

Canada
UPDATE

Notes for an Address by

~~Ms. Jacqueline Gonçalves~~
~~Mr. Mark Vcislo~~

during the

**General Debate of the Special Session of the General
Assembly on the World Drug Problem to be held in
2016**

at the

**58th Session of the
United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

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Vienna, Austria

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OPENING REMARKS:

Mr. Chair, Assembled, Ministers, distinguished delegates:

Canada is pleased to participate in this special segment, as members of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs work together to prepare for next year's special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016).

Canada views UNGASS 2016 as an important milestone for all of us to take stock of progress in achieving the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, and as an opportunity for the international community to have a focussed discussion on the many challenges posed by illicit drugs.

Recognizing the vast scope of the world drug problem, Canada believes that we should focus our efforts on the priority areas identified in last year's Joint Ministerial Statement, including:

- measures to identify, control and prevent the use of new psychoactive substances;
- methods to address diversion, illicit traffic and abuse of prescription drugs;
- a balanced, integrated and comprehensive approach to demand reduction; and,

- measures to address trafficking of precursor chemicals and the illicit manufacturing of synthetic drugs.

Mr. Chair, members here today recognize that finding effective, long-term solutions to the challenges arising from the illicit drug trade requires a multi-faceted approach. The International Narcotics Control Board highlights this point in its most recent Annual Report, where it notes that the illicit drug problem is a result of many inter-related factors including weak rule of law, economic inequality, social exclusion, poverty and corrupt institutions.

Through its National Anti-Drug Strategy, the Government of Canada contributes to safer and healthier communities by helping prevent drug use, treat dependency, and reduce the illegal production and distribution of drugs. In 2014, this Strategy was expanded beyond illicit drugs in recognition of the growing problem of prescription drug abuse. Over the next five years, our government will invest over \$44 million to combat prescription drug abuse.

Preventing substance abuse among youth is also critical to our government. We remain committed to helping increase awareness among youth of the dangers of experimenting with

drugs, assisting parents in keeping their children drug-free, and contributing to the health and safety of communities.

Une des préoccupations du Canada, et de la communauté internationale, est la prolifération de nouvelles substances psychoactives disponibles sur le marché des drogues illicites. L'utilisation de ces substances représente des risques importants pour la santé et la sécurité publique.

Le Canada continue d'améliorer la façon dont le gouvernement informe le public au sujet des risques que présentent les nouvelles substances psychoactives lorsque ces dernières font leur apparition au sein de nos communautés.

Les efforts déployés à l'échelon national ne sont pas suffisants. Le Canada est résolu à échanger de l'information, des méthodes de laboratoire et des leçons tirées par l'entremise de forums internationaux, comme l'alerte avancée de l'ONUDC sur les nouvelles substances psychoactives et les activités internationales de l'OICS sur les NSP (projet ION), qui appuient les efforts mondiaux visant à prévenir l'entrée sur le marché de nouvelles substances psychoactives non répertoriées.

Mr. Chair, there are no easy solutions to the world drug problem. As we look toward UNGASS 2016, Canada is concerned that calls for decriminalization or legalization of illicit drugs underestimates the resilience of organized crime, and downplays the significant harm that these drugs do to individuals, families, and communities.

In closing, Mr. Chair, Canada continues to do its part in advancing the international drug policy agenda by addressing priorities including: prescription drug abuse; new psychoactive substances; the illicit manufacture and diversion of synthetic drugs; and, promoting a balanced, integrated and comprehensive approach to demand reduction.

I am confident that our discussions over the next few days will be productive, and will provide valuable input for UNGASS 2016 preparations. You can be assured of Canada's full engagement in this process.

THANK YOU.