

Guidance on the WHO review of psychoactive substances for international control



World Health
Organization

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2010, the Executive Board of the World Health Organization's (WHO) adopted a revision of the Guidelines for The WHO Review of Psychoactive Substances for International Control. These Guidelines govern the evaluation of substances for WHO's recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as required by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971.

This publication provides a comprehensive overview for all those who are involved in the evaluation process. It can be consulted by the Experts who serve on the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, in order to make the right recommendation while following correct procedures, or by Representatives to the CND, in order to better understand any recommendations made to the Commission by WHO. Furthermore, it can help any interested person to understand the scheduling process in international drug control.

This publication contains the text in its final form as it was adopted by the Executive Board, including three Appendices, of which Appendix 3 is a visual representation of the evaluation process in the format of a Flow Chart. Furthermore, this publication presents the Report by the Secretariat which contains the elucidation of the document by the WHO Secretariat to the Executive Board and the part of the Summary Records from the Executive Board session that reflects the discussion on the proposal, its amending and its adoption.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WHO REVIEW OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

as adopted by EB 126

I. MANDATE

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that conducts the medical, scientific and public health evaluation of psychoactive substances under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961 (the 1961 Convention), as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 (the 1971 Convention).¹ The guidance document for this evaluation has been developed pursuant to resolutions of the World Health Assembly² and of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). This document amends the previous version of these guidelines and sets out guidelines establishing the underlying principles of the review procedure, working arrangements within the Secretariat and with external bodies, and the nature of the documentation to be prepared. The guidelines cover WHO's responsibilities under Article 3 of the 1961 Convention and Article 2 of the 1971 Convention concerning whether or not to recommend international control of substances, as well as the assessment of exempted preparations under Article 3 of the 1971 Convention. Common terms and abbreviations are listed in Section VII.

2. The Thirty-third World Health Assembly, by resolution WHA33.27 (1980), requested the Director-General "to promote the initiation and strengthening of national and international programmes for the assessment, scheduling, control and appropriate use of narcotic and psychotropic substances including those of plant origin, and to support such programmes by the development of appropriate guidelines", and further "to strengthen the coordination between the WHO programmes relating to narcotic and psychotropic substances, those dealing with drug policy and management, and other related programmes, and to strengthen collaboration with interested nongovernmental organizations".

3. In the light of experience gained over later years, and following the guidance of the Executive Board,³ WHO first developed the guidelines document for the evaluation and assessment of narcotic and psychotropic substances for decisions on international control in consultation with CND in 1986,⁴ which document was revised in 1990.⁵ Amendments and decisions subsequently adopted by the Executive Board in 1994⁶ and 1999⁷ resulted in a further revision in 2000. Subsequently, at the request of the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (Expert Committee), supplementary guidelines were submitted to the Executive Board in order to clarify certain issues.⁸ The Board considered the proposed supplementary guidelines in May 2004⁹ and January 2005¹⁰ when it requested the Secretariat and the Expert Committee to continue their work on the issue. This revision of the guidelines has been prepared in response to that request.

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