

**Cross-cutting issues**  
**Drugs and Human rights, youth, children, women and communities**

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**Madam Chair, distinguished experts, panelists and distinguished delegates, I take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to CND for organizing this important meeting and for INCB, UNODC, WHO and other organizations for excellent presentations which gave us great insights on various aspects of the drug problem and directions to way forward.**

Madam Chair

The objective of my presentation is to make an attempt to understand the gaps in the system to address emerging drug-related threats.

Devastating consequences of drug-related issues impacts adversely, on the right of people to live in a safe society, right to lead a healthy life with peace and harmony and also affects the rights of children and women across the world. In addition to that the consequences have become severe threats to health and welfare of the people with permanent physical and psychological damage and overdose deaths to name a few. The drug problem also affects severely on socio-economic development of countries and security, stability and sovereignty of the countries.

Despite many interventions to curb the situation emerging trends show a further deterioration of the system. For eg. emergence of new psychoactive substances(NPS) as legal alternatives to controlled drugs. Most of them are targeted at children and youth and are more toxic and have fatal effects.

Furthermore, they can be easily purchased through social media and delivered to delivered to the relevant addresses using postal and courier services. Diversion of pharmaceutical drugs into the illicit drug market is also an emerging critical issue.

Madam chair we would like to emphasize that in order to address the emerging threats effectively and impactfully and to protect human rights of youth, children, women and communities, there is a need to revisit the current policy framework and identify critical deficiencies.

For that we propose for areas which need to be explored.

- a. Firstly, there is a need to assess current policies to see how far they are meaningful in addressing the present drug situation and emerging drug treats.**
- b. Secondly, we need to examine whether they address the root cause of the problem and are they being developed based on scientific evidence?**
- c. Do the scientific and technical professionals play an active role in drug policy making? Do we have any mechanism to develop coordination and cooperation with scientific professionals?**
- d. Finally, and most importantly do we have developed measurable indicators to assess the extent of the drug problem and measure the effectiveness of the appropriate actions taken by the Member states?**

There are no doubts that scientific evidence is inevitable in the formulation of comprehensive, balanced, coordinated policies to combat against illicit drug trafficking and abuse. Scientific evidence are not properly utilized for intelligence gathering, investigation and operation activities of law enforcement agencies, judicial purposes and as well as for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation measures.

Therefore, new drug policies for coordination and cooperative mechanisms such as Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) platforms with scientific professionals, law enforcement professionals and professional in the judicial system need to be developed.

In this context, we would like to express our gratitude to CND, UNODC and WHO as the leading entities for technical and the financial support extended to Sri Lanka so for with which we are confident that we will be able to uplift and strengthening our drug law enforcement and other supply control related measures as well as treatment and rehabilitation measures. One of such recent program is the technical support extended to establishment of South Asian Regional Intelligence Coordination Centre in Sri Lanka.

Also, we would like to express our views on the need for monitoring and evaluation of the continuous improvement of such projects to encourage member states to encourage member states to promote joint activities in designing and implementing scientific evidence-based strategies.

Moving forward we would like to explore innovative and unconventional approaches to address the root courses of the problem.

We are in the process of exploring how mindfulness practice would help address the root course of this problem first at individual level then at the societal level with the support of “SatiPasala”, “Mindful school”, a non-profit organization of Sri Lanka which aims at sharing mindfulness with students, teachers, and school and university communities, as well as those in other relevant sectors. The organization is in the process of introducing and sharing mindfulness practice in a non-sectarian & non-religious manner particularly among children of all sectors.

Mindfulness is defined as the awareness of thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment with the acceptance and non-judgmental focus. The practice inculcates a powerful skill to respond to a given situation appropriately. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that practice of mindfulness is effective and impactful in addressing root courses of drug-related issues by preventing the drug abuse in reducing relapse rate and thereby preventing overcrowding in prisons and treatment settings.

Furthermore, therapeutic applications of mindfulness practices have proven by research and are being practiced in many countries in school and prison settings.

Therefore, we believe that the introduction of mindfulness to this sector addresses not only the drug-related issues but also other burning issues in the society.

Before conclude I would like to share a video published by Netherlands which gives us great insights on the mindfulness in school settings.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.