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DUBLIN GROUP REPORT FOR SOUTH WEST ASIA

MAY 2003

PREPARED BY THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, LONDON

The following report, submitted by the UK as regional chair for South West Asia, covers the work of the Mini Dublin Groups in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the period May 2002 to May 2003, as reported by the British High Commissions and Embassies in those countries.

AFGHANISTAN

General Situation

Afghanistan is likely to remain the world's largest producer of illicit opium in 2003, with some production occurring in most provinces in the country. The extent of the harvest will only become clear in the autumn when the results of the UNODC opium poppy survey currently being carried out are published.

The Afghan Government is committed to the complete elimination of poppy cultivation. The Government's National Drug Control Strategy, which was adopted on 18 May, seeks to achieve the complete elimination of opium in ten years' time, although the government aims to eliminate the crop entirely before then if at all possible. However, the Central Government's determination to pursue a resolute anti-drugs policy is hampered by the lack of sufficient financial resources to develop alternative livelihoods, as well as its inability to project its power across the whole of Afghanistan. Security problems, political instability and corruption, are preventing the extension of the rule of law into all regions of Afghanistan. The significant role poppy cultivation plays in Afghanistan's rural economy will also be an important obstacle to the Government's efforts in this field. Until such time as these issues are resolved, the ability of the Afghan government to deliver the law enforcement and development interventions foreseen under the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, will be severely restricted.

Institutional Framework

Under the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, the Counter Narcotics Directorate of the Afghan National Security Council has prime responsibility for implementing the National Drug Control Strategy, and for co-ordinating drug control activities throughout the Government, its budget and programmes.

Counter Narcotics law enforcement activities will be carried out by the Afghan National Police force under the direction of the Ministry of Interior. The Afghan border police and customs law enforcement department will also have a role in enforcing counter narcotics law. The Afghan National Directorate of Security will focus on providing counter narcotics intelligence to the law enforcement agencies. The Ministry of Defence will not normally have a role to play in counter narcotics law enforcement, but may have a role to play in providing support to drug law enforcement operations conducted by the Counter Narcotics police.

A wide range of other Afghan Ministries will have a role to play in implementing Afghanistan's National Drug Control Strategy. The Ministry of Public Health, in conjunction with other relevant Ministries, will have the lead role to play in implementing drug demand reduction policy. The Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development, together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Irrigation will also have an important role to play in the provision of alternative livelihoods to those currently engaged in poppy cultivation. The activities of most Ministries (e.g. Commerce, Planning) are likely in some way to have an impact on drug production in Afghanistan.

Production

In 2002 Afghanistan was the world's largest producer of illicit opiates, a position which became established during the course of the 1990s. In 2002 the UNODC estimated that a total of 74,000 hectares of opium poppy was cultivated, giving a total production of around 3,400 tons of opium. The provinces of Helmand and Nangarhar accounted for the majority of production (around 70% of the total), while Badakhshan, Uruzgan and Kandahar also remain significant producers.

This year, reports suggest that there has been a significant increase in the number of provinces cultivating opium. There is a clear trend towards poppy cultivation moving to more remote areas. Although this might result in more difficulties tackling the problem, it clearly shows that the ATA's commitment to fight illicit drugs has introduced uncertainty into the drugs business..

Production of opium in some provinces has been affected by the Afghan Government's eradication programme. Reports of the success of the eradication programme vary: the impact may only become known when the results of the annual opium poppy survey is published in the autumn. But its impact is unlikely to be as strong as the Governors who are carrying out the eradication programme claim.

Demand

UNODC reports suggest that Afghanistan has a growing drug abuse problem. Some drug use is traditional in certain communities, particularly in the north. But there are indications that problem drug use is increasing across the country, partly as a result of the trauma suffered by individuals exposed to over 20 years of conflict and instability. Drug problems are particularly prevalent, for example, among the Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan and Iran. As refugees return, there is a risk that they will bring their drug abuse problems with them.

Although some communities in Afghanistan are traditional users of opiates, different drug abuse patterns are noted among other sections of the population. There is an increasing incidence of intravenous drug users in Afghanistan, with most major cities citing some evidence of this problem. The abuse of legally available pharmaceutical drugs is particularly prevalent, including among women.

Afghanistan's capacity to deal with this problem is at present minimal, although there are indications that there is a growing awareness, e.g. in the Ministry of Public Health, of the severity of the problem. Some Afghan NGOs are doing a good job in providing facilities (e.g. drug treatment centres) which the government is as yet not in a position to provide.

Trafficking

Iran and Pakistan remain the main routes for trafficking drugs out of Afghanistan. Drugs trafficked through these borders are mainly targeted at markets in South Asia, the Arabian peninsula, Africa, West and East Europe, and the Middle East. But there is also evidence of increasing drug trafficking through Afghanistan's northern borders, in the main aimed at providing narcotic substances to the countries of Central Asia, and Russia. It will be essential to improve Afghan capacity to combat trafficking operations if an impact is to be made on this trade.

Afghanistan has practically no chemicals industry of its own. All precursor chemicals essential for the production of heroin are smuggled into the country via a variety of routes.

