



European Union

**Intervention on the occasion of the sixth intersessional meeting
of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Vienna, 23 October 2014

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished Delegates,

1. The European Union and its Member States are committed to ensuring that international cooperation in the field of drugs is based on the principles of shared responsibility, multilateralism, an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach, the mainstreaming of development, respect for human rights and human dignity and respect for international conventions, as stated in the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020.
 2. We strongly believe in a balanced approach and the necessity to address with equal vigour drug demand and drug supply. The world drug problem should not be tackled at UN level only as a public security problem, but also as a public health issue, guaranteeing that drug users are entitled to prevention, risk and harm reduction measures, treatment, recovery and social reintegration projects.
 3. Evidence-base in drugs policies is another key element for the EU drug policy and should be the guiding principle in drug policies so as to avoid that drug interventions have limited impacts, and sometimes unintended consequences.
 4. We reiterate that UNGASS should also focus on strengthening international cooperation against drugs trafficking, including judicial cooperation, public security and countering money-laundering as well as enhancing alternative development based on a development-oriented approach.
 5. We welcome the Non-Paper by the Chair of the CND presented during its 5th inter-sessional meeting on 4 September 2014 as a good basis for starting preparations for the UNGASS 2016.
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6. We consider that the UNGASS 2016 gives an excellent opportunity to review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant UN instruments.
 7. We believe that an outcome of UNGASS 2016 should be a concise and focused document, providing solid input as a stepping stone towards the target date of 2019 and beyond, also reflecting the debate on different approaches towards tackling the world drug problem.
 8. We emphasise the need for greater involvement of other UN agencies dealing with development, public health, human rights and security, including WHO, UNAIDS, World Bank, ILO, UNDP, DPKO (Department for Peacekeeping operation), UN Secretariat, UN Women, UNICEF and UN HCR in the preparation for the UNGASS 2016. Therefore, we welcome the inclusive character of the non-paper promoting the active involvement of all stakeholders at an early stage of the preparatory process.
 9. We attach a great importance to the role of civil society, including the scientific community, in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating drug policies at national and international level, especially in the field of drug demand reduction, and we believe that a meaningful and active role should be recognised for the civil society in the context of UNGASS 2016 processes. Therefore, we welcome the mentioning of NGOs' engagement in the non-paper and would encourage the inclusion of civil society speakers in the official UNGASS 2016 agenda. We should also reflect on how to involve civil society in all the proposed workshops. In this regard, we welcome the proposal by the Vienna NGO Committee to establish a 'Civil Society Taskforce' for UNGASS.
 10. We note with appreciation that the non-paper gives a first sketch for a framework for the agenda as well as an approach towards the high level debates on regional and thematic issues and the six proposed high level workshops. We welcome your suggestion that these workshops should be interactive, including involvement of all stakeholders. The EU is interested in developing this concept further.
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11. We understand that the topics chosen for the high level workshops reflect the interests of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the preparatory process of the UNGASS 2016. We welcome that the proposed high level workshop topics are sufficiently broad to allow for an open discussion and would like to stress the importance of considering the sub-items under each topic as an open rather than a definite list.
 12. We consider that human rights as well as the involvement of the civil society should be cross-cutting issues in all high level workshops. We particularly welcome the inclusion in the Chair's non-paper of the topics No. 1, "Drugs and Health" and No. 3, "Drugs and Human Rights", which are among the key EU priorities. We regard the topic "Drugs and Health" as a possibility to promote the public health-based prevention focus within a comprehensive approach to tackle the world drug problem. We also believe the topic "Drugs and Human Rights" will enable us, among other issues, to further raise the issue of proportionality of drug-crime-related sentences.
 13. The EU and its Member States have a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and consider that the death penalty is a gross violation of human rights and undermines human dignity, and errors made in its application are irreversible. Therefore we would propose to include this subtopic under the topic No. 3, "Drugs and Human Rights" and under the topic No. 2, "Drugs and Crime".
 14. With regards to these two workshops, we believe that the UNGASS 2016 would be a useful opportunity to promote a more effective development and a wider access to appropriate alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug-using offenders, with the final aim to promote the most effective reintegration of drug-using offenders into society.
 15. We also welcome the inclusion of the topic No. 4, "Drugs and development", under which alternative development appreciated by the EU and its Member States as a long term approach to tackle some of the root causes of illicit drug cultivation, will be discussed.
 16. We are convinced that providing various options for treatment and social support for persons with drug abuse as well as risk and harm reduction measures, including prevention of overdoses and reduction of drug-related deaths, should be an essential element of drug policies at national and international level. Therefore, we would like to see this subtopic included under the topic "Drugs and health".
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17. We also appreciate the inclusion of the subtopic "New Psychoactive Substances", as the spread of these substances is one of the main challenges addressed by the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020, and we consider the UNGASS as an opportunity to further develop and strengthen the UNODC Early Warning Advisory.
 18. We also emphasise the strengthening of regional cooperation as a very important tool, as an exceptional attention for some particular regions should be given. Therefore the EU and its Member States would like to see this subtopic included under the topic "Drugs and development".
 19. We note the crucial importance of the availability of national resources when discussing the implementation of the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action, therefore this important aspect could also be addressed in the high level workshops as a cross-cutting issue.
 20. We would encourage the CND chair to review the number of the proposed high level workshops and to reduce it from 6 to 4 in order to have a more focused preparation and debate. One of the possible ways of achieving this could be introducing the subtopics of topic No 5 "Drugs Science and Technology" under topic No 2, and including the subtopics of topic No 6 "Drugs and Youth" under topic No 1.
 21. Finally, we would like to stress our commitment to provide further input as regards the preparation process for the UNGASS 2016.
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