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**'I/A' ITEM NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council  
Subject: Council Conclusions on Alternative Development: "Towards a new Understanding of Alternative Development and Related Development-centered Drug Policy Interventions - Contributing to the Implementation of UNGASS 2016 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals"

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1. One of the objectives of the European Union Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 is to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the EU and third countries and international organisations on drug issues.
2. The European Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020 provides specific actions to reach this objective, including:
  - to ensure that the policy priorities and the balance between demand and supply reduction are well reflected in policy options and in the programming, implementation and monitoring of external assistance, through projects involving notably alternative development measures; and
  - to promote and implement the EU approach to alternative development in cooperation with third countries.

3. The draft Council Conclusions on alternative development aim at supporting these actions. In these Conclusions, alternative development is considered as an important strategy to address the underlying root causes of illicit drug economies through an integrated approach.
4. The draft Council Conclusions were presented and examined during the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG) at its meetings on 5 July, 18-19 September and on 19 October 2018, where the amended text was endorsed by the working party.
5. Consequently, COREPER is invited to adopt the text of the draft Conclusions as set out in annex and to submit it to the Council for adoption.

**Draft Council Conclusions**

**"Towards a new understanding of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions – Contributing to the implementation of UNGASS 2016 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals"**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- the *European Union Approach on Alternative Development 2006*<sup>1</sup>, the *European Union Drugs Strategy 2013-2020*<sup>2</sup> and the *European Union Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020*<sup>3</sup>;
- the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development 2013*<sup>4</sup> and the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND);
- the *Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) 2016*;

REFERRING to the European Union Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and the European Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020, which are based on respect for human rights and human dignity and compliance with international conventions and which state that the EU is to promote and implement the EU approach on alternative development in cooperation with third countries, taking into account human rights, human security, gender aspects and specific framework conditions;

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<sup>1</sup> 9597/06 CORDROGUE 44.

<sup>2</sup> 17547/12 JAI 901 CORDROGUE 101 SAN 324 JAIEX 124.

<sup>3</sup> 9960/17 CORDROGUE 77 SAN 233 ENFOPOL 289 RELEX 489 COSI 125 COAFR 162 COASI 68 COEST 122 COLAC 48 COWEB 69 CONUN 134 COHOM 73 COSCE 5 DROIPEN 82 UD 143.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Drug\\_Resolutions/2010-2019/2013/A\\_RES\\_68\\_196.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Drug_Resolutions/2010-2019/2013/A_RES_68_196.pdf)

UNDERLINING that alternative development is part of the integrated, balanced and evidence-based EU approach on drugs;

WELCOMING the increasing recognition of a development pillar in the efforts to control international drug supply, reflected notably in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document – Chapter VII;

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets 3.5 'Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol' and 16 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels';

ACKNOWLEDGING the guiding character of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the design and implementation of alternative development and related development- centred drug policy interventions, and the need to better align the United Nations drug control system with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

REITERATING our commitment to the principles of common and shared responsibility and of an integrated and balanced approach in addressing the world drug problem;

RECOGNISING that the internationally agreed definition of alternative development set out in the 1998 UNGASS Action Plan on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development<sup>5</sup> has evolved into a more integrative approach to development, as reflected in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document – Chapter VII;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/documents/alternative-development/UNGASSActionPlanAD.pdf>

ACKNOWLEDGING in this respect that the implementation of the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the principle of 'ensuring that no one is left behind' at the global level, and, at the same time, underlining that alternative development programmes aim to improve livelihood opportunities and alleviate poverty, and thus contribute to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;

UNDERLINING the leading role of the European Union and its Member States in the promotion of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions in the framework of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and related international fora;

WELCOMING the leading role of the European Union and its Member States in the alignment of alternative development with related development-centred drug policy interventions as well as overarching development strategies and sectoral policies, such as the promotion of human rights in drug policy; poverty alleviation; rural development and food security; access to land and land rights; environmental protection and climate change; peaceful settlement of armed conflict and security; the promotion of the rule of law and good governance; and the promotion of gender equality;

WELCOMING the promotion of the alternative development approach within the framework of the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs and the EU-funded COPOLAD cooperation programme, including the exchange of best practices and technical expertise as well as peer-to-peer learning;

