

ECOSOC Resolution 2005/26

Demand for and supply of opiates used to meet medical and scientific needs

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2004/43 of 21 July 2004 and previous relevant resolutions,

Recognizing that the medical use of narcotic drugs, including opiates, is indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering,

Emphasizing that the need to balance the global licit supply of opiates against the legitimate demand for opiates used to meet medical and scientific needs is central to the international strategy and policy of drug control,

Noting the fundamental need for international cooperation with the traditional supplier countries in drug control to ensure universal application of the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961¹ and that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol,²

Reiterating that a balance between consumption and production of opiate raw materials was achieved in the past as a result of efforts made by the two traditional supplier countries, India and Turkey, together with established supplier countries,

Expressing deep concern at the level of licit global production of opiate raw materials and the significant accumulation of stocks over the past few years as a consequence of the operation of market forces, which has the potential to upset the delicate balance between the licit supply of and demand for opiates for medical and scientific purposes,

Emphasizing the importance of adhering to the estimates, based on actual consumption and utilization of narcotic drugs, furnished to and confirmed by the International Narcotics Control Board on the extent of cultivation and production of opiate raw materials, especially in view of the current oversupply,

Recalling the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted during the ministerial segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,³ in which ministers and other government representatives called upon States to continue to contribute to the maintenance of a balance between the licit supply of and demand for opiate raw materials used for medical and scientific purposes and to cooperate in preventing the proliferation of sources of production of opiate raw materials,

Considering that opiate raw materials and opiates derived therefrom are not just ordinary commodities that can be subjected to the operation of market forces, and that, therefore, market economy considerations alone should not determine the cultivation of opium poppy,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

³ A/58/124, chap. II, sect. A.

Reiterating the importance of medically appropriate use of opiates in pain relief therapy, as advocated by the World Health Organization,

Noting that countries differ significantly in their level of consumption of narcotic drugs and that in most developing countries the use of narcotic drugs for medical purposes has remained at an extremely low level,

1. *Urges* all Governments to continue to contribute to maintaining a balance between the licit supply of and demand for opiate raw materials used for medical and scientific purposes, the achievement of which would be facilitated by maintaining, insofar as their constitutional and legal systems permit, support to the traditional and established supplier countries, and to cooperate in preventing the proliferation of sources of production of opiate raw materials;

2. *Urges* Governments of all producer countries to adhere strictly to the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961⁴ and that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol,⁵ and to take effective measures to prevent the illicit production or diversion of opiate raw materials to illicit channels, and welcomes the study carried out by the International Narcotics Control Board on the relative merits of different methods of producing opiate raw materials and encourages improvements in practices in the cultivation and production of opiate raw materials;

3. *Urges* Governments of consumer countries to assess their licit needs for opiate raw materials realistically on the basis of actual consumption and utilization of opiate raw materials and opiates derived therefrom and to communicate those needs to the International Narcotics Control Board in order to ensure easy supply, calls on Governments of countries producing opium to limit the cultivation of opium poppy, taking into account the current level of global stocks, to the estimates furnished to and confirmed by the Board, in accordance with the requirements of the 1961 Convention, and urges that, in providing estimates of such cultivation, producer countries consider the actual demand requirements of importing countries;

4. *Urges* all the Governments of countries where opium poppy has not been cultivated for the licit production of opiate raw materials, in the spirit of collective responsibility, to refrain from engaging in the commercial cultivation of opium poppy, in order to avoid the proliferation of supply sites;

5. *Commends* the International Narcotics Control Board for its efforts in monitoring the implementation of the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions and, in particular:

(a) In urging the Governments concerned to adjust global production of opiate raw materials to a level corresponding to actual licit requirements and to avoid unforeseen imbalances between the licit supply of and demand for opiates caused by the exportation of products manufactured from seized and confiscated drugs;

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

(b) In inviting the Governments concerned to ensure that opiates imported into their countries for medical and scientific use do not originate in countries that transform seized and confiscated drugs into licit opiates;

(c) In arranging informal meetings, during the sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, with the main States that import and produce opiate raw materials;

6. *Requests* the International Narcotics Control Board to continue its efforts in monitoring the implementation of the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions in full compliance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and with that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolution to all Member States for consideration and implementation and to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-ninth session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

*36th plenary meeting
22 July 2005*