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Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the international drug control treaties: international cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion

Belgium and Côte d'Ivoire: draft resolution**

Improving access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical purposes, including for the treatment of children in pain, through the promotion of awareness-raising, training and data collection

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Recalling that the international drug control conventions enshrine the commitment by the international community to make adequate provisions to ensure, and not unduly restrict, the availability of controlled substances that are considered indispensable for medical and scientific purposes,

Recalling also the commitments made in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem of 2009,¹ the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action² and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, held in 2016, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,³ to ensure access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Recalling further the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem,⁴ adopted

* E/CN.7/2024/1.

** On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union.

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

² *Ibid.*, 2014, *Supplement No. 8 (E/2014/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

³ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 8 (E/2019/28)*, chap. I, sect. B.



at its sixty-second session, in 2019, in which Member States reiterated their resolve to ensure access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, and address existing barriers in that regard, including affordability,

Reiterating that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ and to effectively address the world drug situation are mutually reinforcing, and more specifically that efforts to increase access to internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes contribute to the achievement of target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is focused on access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all,

Recalling its resolution 63/3 of 6 March 2020 on promoting awareness-raising, education and training as part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring access to and the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and improving their rational use,

Recognizing the importance of appropriately mainstreaming gender and age perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes,

Recognizing also that the treatment of children in pain involves greater complexity and that the data required to adequately monitor access to age-appropriate paediatric medicines are insufficient,

Concerned about the lack of access to quality, safe, effective and affordable medicines for children in appropriate dosage forms and the problems associated with the rational use of children's medicines in many countries,

Recognizing that the lack of research and development relating to age-appropriate paediatric medicines and formulations is hindering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and universal health coverage and is putting children's lives at risk,

Recalling the supplement to the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2022* entitled *No Patient Left Behind: Progress in Ensuring Adequate Access to Internationally Controlled Substances for Medical and Scientific Purposes*,⁶ in which the Board noted that Member States had reported the lack of training and awareness among health-care professionals as a major impediment to access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Emphasizing the important role of the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, health-care professionals and civil society in improving access to and the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Bearing in mind the important work and concerns of the World Health Assembly with regard to improving access to and the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Acknowledging the expertise and support provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within their respective mandates, in this area,

Welcoming the "Access and availability" initiative, led by the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-fifth session, with the stated objective of ensuring that no patient is left behind, and emphasizing the need for accelerated global action following the joint call to action on scaling up the implementation of international drug policy commitments on improving the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission,

⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

⁶ E/INCB/2022/1/Supp.1.

1. *Reaffirms* all relevant international drug policy commitments, in particular those related to ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion;

2. *Calls upon* Member States to address all existing barriers, including those related to legislation, regulatory systems, health-care systems, affordability, the training of health-care professionals, education, awareness-raising, estimates, assessments and reporting, benchmarks for the consumption of substances under control, and international cooperation and coordination;

3. *Stresses* the importance of taking into account the specific needs of children when assessing, developing and implementing policies to improve access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

4. *Calls upon* Member States to provide statistics, including by collecting national data and analysing evidence, and to share, including through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, information on access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical use, with additional attention to the needs of children, in order to improve responses in this regard;

5. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, within existing resources and mandates, to assist Member States, upon request, in strengthening and developing their capacity to collect high-quality data on access and availability;

6. *Encourages* Member States to include tailored education and training on the medical use of controlled substances in the curricula of all education programmes for health-care professionals, such as those for physicians, pharmacists and nurses, as well as in continuing medical education programmes that focus specific attention on the needs of children, in order to address misconceptions about pain, promote non-stigmatizing attitudes towards the prescription of controlled substances for medical purposes, respond to mental health needs and ensure the rational prescribing and administering of controlled substances for medical purposes, including in paediatric formulations;

7. *Also encourages* Member States to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as academia, civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-led organizations, in order to raise awareness and ensure the acceptance and understanding of the rational use of controlled substances, including for children, as well as to fight against stigma associated with the prescription of controlled substances, including for children;

8. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to develop technical guidance and guidelines for the rational prescription of controlled substances, with attention to the specific needs of children, in order to equip prescribers with the knowledge and confidence that they need to prescribe controlled substances when clinically indicated;

9. *Urges* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board, and invites the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, to continue to strengthen and improve their inter-agency cooperation in the area of access and availability, and, within their respective mandates, to continue to provide multidisciplinary support to Member States, in particular with regard to education, training and awareness-raising, including the provision of objective information, on the essential role and rational use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, with attention to the needs of children;

10. *Calls upon* Member States to continue to work through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, building upon the “Access and availability” initiative and other relevant efforts, to enhance access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, in line with the commitment to accelerate the implementation of all international drug policy commitments;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution, taking into account the work of and including the collaboration of the Office with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within existing reporting obligations;

12. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for these purposes, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations.
