

**Remarks of the UNODC Executive Director
Opening of the Special Segment on UNGASS
preparations at the 58th session of the Commission
on Narcotic Drugs
9 March 2014**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,**

This year the 58th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is of particular importance as it contains a segment dedicated to preparations for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem to be held in 2016.

UN General Assembly resolution 69/200 entrusted the CND with leading an inclusive preparatory process for the special session, with the substantive contributions of the UN system, international and regional organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

This process is already well underway, building on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and on the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted by the 2014 High Level Review, and I welcome the progress that has been made.

This includes the consensus decision adopted by the Commission in December to establish a Board to oversee preparations.

I would like to commend the leadership of Ambassador Shamaa and the commitment and engagement of all members of the UNGASS Board.

As ever, UNODC stands ready to continue providing substantive expertise and technical support for the UNGASS preparatory process.

We also remain committed to working in close cooperation and coordination with other UN entities and specialized organizations.

I welcome the many interactions that have taken place with Member States, including through briefings and informal meetings.

These briefing materials, as well as the written contributions provided by our UN partners and other organizations, have been made available on the UNGASS website.

Many tasks lie ahead. We are relying on the active and constructive involvement of all Member States during the general debate and interactive discussions over the next days, with the aim of agreeing recommendations on substantive matters to the General Assembly and providing a roadmap leading to the UNGASS.

I would like to thank Ambassador Srisamoot, the Chair of the current 58th session, for having tabled an important resolution aimed at guiding the preparatory UNGASS process in the period ahead, and for undertaking the necessary and hard work in steering the efforts of the Commission this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To quote from the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 High-Level Review:

“...the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed in a multi-cultural setting through effective and increased international cooperation and demands an integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually

reinforcing, balanced and comprehensive approach to supply and demand reduction strategies...”

The hard work of putting this balanced approach into action continues, every single day, through UNODC’s efforts on the ground with governments, civil society, the scientific community and UN partners.

Working with you, we have put in place integrated, inter-regional responses linking UNODC’s country, regional and global programmes to confront the challenges of illicit drugs.

This has helped us to achieve greater strategic and operational coherence in providing targeted, effective support within the framework of the conventions, and in full compliance with human rights standards.

Our work also seeks to protect the health of people; including those suffering from HIV or hepatitis; ensure access to treatment services and essential medicines; promote fundamental human rights; build viable alternative livelihoods and stop criminals from exploiting the vulnerable.

The results of our collective efforts are outlined in my report to you on the activities of UNODC.

At this 58th session of the CND a number of draft resolutions are on the table for your consideration, addressing issues including:

- promoting evidence based treatment and care for young people affected by drug use disorders;**
- as well as alternative sentences for drug involved offenders.**
- protecting young people and children, including from the sale of illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances online;**
- promoting the role of drug analysis labs as well as scientific research, and strengthening cooperation with academia;**
- promoting the use of the international electronic import and export authorization system for licit international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances;**
- supporting alternative development, as well as international cooperation to respond to synthetic drugs; and**

- **confronting financial flows linked to drug trafficking.**

The commitment of Member States to the balanced approach is clearly evident in the broad range of draft resolutions presented at this CND.

UNODC is looking to the forward guidance you will provide during this session, also with respect to administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions.

In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC for their efforts.

The week will also feature a number of side events and special events on a wide range of topics, highlighting the importance of the CND as the central policymaking body within the UN system dealing with drug-related matters.

It is also evidence of the commitment of the Commission and of all Member States to provide a forum for diverse perspectives.

I very much welcome the interactions with civil society and the scientific community planned for this week, and look forward to these further contributions to the meaningful and well-informed discussions that have been taking place here in Vienna.

We will also mark sixty years since the General Assembly decided to establish the UN Narcotics Laboratory, which is the predecessor of UNODC's Laboratory and Scientific Section, and we will celebrate thirty-five years of the lab in Vienna.

We will be opening an exhibit highlighting the achievements of laboratory science in drug control this evening, and I encourage you all to come.

I wish you all the best in the deliberations ahead.

Thank you.