

Statement of Finland
On the occasion of the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 14-15 March 2019)

Mister Chair, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honour to address the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Finland fully aligns itself to the statement made by the European Union on behalf of its Member States.

Mister Chair,

A lot of progress has been made since 2009 when the goals and targets for the international drug policy were set for a 10-year period. The progress was visible already in the 2016 when the successful outcome of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem held in 2016 gave us a modern and balanced framework to work together in multidisciplinary cooperation. Reaffirmation that has been given to the recommendations of the UNGASS outcome document in the Ministerial Declaration can also contribute towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Even if there has been progress on some areas of drug policy the world drug situation is not improving. And although the drug policy challenges differ from region to region we all need reliable data to back our policy decisions. Therefore, we want to underline the commitments made in the Ministerial Declaration to improve the collection, analysis and sharing of quality data, including to the Annual Report Questionnaire and its development.

Finland believes that all drug policies have to be implemented comprehensively with the respect for human rights. Health, well-being, safety and security of people and societies are essential. We also align ourselves with the advocates of the abolition of the death penalty as well as with those condemning the use of extrajudicial sanctions of whatever nature.

Mister Chair,

Experience has taught us that in order to achieve the best results in health, wellbeing and safety, it is essential to pursue multidisciplinary and balanced cooperation between social, health and law enforcement authorities and all other stakeholders - including NGOs, grass root actors and people who use drugs. Many of the best practices in drug policy have originally been NGO initiatives and they are now a normal state practice. For example in co-operation with different actors, we in Finland have implemented harm reduction initiatives for over 20 years. Success of these initiatives cannot be credited to only one actor.

In co-operation we have better chances to tackle new emerging threats like potent new synthetic opioids. We need to address this issue together with effective actions in many areas like early warning, prevention and treatment as well as national and international cooperation and experience sharing in order to prevent harms in this complex situation. As well as we need to think new ways to prevent drug related deaths we also need to raise awareness of the best practices in order to make sure the first responders like law-enforcement officers and other professionals or volunteers are not affected by accidental exposure.

Mister Chair,

Finally, drug policy is not a competition whether law enforcement or health and social sector are doing things better. Even if the main role of the law enforcement authorities is to reduce drugs supply and tackle drugs trafficking, successful and sustainable harm reduction is not possible without their participation. Police and other law enforcement officers are often the first ones in contact with drug users and they have for example, a key role in referring problem drug users to services. Core of today's drug policy implementation should be in promoting participatory and inclusive policies that contribute to public health in the diverse realities and challenges that Member States face.

Thank you.