



CND 2019 Ministerial Segment *Interactive, multi-stakeholder round tables*

Round-table discussions were held on 14 and 15 March 2019 on the following themes:

- (a) Taking stock of the implementation of all commitments made to jointly address and counter the world drug problem, in particular in the light of the 2019 target date for the goals set in paragraph 36 of the Political Declaration; analysing existing and emerging trends, gaps and challenges;
- (b) Safeguarding the future: enhancing our efforts to respond to the world drug problem through strengthening international cooperation, including means of implementation, capacity-building and technical assistance, on the basis of common and shared responsibility.

Summary of the salient points of the round table on taking stock of the implementation of all commitments made to jointly address and counter the world drug problem

- Many participants acknowledged that tangible progress had been achieved in the implementation of the commitments made over the past decade to address and counter the world drug problem, including with regard to an improved understanding of the problem, the development, elaboration and implementation of national strategies and enhanced sharing of information.
- Other achievements included a more responsive scheduling system and the adoption by many countries of scientific evidence-based approaches prioritizing public health and human rights.
- However, speakers noted that, since 2009, both the range of drugs and drug markets had expanded and diversified. The illicit cultivation and production of narcotic drugs such as opium were at record high levels, as was the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors. The number of deaths associated with the use of drugs remained significant, and many countries still failed to provide adequate drug treatment and health services. The Governments most affected often did not have the means to address the problem.
- Among other persistent and emerging challenges were poly-drug use, the abuse of prescription drugs and the increases in drug-related violence and homicide rates.
- It was also noted that women were underrepresented in the access to treatment services and that stigma and human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, continued to exist. The availability of internationally controlled substances for the relief of pain and palliative care remained low to non-existent in many parts of the world.
- In the view of participants, a particular challenge was posed by new psychoactive substances, including fentanyl and its analogues, other opioids and methamphetamine, for which there was a lack of sufficient prevention, treatment and legislative measures. Countries should reduce illicit synthetic drug production, strengthen the capacity to detect new psychoactive substances, target online sales and trafficking and reduce global demand for those substances.
- Speakers also referred to the illicit financial flows and money-laundering related to drug trafficking and noted that there was insufficient information on the illegal networks used to commit those crimes.

Bilateral, international and regional cooperation was fundamental to countering those phenomena and States needed to act together to identify, seize, confiscate and return the proceeds of crime.

- Several speakers noted that the adherence to and implementation of the drug control conventions were key to international drug control, and that the legalization of the non-medical use of cannabis in some regions represented a challenge to public health and the well-being of young people.
- Many participants acknowledged that the international community needed to strengthen its responses to cope with persisting and emerging drug-related challenges and gaps, share more information and analyses and deploy more resources.
- In the view of many participants, the next decade should be dedicated to the joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem, with a focus on the implementation of the operational recommendations contained in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly.
- Speakers also recognized that the aspirational goals established in 2009 for the reduction of drug demand and supply remained valid beyond 2019, and that all of the documents should be implemented in a balanced and comprehensive manner.
- It was reported that progress had been made in increasing the number of Member States submitting the annual report questionnaire, but that the geographical coverage and availability of reliable data needed improvement. Support was expressed for the Office's efforts to update the questionnaire.

Summary of the salient points of the round table on safeguarding the future: enhancing our efforts to respond to the world drug problem through strengthening international cooperation

- With a view to accelerating the implementation of the commitments made in the past decade, participants highlighted the importance of strengthened international cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility and recognizing that “one size does not fit all”, as well as of joint efforts focused on the implementation of integrated, balanced, multidisciplinary, scientific evidence-based, comprehensive, and human rights-based approaches. In that regard, many speakers underscored the mutually reinforcing and complementary nature of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, held in 2016.
- Speakers recalled the commitment shared by Member States and the international community to promote and implement effective drug policies based on the international conventions and other relevant instruments, as well as on the political commitments made over the past decade.
- Speakers reiterated that the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments remained the cornerstone of international drug policy. A number of speakers underscored that the conventions allowed sufficient flexibility for Member States to design and implement national drug policies in accordance with their priorities and needs, and consistent with the principle of common and shared responsibility and applicable international law.
- Acknowledging its shortcomings, speakers recognized the urgent need for an in-depth revision of the prevailing approach.
- Focused on strengthening the public health approach, several other speakers called for the decriminalization of drug abuse, while others expressed concern for developments taking place in different parts of the world regarding controlled substances. The importance of implementing proportionate and effective national policies, including alternatives to conviction or punishment for drug-related offences in appropriate cases, was highlighted by several speakers.
- In implementing the joint commitments made over the past decade, many speakers stressed the need to enhance national efforts and international cooperation at all levels to ensure the availability and accessibility of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, while preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking.

- Several speakers underscored the need to ensure non-discriminatory access to health, care and social services in prevention, primary care and treatment programmes, including measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health consequences of drug abuse, and underlined the need to provide specialized programmes that respond to the specific needs of vulnerable members of society, including women, youth and children. In addition, the importance of designing and implementing appropriate interventions that prevent the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug use was emphasized.
- With regard to persistent and new challenges, many speakers highlighted the need to respond to the expanding and diversifying range of drugs and drug markets, and the increasing risks posed by, inter alia, new psychoactive substances, including synthetic opioids, as well as the non-medical use of prescription drugs. Some speakers also highlighted the need to address the increasing number of links with other forms of organized crime, including money-laundering, as well as the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies for illicit drug-related activities. A number of speakers underscored the importance of strengthening cross-border operational cooperation, enhancing cooperation in criminal matters, and addressing the illicit diversion of precursors.
- In that connection, speakers underscored the urgent need to develop innovative responses and strengthen cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, in order to face the new challenges posed by the evolving trends and patterns in production, trafficking and consumption.
- Several speakers highlighted the need to continue mobilizing resources for the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building, to ensure that all Member States, in particular those most affected by the world drug problem, including by illicit cultivation and production, transit and consumption, can effectively address and counter the world drug problem.
- Enhanced cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, as well as the sharing of good practices, experiences and lessons learned, among all relevant stakeholders, including United Nations entities, regional and international organizations, civil society, the scientific community and academia, were identified by many speakers as crucial elements in accelerating the practical implementation of the joint commitments made by the international community.
- A number of speakers underlined the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and encouraged UNODC to further increase its cooperation with other United Nations entities.
- Several speakers underlined the importance of strengthening the development perspective in comprehensive, integrated and balanced national drug policies and programmes, including alternative development programmes, thereby addressing the causes and consequences of the illicit cultivation, manufacture, production of and trafficking in drugs, which included drug-related violence, poverty, exclusion, marginalization, stigmatization and social disintegration.
- Many speakers highlighted the importance of ensuring that drug policies were developed and implemented in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the importance of high-quality and reliable data, and emphasized the need to improve the collection, analysis and sharing of data. In that regard, a number of speakers reiterated the call to UNODC to support, in cooperation with relevant partners, Member States in strengthening and streamlining existing data-collection and analysis tools, including by improving the quality, response rate and effectiveness of the annual report questionnaire.