Your Excellency President, Mister Chairman, Executive Director, distinguished delegates,

On the outset I would like to join previous speakers and congratulate you, Ambassador, as Chair of this High Level Segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I would like to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would like to reaffirm Lithuania’s full commitments to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted in 2009.

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by distinguished Greek representative. In my national capacity I would like to add the following.

Last semester Lithuania was holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and played a constructive role throughout the difficult months of negotiations during the preparation of Joint Ministerial Statement. I would like to express our appreciation to all the distinguished parties of the process.

Essential principle which we always wished to see reflected in the Joint Ministerial Statement for Lithuania is the respect for fundamental rights for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity and the rule of law. We strongly oppose to the application of the death penalty for drugs-related crime and call to ensure that the sanctions for drug offenses are proportionate to the seriousness of the crime and in conformity with the aim of social reintegration of offenders. This goes in line with the principles enshrined in the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and fully respects the three International Drug Control Conventions, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and UN political documents.

We welcome the development of the integrated and balanced approach as we strongly believe that people who use drugs should be entitled to access treatment, essential medicinal care and risk and harm reduction services.

There is increasing evidence that a health-oriented approach is also the most effective in reducing illicit drug use, and the social harm that it causes. Programmes aiming at recovery and social reintegration should be more than
encouraged since the ultimate goal is to get drug abusers off drugs and reintegrate them back into society.

Treatment as an alternative to criminal justice sanctions represents an opportunity offered by the community to drug users and drug dependent individuals to accept some form of assistance. Therefore, the effective collaboration between the public health and law enforcement sectors in building effective evidence based drug control policies is of great importance.

The role of civil society and NGOs is of the utmost importance in the implementation and assessment of drug-demand strategies. We need to work effectively in the international community to build a political consensus and to uphold a broad public support for this.

The public health approach should be strengthened in the debate about the global system of drug control, as well. We need to encourage Member States to consider that drugs should not be tackled at UN level only as a public security problem. It is a significant public health issue, too. Hence we have to guarantee the implementation of such measures like evidence based prevention, early intervention, risk and harm reduction, appropriate treatment, rehabilitation, social reintegration and recovery. I would stress risk and harm reduction as the scientific and evidence based language for the reduction of the adverse consequences of drug use promoting interventions such as opioid substitution therapies and needle/syringe exchange programmes for injecting drug users.

From the Lithuanian point of view it is very important to uphold a balanced and integrated approach between drug demand and drug supply reduction in full compliance with the international drug control conventions. Furthermore, there is a strong need to develop firm, comprehensive and global enforcement approaches to tackling drugs – approaches that encompass international co-operation, information-sharing and exchange of strategic and operational intelligence.

We need to strengthen measures and capacity-building to combat money laundering and improve judicial cooperation within a comprehensive approach to dismantle criminal organisations, and to better align legislations and practices.

At the same time we would like to call for a stronger collaboration in preventing diversion of chemicals used in the production and manufacturing of illicit drugs as outlined under the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 UN Convention as well as those non-scheduled substances (chemicals).
Maintaining international cooperation in the identification and reporting the emergence of new psychoactive substances, Lithuania emphasizes the need for all the Member States to work closely with the World Health Organization, INCB, UNODC and other relevant organizations to review and schedule as appropriate new substances, according to each organization's roles and responsibilities in the conventions. We welcome further support for the establishment of a global early warning system through UNODC to increase data collection as well as support for increased cooperation between Member States on the exchange of real-time information on the trafficking and production of these substances.

Your Excellency Ambassador, I would like to assure you as Chair of this High Level Segment of the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and the other members of the Bureau of the full cooperation of Lithuania in carrying out your work.