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Agenda item 3

Policy directives to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and strengthening the drug programme and the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body, including administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Reconvened twenty-fifth session

Vienna, 1 and 2 December 2016

Agenda item 3 (a)

Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Summary

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2015/234, in which the Council renewed the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime until the first half of 2017, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 52/13, 54/10, 54/17, 56/11 and 58/1 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 18/3, 20/1, 20/9, 22/2 and 24/1. The present note covers the work of the working group between 9 June 2016 and 23 September 2016. Information on the work of the working group during the preceding period of 9 November 2015-18 January 2016 can be found in document E/CN.7/2016/3-E/CN.15/2016/3.



I. Deliberations

1. From 9 June to 23 September, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held two informal meetings. It continued to consider issues under the items of the agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2015/234 and by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 52/13 and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in its resolution 18/3 and in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to those resolutions, as well as with provisions contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 54/10, 54/17, 56/11 and 58/1 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 20/1, 20/9, 22/2 and 24/1.

2. At its meeting held on 9 June, the working group considered the draft calendar of meetings and provisional programme of work for the working group through the end of November 2016. Several delegations made proposals on items for inclusion in the programme, including on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the practices, policies and programmes of UNODC and on activities being undertaken by UNODC to achieve gender parity in the Office. The meeting was provided with an update on the Regional Programme for South-East Asia for the period 2014-2017, in terms of activities, beneficiaries, budget expenditure and fundraising efforts, as well as main challenges to implementation and responses to address them. Reference was also made to key partnerships in the subregion with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Mekong countries and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Director of the Division for Management of UNODC briefed delegations on the financial situation of UNODC, including the evolution in 2010-2017 of special-purpose funds, programme support cost funds and general-purpose funds and the implementation of the budget in 2015 by source of funding and by region. Overall, there had been a budget implementation of 81 per cent, some real cost reductions through stringent field office management and saving measures and increasing host country support in several countries. The special-purpose fund implementation rate of 21 per cent as of early May 2016 was noted. Reasons for such relatively low rates included technical difficulties with Umoja, the postponement of activities, delays in contracting, changes in donor and governmental counterpart strategies and issues related to security in conflict and post-conflict areas. A shortfall in general-purpose funding was expected for 2016. The Director of the Division for Management also reported on the application of full cost recovery by field office as well as on the steps for the preparation of the regular budget for the biennium 2018-2019. In replying to questions and comments, the Director of the Division for Management, the Director of the Division for Operations and the Director of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs of UNODC recognized that downward projections would affect full cost recovery and programme support cost fund income and that there was therefore a need for closer scrutiny.

3. At the same meeting, the Secretariat presented the Joint Programme on Drug Dependence Treatment implemented by UNODC and the World Health Organization, which was aimed at mainstreaming the response to drug dependence in national public health and social protection systems, and covered data collection, capacity-building, drug treatment services, tool development and advocacy support.

The decreasing trend in funds since 2009 and the decrease in the number of donors were also brought to the attention of the working group. The working group was also presented with an overview of the work of the Independent Evaluation Unit of UNODC, stressing the mandate of evaluating every programme at UNODC. Delegations were provided with an overview of existing knowledge management tools to facilitate analysis of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, such as the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC), the Mutual Legal Assistance Request Writer Tool and tools pertaining to trafficking in cultural property.

4. At the meeting held on 23 September, the Director of the Division for Management of UNODC briefed delegations on the financial situation of the Office, noting the slightly lower delivery rate in 2015 as compared with 2014, as well as the critical situation of the general purpose fund, whose income in 2015 was lower than the actual expenditure. In addition, the working group was provided with prospects for 2016 budget implementation, with estimated delivery rates close to 2015 levels. The Director also reaffirmed the need for consistent application and monitoring of full cost recovery and indicated that the guiding principle for the allocation of programme support costs was to cover indirect costs. The steps for the regular budget process for the biennium 2018-2019, including approval of the budget outline by the General Assembly in December 2016, were outlined. For the budget of the biennium 2018-2019, zero growth would be expected. Umoja was in a stabilization phase with normalization expected by the end of 2016. As a replacement for the previous Profi platform for programme monitoring, a dashboard had been developed and was available for use by Member States. Several delegations recommended a flexible application of programme support costs in field offices and expressed their wish for the involvement of Member States in the process for the approval of the regular budget for the biennium 2018-2019. The importance of performance budgeting at UNODC, linking expenditure to concrete outcomes, was mentioned.

5. At the same meeting, the Chief of the Public Affairs and Policy Support Branch of UNODC presented examples of gender mainstreaming at the Office, including a guidance note on gender mainstreaming in its work and a list of tools developed to address gender concerns in the fields of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, HIV/AIDS, and criminal justice and crime prevention. The Director of the Division for Management provided an overview of the commitments made on gender balance, including the Secretary-General's goal of a 50/50 gender balance, the targets set in the compact signed by the Executive Director and the Secretary-General, and the gender strategy developed Secretariat-wide. UNODC had taken action in recruitment, with enhanced outreach activities being carried out, close monitoring of selection processes, and the appointment of focal points for women to promote greater awareness and advocacy and to advise hiring managers. Other measures regarded career development through coaching and the promotion of work-life balance. The UNODC focal points for women informed the working group on their role and work. Delegations welcomed the improved response of the Secretariat to requests for information on gender issues and expressed their wish to continue a dialogue on further measures to improve the gender and geographical balance of UNODC staff at the senior level, including field representatives.

6. Finally, at the same meeting, the working group received updates on the Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC and the programme of work of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch of the Office. The working group also received the results of a professional peer review of the evaluation function of the Office, which was conducted in the framework of the Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the United Nations Evaluation Group.

II. Organizational and administrative matters

7. The working group held two informal meetings in the reporting period, on 9 June and 23 September. Further meetings are scheduled for 25 October, and 11 and 28 November.

8. The Secretariat continued to provide documents and information to the working group in both electronic format and hard copy, including through a public web page on the website of UNODC and through a secure web page restricted to Member States, aimed at providing them with access to information of interest.