Afghanistan has no effective money laundering legislation at present. The issue of money laundering, together with counter narcotics legislation in general, is being examined under the framework of Afghanistan's judicial reform programme. Italy is lead nation on Afghan judicial reform.

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

The Afghan government is in dire need of assistance for counter narcotics activities across the board. As lead nation on Counter Narcotics, the UK is co-ordinating the delivery of international assistance to Afghanistan.

The Afghan government needs assistance to increase its capacity to deal with counter narcotics policy. Assistance should be supplied to the Counter Narcotics Directorate of the National Security Council in order for the CND to fulfil its vital role in co-ordinating government policy. Resources should also be supplied to enable the CND to play a role in the regions. Other Ministries involved in the fight against drugs also require training and capacity building assistance.

Assistance to the Afghan law enforcement authorities is being co-ordinated by Germany, as lead nation on police reform. Assistance in the form of training and equipment is required by the Afghan border police (as agency with lead responsibility for policing Afghanistan's external borders against trafficking of narcotics out of Afghanistan). Similarly, there is a requirement to deliver training and equipment to the national police force, in particular in the provinces, to carry out their counter narcotics law enforcement role. The Customs administration will also require assistance in establishing their role in counter narcotics law enforcement.

It will be essential to deliver broad-based developmental assistance to Afghanistan if Afghan farmers presently dependent upon poppy cultivation for their survival are to be given alternative, licit means of generating income. There is a need for more international donors to deliver sustainable developmental assistance, both to those areas where poppy is cultivated, and elsewhere, as a means of providing alternative employment opportunities for those currently involved in the drugs trade.

The impoverished Afghan health sector is also in need of assistance to combat Afghanistan's drug abuse problem. The increase in intravenous drug use in Afghanistan suggests that there is a risk of an increase in AIDS incidence in Afghanistan, unless steps are taken to tackle the problem soon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mini Dublin group recommends the following:

Pressure should be maintained on the Afghan government to implement counter narcotics policy as outlined in the government's own Drug Control Strategy and at the same time strongly support ATA's declarations on illicit drugs.

Donors should be urged to provide sufficient financial resources and technical assistance to enable the Government to fulfil the requirements of the Strategy in the development of licit sources of livelihood.

The international community should apply pressure more widely to encourage donors to come forward and assist Afghanistan in its fight against drugs. In particular, work should be carried out with Afghanistan's neighbours, the first line of defence against drugs trafficked out of Afghanistan, to ensure that they play a constructive role. The Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations may be a suitable vehicle for encouraging more co-operation on this topic.

Institutional development remains a key priority for the international donor community. CND staff require training and development in order for the CND to play its vital co-ordinating role in government. Resources are required to enable the CND to perform a role in the regions. Other Ministries involved in the fight against drugs require training and capacity building in order to increase the positive role they can play. Significant inputs will be required in all manner of areas to enhance the capacity of the Afghan national police and border police effectively to fulfil their leading counter narcotics law enforcement role. The international community should encourage the Government finally to dismantle the State High Commission for Drugs Control.

More sustainable development assistance is required in a wide range of sectors to enable the creation of employment opportunities in the licit sphere. The Afghan health sector will require significant injections of funds and technical assistance if it is to have an impact on addressing demand side issues.

BANGLADESH

General Situation.

There are no accurate figures available for the number of drug users. But Phensidyl (an addictive cough syrup with a very high Codeine content) remains the main drug of abuse. Heroin and cannabis are also available. Drugs issues are not high on the agenda of the country, but occasional large seizures and significant police raids receive media coverage. On 21 May 2003, 3 passengers arriving from Karachi, via Dubai, carrying 14kg of heroin were detained at the international airport in Dhaka. In October 2002 2kg of heroin, also from Karachi, was seized at the airport.

Institutional Framework

Adequate legislation is in place under the Narcotics Control Act. Policy is driven by the Narcotics Control Board. Counter drugs work is co-ordinated by the Department of Narcotics Control (but this is under-resourced and has limited impact). The police and customs play only a minor role in disrupting the drugs trade. Corruption is widespread (senior personnel at the Department of Narcotics Control were removed from office in the first half of 2003; there are unconfirmed media reports that this followed allegations of corruption). However, small amounts of drugs are seized every month.

Production

Small amounts of cannabis (for local use) and opium are grown in the country.

Demand

Drug use is widely believed to be increasing. The poor law and order situation and unemployment are all contributory factors. It is thought that there is an increasing use of illicit drugs among young people from the middle and the upper middle class. However, a lack of data means it is not possible to make an accurate assessment.

There is little information available on the use of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), but Indian security forces recently intercepted a shipment of Ephedrine thought to be destined for Bangladesh. There is some NGO work in relation to drug use by low-income groups (rickshaw or van pullers/day labourers, unemployed youths, floating prostitutes etc). But this is not a main development theme.

