



Brussels, 9 November 2016
(OR. en)

14067/16

CORDROGUE 67

NOTE

From:	French Presidency of the Dublin Group
To:	Dublin Group
No. prev. doc.:	14336/15
Subject:	Regional situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Dublin Group

Regional situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan

I. Place and date of mini group meetings

France chairs the regional Dublin Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The last meeting of the mini Dublin Group for the Pakistan region was held on 14 October 2015. However, status updates on the fight against drugs in the country and the region were conducted by the French Embassy in Islamabad, in collaboration with local partners, in June and October 2016.

In Afghanistan, the mini Dublin Group met twice at the French Embassy in Kabul:

- once on 26 January 2016, with the Minister for Counter Narcotics, Ms Salamat Azimi, and the UNODC regional representative. At this meeting, the Minister gave an overview of the national anti-drugs action plan, before mentioning the results it has achieved in the country and outlining plans for the future;
- once on 8 June 2016, in preparation for the ministerial donors' conference on Afghanistan which was held in Brussels on 5 October 2016. Speaking points on the importance of the fight against drugs were drawn up and distributed to the individuals involved, in the form of a non-paper. The final communiqué includes some of these points, placing particular emphasis on the importance of working at regional level and, particularly in the context of the national action plan, of combating drug production and trafficking, as well as other forms of crime, in addition to providing treatment and rehabilitation for people addicted to drugs.

The information used in this report is taken from the outcomes of the mini Dublin Group meetings, regional situation monitoring reports and the summary of the 2016 UNODC survey on opium cultivation and production in Afghanistan, published in October 2016.

II. Mini groups' work

a. Regional situations as regards drug production

South Asia, and primarily Afghanistan, is one of the world's three main opium production areas, exporting mainly to neighbouring countries, Europe, the Near and Middle East, Africa and South Asia itself.

b. **National situations regarding production, consumption and trafficking of drugs, precursors and money laundering**

In Afghanistan

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan

In 2016, the area of land used for opium cultivation increased by 10% as compared to 2015, from 182 000 to 221 000 hectares. The largest increase was recorded in areas where the security situation is deteriorating: in the north of the country and in the north-western province of Badghis.

This increase in the areas dedicated to opium cultivation has taken place across almost the entire country, except in the south, where the area of land used for opium poppy production has remained the same.

Cultivation areas have grown in the north by 324 %, in the north-east by 55 %, in the east by 44 %, in the central region by 24 % and in the west by 15 %.

The northern province of Jawzjan has lost the 'poppy-free' status that it achieved in 2008.

The majority (93 %) of cultivation areas are still located in the south (59 %), west (25 %) and east (9 %) of the country. Helmand Province remains the main poppy-growing region with 80 273 hectares, followed by Badghis (35 234 hectares) and Kandahar (20 475 hectares).

Opium cultivation in 2015 and 2016 – regional distribution and changes

Region	2015 (ha)	2016 (ha)	Change (%)	Percentage of 2015 total	Percentage of 2016 total
South	119 765	117 987	-1	66	59
West	44 308	51 067	+15	24	25
East	12 242	17 608	+44	7	9
North-East	4 056	6 298	+55	2	3
Central	321	398	+24	0,2	0,2
North	1 875	7 951	+324	1	3,9
Total	183 000	201 000	+10	100	100

Source: Summary of the 2016 survey on opium cultivation and production in Afghanistan, UNODC

In 2016, the number of eradication campaigns fell by around 91 %, with 355 hectares of crops being destroyed. These campaigns were carried out in seven provinces (12 provinces were involved in 2015).

Most of the eradication schemes took place in the province of Badakhshan, where 270 hectares of crops were destroyed. Eradication campaigns were not carried out in any of the provinces most affected by opium cultivation due to the security situation in those areas.

The teams responsible for destroying the crops are still met with violent resistance and attacks. In 2016, eight people were killed (one law enforcement officer and seven insurgents) and seven were injured (four law enforcement officers and three insurgents).

