



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA AT THE FORTY-EIGHTH RECONVENED SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, 7-9 DECEMBER 2005, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHEEL KANT SHARMA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and I am pleased to convey to you our pleasure in seeing you presiding over the 48th reconvened session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the preparation of this resumed session and particularly for the preparation of the extensive budget documentation.

The Group would like to make some preliminary observations on the main item of the agenda for this session, that is, the consolidated budget of UNODC for the biennium 2006-2007.

We are happy to note that the budget document is more concise compared with previous budgets. The Group notes that the pattern of the budget document has changed in relation to the format used for budgets in the previous years, which makes comparison difficult. To make the budget document more user-friendly, the Group proposes that a glossary of terminologies be added to the document. In the present budget document, the term "General Purpose Funds", which was used in several resolutions adopted by the CND, is replaced by the term "Core Funds". This change of terminology, due to variation from what was referred to in the earlier resolutions, is likely to create difficulties and confusion for Member States. In fact, the guidelines for deployment of General Purpose Funds and the priorities for the same were also prescribed in one of the resolutions which was approved by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

The Group is pleased to note that the consolidated budget has increased by about 6% over the previous biennia. We share the concern highlighted in the budget about the increase in the share of earmarked funds and the decrease of the general purpose funds/core funds as indicated in the Consolidated Budget for the biennium 2006-2007. The Group urges flexibility on the part of Member States in their voluntary contributions in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the mandates given to UNODC by the Commission. This is especially important given the fact that UNODC is facing a situation where on one hand the earmarked contributions for the programme are going up, and on the other hand, there is shortage of funds for the support and the core component of UNODC. The situation becomes even more difficult because the regular budget has maintained a zero growth, at a time when UNODC has been given new responsibilities.

Furthermore, the Group notes with concern the report of the Independent Evaluation Unit, that due to the strategic weaknesses pertaining to a lack of an overarching organizational strategy and the existing unstable and unpredictable funding mechanism, UNODC's ability to deliver its programmes and projects effectively and efficiently is threatened, thereby weakening UNODC's ability to deliver technical assistance programmes to assist Member States to actively participate in efforts to control drugs and crime.

The Group welcomes the approach of making the budget result-based, in accordance to the recommendations of the Independent Evaluation Unit. The achievement indicators would help in assessing the effectiveness of the programme delivery as well as making improvements in the technical assistance being offered to the Member States. In this regard, the Group is of the view that the achievement indicators should be objective, concrete and measurable. It is seen that some of the achievement indicators do not meet these criteria. We would urge UNODC to continue to further improve and refine achievement indicators.

In this context, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the initiative taken by the Executive Director, in his note accompanying the 2004 Annual Evaluation Report, in which he calls for the consideration of the establishment of an informal advisory group of Member States which would assist the Office in examining ways and means of matching anticipated funding with operation strategies. This initiative was also highlighted by the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the consolidated budget for 2006-2007 in paragraph 14, where it states that it would be valuable to establish a consultative body to assist the Executive Director, in the management of the drug programme and the crime programme.

In this regard we would also like to point out that the priorities led down by CND sometimes differ from the priorities of major donor countries and therefore we would like to encourage more dialogue among the UNODC, and all stakeholders especially those countries where projects are implemented to ensure that UNODC has sufficient funds to carry out projects in all the regions in accordance with priorities set by the CND. Therefore, the Group calls for the establishment of an intergovernmental, open-ended informal consultative group.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Group wishes to indicate its preference for a five days, Monday to Friday duration for the 49th session of the CND. We would like to stress the importance of advance preparations and consultations, between the Member States and the Secretariat to ensure the successful outcome of the five days' session of the Commission. As for the thematic debate for the 49th session, the preference of the Group is for the theme on "alternative development, including preventive alternative development", which we believe is essential to the success of the world wide drug control strategy. The Group is of the view of establishing an open ended working group with interpretation to structure the content of the thematic debate, recalling the importance of the establishment of such group during the last sessions of the previous CND.

Mr. Chairman, these are our preliminary comments and the Group looks forward to working with you and the Member States during the session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.