

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO BY
AMB. JUAN MANUEL GOMEZ ROBLEDO, UNDERSECRETARY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR MULTILATERAL ISSUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**SPECIAL SEGMENT ON PREPARATIONS FOR UNGASS 2016
58TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

Vienna, 9 March 2015

Mr. Chair:

In September 2012, Mexico, Colombia and Guatemala jointly called for a thorough revision of the world drug situation, aimed at improving international cooperation in this field.

This appeal was based on the assessment, shared by many States, that the current strategy has not provided the results we expected globally in terms of reducing consumption, decreasing illicit trafficking, eliminating the illicit cultivation and eradicating drug-related violence.

This appraisal is based on data provided by UNODC in its latest World Drug Report. For example:

- The global number of illicit drug users has increased from just over 200 million in 2006, to nearly 250 million in 2012.
- The global area under illicit opium poppy cultivation has doubled between 2005 and 2013, increasing from approximately 150,000 hectares to almost 300,000.
- The number of new psychoactive substances stood at 348 such substances in December 2013, clearly exceeding the 234 under international control.

More importantly, millions of people have been affected by violence and crime, directly or indirectly related to the world drug problem. A high number have lost their lives as a result. In light of this reality, we must ask ourselves how best to articulate international cooperation aimed at achieving the best results and, above all, at saving lives.

Mr. Chair,

The international community will adopt this year the post-2015 Development Agenda. Member States have agreed to base all our development efforts on the welfare of individuals. It would be desirable, for the sake of consistency, that we do the same when addressing the drug problem.

We should jointly endeavour to prevent the negative effects that the drug phenomenon inflicts upon our societies. These consequences are not limited to drug users, but extend to those who suffer from physical and psychological violence, or whose right to development is limited by the violence associated to the illicit drug market, comprising the entire chain, from production to consumption.

We should bear in mind that communities suffering from high levels of drug-related violence also tend to be affected by other forms of crime, such as theft, trafficking in firearms, money laundering, trafficking in persons and homicide. These conditions have a negative impact on development, family integration, employment, education and health. They place individuals in a vulnerable situation towards crime, and generate a vicious circle that must be broken. We must respond to and prevent the social harm that limits the opportunities of development for millions around the world.

This understanding was highlighted at the past Special General Assembly of the Organization of American States and as a result of the meetings of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the European Union. The agreements adopted in those fora further recognize that States have developed new approaches as a result of the different realities they face.

We therefore attach the highest importance to ensuring a broad, open and inclusive debate leading to UNGASS 2016, without preconceptions of any kind and allowing for all experiences to be shared and all voices to be heard. The debate itself should not be our goal, but rather a means towards building global a consensus that leads us to more effective and humane actions in dealing with this challenge.

The participation of the World Health Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, among others, would be of the utmost significance. Their contributions would be consistent with the broader process aimed at a greater integration of the mandates distributed within the United Nations.

The discussions which will take place this week offer a valuable opportunity to move forward towards a genuine understanding of our own perspectives and experiences at the national and regional levels, considering new realities. We commend the decision to celebrate this Special Segment in an open-ended manner.

On that note, we also welcome the Thematic Debate convened by the President of the General Assembly in May, which we consider a unique opportunity to contribute to the process on the way to 2019.

Mr. Chair,

We cannot insist on the same actions and expect different results. We must work together to better comprehend the new dynamics of the illicit drug market, and to seek the best ways to tackle it, while avoiding the related social harm.

UNGASS 2016 should provide States with an opportunity to jointly set out the foundations for addressing the world drug problem in a more efficient manner.

We must find options to avoid criminalizing victims of the drug problem in its diverse forms; providing assistance to those who wish to be free from the destructive universe of drugs while limiting the illicit market, which will continue to find suppliers.

In doing so, we will be moving towards a renovated, improved and more efficient orientation of our policies. To date, these have privileged the field of security, aimed at addressing supply reduction while taking a serious toll on the social fabric of our societies.

Any unilateral action clearly carries transnational effects. We must jointly agree on lines for future action that lead to a more humane and balanced implementation of the current framework.

For example, we should fully take advantage of the tools we have developed over the years, including institutions such as the International Narcotics Control Board. The mandates of INCB must enable it to tackle the drug problem not only in terms of supply, but also of demand and – as the Board’s most recent report recommended – to address it within the broader socioeconomic development agenda.

We must also work to ensure access to medications necessary to alleviate pain, especially in developing countries, and we must strengthen our actions aimed at combatting money laundering.

Mr. Chair,

Mexico has spared no effort in its actions against the leaders of drug cartels, and in combatting money laundering and trafficking in firearms. In parallel, we have developed a comprehensive program to prevent and provide attention to drug dependency which privileges a public health approach in dealing with this phenomenon.

My country works towards improving the availability and access to substances under control for the relief of pain, an unprecedented reform to the justice system is currently underway, and comprehensive models which focus on the individuals rather than on the substances themselves, such as the National Program on Social Prevention of Violence and Crime, have been implemented.

Nevertheless, we cannot tackle a global challenge on our own. We remain fully committed to the multilateral system in providing joint solutions, and are certain that through collective action we will define the foundations of a more effective implementation to address the persisting manifestations of the problem.

This is the time to strengthen the global political will in favor of the international drug regime, and to heed the call of millions of people whose lives are daily cut short by drugs, crime, and the related socio-economic effects.

We will not be able to achieve this goal unless we can set out in 2016 the foundations of a more effective implementation of the United Nations drug control conventions, bearing also in mind our commitments related to this problem under instruments and policies in several fields, including health, human rights and organized crime, allowing us to address in a comprehensive manner the current reality of the world drug problem.

Thank you very much.