Opium production in Afghanistan

According to the UNODC, an estimated 4 800 tonnes of opium was produced in 2016 – a 43 % increase compared with 2015, consistent with the increase in the area dedicated to opium cultivation.

The majority of production, amounting to 54 % of the national total, takes place in the south of the country. This is then followed by the west, east and north, which respectively account for 24 %, 12 % and 6 % of the country's total production.

The average yield is estimated at 23.8 kilogrammes of opium per hectare under cultivation. In comparison with 2015, the yield per hectare has significantly increased in the west (+37 %) and south (+36 %). Because of the security situation in certain areas, the survey intended to measure production yield could not be carried out in all provinces. Satellite images have confirmed the high yield, but the UNODC data are nevertheless an estimate.

Cultivation and production of other drugs in Afghanistan

In addition to opium, Afghanistan is the world's second-largest producer of cannabis after Morocco, according to the UNODC's 2016 World Drug Report. Production of the drug feeds into local consumption as well as regional and international trafficking. Synthetic drugs are also produced in Afghanistan.

Drug consumption in Afghanistan

The figures provided by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (United States) in its 2016 report paint a bleak picture of drug consumption in Afghanistan, one which is confirmed by the Afghan authorities. Three million Afghans, or 11 % of the population, are drug users, including high numbers of young people and women.

In the light of the reported relapse rate and the use of certain violent practices in health centres, the effectiveness and legitimacy of the support services for drug addicts have been called into question by some donors.

Afghanistan's national drug control strategy

National strategy

Afghanistan is implementing the strategy previously presented to the mini group by Salamat Azimi, the Minister for Counter Narcotics. This strategy is based on a holistic approach and involves establishing coordination at national level between donors and the various ministries concerned on the one hand, and regional coordination on the other.

The national strategy focuses on:

- health and social support (a demand reduction plan, the establishment of appropriate care and treatment for drug addicts, post-treatment services, reintegration assistance);
- the implementation of a gender programme to increase the involvement of women and take greater account of their situation in the fight against drug use;
- communication, prevention and public awareness-raising;
- the country's economic development, without which there can be no sustainable solution, and the agricultural chain as a whole (support for alternative crop development, social support for populations, development of markets for legal crops, etc.).

At regional level, the strategy also emphasises cooperation between the 14 neighbouring countries in the region and the need to improve border control.

Action plan

The 2015-2019 action plan to tackle the production and trafficking of drugs is based on a balanced, comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable strategic approach which aims to step up the fight against drugs in Afghanistan.

Alternative development, eradication, prohibition, healthcare and the development of prevention programmes are the main focuses of this action plan, the implementation of which should reduce opium poppy cultivation, opiate production and trafficking, and demand for illicit drugs, while allowing for the development of care and treatment services for drug addicts.

At the last meeting of the mini group on 26 January 2016, the Minister for Counter Narcotics reported that the action plan was being refocused on measures to prevent opium poppy cultivation and reforms to tackle money laundering and corruption. She also confirmed that increasing the resources allocated to assisting drug addicts was a priority.

As part of the implementation of the action plan, a series of initiatives has been taken in relation to communication, public health and the strengthening of the legal framework:

- a national awareness-raising campaign on the dangers of drugs;
- increased drug-treatment capacity (addition of 1 500 extra beds in Kabul and opening of two centres in the provinces of Nangarhar and Helmand);
- an ongoing discussion in the House of the People concerning a draft law to strengthen existing drug legislation.

Over the next year, continued efforts will be made in terms of prevention, curative policies and eradication, notably with the opening of new treatment facilities for drug addicts, including one reserved for women, the establishment of a drug education centre, and intensified eradication campaigns (+5 % in all provinces).

The fight against trafficking in Afghanistan

The resources and measures employed to fight trafficking do not seem sufficient to address the scale of the phenomenon or to meet the objectives set out in the national strategy and the action plan. As an example, in 2016 there was a 91 % reduction in eradication campaigns in comparison with 2015, a year in which 3 760 hectares of crops were destroyed.

