



**Check against delivery**

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**STATEMENT AT THE HIGH LEVEL REVIEW OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL DECLARATION AND  
PLAN OF ACTION ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
TOWARDS A STRATEGY TO  
COUNTER THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM**

**Vienna, 13 March 2014**

**Your Majesty,  
Ministers,  
Executive Director Fedotov,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is a great pleasure for me to address this important High Level Review of the 57th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, here in Vienna.**

**Today's deliberations are a milestone on the path towards the 2016 UN General Assembly's Special Session on the world drug problem.**

**I know Member States, the United Nations, and civil society are hard at work preparing for this historic meeting.**

**The Special Session will be invaluable in order to focus and calibrate our response to the world drug problems.**

**We need a comprehensive and open-minded exchange of ideas on what has worked, and what has not worked in dealing with the drug scourge. We must not shy away from discussing innovative ideas and perspectives.**

**The United Nations stands ready to play an active role in facilitating global cooperation and coordination on this crucially important issue.**

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Illicit drugs affect all of us, directly or indirectly. Many millions of men, women and children are denied productive lives, languishing in prisons, in clinics, or in miserable conditions.**

**Drug trafficking is a multi-billion dollar business that fuels criminal networks. The annual proceeds from illicit drugs are valued at around US\$320 billion.**

**No nation can escape the impact of these criminal networks. We all share the responsibility to forge effective solutions.**

**The illicit drug market weakens the rule of law, undermines social and economic development, and erodes stability and security. It corrupts institutions and democratic societies.**

**Illicit drugs and drug trafficking disproportionately hurt the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Its victims are scarred by brutal violence and denied crucial opportunities for protection and social and economic inclusion.**

**We also face new dangers through the dramatic increase in new psychoactive substances that strain public health services around the world.**

**The threat from illicit drug trafficking is so severe that the UN Security Council has recognized its implications on international peace and security. Several of our peacekeeping and political missions now have mandates to deal with drug trafficking and organized crime.**

**The Secretary-General has established a UN System Task Force on drugs and crime, which is to develop an effective and comprehensive system-wide approach to meet these challenges.**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**The response of the UN is firmly rooted in the fundamental principles of the three international drug control conventions: the protection of the health and welfare of humankind, as well as the promotion and protection of human rights through the rule of law.**

**Globally, however, the implementation of the international drug control conventions has been uneven and incomplete. We can all do better, individually as nations, and collectively through international cooperation.**

**The three Conventions are the legal basis for our work. But let us remember that Member States also can take action on the basis of these conventions to promote public health, prevention, treatment and economic and social progress.**

**Furthermore, we should balance demand and supply reduction strategies. Demand is fuelling insecurity and violence. Consumer countries must do much more to reduce demand, including through health-centred approaches. We should also raise public awareness of the impact of drug consumption on producer and transit countries, as well as implement effective prevention measures.**

**On the supply side, the rampant criminality stemming from drug trafficking undermines government institutions and democratic processes from West Africa to Central Asia, to the Americas and beyond.**

**Working together, countries must adopt the UN conventions on crime and corruption that can tackle these problems at their roots, and re-establish the rule of law.**

**We must coordinate cross-border operations, improve judicial cooperation, and enhance arms regulation. We must make our law enforcement tools more effective. We must also ensure that such measures are in compliance with fundamental human rights.**

**An integrated and balanced response to the drug problem should also consider alternatives to the penalization and incarceration of drug users. Let us remember that the serious criminals are the traffickers and the syndicates controlling them.**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**We must confront drug production and trafficking, wherever this occurs, and prevent new routes and channels from being established.**

**But we must also provide the most vulnerable in the chain of production and trafficking with hope and new opportunities. I am thinking of actions such as sustainable alternative livelihoods, access to education and appropriate social welfare services.**

**And we must never forget the public health imperative. We should be more focused on the prevention and treatment of drug use disorders, as well as its consequences, such as HIV infections. We also need to ensure equal access to controlled medicines for medical purposes, in line with human rights standards. For instance all human beings have an equal to alleviation of serious pain.**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I know the drug issue is a difficult and controversial topic.**

**Many of you have genuine differences on how to address the local, national, regional and global drug problems. There are serious discussions on which methods are most effective and appropriate.**

**Searching for consensus in the international community, despite these differences, is a challenge and, indeed, an imperative for us all.**

**We must also include representatives of civil society in our discussions. They can promote good practices, provide a wide range of perspectives, and help raise awareness among the public and in the media.**

**I urge Member States to continue debating the drug issues comprehensively and inclusively. I also urge you to work in a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility to deliver solutions.**

**The UN System stands ready to assist you in this pursuit over the next two years as we prepare for the General Assembly Special Session.**

**Let us never forget that in promoting health, prevention and treatment, and in confronting the criminal networks, we are not only saying “no” to drugs. We are also saying “yes” to development, to health, to human rights and to a Life of Dignity for All.**

**Thank you.**

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