Trafficking

There is some evidence that Bangladesh is increasingly being used as a transit country for heroin to Europe (In the UK there have been 7 seizures of heroin contained in fresh vegetables from Dhaka. The UK authorities believe there have been approximately 70 such successful imports, averaging 3kg each). It is possible that commercial quantities of heroin from Burma are being sent by sea, via the Bay of Bengal, and distributed into fishing vessels for transit through Bangladesh. It is likely that the 14kg heroin seized recently (see above) was destined for onward distribution. It is possible that this, and the 2kg seized in 2002, only represent a small percentage of the heroin passing through the country.

Money Laundering

Attempts have been made to investigate a number of alleged money laundering cases with little success. It is possible that Bangladesh is an attractive country for money laundering given the weak judicial system and widespread corruption. Bangladesh adopted in February 2002 the "Money Laundering Prevention Bill". The economic press in Bangladesh saw this as insufficient to tackle the main problems linked to money laundering in the country. The central bank, with line ministries, has set up a task force on money laundering. 42 suspicious transactions have so far been notified to this, but to date it appears that no charges have been made in relation to these cases. Efforts in regard to money laundering are apparently having some success in encouraging overseas workers to send remittances back to Bangladesh through official channels, rather than through the illegal "hundi" network (but this is still widely used).

Precursors

Efforts are made to tightly control precursors, but these may not be entirely effective. Hydrochloric and sulphuric acid are produced commercially; other precursors are imported legally for commercial use. The Department of Narcotics Control does not think these are used for in country drug production. Bangladesh is a beneficiary of the EC-UNODC project “Precursor Control in the SAARC Region”. In February 2002, a training workshop for members of law enforcement agencies was jointly organised in Dhaka by the UNODC and the Bangladeshi Department of Narcotics Control under that project.

External Assistance

The Department of Narcotics Control has not produced details of assistance needed, but it is likely they would welcome training and or equipment. They have said they would welcome equipment / training for drug detection at airports, and would also welcome supplies of field drug testing kits. They also see a need for assistance in developing the current limited provision of drug detoxification centres.

Only the US are providing significant assistance to Bangladesh in this area. They have provided some equipment for a drug analysis laboratory, which is functioning adequately, and have now signed a Letter of Agreement with the government to provide about \$500,000 worth of anti-narcotics equipment and training, beginning this year. This agreement calls for an extensive assessment of the national police force, to include its narcotics interdiction component, which is scheduled to occur in June.

Recommendations

The Government of Bangladesh should be encouraged to continue efforts to tackle drug issues.

INDIA

Institutional Framework

Political will to conduct a resolute anti-drugs policy

The Government of India (GoI) anti-drug authorities does a good job with the resources available to them. However, those resources are scarce, bureaucracy is heavy and priorities sometimes differ from the interests of the international community (e.g. mandrax seizure appeared to be a higher priority than stopping heroin – see “trafficking issues - routing” below). The current set-up lacks the capacity for a long-term enquiry (though there were indications that the CBN might be considering expansion).

Movement of NCB from Finance Ministry to Home Ministry

The expected move of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) from the Finance Ministry to the Home Ministry happened in April 2003. The impact is not yet clear. There are no plans for the CBN to similarly move from Finance to Home.

Co-operation between Indian agencies

There is little evidence available to the MDG to indicate that Indian inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination on counter narcotics investigations have improved since last year.

Production

Production of Indian licit opium crop

Yield figures for this year's licit opium poppy crop were not yet available at the time of the MDG meeting. The Central Bureau for Narcotics (CBN) expected a drop as compared to last year due to lack of rainfall. The minimum qualifying yield in 02/03 was 53kgs per hectare in Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Rajasthan (both as for last year) and 47kgs in Uttar Pradesh (UP) (2kgs up on last year).

Diversion

Authorities continue to claim publicly that diversion of the licit opium crop is minimal. The CBN claim that higher average yields backed this up and that satellite imagery had shown little deviation.

Alternative growing methods

The International Narcotics Control Board recently visited India. One of their recommendations was that a technical study be carried out to compare the poppy straw production method (used in licit production elsewhere) and the lancing production method (used in India). India continues to maintain that the lancing method holds a number of benefits, though the MDG noted that there were indications that Indian drug authorities were now becoming more open to examining other methods. The study is likely to take several years.

Socio-economic factors

About 100,000 licences to grow opium were issued in 2002/03. Most licences went to family heads, and each family had about 6 to 7 people working on the opium fields. Casual workers were also employed during crop growing and harvesting time. Therefore possibly over 1 million people in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and (to a lesser degree) Rajasthan largely depend on opium farming to earn a living. That said, opium farmers grow many other crops and their seasonal workers generally work for less than a month a year on the opium crop, migrating to other areas when other agricultural labour becomes available.

Other figures

In 2001/02, the area licenced was 22,847 hectares and the area harvested 18,447 (the ratio of harvesting to licences was up on the year before). The number of villages licensed in 01/02 was 5,083, of which 4,832 harvested (also a relative increase on the previous year). The average yield in 01/02 was 57.19kgs per hectare (up on 55.02kgs in 00/01, continuing a rising trend in recent years).

