

Resolution 56/8

Promoting initiatives for the safe, secure and appropriate return for disposal of prescription drugs, in particular those containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Recalling the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem,⁴⁰ in which Member States stated their determination to tackle the world drug problem and to actively promote a society free of drug abuse,

Recalling also the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961⁴¹ and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971⁴² as the two treaties governing

⁴⁰ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

⁴¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

activities involving narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control and the pharmaceutical products in which they are found,

Recalling further its resolution 53/4 of 12 March 2010, in which it stressed the importance of promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled licit drugs for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse, and its resolution 54/6 of 25 March 2011, in which it recalled its resolution 53/4,

Affirming the important role entrusted to the International Narcotics Control Board of ensuring, in cooperation with Member States and in line with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, that the use of the drugs listed in those two conventions is limited to medical and scientific use and of preventing their diversion into illicit channels for trafficking and abuse, and the role of the World Health Organization in ensuring the appropriate use of medicines,

Acknowledging the recommendation made in the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2012 for Governments to formulate and implement effective awareness-raising and prevention strategies targeting the general public and the health-care professions, in which the Board further urged all Governments to take measures to prevent the diversion of prescription drugs, while at the same time ensuring their availability for licit purposes,⁴³

Concerned that the non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, in particular those containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control, have become an issue of increasing concern among some Member States because of their impact on public health and safety and community well-being,

Recognizing that in some Member States the rates of non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs are rising and that in many cases, some prescription drugs containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control remain in the home after they have expired or when the patient no longer requires them, and thus have the potential for diversion, non-medical use, misuse and abuse, often by young people,

Recognizing also that law enforcement agencies in some Member States have noted an increase in prescription drug-related crime,

Recognizing further that providing individuals with a safe, secure and appropriate way to return for disposal unused, unneeded and expired prescription drugs, in particular those containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control, as part of comprehensive measures to address the non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, will help to raise awareness about the forms of harm associated with the non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, and potentially reduce the harms associated with accidental ingestion, abuse and diversion,

⁴² Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.

⁴³ See *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2012* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XI.1).

Recognizing that inappropriate disposal of, inter alia, unused, unneeded and expired prescription drugs, including through waste management and wastewater, may have detrimental effects on the environment, for example on soil and water,

1. *Encourages* Member States to work with relevant partners and stakeholder groups, such as public health officials, pharmacists, pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, physicians, consumer protection associations and law enforcement agencies, in promoting greater public education about the risks associated with the long-term storage of prescription drugs in the home, in particular those containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control, and the potential for their non-medical use, misuse, abuse and diversion;

2. *Acknowledges* that initiatives for the safe, secure and appropriate return for disposal of prescription drugs, in particular those containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control, established in some Member States could serve as a model for others by helping to raise awareness of the forms of harm associated with the non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs and reduce the amount of those drugs being diverted;

3. *Encourages* Member States, as appropriate, to consider the establishment or enhancement of such initiatives, as part of comprehensive measures to address the non-medical use, misuse and abuse of prescription drugs while bearing in mind the health-care systems, regulatory frameworks and legal systems of each Member State;

4. *Also encourages* Member States to exchange experiences and good practices in the establishment and operation of initiatives for the safe, secure and appropriate return for disposal of prescription drugs, and to share their experiences at a future session of the Commission.