

Swedish Statement- check against delivery

Thank you chair,

Sweden believes that the UNGASS (UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs) scheduled for 2016 in NY is a very important meeting. We think it is an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation and the implementation of agreed frameworks and to find solutions to new challenges.

Sweden favours a **balanced approach in which demand reduction, supply reduction and international cooperation are equally important**. To enable this balanced approach, we must leave the rhetoric of a 'war on drugs' behind us and strengthen the emphasis on demand reduction and international cooperation. The focus must be concentrated on health and well-being for all people.

Our work must be based on human rights. Everyone has the right to the highest possible physical and mental health. This includes the right not to be exposed to drugs, the right to treatment for abuse and the right to access essential medicines anywhere in the world. We must ensure that the human rights aspects of a balanced approach are also dealt with in the Human Rights Council. The right to essential medicines is the joint responsibility of Member States and many UN organisations to include in health systems.

Furthermore, there is a clear need to acquire more knowledge and tailor initiatives, while keeping **the gender gaps in mind**. Women's **rights** or gender equality rarely feature in discussions about the global drug problem and this must change.

Our work must be based on evidence and experience. If the science or evidence is lacking, we must all take responsibility for filling the gaps and strengthening the research at national, regional and international level. However, we must also bear in mind that visions for the kind of society we want to create in Member States are political.

High level meetings, preparatory meetings and the UNGASS itself are reviews of what works and what needs to be improved within agreed frameworks. **We will leave the final evaluation of the work until 2019, when the present Political Declaration is to be discussed and the post-2019 process agreed.** We must avoid duplicating work, and use resources wisely in order to be efficient and focus on implementing the UN framework.

We will get nowhere without civil society, think-tanks, the scientific community, enterprises and national parliaments. So the process must be broad and include contributions from various actors. We fully support the Vienna NGO Committee and the newly established Task Force for civil society and encourage their involvement in the preparations and at UNGASS. Sweden is considering financial support for their work so that voices from civil society will be heard. **We also appreciate the work of parliaments through the work of the Interparliamentarian Union, IPU, in the preparations for UNGASS.**

The UNGASS must result in **mobilised political will to reach the clear targets in the Political Declaration. Action-oriented recommendations** from the UNGASS on how to reach these targets will be an important outcome. This will involve homework for Member States who will need to step up implementation and put pressure on the whole UN family to incorporate illicit drugs and access to essential medicines in their activities and for media and civil society to continuously put pressure on politicians to deliver results.

Thank you!