Illicit poppy cultivation

The CBN has a special cell in Assam (North East India) which targets illicit opium production. The MDG also heard reports this year of illicit opium crops in southern India and in Jammu & Kashmir. The CBN clarified that it only had an eradication mandate in northern India.

Pharmaceutical drugs

The MDG expressed concern about controls in the pharmaceutical drugs industry.

Demand

A summary report of UNODC's project "National Survey on Extent, Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse in India" is attached with this record.

Trafficking

Opium/heroin/chemical precursors trafficking

Full seizure figures for 2002 were not available from the NCB for the MDG meeting. The US State Department provided the following seizure figures based on provisional GoI reports for the period between November 2001 and October 2002 inclusive:

Heroin – 636 kilograms

Opium – 1,403 kilograms (down from 2,633 kilograms the previous year)

Methalqualone (mandrax) – 11,130 kilograms (a new high)

ATS

In May 2003 a 24kg consignment of ephedrine hydrochloride, the main raw material for manufacturing ATS, was seized in Kolkata. This led to press speculation that the manufacture of ATS might be shifting from Burma to North Eastern India. The MDG thought that it was too early to reach this conclusion but will continue to monitor developments in this area.

Arrests

The US State Department reported that up to and including October 2002, 4,747 persons, including 55 foreigners, had been arrested for drug-related offences, a figure significantly down from 13,333 in 2001.

Routing

The MDG has concerns that the situation in Afghanistan and other factors might change routes used for trafficking. A number of countries are looking at this closely. For example, France hosted a ministerial conference on this on 21 and 22 May, to which India was invited.

Licit/illicit price differentials

The average cost per kg of licit opium is about Rps800 to Rps1,000 (rising to a high of Rps1,600). On the illicit market the average price is between Rp10-20,000.

Money laundering

India's new money laundering legislation has just been passed, after a delay of many years. It has not yet been examined by MDG members, but is believed to lack sufficient measures to tackle traditional forms of money laundering (e.g. hawala).

MDG Member Activity

The following bilateral activity was reported.

USA

INL's Joint Licit Opium Poppy Survey (JLOPS) was being run for a second year following flawed results last year. The State Department was also providing some assistance with vehicles for the NCB. Substantial funds were available for further assistance, but to date Indian agencies had not availed of them.

On the enforcement side, the DEA continued to work closely with Indian officials.

Italy

Italy had contributed to UNODC's demand reduction programmes in India, including for a project in the North East (Manipur/Nagaland)

Canada

Canada had plans for technical support and training, but India had not yet responded. Continued law enforcement work.

UK

Plans for a container profiling survey in the region were moving forward. Further passenger profiling training was also in the pipeline.

Continued law enforcement work.

Sweden

A harm reduction programme in the North East (Nagaland, Assam, Manipur) which would soon expand to the other 4 north-eastern states.

France

Continued law enforcement work.

Fact-finding visits to France in the pipeline.

Australia

Ausaid is likely to fund a UNODC project commencing later this year focused on strengthening the capability of authorities in the North East to respond effectively to HIV/AIDS infection in the drug user population. The Australian Federal Police office in Islamabad has offered training assistance to the Indian law enforcement agencies during the past year but their ability to participate had been hampered by developments in India's relationship with Pakistan.

European Commission

Support for UNODC programmes.

Germany

Continued law enforcement work.

German NGOs also worked on harm reduction projects in the North East.

UNODC

Their mandate now also includes issues other than drugs. On drugs, UNODC continue to work on their household survey project, demand reduction programmes (including in North East India), capacity building (particularly HIV/AIDs related), and their precursor project.

They are also working on possible new projects, including on money laundering, now that India has new legislation (e.g. assistance with implementation).

External Assistance

UNODC are aware that the Ministry of Justice & Social Empowerment has ideas relating to work in the North East linked to demand reduction.

The UNODC had hoped for support for an NCB law enforcement project, but no donors had come forward.

Possible follow-up on implementation of the new money laundering legislation.

Recommendations

Licit opium diversion

The Indian government should be encouraged to acknowledge the principle that diversion from the licit poppy crop is taking place, the scale of the problem and the need to address it. MDG members should be prepared to assist India in addressing this issue.

Precursor controls

There should be continued effort to encourage precursor control programmes, particularly in light of India's large chemical and pharmaceutical industry.

Drug signature project

Dialogue with the Indian authorities is needed to create a mechanism to allow drug samples to leave the country for signature analysis, so as to assist the international mapping effort. This need not necessarily require a change in Indian legislation if already covered under UN Conventions.

Co-ordination between agencies

India should be encouraged to consider the benefits of a co-ordinated "task-force" approach for agencies.

Bilateral assistance

The MDG hopes that India will respond to substantial offers of bilateral assistance that are currently available.

IRAN

General Situation

Iran has maintained high levels of commitment in their struggle against the flood of illegal narcotics, both domestically and regionally.