The counter-narcotics police of Afghanistan (CNPA) has seen its staff numbers halved from the 5 000 it had in 2010. Meanwhile, the special unit in charge of eradication has been totally disbanded. The service has also lost its air capabilities to the army, thereby depriving its national intervention unit, which specialises in the dismantling of clandestine laboratories, of the ability to deploy throughout the territory.

The legal framework may also undergo changes that could undermine the efforts to fight drug trafficking. It would appear that a proposal for a law is currently being drafted to ban the destruction of seized narcotics 'so they can be used for pharmaceutical purposes'.

International cooperation in Afghanistan

In December 2015, the UNODC held a high-level meeting of partners for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries in Vienna. This meeting, chaired by the UNODC executive director, Yuri Fedotov, gave Afghanistan, the countries of the region and the donor countries and partners the opportunity to present their priorities and actions relating to the fight against the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan and to reconfirm their commitment and mobilisation on this issue, in particular through the UNODC's regional and national programmes.

The UNODC programme for Afghanistan 2016-2019 focuses on four action areas (Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Health and Alternative Development, Advocacy, Policy and Research), each of which includes an anti-drugs component from the perspective of reducing demand or reducing supply.

On 5 October, the European Union and the government of Afghanistan co-hosted the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan. The conference brought together 75 countries and 26 international organisations and agencies. The parties confirmed their partnership for prosperity and peace. The government of Afghanistan announced its reform agenda for the coming years (the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework), while the international community renewed its pledge to support Afghanistan with USD 15.2 billion over the next four years. The joint communiqué adopted at the end of the conference refers to the need for an integrated approach to the fight against the production and trafficking of narcotics, within a regional framework, and the rehabilitation of drug addicts. The European Union recalled that 30 % of aid to Afghanistan in the period 2014-2020 (totalling EUR 1.4 billion) was allocated to agriculture and rural development, as one of the objectives was to reduce Afghan farmers' dependence on opium crops.

In Pakistan

Pakistan's national drug control strategy

As far as the mini Dublin Group is aware, Pakistan's anti-drugs strategy has not been modified recently.

As regards the organisation of agencies, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), responsible for the fight against drugs, implements government policy on reducing supply and demand at both national and international level. This agency is also the main contact partner for foreign counter-narcotics agencies.

In addition, it coordinates the fight against narcotics via the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), which was set up in 2010 and brings together all the Pakistani agencies involved in the fight against drugs (the federal police forces, Frontier Corps, Rangers, Federal Bureau of Revenue, Pakistan Coast Guards, Pakistan Customs, Railways Police and National Highways & Motorway Police).

The 1997 Control of Narcotic Substances Act establishes the legal framework for the fight against drug trafficking.

Pakistan's national strategy has a distinct focus on reducing supply. Lower priority appears to be given to minimising the harmful effects arising from the consumption of narcotic or psychotropic substances and to reducing demand.

Furthermore, the financial flows generated by drug trafficking in Pakistan promote corruption at all levels of society and government.

Lastly, the problem of drug trafficking in Pakistan is closely tied to the situation in Afghanistan. The permeability of the borders and the prevailing lack of security in these regions hinder the establishment of a truly effective control mechanism between the two countries.

However, the implementation of tighter controls at crossing points between Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially since 1 June 2016 at the Torkham border post, should reduce the flow of narcotics.

The fight against trafficking in Pakistan

Even if Pakistan remains primarily a transit country for narcotic substances (opium, heroin and cannabis) from Afghanistan, it is also faced with serious internal problems related to drug use.

Seizures of chemical precursors (acetic anhydride and ephedrine) and cocaine are rising sharply. An increase of 300 % between 2014 and 2015 has been recorded for cocaine.

The routes used by traffickers converge mainly on the ports of Karachi (Sindh) and Gwadar (Baluchistan), where drugs from Afghanistan are exported by sea to the countries of the Persian Gulf, East Africa and South-East Asia.

