

Statement of the Delegation of Portugal
on the thematic discussion on the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document – *Operational recommendations on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues*

Vienna, 23 January 2017

Thank you, Mr. Facilitator,

During these thematic discussions, we will be discussing the implementation of the recommendations included in each of the seven individual chapters of the UNGASS outcome document. However, allow me to start by addressing, in this initial session, some of the issues common to all thematic chapters, in particular those relating to the process and methods that will need to be devised along the next months or years to carry out and monitor that implementation.

The UNGASS broadened the scope of our analysis and gave a positive contribution to the improvement of our individual and collective responses to the world drug problem. It reflects the most recent consensus achieved by the international community in this area. However, it was not meant to simply capture that consensus in a still image, but also to help shape our future in a dynamic way. After the long negotiations and the successful adoption of the outcome document, the time has come to adapt our activities to this new framework established by the UNGASS 2016.

The good news is that we don't need to start from zero. Along the years, we have been deepening our discussions on the world drug problem and trying to improve our responses to its different challenges. The outcome document

incorporates many of the good practices already implemented by States and organizations. Our tasks should be to correct any existing shortcomings, to preserve and develop evidence-based measures implemented in the past and build upon them.

At the same time, since the outcome document also contains innovations and expanded our focus to areas not sufficiently covered in the past, we should not exclude the need to complement our current tools and data collection with new ones, providing the UNODC and the CND with the necessary mandates to explore those options while avoiding duplications or the creation of excessive burdens to international organizations and States.

The UNGASS outcome document is our present and future. It will come a time when it will become our past, whenever we choose collectively to adopt a new document that goes beyond and improve it. That is the nature of our continuous multilateral dialogue, as we hopefully progress towards more humane and effective drugs policies. But I dare say that that time is still far from us, maybe more than a decade, and we need to concentrate now in the implementation of the recommendations adopted in April 2016. That path is not self-evident. It requires a conscious and willful decision from us. We need to clearly establish the UNGASS outcome document as the main framework for the period that extends beyond 2019.

Also, the Sustainable Development Goals have set the framework for the activities of the international community until 2030. We believe it would be beneficial to link the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document, as much as possible, to the efforts to achieve and monitor the accomplishment of those important Goals.

That is an essential element of the coherent approach to the activities of the United Nations that must be pursued by the international community, thus helping to break the silos between cities and organizations. The CND and the UNODC should continue to lead our efforts to implement the commitments adopted at the international level on drugs policy. But Vienna will only remain relevant if it continues to reach out to the rest of the UN system and integrate the contributions of different partners in a path of cooperation and partnership already undertaken at present and that must be strengthened in the future.

The 60th session of the CND will be the right time for us to start taking decisions on many of those issues and subsequent sessions to consolidate the chosen options. As we proceed towards 2019 and beyond we should not leave any ambiguities that may contribute to a negative fragmentation of the international discussions on drugs policies or their implementation.

Focusing our attention now of the specific thematic chapter on demand reduction and related measures, we believe that the activities of States and the international community should progressively be directed towards integrated and comprehensive policies which place human beings at their center, treat drug use and drug addiction as public health issues and favor treatment and care over punishment.

Towards those ends, the UNODC and the CND, in cooperation with other relevant partners, such as the WHO, the INCB and UNAIDS, should continue to develop and promote standards in the fields of prevention and treatment, to give their contribution to the expansion of the use of risk and harm reduction interventions aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other blood-

borne diseases and to disseminate knowledge and research on the positive impact of alternatives to punishment for drugs users in those areas.

Thank you, Mr. Facilitator.