While a key element of their activities remains preventing the influx of illegal narcotics from Afghanistan, they now clearly recognise the dangers posed by the demands of their own domestic consumption, and the focus of their effort has shifted as a result. The old out-and-out physical struggle against the influx of drugs from Afghanistan has given way to a more balanced range of activities. There is now a wide perception that demand issues should be addressed with equal vigour, including the effects of a large scale domestic consumption (such as HIV/AIDS and overcrowded prisons). There has also been a realisation that an increased effort to strengthen the legislative framework (including a money-laundering bill to help keep traffickers at bay) is also needed.

However, the profile of the narcotics issue has lowered over the year, mainly due to the switch of the regional and international spotlight from Afghanistan (where stemming the drugs flow is a major part of both Iran's and the international community's efforts to build a new Afghanistan) to Iraq. The significant reshuffle of senior management in the lead government anti-narcotic institution, Drug Control HQ (DCHQ), has also contributed (possibly temporarily) to a reduction in the dynamism of the national anti-narcotics policy.

A major positive development was the Iranian government's formal agreement to the posting of DLOs from foreign governments. This was due in part to pressure from the MDG. Once there, DLOs will be well placed to initiate bilateral assistance projects with Iran, which in turn should help to make an impact on supply reduction from Afghanistan.

Institutional Framework

As reported in January, Ali Hashemi was appointed as the new secretary-general of DCHQ, replacing General Fallah. Unfortunately, the subsequent shake-up has resulted in some confusion over where individual responsibilities lie in DCHQ. Other, more active parties dealing in issues with a drugs angle have emerged: the Judiciary with proposals of legislative changes and legal development; the Ministry of Health with drug treatment and HIV/AIDS programmes; and the Prisons Organisation with internal treatment and rehabilitation centres. DCHQ's budget allocation was not increased this year; for the second year in a row they received USD 80 million despite having bid for much more.

Production

UNODC report that there is still no significant licit or illicit cultivation of narcotic plants, nor manufacture of illicit drugs, in Iran. There was one incident reported of the destruction of a small field of poppies (in Kazeroun, Fars province), but much publicity surrounded the decisive action taken by the authorities to stamp it out.

Demand

According to the preliminary findings of an unreleased UNODC/Government of Iran epidemiological study leaked to the Iranian press by the Ministry of Health, some 7.4 million Iranians are regular narcotics users. Of these, 3.6 million are said to use pharmaceutical drugs (tranquillisers, barbiturates), and 3.7 million opiates. According to the same survey, hard core opiate users number 1.2 million, with some 600,000 IVD (intravenous drug) users (an increase of almost 50% on last year).

The ATS/Synthetics market in Iran is not large – generally consumers are the rich youth, a small section of society – but numbers are rising indicating the emergence of a more sophisticated market. Methamphetamine tablets are now sold alongside tickets to illegal rave parties in Tehran. Ecstasy is also now appearing on the market in Tehran, at prices competitive with Europe.

UNODC deduce that this means it is either being produced nearby or being brought from the Far East where production is cheaper, or the traffickers are artificially reducing the price in order to create demand. There has also been an increase in hashish usage for social recreation.

Drug related deaths in Iran are rising: in 2001 there were 2,345 in total, whereas in 2002 there were 2,989. This is attributed to an increase in the number of injectors, who use heroin, synthetic heroin and opium residue (all of which tend to be poor quality). An additionally worrying result of an increase in injectors is the spread of HIV – statistics are variable but there is now a clear increase of HIV carriers within society year on year, 70% of them confirmed intravenous drug users. However, a positive development is the more open official recognition of the HIV/AIDS problem – whereas two years ago official reports would deny any mention of it, now it is an openly debated issue with many officially supported initiatives to combat the problem. President Khatami has personally involved himself in the HIV/AIDS campaign.

Recently the government announced a pilot programme involving methadone distribution to the addict population – another positive step. UNODC suggest this initiative is a result of increasing interaction between international experts and domestic demand reduction practitioners.

There are now over 100 government out-patient treatment centres in Iran and numerous private and NGO treatment centres, with numbers continually increasing. The Prisons Organisation now runs treatment clinics in most of its prisons. A total of 8 ‘triangular’ clinics, run by NGOs with governmental support, have opened nation-wide. These clinics provide treatment for drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. WHO has adopted the model as global best practice in this field.

Trafficking

The latest official Anti Narcotic Police figures on seizures for 2002 are:

(all figures in kg)

Opium:	72,856 (decrease of 8.6% on 2001)
Morphine:	9,521 (approximately the same as 2001)
Heroin:	3,977 (approximately the same as 2001)
Hashish:	64,166 (increase of 39% on 2001)
Others:	873 (decrease of 33.6% on 2001)
TOTAL:	151,393 kg (8.3% greater than 2001)

Latest analysis of seizures from the eastern border of Iran indicate a likely resurgence of opiates being smuggled into Iran over the last few months. This is likely to be a result of traders flooding the market with their old stocks in preparation for the new harvest in Afghanistan. However, reflecting the normal lag between production and market, prices in Tehran remained level for some time before only very recently beginning to drop as expected by the market excess. Combined with the increasing efficiency of Iranian LEF, the relatively high market value of the opiates has resulted in traffickers increasingly using human mules (who carry less so there is less of a loss if they are caught compared to a large convoy).