Drugs are also transported illegally by air by mules who conceal small quantities in their luggage, on their person, or even inside their bodies. The Persian Gulf is one of the key destinations for this type of trafficking. The African continent, especially West Africa, is also a leading destination for drug mules, as is Europe (the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands).

In the first six months of 2016, the anti-drug trafficking agencies reported seizures of 30 190 kg of opium, 2 800 kg of morphine and 8 156 kg of heroin. The total value of these seizures amounted to USD 1 925 million.

They led to the opening of 20 145 legal proceedings and the arrest of 21 369 people. In the context of these proceedings, 15 foreign nationals were arrested, mainly Nigerians (9).

However, the operations leading to these seizures do not always result in the complete dismantling of international trafficking networks. The lack of resources and equipment is one of the factors which may explain this, as well as corruption and collusion.

Drug consumption in Pakistan

A small, but hard-to-quantify proportion of the 40 % of Afghan narcotic substances which transit through Pakistan is intended for local consumption (mainly heroin and cannabis resin), along with opium, the consumption of which is an age-old tradition in tribal areas.

'Recreational' drugs and amphetamines are generally consumed by a wealthy, urban population. An increase in their use has been reported.

The authorities estimate that about 6 million people consume drugs and non-prescription medicines.

International cooperation in Pakistan

The Pakistan office of the UNODC collaborates at a regional level with the offices in Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in implementing the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries 2016-2019. The overall draft budget for the next four years for the implementation of this regional programme is estimated at USD 43 million.

The UNODC Pakistan, lead by Cesar Guedes, has about 60 members of staff and carries out cooperation activities throughout the country in support of the Pakistani security forces and judicial services .

It should also be noted that the Pakistani authorities and the UNODC wish to organise an international conference on drugs, bringing together dozens of countries in Islamabad at the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017.

c. Key points followed up by the mini groups

In Afghanistan

Against the background of a proliferation of priorities on the national government's agenda: security, peace negotiations, stabilising the country, managing the flows of migrants, etc., the fight against narcotics must remain a focus of action at national and international level.

An integrated approach, combining supply reduction policies, renewed commitment to the eradication campaigns, the implementation of alternative development programmes, demand reduction policies, social support for users, and education campaigns, is essential.

The role of donors and the mobilisation of funds in these areas of development are crucial.

In Pakistan

The mini Dublin Group is specifically monitoring the activities of the Anti Narcotics Force (ANF), which is responsible for tackling drug trafficking, especially across borders and internationally. It gathers all national data and exercises control over the other State agencies involved in intercepting the flow of drugs at national level. All these services are known collectively as the IATF (Inter Agency Task Force).

III. The nature of the regional and sub-regional problems

The security situation in Afghanistan is not conducive to a reduction in the production of opium, heroin and cannabis resin. The most recent data published by the UNODC show an increase in the area of farmland used to grow opium poppies and a consequent increase in opium production.

Afghanistan is also, in the short term, going to have to cope with major migratory movements which are likely to destabilise the region. Three million people are expected to come from Pakistan (1.5 million refugees and 1.5 million persons without status), while internally, the Afghan authorities are already having to deal with a huge rural exodus which is causing the country's cities to become overpopulated.

In a context of endemic poverty, reliance on family, tribal allegiances and individual loyalties provides the most protection.

The underground economy, largely fuelled by drug production and trafficking, creates major imbalances, promotes corruption, keeps criminal networks active and weakens state institutions.

Corruption affects all sectors of society.

The only thriving sector is opiate production, primarily in Taliban-controlled areas; it is also the only sector to have undergone any form of industrialisation, with the development of clandestine opium-processing laboratories. Opiate exports represent more than 10 % of Afghanistan's GDP.

The authorities in Pakistan are struggling to control the movement of opiates in hard-to-reach areas around the Pakistani-Afghan border, where terrorist and/or pro-independence groups are active (the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan and tribal areas) and there are high levels of corruption.

