

52nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs - High-Level Segment
Speaking points by H.E. Ambassador Lars-Erik Lundin,
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Vienna
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- Madam Chairperson, I thank you for the opportunity to speak at this late hour today.
- I also congratulate you on the adoption of a new Political Declaration and Plan of Action in the field of drugs.
- From the very beginning, the European Commission has been an active supporter of the UNGASS 1998 review process. Indeed, we have supported the establishment of an expert working group to give advice to the review process and provided funding for the Open-Ended Working Groups that took place last summer and that were intended to provide a basis for discussion in the informal meetings that resulted in the current draft Political Declaration and its Plan of Action.
- Yesterday, delegations to this High Level Meeting received copies of a report funded by the European Commission on Global Illicit Drug Markets 1998-2007.
- This report was prepared over a period of 12 months by a consortium of independent international experts and researchers and contains information on the drug situation in a broad range of countries across regions around the world.
- The objective of the report is to provide policymakers with a dispassionate overview of the issue and changes that took place in the global illicit drug markets in the past decade.
- It is the European Commission's firm belief that an objective and scientific basis is key to the success of any UN political action in the field of drugs, even if the conclusions are sometimes uncomfortable or the results fall short of our expectations.
- The European Commission is and will remain committed to international cooperation aimed to address the world drug problem. We continue to be committed to principles of shared responsibility, multilateralism, a balanced approach, the development of evidence-based drug policies and – in particular – respect for human rights. This approach is the basis for all drug policies throughout the EU.
- It is our understanding that the threat from illicit drug trafficking is increasing in countries and regions where poverty, conflict, a lack of security, poor health and socio-economic deprivation prevails.

- The problem of illicit drugs is deeply rooted in broader socio-economic contexts. Addressing these challenges is directly linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, such as the eradication of poverty and the improvement of health.
- The European Commission would like to underline its support for some of the following elements that are being addressed within the Political Declaration:
- **We reiterate the need for a more balanced approach in our cooperation with third countries**, reflecting a proportionate response in drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction and with respect for human rights.
- **Addressing the demand for drugs and its adverse consequences.** The European Commission is very concerned about deteriorating health and social situations in specific countries, in particular regarding the consistently rising levels of drug abuse and increases in HIV infection rates.
- **We underline the need for a comprehensive approach within international cooperation in the field of demand reduction, which includes harm reduction.** The global burden of adverse health and social consequences of drug use is significant, and especially in those countries where demand reduction efforts are insufficient. The public health responses in drugs policy and for enhancing the effectiveness of evidence-based harm reduction work need to be addressed in a comprehensive way.
- The EU takes the issue of supply reduction and law enforcement very seriously. Across the region, cooperation and coordination is continuously stepped up, as the operations of specialised European bodies, such as EUROPOL and EUROJUST, testify.
- Under the European Security Strategy, organised crime such as trafficking in drugs, human beings, and weapons, alongside international fraud and money laundering, are identified as global threats, and new initiatives have been developed by the EU to contribute to creating a more secure world, combining development assistance with measures to ensure better security. The human rights dimension is very important in all activities in this field.
- Within the context of addressing the emerging trafficking routes, the situation in **West Africa has become one the major political priorities for the EU.** An example of addressing trans-regional links between organised crime and drug trafficking are the new programmes which the EC and the EU Member States are launching to counter drug trafficking along the cocaine route from Latin America and the Caribbean to Western Africa and the one for trans-regional cooperation on the heroine route to stem illicit trafficking from and to Afghanistan.
- Turning now to Alternative development which requires a consistent approach. The Commission has developed a great deal of experience in the field of sustainable alternative. The EU approach to alternative development is

based on a number of key principles based on lessons learnt and that address drug problems within the broader development agenda:

- Non-conditional eradication, making development assistance unconditional to prior reductions of illicit crop cultivations
 - Respect for fundamental human rights
 - Cooperation and commitment with and towards local communities, and;
 - Preventive initiatives.
- Alternative Development is at a crossroad and the effectiveness and efficiency of eradication programmes is being questioned. The EU approach towards alternative development turned out to be a major issue in the UNGASS review process. Although some progress has been made, the European Commission regrets that no consensus was reached on some of these major principles of alternative development, without which negative consequences such as human suffering and severe environmental effects may continue.
 - **Finally we strongly support “effective multilateralism”.** The EU will support multilateral efforts, principally in the UN and its reform process. Implementing of existing UN instruments on drugs and crime is essential and more emphasis should be placed on monitoring implementation of these conventions.
 - Furthermore, **we strongly advocate a further improvement of system-wide coherence between** UN organisations, as we sincerely believe this will improve effectiveness, efficiency and the quality of our efforts to tackle the world drug problem.

Thank you, Mrs. Chairperson.