

2003 Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council

Statement by Dr. Philip O. Emafo, President of the International Narcotics Control Board

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure and an honour for me to report to the Economic and Social Council about the work of the International Narcotics Control Board for the year 2002, in accordance with the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

In February 2003, the annual report of the Board was officially launched in more than 30 countries in the world. In its first chapter, the report examines the impact of drugs on overall economic development and debunked the myth that illicit drug production and trafficking could improve the economic situation of a country. On the contrary, a comparative analysis of drug production data and economic growth rates in the main drug cultivating countries of the world contained in the report clearly shows that illicit drug production and trafficking do not lead to long-term economic development. In fact, illicit drug production and trade impact negatively on economic development as they destabilize the political system by strengthening insurgency groups and terrorism, distort the economy through inflow of illicit profits and undermine civil society through rising levels of crime, violence and drug abuse. Although the illicit drug industry does offer short-term benefits in the form of employment opportunities, these employment opportunities jeopardize the long-term development of human capital.

The conclusion that has been reached is that long-term economic development in a country is not feasible without an effective drug control system. Also, sustainable development is a pre-requisite for successful drug control. It is therefore necessary for governments and international institutions to show commitment to drug control in the context of overall national economic development.

The Board is committed to co-operating and collaborating with international and intergovernmental organizations in trying to identify and find solutions to the world drug problem. The Board participated in this year's World Health Assembly. The Board also visited the World Customs Organization headquarters in Brussels to discuss further collaboration.

In April 2003, the Board participated in the meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its ministerial segment which assessed progress made by Governments to implement the goals set at the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on the world drug problem (UNGASS) in 1998. The Board and the Commission are committed to the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug production and trafficking. The Commission and the Board have grave concerns about policies and activities which may

lead to the legalization of drugs. Also the Commission and the Board regard the implementation of the drug control treaties in their entirety as a way of safeguarding the integrity of the international drug control regime.

The Commission re-emphasized its support for the work of the International Narcotics Control Board as the main monitoring body of the drug treaties:

Mr. Chairman,

The Board remains concerned about the widespread illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and continues in its process of formal consultation with its Government pursuant to article 14 of the 1961 Convention. As you remember, the 2001 annual report contained a clear warning against the resumption of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and called on the international community to provide support to the Afghan government in its efforts.

During a visit to Afghanistan in August 2002, the Board found, what unfortunately has now been confirmed, that large-scale cultivation of opium poppy increased despite the eradication campaign being carried out by the government and the enactment of two decrees prohibiting the cultivation of opium poppy and related activities. But the drug problem in Afghanistan today extends beyond opiates. Chemicals and psychotropic substances are also trafficked into the country and are used to manufacture or adulterate heroin. In 2002, the Board, in cooperation with the Government of China, prevented the export of 5 tons of diazepam to Afghanistan, a quantity far in excess of the annual medical requirements of that substance in many bigger and developed countries such as France and Germany. Some samples of seized heroin have been shown to be adulterated with diazepam.

Since last year, the Government of Afghanistan has remained steadfast in its drug control efforts and committed itself to eliminate drug production by 2013, and to make further efforts to implement the decrees prohibiting the cultivation, production and processing of the opium poppy, including illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse. However, the Government of Afghanistan cannot resolve such an enormous problem on its own. The Board was therefore pleased to note that the Security Council, in a special meeting on Afghanistan in June, expressed support for the efforts of the Government. In the same month, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Central Asian Governments launched projects to counter the heroin flow from Afghanistan. The drug situation in Afghanistan was also the subject of the G8 meeting in Evian, France in May and of the Ministerial Conference on Drug Routes from Central Asia to Europe organized by the Government of France in Paris in May 2003. These events all stressed the need for stronger, concerted and coordinated action to assist Afghanistan in the eradication of opium poppy cultivation and for providing support to countries surrounding Afghanistan in their efforts to curb illicit drug trafficking. It is now widely understood that there will be no peace and security in that country unless its drug problem is addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Country missions are an important part of the dialogue between governments and the Board. These visits are carried out to examine national drug control structures as well as administrative and legislative measures adopted by governments to implement the provisions of the international drug control conventions. If a country has not yet become a party to the conventions, the Board also discusses accession or ratification of the treaties with the government. A visit by the Board has often sensitized countries to become parties to the conventions or to take action to strengthen their drug control system. The Governments of Albania, Algeria and Guyana, for example, became parties to the 1961 and 1971 Conventions or the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention shortly after receiving an INCB mission.

