

TRAFFIC IN NARCOTIC DRUGS

In 1984, the United Nations General Assembly requested that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs begin preparation of a new draft convention on illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In 1986 the Commission identified 14 items to be incorporated in a draft proposal that would be sent to the governments for their comments. In February 1987, the Commission examined the draft convention and the governments' comments.

In May 1987, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations asked the Secretary-General to prepare a working paper combining the draft convention, the observations that had been submitted by governments and the results of the work done by the Commission on the draft proposal. The Council also decided that an intergovernmental group of experts of unrestricted composition would meet to examine the working paper, to reach an agreement on the articles of the convention whenever possible and to prepare a revised working paper.

The intergovernmental group of experts met three times in Vienna during 1987 and 1988 presented a draft to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for consideration at the latter's tenth special session. The Commission decided to forward nine of the draft articles directly to the Plenipotentiary Conference. The remaining five articles were sent to a Review Group of Experts for substantive review and in turn forwarded to the Plenipotentiary Conference, to be held in Vienna, November 25 to December 20, 1988.

Canada has played a leading role in the elaboration of the draft convention including the co-authorship of drafts of key articles on identification, freezing, seizing and confiscations of proceeds and assets acquired from illicit drug traffic (Article 3) and mutual legal assistance (Article 5). Canada advocates a strong convention that will allow the international community to employ new, innovative ways to suppress the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs. Such innovative ways would include enhanced means to follow the trail of money derived from illicit traffic and the seizure of assets acquired therefrom.