The total number of Iranian LE officials killed over the last 10 years is now 3,250. But while the number of arrests and seizures has remained approximately the same each year, the number of casualties suffered by the Iranian LE forces has reduced significantly. The number of officers killed in 2002 was 67, compared with 212 in 1999 when the NOROUZ project started. UNODC suggest this is an indicator of the effectiveness of foreign technical co-operation with Iran.

Afghanistan

Iran has remained focused on the Afghan problem, actively looking for ways with which to engage with the Transitional Authority in Afghanistan and the international community to eliminate drugs. They work bilaterally, with other nations and Afghanistan trilaterally or with UNODC on Afghan-related projects. DCHQ have developed a regular dialogue with the lead institute for drug control in Afghanistan, the National Security Council, and have made several helpful suggestions to the UK, lead nation on narcotics issues in Afghanistan. Projects include a bilateral initiative to help build 25 border posts for Afghan border guards, direct financial help for the Afghan Counter Narcotics Department and a trilateral training programme for Afghan border police with the UK. Their priority remains preventing Afghan-originating drugs from ever reaching Iran. This includes in-country eradication of the current crop if possible. The effort is split between DCHQ, Ministry of Agriculture, Anti-Narcotics police and the Afghan Reconstruction Unit (led by the MFA). The Iranian authorities are concerned that the expected bumper crop in Afghanistan this year, combined with a worrying increase in Pakistani narcotics production, will impact greater than ever on them.

Money Laundering

In late May 2003, UNODC are hosting a high-profile conference in Shiraz in association with DCHQ and the Iranian Judiciary to sensitise Iranian MPs to the benefits of anti-money laundering legislation. Mini-Dublin Group and regional Ambassadors have been invited. The preparatory work on drafting a new bill has already been carried out by the Judiciary and UNODC, and gained support from the Majles Judicial Commission.

NOROUZ

Subject to funding, UNODC expect to finish the first phase of NOROUZ in 2003-2004. Three of the elements of the first phase are already fully funded, with only CIRUS (the Law Enforcement element) outstanding. Negotiations between UNODC and the Iranian Government on the design of a second phase of NOROUZ (to take place from 2004 to 2008) have already started. This will essentially be a follow-on from the successful first phase, but with different balance in funding.

The Law Enforcement element (CIRUS) will continue with emphasis on enhancing the sniffer dog capability, encouraging more intelligence exchange with neighbouring countries and international co-operation in general (budget around USD 1-2 million).

The Demand Reduction element (DARIUS) will be the largest part, continuing the successful programmes started by NOROUZ 1 (budget around USD 3-5 million).

The Primary Prevention programme (PERSEPOLIS) will have a widened scope and will also focus on support for NGOs and other local initiatives.

In addition to NOROUZ 2, UNODC plan to launch a new programme (JUST) addressing issues not just restricted to drug crime, including: a) criminal prevention - refining and reviewing national criminal policy leading to new criminal laws (with the judiciary); b) increased support for anti-money laundering activities; c) technical input to judicial modernisation (e.g. the computerisation of the court system) and; d) the evaluation of Iranian projects in prison rehabilitation.

External Assistance

UNODC's priorities for funding still consist of the CIRUS element of NOROUZ phase 1. Their shortfall has dropped from \$2 million to \$1.3 million since last year's report, but this funding is necessary to complete their project successfully. Preliminary fund raising for NOROUZ 2 and JUST will be initiated by UNODC centrally in Vienna towards the end of 2003.

Domestically, the MDG needs to encourage the Iranian authorities to share their anti-narcotics strategy (latest version almost finalised) in order to help members agree with them areas for bilateral or multilateral assistance.

Iran needs still more encouragement to integrate fully into the international anti-narcotics community. Their continued involvement in Afghanistan-related projects and contribution to regional anti-narcotics activities should be encouraged, and their experience used.

Recommendations

That CDG members consider contributing UNODC's shortfall to complete the NOROUZ project, and factor in budgetary planning for NOROUZ 2 and JUST.

That DLOs are appointed by as many MDG members as possible, and bilateral co-operation is geared up as a result.

That the CDG continues to incorporate Iran's ideas and capabilities on tackling the narcotics problem into their regional strategies for Afghanistan.

NEPAL

Institutional Framework

New legislation to strengthen the authorities' ability to combat the drugs trade is in the drafting stage, but given current political instability, there is no indication that this will be passed quickly. The government has decided to establish a Department of Drug Control. Previously this responsibility was with the Home Ministry and is now recognised as an increased priority.

Production

Cannabis is native to Nepal and although the government is making efforts to eradicate its growth, a lack of resources and the poor security situation mean that cultivation is rising.

Opium cultivation in Nepal is growing, but from a low base, and mainly destined for consumption within the region

Demand

There are an estimated 50,000 (unspecified) drug users. Intravenous drug use is increasing, with a consequent rise in the incidence of HIV/AIDS. As part of a regional UNDCP HIV/AIDS initiative a study will be conducted on intravenous drug use in Nepal. The Home Ministry has established a drugs awareness project aimed at school children. There is growing concern about use of synthetic drugs.

