

Statement of the Delegation of Portugal
on the Special Segment on UNGASS implementation of the reconvened 59th
session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Vienna, 30 November 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Almost nine months ago the international community was called upon to renew its commitments on the present and future of the international drugs policy. The UNGASS 2016 was the end of a long process of reflection and negotiations. But, as is frequently the case in multilateral affairs, the end of a process is also the beginning of a new one. A large number of recommendations were adopted in the UNGASS outcome document and we now must reflect collectively on how best to implement them over the coming years.

The UNGASS outcome document represents the most recent consensus on international drugs policy. Its major achievement was that of opening the scope of the discussions away from constraining traditional categories, namely by giving more attention to areas such as public health and human rights and to the desirable complementarity of efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as among United Nations bodies.

It is our belief that the UNGASS outcome document will remain the basis for international discussions on the path leading towards 2019 and beyond, during which we must consolidate and build upon the recommendations included in all **seven thematic areas** of the document. In that journey, we can briefly look in the rear-view mirror to see where we are coming from and to assess the results of the goals and policies established in the past, but then continue looking ahead to **where we want to go**, using as guidance the framework agreed upon by all States earlier this year in New York. Thus, the activities of States, but also

those of the UNODC, the CND and all other United Nations bodies with mandates covering issues included in the outcome document, must be gradually adapted to the new reality of the UNGASS.

Portugal has always privileged an open and inclusive debate. We are ready to continue sharing our thoughts, but also to listen to the experiences of other countries, the scientific community, international organizations and the civil society. During the intersessional meetings held on October, Portugal had the opportunity to transmit information on practical measures and programmes implemented at the national level in areas included in the UNGASS outcome document, in particular as regards proportionality of sentencing, alternatives to conviction or punishment, the move away from punitive approaches towards drug users or the coverage of harm reduction interventions. All the measures presented in the meetings are part of a comprehensive national drugs policy that is now celebrating fifteen years. We will continue to share the data accumulated over that period on its results with our partners, as it serves as a positive indication that States have nothing to fear, and much to gain, from the implementation of more pragmatic and humane drugs policies.

With the same constructive approach, we are open to start discussing with all our partners in the next few months the different elements of the work that will have to be achieved towards 2019 and beyond. That process should reinforce our commitments, namely those made at the UNGASS, towards the implementation of more health oriented and human rights based drugs policies, which in our opinion have a positive effect on the efforts to achieve the objectives of the three international drug conventions of promoting the health and welfare of humankind.