IV. Issues to be discussed by the Dublin Group at central level

At regional level, good coordination of initiatives must be a priority for donors. The Paris Pact serves as a framework for dialogue and the coordination of measures at both technical and political level. The mobilisation of donors in this partnership must remain stable.

In Afghanistan, major challenges remain in the political domain (governance), the economic domain (corruption) and the security domain (Taliban threat, Da'esh-affiliated individuals).

The situation in Afghanistan must remain one of the political priorities of the international community, which must ensure compliance with the commitments undertaken as part of the national strategy and the associated action plan by supporting their implementation. This key aspect of the international community's involvement was recalled at the Brussels Conference on 5 October 2016.

In Pakistan, international aid is a necessity, to provide support for the development of national strategies and also in such areas as further training, provision of equipment and operational cooperation.

Within the framework of the national anti-drug policy, the international community could provide greater support to the Pakistani authorities to help set up a programme which would include training for all actors involved in the fight against drugs (judges, judicial services, medical staff and educators).

Cooperation measures in the operational and technical domains could also be taken.

V. Recommendations and conclusions of the Regional Group

The recommendations made in the previous report remain valid. Monitoring the implementation of the regional and national UNODC action plans is a crucial element of the work of the central group and mini groups.

a. Political initiatives

In Afghanistan

The Afghan authorities must continue to be made aware of the need to combat the opium cultivation, heroin production, trafficking and corruption which are undermining the stability and development of the country and the health of its people.

The contacts made with Ms Salamat Azimi, the new Minister for Counter Narcotics, need to be maintained so as to monitor and support the progress made in the implementation of her 100-day plan and, in the longer term, the overall strategy of her ministry.

The Kabul mini group needs to support the overall approach of the Afghan anti-drugs strategy in the context of shared responsibility between producer and consumer countries, and by combining the parallel work carried out in the fight against drug trafficking, in alternative development and in the treatment of consumers. It needs to ensure the involvement of all the relevant authorities and donors so that the fight against drugs is systematically taken into account in programmes and projects.

It could help support the establishment of genuine national coordination between the relevant ministries and donors, while also ensuring coordination and providing impetus at regional level.

With regard to the Paris Pact initiative, the members of the mini Dublin Group could convey to the Afghan government the need for it to support and become engaged in this initiative, which aims to strengthen regional and international cooperation against the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan. The reservations regarding this initiative expressed recently by the Afghan authorities (particularly at the CND in March 2016) and their attempts to change its title (so as not to mention that the opiates come from Afghanistan) are counter-productive, for they run the risk of discouraging partners willing to support the Afghan government in its efforts to combat drug trafficking.

In Pakistan

The international community, in the context of Pakistan's overall strategy in the fight against drugs, could support the implementation of a training programme for all those involved in combating drug trafficking (the judiciary, police, health personnel and the education sector) and promote the application of laws compatible with international rules with regard to the fight against drug money laundering.

The international community could also develop links between the authorities, those involved in the fight against drugs in Pakistan and their counterparts, with a view to sharing expertise and experience in this area.

Strengthening operational cooperation and ensuring that it works smoothly are crucial in order to achieve the best possible results in dismantling networks and arresting international traffickers.

b. Priorities for donors

In Afghanistan

Donors need to remain committed to supporting Afghanistan in order not to undo what has taken several years to achieve.

It is important for donors to support the implementation of the government's strategy and to continue to support the country's development, as they undertook to do at the Brussels Conference.

In Pakistan

The Pakistani anti-drug agencies particularly need the support of the international community in investigations targeting the ringleaders of drug-trafficking networks, and in particular cross-border networks.

The Anti-Narcotic Force's activities need to be supported by the international community so as to develop continuous professional training for police investigation agencies and other agencies tasked with investigating and handling drug-related cases.

Lastly, the Pakistani investigative services are still greatly lacking in equipment suited to drug-related investigations, as well as equipment for field operations, including infra-red goggles, which are essential for night-time anti-drug operations (particularly in mountainous and remote areas).