WELCOMING the ongoing engagement of the European Commission in the funding and implementation of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions in several source countries of illicit crops, in compliance with the universally acknowledged principle of shared responsibility in international drug control;

UNDERLINING the leading role of the European Union and its Member States in the funding and implementation of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions;

RECOGNISING the growing relevance of development-oriented drug policies in the international debate on addressing the world drug problem;

REAFFIRMING that, as outlined in the European Union Drugs Strategy 2013-2020, alternative development programmes

- are non-conditional, non-discriminatory and, if eradication is scheduled, properly sequenced, and that forced eradication should be pursued only when ground conditions ensure that small-scale farmers have had access to alternative livelihoods for a sufficient time period;
- set realistic rural-development-related objectives and indicators for success, ensuring ownership among target communities;
- support local development, while considering interactions with factors such as human security, governance, violence, human rights, development, health, education and food security.

REITERATING that alternative development is a long-term strategy based on a comprehensive approach to rural development, which seeks to put in place the foundations for sustainable livelihoods and independence from illicit drug crop cultivation in the long term;

RECOGNISING that alternative development needs to include the sustainable use of natural resources as well as the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

STRESSING that alternative development programmes should involve local communities and relevant organisations, including producers' associations, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such programmes, should promote community cohesion, and should at the same time contribute to the strengthening of relevant government institutions at regional, national and local level;

REITERATING that alternative development programmes should promote partnerships and innovative cooperation initiatives with the private sector, civil society and international financial institutions, and that these stakeholders should also be involved in the development of alternative development programmes;

RECOGNISING that successful alternative development initiatives require adequate strategies to integrate their beneficiaries into inclusive and sustainable value chains in order to gain market access for goods and services and establish sustainable and legal sources of income;

REITERATING that alternative development programmes should promote gender equality and ensure that both men and women benefit equally from them, including through the promotion of employment opportunities, improved infrastructure and basic public services, and access to land and legal land titles;

WELCOMING the increasing number of states which support a development-oriented approach to addressing the world drug problem, including by addressing socioeconomic issues and acknowledging their relevance in the fields of drug trafficking and urban drug markets, as reflected in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document – Chapter VII;

NOTING WITH CONCERN the prevailing use of repressive measures in dealing with illicit drug crop cultivation in some drug source countries, such as forced and improperly sequenced eradication measures, which violate the human rights of small-scale farmers, threaten their means of subsistence and negatively affect the environment;

BEING AWARE of the need to further increase evidence-based research and to foster data collection on illicit drug crop cultivation and its driving factors and root causes as a basis for policies and strategies in the field of alternative development and related measures;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that, despite its growing international recognition, the alternative development approach and related measures have suffered a substantial decrease in funding, as reflected in the special chapter on alternative development in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Drug Report 2016,

1. *decides* to consider alternative development as an important strategy to address the underlying root causes of illicit drug economies through an integrated approach combining efforts on rural development, poverty alleviation, the promotion of access to land and land rights, environmental protection and climate change, the promotion of the rule of law, security and good governance in full compliance with international human rights obligations and a commitment to gender equality;
2. *recommends* that the success of alternative development interventions be measured using socioeconomic indicators which go beyond an exclusive focus on illicit drug crop monitoring indicators;
3. *stresses* the need to further contribute to the universal recognition and promotion of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions at international level, and thereby contribute to a more humane and integrative global drug policy which is based on the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the world drug problem and is consistent with the UN SDGs, in particular SDG targets 3.5 and 16;
4. *acknowledges* other development-centred drug policy interventions as legitimate means of addressing phenomena such as drug trafficking and urban drug markets in developing countries, and thus contributing to the implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document;

5. *invites* Member States and the European institutions, agencies and bodies to address the issue of illicit drug crop cultivation in close collaboration with affected countries as well as relevant UN agencies, and to promote a human rights and development-oriented approach in dealing with this issue;
  6. *encourages* the European Commission to maintain its strong global engagement while supporting in particular certain countries affected by illicit drug crop cultivation and related phenomena and relevant source countries for illicit drugs which are used on a wide scale in European Union Member States;
  7. *encourages* Member States and the European institutions, agencies and bodies to maintain or, if appropriate, increase their international engagement in the funding and implementation of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions, in order to help overcome the current funding crisis for these interventions.
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