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ITALY



*The Permanent Mission of Italy
to the International Organizations
in Vienna*

**Statement by the Head of the Italian delegation
H. E. Ambassador Filippo FORMICA
on the occasion of the 58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 9 March 2015**

Mr. Chairman, Executive Director, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Whilst fully aligning with the statement by the European Union, I would like to share a few remarks in my national capacity.

1. Italy believes that UNGASS 2016 will be an important occasion for the international community to comment on the achievements, and share ideas on how to tackle those challenges still ahead of us, when dealing with global, regional, national and local responses to the world drug problem.
2. UNGASS 2016 shall be an opportunity to further promote the full implementation of the United Nations conventions on drugs and psychotropic substances, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the relevant United Nations political documents, such as the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the United Nations Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the 2014 Joint Ministerial Declaration.

3. Although the 2014 Joint Ministerial Declaration is an essential basis for our debate, we believe that UNGASS 2016 should not be a mere duplication of the High Level Review of the Political Declaration carried out in 2014.

4. Italy believes that the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of national and international drug policies should be based on the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, human dignity, democracy, equality, solidarity and the rule of law. In this context, Italy, fully in line with the European Union, opposes the death penalty, including for drug-related offenses, and calls for its universal abolition.

5. We appreciate the efforts undertaken by the Chair of the UNGASS Board to guarantee the full involvement of civil society and NGOs in the preparations for UNGASS 2016. We believe it is crucial to further promote the participation of both the civil society and the scientific community in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug demand and supply reduction policies.

6. We consider it is essential to develop and support anti-drugs policies and strategies that are based on a balanced approach between drug demand and drug supply reduction. UNGASS shall be an opportunity to further promote such a balanced approach at the national and international level.

7. Drug demand reduction measures should guarantee an effective synergy among preventive, therapeutic, recovery and risk and harm reduction interventions. Preventive policies and interventions play a crucial role: they should be mainly oriented to selective prevention and early detection, especially for children and young people.

8. Italy strongly supports evidence-based prevention interventions, as we believe they are an effective and efficient investment for health, well-being and safety of children, youth, families, schools and communities. In this regard, we commend the work car-

ried out by UNODC in the elaboration of the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. We thank the Secretariat for having organized, in collaboration with Italy, Finland and Norway, a side event on this topic and we invite all delegations to attend this event, on Thursday 12 March.

9. Recovery as well as prevention and risk and harm reduction strategies should not be considered as alternative or incompatible measures, but as complementary and co-existing interventions. All these measures should result in a balanced approach aimed at preserving the health and a full reintegration of drug users into society.

10. We believe it is very important to increase our efforts to prevent and counter the illicit use of drugs and new psychoactive substances as well as to promoting their early detection, also in relation to their increasing availability via the Internet. We are also convinced of the importance of further strengthening our determination to prevent and counter the misuse of prescription medicines, as foreseen by the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2013-2016.

11. In this regard, Latvia, on behalf of the European Union, has introduced a draft resolution aimed at raising awareness on the threat posed by the illicit sale of drugs and new psychoactive substances via the Internet. Member States should protect the health and well-being of children and young people from this emerging challenge, raising awareness and promoting the collaboration of all stakeholders, starting with parents, schools and communities. We invite all Member States to support this draft resolution.

12. UNGASS 2016 should also be a useful opportunity to increase and improve our interventions to protect the most vulnerable groups and to promote a balanced approach on gender within national and international drug strategies. We also consider it important to continue the ongoing review aimed at enhancing the protection of hu-

man rights of drug users in prison and at guaranteeing that sentences imposed on them are based on the principle of proportionality.

13. With regard to supply reduction, we are confident UNGASS 2016 will allow to take stock of the successes and challenges of the international cooperation for the disruption of the illicit drugs market and the diversion of precursors. We need stronger interregional exchange of information and international cooperation, such as in the framework of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). We finally stress the importance of an effective international legal framework to combat the illegal production and trafficking of drugs; in this respect, UNGASS 2016 should promote the full and universal implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols as well as the Merida Convention against Corruption.

I thank you for your attention.