Trafficking

Seizures of and arrests related to cannabis have decreased over the last year, most probably because the attention of the Nepalese security forces has been diverted to higher priorities, including, most notably, combating the Maoist insurgency

Heroin trafficking through or directed from Nepal is a growing problem, with evidence to suggest there are new routes by which South West Asian heroin is reaching markets in developed countries. There are reported to be five heroin-trafficking syndicates operating in Nepal which employ not only Nepalese citizens as couriers, but also growing numbers of foreign citizens, including, for example, citizens of the United Kingdom and Australia. Evidence from intelligence suggests that some South West Asian heroin reach the United Kingdom through these syndicates; evidence from seizures confirms it is reaching the United States via this route. Other trafficking routes have been traced to Cambodia and Macao, but the ultimate destination is unknown

Hashish is still trafficked on conventional, known routes, including via India and China

There is new evidence of significant hashish trafficking from Nepal to Japan, including the recent arrest of three members of Japanese organised crime syndicates in Nepal and the seizure in Japan of the largest ever quantity of hashish in a move related to the earlier arrest of a trafficker in Nepal.

External Assistance

Mr Poudyal of the Home Ministry reported to the MDG that the Government of Nepal was encountering significant difficulties in tackling the problem of production and consumption of illegal drugs in Nepal because of lack of resources. Cultivation of cannabis in Nepal was easy, and in some areas a traditional crop. Demand for cannabis and opium and its derivatives in neighbouring and foreign markets were growing and would stimulate supply. There was a real risk that Nepal could become a significant source of supply, but the government lacked the resources to tackle the problem seriously.

UNODC had given some assistance (e.g. to assist in the drafting of pre-cursor control legislation), but Mr Poudya appealed to members of the Dublin Group to consider ways in which they might provide further assistance, both bilaterally and through multilateral agencies.

PAKISTAN

General Situation

The Government of Pakistan remains committed to following a comprehensive and resolute anti-drugs policy.

Pakistan's drug problem needs to be looked at in both a national and regional perspective. Nationally, they have had an increase in poppy cultivation this year, they have an enormous drug addict population, and they have laws that need to be tightened to target the drug lords more directly.

Regionally they need to work with their neighbours, especially Afghanistan and Iran, sharing information and expertise. Although the individual countries have their own specific problems, it is a regional problem and as such requires a regional solution. There has to be a cohesive and like-minded approach by all countries throughout the region.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The policy framework is provided by the Drug Abuse Control Master Plan (1998-2003) prepared in collaboration with UNODC. The Narcotics Control Division of the Interior Ministry leads on implementing the policy. The police and the Anti Narcotic Force (ANF) are the principal law enforcement agencies involved, while Customs and Excise and the Frontier Corps (Baluchistan and NWFP) also play a substantial role

There are many laws in place to combat the production, consumption and trafficking of drugs in Pakistan, the keys ones being;

- The Anti-Narcotics Force Act, 1997
- The Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997
- Dangerous Drug Act, 1930

- Drugs Act, 1976
- Opium Act, 1878, and consequent Opium Rules Act of 1956
- The Hadood Ordinance, 1979
- The Customs Act, 1969

In addition to these existing laws the Government of Pakistan has to make efforts to tighten its legal framework further. Money Laundering and Conspiracy Laws need to be put in place quickly. Due to the lack of legislation in these areas arrests, and more importantly convictions, are difficult to make.

Production

Measures remain in place to eradicate opium production. In 2001 Pakistan was poppy free, but recently production has been on the increase. According to UNODC, 2002 saw 1400 hectares of poppy cultivation. The figures for this year are around 4000-5000 hectares prior to eradication. A combination of factors may have led to the resurgence in poppy cultivation including high price for opium, favourable climatic conditions, availability of expertise in poppy production (including the expertise of Afghans who are reportedly involved in poppy production in Baluchistan and in some other areas). Moreover, many of the areas where poppy has been cultivated are difficult to access and are amongst the poorest in Pakistan. It is also thought that cultivation is being used as a political tool, as generally, where there is cultivation there are development programmes. It may be for this reason that cultivation has appeared in 'non traditional' areas this year.

DEMAND

Drug abuse, in particular heroin and hashish is widespread in Pakistan. The results of a national drug abuse assessment jointly undertaken by UNODC and the Government of Pakistan in 2000 estimates the number of chronic heroin abusers at 500,000, with a massive 77% of users reportedly using the drug on a daily basis (ANF source). Trends suggest a shift from inhaling and smoking heroin to intravenous injection of drugs, bearing the risk of an HIV/AIDS epidemic and the spread of other blood borne diseases.

In 2000, about 15% of drug users injected drugs, up from 2% in 1993 and 0% in 1988. The majority of intravenous heroin users are located in Karachi and Lahore. The most commonly used drug in Pakistan is cannabis; it can be consumed in a number of forms, e.g. charas, marijuana.

