



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 45TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS 11-15 MARCH 2002 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VICTOR G. GARCIA III, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Madame Chairperson,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me at the outset to express our heartfelt congratulations on your election as well as that of the members of the Bureau and to assure you our full support for the successful conclusion of our work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Officer in Charge of the Office of the Executive Director for his introductory statement. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I should also like to congratulate Mr. Antonio Maria Costa on his appointment as the new Director-General of UNOV and Executive Director of ODCCP and to convey to him the Group's support in his assignment.

While appreciating the preparations made for this session by the Secretariat, the Group would like to stress the importance of making documents available in a timely manner.

Madame Chairperson,

Regarding the Thematic Debate on "Alternative Development and the Eradication of Illicit Crops", we hope that this will lead to a better understanding of the difficulties in implementing the sustainable alternative development strategy, and come up with feasible recommendations on how the programmes can better assist concerned developing countries. In this context, the Group recognizes the relevance of market access to help developing countries to be more efficient in the fight against the world problem of drugs. It is therefore, the view of the Group that reinforcing and strengthening international cooperation through, among other things, technical cooperation is important. The Commission should ensure ways and means to achieve our aim of combating illicit drugs more effectively.

Madame Chairperson,

The Group took note of the efforts of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the UNDCP in trying to avoid gaps between their reports. However, more efforts should be made to improve future reports. In this regard the Group takes note of the concern expressed by INCB in its 2001 report especially over the widespread abuse of cannabis among others in a recreational setting and for leisure activities. The Group is troubled that this alarming trend is encouraged by policies of decriminalization in some States-Parties of such use of drugs and preparatory acts, including cultivation, distribution, and possession.

Efforts to reduce and control the cultivation and abuse of cannabis will be jeopardized by policies in contravention of the letter and spirit of the international drug control conventions with potential repercussions to other controlled drugs. The Group demands that the Commission address this issue in order to guarantee the integrity of the entire international drug control regime.

As we are confronting various forms of licit and illicit drug abuse, it is pertinent that all relevant organs of the United Nations dealing with this issue form a common view. Thus, we also encourage UNDCP and INCB to find common synergy through holding more regular interactions and meetings.

Madame Chairperson,

The Group is gravely concerned with the increasing trend of polydrug use within the context of recreational settings and leisure activities that are largely concentrated in certain regions of the world and could easily spread to other parts of the world. The Group thus welcomes UNDCP activities in developing strategies and

prevention programmes for reducing illicit drug demand, especially among young people. UNDCP should also endeavor to encourage the sharing of experiences between countries that have a history of dealing with the problem as well as those new to it.

With regard to Afghanistan, the Group feels that the international community must build upon the recent developments and seize the opportunity for a more meaningful engagement for the prevention of re-emergence of opium poppy cultivation. Along this line, UNDCP must be enabled to implement an effective alternative development programme for Afghanistan. However, we have to be wary of the reappearance of this situation in the region and other regions. It is therefore pertinent to have a pragmatic and comprehensive approach to combating the production and distribution of opium.

Madame Chairperson,

Although we appreciate efforts toward greater efficiency in the work of the Commission, it seems that cutting our sessions to a mere five days may not be the answer. Many developing countries are not represented in Vienna and thus need more time within the Commission sessions to appreciate the issues under discussion and to make concrete contributions. Translations in all six languages of the United Nations could likewise not be met in such a short time. The Commission should therefore further consider its policy on the duration of future meetings.

Regarding the preparation for the Ministerial Level segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs relating to the follow-up to the 20th special session of the UNGASS Political Declaration in 2003, the Group underscores the need to focus on the Commission's unique role in strengthening our common commitment and objectives as set out in the 1998 Political Declaration in particular on demand reduction and international cooperation. The meeting should assess the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered in meeting the goals and targets set out in the 1998 Political Declaration. The Group endorses the draft resolution on the preparation for the Ministerial Level segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, relating to the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, in document E/CN.7/2002/L.11.

Madame Chairperson,

The Group would also like to express its support for efforts to strengthen the UNDCP and the role of the Commission as its governing body through continuing improvements in its management. While appreciating the initiation of a system of joint informal meetings between the Office of the Executive Director with various developed and developing countries, the Group stresses the importance of maintaining the momentum of dialogue in order to strengthen international cooperation. However, we request the Secretariat to further improve the format of the meeting, preserve the original purpose of the meeting as well as to avoid duplication with inter-sessional meetings. We also await information about the new strategy for resource mobilization, focused particularly on foundations, the private sector and other sources. However, we should be careful not to allow this strategy to become a source of burden, in particular for developing countries that already have a considerable amount of debt.

The Group reiterates its concern over the decrease in the 2002-2003 budget. We would like to call upon major donor countries to meet their international commitments.

Finally, as a part of the ongoing efforts aimed at better management of the ODCCP, the Group calls for greater transparency in recruitment. The Group requests the Secretariat to provide an informative report on the existing breakdown of the posts in the ODCCP at all levels of the hierarchy on a country by country basis. This will provide a clear picture as to the actual extent to which each geographical region is represented in the Secretariat.

Thank you.