

H.M. Drottningens tal vid öppningsceremonin vid UNODC:s högnivåöversyn av narkotikakonventionerna, 13 mars 2014 i Wien.

Dear Excellences,

Dear Ministers,

I would like to start by thanking you for the kind invitation to attend and speak at this very important meeting of the Commission on Narcotic and Drugs. Since last time I participated in this key event in 2009 a lot has changed – unfortunately not everything to the better.

Today and the coming days you will debate how you can tackle the world's drug problem. These discussions will be the starting point of the preparation for the the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) 2016.

When I travel around the world and meet children and young people living in societies where narcotic drugs and drug abuse is part of their daily life my heart bursts. A society where production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs are an integral part of the life of its citizen creates a society where poverty, corruption and misery are present. Children and young people suffer the most in such a society- they lose hope and belief in the society.

For almost 20 years ago I founded Mentor Foundation – an international non-governmental organisation focussed on the prevention of drug misuse with the mission to help vulnerable children- and through this work I have met many children growing up in societies affected by drug abuse and have seen the harm it causes. Mentor has actively sought to support the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime since decades ago.

Narcotic drugs and drug abuse challenge not only the lives of those affected but also democratic principles and the rule of law.

According to my mind a drug policy should be based on zero tolerance focusing on prevention, treatment, control, and aiming to reduce both supply and demand of and for illegal drugs. And I am convinced that the UN Drug Conventions are the best tools and means available to achieve these aims. Therefore we must support and defend the UN Drug Conventions.

So, how does Mentor Foundation work? We are working with our partners to reach out to children and young people. We apply and share our knowledge internationally so that the benefits of effective drug prevention policy and practice become visible worldwide. Our Vision is a world where children and young people are empowered to make healthy decisions and avoid drug use.

This year marks the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the rights of the Child. The Convention is a human rights treaty that sets out civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children- rights that are infringed if the child lives in a family affected by drug abuse.

So many children around the globe are affected by drug misuse. This could be either by using drugs themselves at a very early age or growing up in a family where drug abuse is part of their lives. This is something we have to take most seriously and try our hardest to change. We cannot let narcotic drugs and drug abuse be an accepted part of persons day to day life.

According to Article 33 of the Convention on the rights of the Child states parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances. We must work together to try to fulfil this obligation!

When I say “we” I mean the United Nations and the governments around the world together with the non-governmental organisations – the NGO’s. The civil society plays a vital role in combatting drug abuse and altering detrimental effects, not least for children and youth. Civil society’s involvement is crucial in all relevant UN processes dealing with these issues and can be developed even further in relation to the preparation of UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.

My vision is a society free from narcotic drugs. We cannot afford losing the battle against drug misuse. I am worried and with me many parents. I hope your work the coming days will be fruitful and successful – we cannot afford to lose the battle against drug misuse.

Thank you for your attention.