

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY WILLIAM R. BROWNFIELD
SECRETARY'S SPECIAL REMARKS FOR THE
OPENING OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS (CND)
SPECIAL SEGMENT ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE UN
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT
Vienna, Austria
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(588 words; 5 minutes timed delivery)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Next year's General Assembly Special Session on Drugs is the first meeting on international drug control policy at this level since 1998. It will be an opportunity to analyze achievements and gaps in meeting this challenge and to establish priorities for further action.

The dialogue will incorporate many viewpoints from Member States, civil society and the people. The United States welcomes these contributions; anything less would shortchange the process and deprive us of an honest assessment. We urge all regions and UN institutions to join this discussion. The expertise of UNODC and INCB will help us all in the preparatory process. It is important to maintain a balance between recognizing achievements and shortcomings. Constructive criticism drives progress, but it shouldn't descend into cynicism, inhibit progress, or blind us to what is effective.

We should not pretend that abstract debate helps communities suffering from drugs and related violence. In the spirit of "common and shared responsibility," the UNGASS should endorse tangible, operational measures. We can do so within the framework of the three UN drug control conventions, which have evolved over time to adapt to new challenges and permit options for states.

The Organization of American States produced a contribution to UNGASS that represents a 21st century approach to balanced, comprehensive and integrated drug policy. Consistent with this, the United States will emphasize three priorities:

First, we must translate the achievements of neuro and behavioral science into effective policies. We can develop and implement global standards for substance use treatment interventions for public health officials, similar to the global prevention standards that were completed two years ago. Wherever we live, our brain chemistry is the same, so our treatment providers should utilize a common

toolbox and agree on basic standards and criteria for treatment. And, we must also ensure the medical availability of controlled substances for those who need them.

Second, the UNGASS is a golden opportunity to share best practices in criminal-justice reform. The United States believes we can't arrest or incarcerate our way out of the drug problem. The legal system still plays a critical role, particularly when it develops innovative methods to manage low-level offenders.

Governments have the prerogative of determining country specific sanctions applicable to drug-related crimes, but we all benefit from evidence-based assessments of justice sector policies.

Third, we must build on our success in promoting the international judicial and law enforcement cooperation endorsed within the conventions. This includes extradition, mutual legal assistance and law enforcement. We have made strides in stopping international diversion of chemicals used to produce drugs, but traffickers are now exploiting domestic chemical markets where the drugs are produced or by using non-controlled chemicals. We should expand voluntary controls and increase engagement with the private sector to prevent domestic diversion. We must use all available tools to focus on the challenge of new psychoactive substances. And, we must extend UNODC's work on container security with benchmarks for all countries to achieve.

Institutional vitality and resilience undergird all of these priorities. Transparent, accountable and effective criminal justice and public health systems are generational challenges; they require long-term commitment and resources. There is no short cut to reform. Without effective criminal justice institutions and international cooperation, we cannot safeguard the human rights and safety of our people.

In thirteen months the world will direct its attention to the UNGASS. This CND will shape the debate for decades to come. We must do so with reason, scientific evidence and a sense of responsibility. The health and security of all our citizens depend on it.