Since I last addressed the Council, the Board has carried out missions to Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Fiji, Haiti, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Suriname, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam.

Mr. Chairman,

In accordance with the functions assigned to it under the 1961 Convention, the Board regularly examines issues affecting the supply of and demand for opiates for medical requirements, and strives to maintain a lasting balance between the two. The Board notes that cultivation and production levels of opiates for medical purposes are far in excess of actual medical consumption and there is an increasing risk that stocks could be diverted into the illegal drugs market. Therefore, the Board cautions Governments that authorize opium poppy cultivation to reduce the area they cultivate while other countries considering opium poppy cultivation should desist from doing so. However, despite the worldwide over-production of opiates, these licit drugs are often not available in developing countries. In 2001 developing countries accounted for less than 5 percent of total worldwide consumption of opiates. The Board raised its concern about this situation in its report three years ago but the situation has not changed. For these reasons, the Board calls on Governments and the World Health Organization to promote better awareness programmes for the availability and rational use of licit opiates in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, members of the International Control Board serve the international community in their personal capacity and not as government representatives. This is to ensure that they retain their independence and impartiality throughout their entire term of office at the Board. Since Board members serve in their personal capacity, paragraph 6 of article 10 of the 1961 Single Convention stipulates that Board members should receive "adequate remuneration as determined by the General Assembly". Yet in February 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/272, which reduced this amount to a level of

U.S. \$1.00 per annum. This decision is not in line with the intent of the 1961 Convention as U.S. \$1.00 per annum cannot be said to satisfy the norm of adequacy of remuneration provided in that Convention. While payment of Board members has been practically suspended, the workload of the Board has been increasing considerably. The Board receives additional monitoring mandates, and monitors an increasing number of parties to the drug control treaties and an increasing number of internationally controlled substances, especially psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

Allow me, therefore, to express, on behalf of the Board, my appreciation for the action taken by the Council under your leadership, Ambassador Rosenthal, to approach the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat for a legal opinion. The legal opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs was issued in March and in it, the Legal Counsel expresses, *inter alia*, the view "that the reduction to one dollar per year of the remuneration payable to members of the INCB may be viewed as not corresponding to the legislative intent of the relevant provision of the 1961 Convention. Meanwhile, the inadequacy of our remuneration has taken its toll resulting in the resignation of a newly elected and brilliant Board member from Peru. This trend should not be allowed to continue as it adversely affects the work of the Board and the operation of the international drug control system.

The drug problem affects all countries to varying degrees. Although drug abuse is stabilising or declining in some regions, it is increasing in some others. The abuse of synthetic drugs represents a new challenge facing the international community.

We cannot afford to throw up our arms in frustration. This new challenge calls for a collective will and determination from the international community to rid our societies of illicit drug supply and use. No country working alone, can solve the drug problem. Significant reduction in the demand for drugs has always been possible when Governments demonstrate a strong will and commitment in addressing the drug problem. We must continue in our efforts to free our societies from illicit drug use.

Mr. Chairman,

Kindly allow me to explain to Council Members how the Board functions. The work of the Board is undertaken through:

- Meetings lasting five and half weeks every year and held in Vienna;
- Country missions; and;
- Communications and correspondence between members and the secretariat and among members, when the Board members return to their countries after Board meetings. The Board members bear the cost of the communications and correspondence from the remuneration earned. Now that the remuneration has been terminated members are still expected to bear these costs from their own personal resources.

Should members of the Board refuse to use personal resources to run the affairs of the Board, such a decision will result in meetings of the Board holding for longer periods

than presently and so may cost the United Nations more to run the Board. The quality of the work of the Board will also be adversely affected and so will the preparation of country missions.

Mr. Chairman

Let me assure you of the Board's preparedness to continue to serve the international community in combating the world drug problem. We call on the international community to join hands with the Board. Together we shall succeed.

Thank you for your attention.