

**Statement of the Delegation of Portugal
on the Intersessional Meeting (16-17 November 2017)**

60th session Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Vienna, 16 November 2017

**Chapter VI: Operational recommendations on
strengthening international cooperation based
on the principle of common and shared responsibility;**

Thank you Madam Chair,
Thank you Mr. Ambassador,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to commend the intervention of Estonia on behalf of the European Union and its Member States with which we fully agree.

International cooperation with our partners, both at the bilateral and multilateral level, is one of the essential aspects of Portuguese policy in combating the world drug problem.

This same week we are hosting the 2nd Annual Meeting of National Drugs Observatories under the aegis of the Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD), which gathers 71 leading authorities, 18 from Latin American Countries, 14 from Caribbean countries and 6 from the EU. As you know, COPOLAD encourages the exchange of best practices and know-how between experts, through bi-regional cooperation and exchange between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union.

Just last month Lisbon also hosted the Second European Conference on Addictive Behaviors and Dependencies, a forum where leading international experts on addiction science from over the world showcased and discussed the latest scientific knowledge in this field, in particular concerning dependencies on illicit drugs. The Conference gathered more than 1200 participants from 71 countries and around 500 communications were presented, which represent an important contribution towards an objective, scientific and evidence based approach of the addictions phenomenon. The relation between practice and policy making was also at the core of the expert's debates in Lisbon, topic that directly relates with the UNGASS implementation.

As I had the opportunity to previously share with you during the thematic discussions on supply reduction, effective law enforcement and the promotion of judicial cooperation, we closely cooperate on maritime security and law enforcement issues with African Portuguese-speaking countries, and in the case of Cape Verde and São-Tomé and Príncipe we have concluded Cooperation Agreements for the Joint Surveillance of Maritime Spaces under the respective Sovereignty or Jurisdiction.

Portugal's firm support to the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) also speaks for my country's continued commitment in the fight against drug trafficking. For the past ten years now, from its Lisbon headquarters, MAOC merits our recognition as a very effective instrument for maritime operations and a global platform in the fight against drug trafficking. Its discreet effectiveness is paradox to its real weight, and the numbers prove it: in fact, during the last decade, around 500 tons of cocaine, heroin and cannabis, and more than 12 billion euros have been diverted from criminal platforms.

I would also like to underline the role HONLEAs (Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies) have provided along the years, as a forum for discussion and cooperation between law enforcement agencies. These are very important channels of dialogue we should maintain and build upon. But without compromising the existing cooperation on supply reduction, these thematic discussions, exceptionally led by the Facilitator Ambassador Moitinho de Almeida, show us that opening the subsidiary bodies to other thematic areas of the UNGASS outcome document and extending the participation to practitioners in those other fields is of utmost importance to confront the world drug problem in a more balanced and effective way.

The spread of psychoactive substances is a global problem which demands an intertwined approach between countries, regions, and multilateral organizations. New and more aggressive psychoactive substances appear each day on the illicit drugs markets, with direct impact on the health and safety of many people and profound socioeconomic effects.

As we have witnessed in Portugal – and as we have shared with you in this and other *fora* –, coordinated efforts, information sharing and a humanistic multidisciplinary approach to the drug phenomenon, works and works well.

Portugal considers international cooperation to be a core subject, but one among the mutual reinforcing operational recommendations of UNGASS, the implementation of which must now be our focus!

Thank you.