There is no coordination within central Government on how to cope with drug addicts. Drug addiction centres are few in number and as such only a small number of addicts receive any treatment. Most treatment centres in the country are run through NGOs with donor funding. UNODC is supporting a network of 17 drug treatment centres within the NGO and Government sector to provide quality treatment and rehabilitation for drug addicts. In addition, UNODC in cooperation with UNAIDS have established two drop-in centres for injecting drug users in Karachi to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other blood borne diseases. An in-depth evaluation of UNODC's drug demand reduction activities is planned towards the end of 2003 on the basis of which an increase of activities will be considered.

A further problem that the Government of Pakistan has in this area is the number of drug addicts addicted to pharmaceutical drugs. Pharmacies in Pakistan do not have to be registered and are unregulated. Any prescribed drug can be sold over the counter. The Group agreed that it was important the Government of Pakistan enforced regulations and laws on pharmacies throughout the country.

TRAFFICKING

The ANF figures record seizures by all law enforcement agencies in Pakistan (to the nearest kilogram). The figures for the last four years are as follows:

	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1999</i>
OPIUM	2,678	5,175	8,927	16,320
HEROIN	12,691	8,755	9,495	4,973
HASHISH	85,486	75,164	129,833	81,458

Opium seizures have been in decline since 1999, when seizures peaked at 16,320kgs. This coincided with the largest harvest of opium in Afghanistan over the four year period 1999-2002, 4,600 metric tonnes (UNODC source). The figure for this year is 2,678kgs with the Afghan harvest increasing for the first time in two years, 3,400 metric tonnes (3,300mt in 2000 and 185mt in 2001). As opium seizures have decreased, heroin seizures have increased, initiated by a 90% increase between 1999 and 2000. The figures have remained high in the intervening years. The majority of opiate seizures continue to be made in the Baluchistan province. There are no separate figures for morphine seizures as, up until last year, the ANF included these in the heroin seizure figure.

No acetic anhydride was seized in Pakistan in 2002. (ANF source)

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE AND ISLAMABAD GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Press the Government of Pakistan to conduct a thorough assessment of the Drugs Control Master Plan and drug issues in order to draw lessons from the current Drug Control Master Plan (1998-2003);

Support the Government of Pakistan in preparing a new Drugs Control Master Plan - The donor community could assist with coordination of the Plan and encouraging the Government to provide the resources to make the Plan achievable. The Islamabad Group recommends that ANF personnel should, on the whole, be permanent and not be rotated every few years as current practice dictates;

The Group recommends that there is more inter-agency co-operation and sharing of information between relevant departments and organisations, i.e. ANF, Frontier Corps, Ministry of Interior and Federal Investigation Authority (FIA). MDG members should co-ordinate to encourage this;

Support the Government of Pakistan in its programme to curb the misuse of drugs through members' development ministries and also encourage continued support from other NGOs, e.g. ADB programmes;

Press the Government of Pakistan for speedy approval of anti-money laundering and conspiracy legislation. Once this is implemented donors can help the Government of Pakistan by giving assistance through legal and police assistance programmes. This should include training on the different Dublin Group countries' legal systems;

Continued coordination by donors to avoid duplication of bilateral efforts of operations and/or activities;

Pakistan should be encouraged towards more co-operation and co-ordination with its neighbours (Iran and Afghanistan) in order to tackle the drug problem;

The Group recommends that lobbying on drug related matters should be taken up by Ambassadors and also included in ministerial briefs;

The Group recommends offering continued support to the Government of Pakistan in reducing production, transit, supply and misuse of drugs.

SRI LANKA

Production

Opium poppy is not cultivated in Sri Lanka and there is no evidence of any processing of opiates. Cannabis is grown in significant quantities and is thought to be exported to Europe.

Demand

Sri Lanka has a comparatively modest but increasing drug problem. UNODC estimate that 0.3% of the adult population use opiates and concern is rising about the use of heroin, particularly outside Colombo. There are believed to be some 50,000 regular users of heroin. The government has a nation-wide demand reduction and drug abuse education campaign.

Trafficking

The majority of heroin enters from India, either by air from Chennai or by sea from South India. A UK study into likely transshipment, in 2002, found that the annual quantity of heroin smuggled into Sri Lanka exceeds the amount needed to meet domestic use by at least 3,000kgs. They found little evidence to indicate where the excess drugs are destined. The study recommended some technical assistance to the Sri Lankan law enforcement agencies. A container profiling training course has already taken place with Sri Lankan Customs officials. India and Sri Lanka hold operational-level talks in order to coordinate efforts against trafficking, but indications are that actual co-operation between the two customs organisations is limited.

The Police Narcotics Bureau seized 102.22kg of heroin in 2001, up from 94.15kg in 2000. In 2001 77 tonnes of cannabis was seized, up from 37.5 tonnes in 2000. 2002 figures are not yet available.

Money Laundering

There is no evidence of large scale money laundering in Sri Lanka. There is currently no legislation against money laundering although this is in the pipeline.

Precursors

Sri Lanka is not thought to be a producer of precursors.

Work of Mini Dublin Group

There have been no meetings of the MDG since February 2001. The MDG in Colombo operates a watching brief only.

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