

*Islamic Republic of Iran – Check Against Delivery*

*In the name of God*

*The Merciful, the Compassionate*

*Address by H.E. Dr. Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, the Interior Minister and Secretary General of the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the High-Level Segment Meeting concerning UN General Assembly Special Session on the global problem of drugs*

*March 14-16, 2016*

*Vienna*

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate H.E. Mr. .... for his election as the president of the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and thank UNODC Executive Director, H.E. Mr. Yuri Fedotov and his colleagues at the secretariat for organizing this meeting. I also wish to appreciate the efforts made by the presiding board of the meeting as well as active participation by world countries in the past one year.

I hope that the meeting by emphasizing the existing international principles would offer generative and constructive solutions for combating the global scourge of narcotic drugs and contribute to the alleviation of human pains and sufferings.

Mr. Chairman,

In a bid to effectively tackle the problem of illicit drugs, the international community since 1998 has adopted international mechanisms such as the three international drug control conventions on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action and other relevant instruments making continued efforts within the said international documents. In line with this, one can refer to the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive strategy as well as collective participation based on the principle of shared responsibility. This meeting is a suitable opportunity for the senior officials to put forth their viewpoints concerning their experiences and achievements in the field of drug control. They can also shed light on the new challenges that have led to the failure of efforts aimed at reducing the illicit production of drugs and its spread and offer their practical proposals in order to be examined at the UN General Assembly Special Session in April.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to elaborate on my country's views and standpoints concerning the topics to be addressed at the UN General Assembly Special Session.

The position and role of INCB & CND:

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the main UN policy-making body on issues pertaining to drugs and emphasizes the determining role of the International Narcotics Control Board in facilitating the

legal access by patients to narcotic drugs. The Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the interventions made by the said UN bodies for evaluating the achievements, specifying the challenges and implementing the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action on international cooperation with regard to a balanced and comprehensive strategy particularly preparations made for the UN General Assembly Special Session.

### Supply Reduction:

In parallel with programs on drug demand reduction and harms reduction, broad-based plans have been put on the agenda focusing on a smart campaign against international mafia and regional drug trafficking rings in order to halt drug cultivation and production from its point of origin to its final destination. This is the outcome of decades of indefatigable campaign by the Islamic Republic of Iran against drug traffickers and sustaining of irreparable life and property losses. Our past experiences have brought us to the conclusion that drug-related challenges differ from one region to the other and means for countering these challenges must be defined in congruity with the enormity of the problem and every country's circumstances.

The Islamic Republic of Iran as a country on the frontline of the battle against narcotic drugs sustains the heaviest losses due to traffic in illicit drugs as well as the illicit cultivation and production of drugs and is of the view that the existing international mechanisms such as the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action are quite useful for the adjustment of plans seeking to tackle the global problem of drugs.

By improving the national legislations, regulations and procedures, the Islamic Republic of Iran while making efforts to prevent the perpetration of crimes seeks to

pave the way for rehabilitation and social reintegration of individuals. In line with the said policy, the alternative punishment plans such as freedom under the supervision of electronic systems, the conditional freedom system and half-freedom, delay in the issuance of the verdict and reprieve have been envisaged and the executive mechanisms have been created following the adoption of the executive by-law. The drug-related convicts are provided with the chance of appeal aimed at reducing the population of inmates and providing them with social support and services.

#### Demand Reduction:

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that health and social security shape the main pillars of a broad-based approach in dealing with the menace of narcotic drugs and for this very reason has put on the agenda of its balanced strategy the availability of drugs for medical purposes within the framework of the three relevant international conventions while preventing their diversion to illicit markets.

On this basis, the implementation of demand reduction policies aimed at minimizing the negative effects of drug abuse and improving public health are an inseparable part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's balanced strategy. There are a number of ongoing projects for strengthening harms reduction programs through boosting access to treatment services without discrimination, enjoying social supports aimed at promoting health in the society, reducing the negative effects including reduction of drug-related mortality rate and HIV/AIDS infection, providing various treatment options inside prisons, rehabilitation and empowerment of individuals paving the way for their social reintegration.

In parallel with these measures, primary prevention programs are continuously expanded within the educational system. There is also a comprehensive plan for preventing any tendency amongst children and teenagers towards drug use through the implementation of prevention and cultural programs as well as programs for strengthening life skills that are seriously followed up.

#### Human Rights, Youths, Women and Children:

Regretfully, the problem of narcotic drugs is more than ever before threatening the youths, women and children and that is due to the spread of terrorism and the subsequent economic crises and unwanted migrations. In order to tackle this problem, the youths, women and children must be given top priority. On this very basis, life skills training for the youths, women and children starting from elementary schools to universities have been prioritized by the national instrument on drug and crime prevention. In the meantime, special courts have been set up for children and teenagers and a special branch of public courts have been established for teenagers with special arrangements.

New

Challenges:

Bearing in mind the diversity and spread of new psychoactive substances (NPS) and growing misuse of these drugs by drug traffickers, the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the need for collection and sharing of intelligence as well as conducting scientific researches for assessing the potential risks in collaboration with other countries and UNODC.

NGOs:

More than eighty percent of drug demand reduction programs are handled by NGOs which indicates the Islamic Republic of Iran's belief towards the role of NGOs and the private sector in the campaign against illicit drugs so much so that based on an order issued by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hassan Rouhani the community-based approach has been given top priority in order to attract public participation in the campaign against drugs covering different domains such as social protection, rehab and social reintegration.

Alternative

Development:

The global community is unanimous about the need for adopting an alternative development strategy which obtains sustainable livelihood with the aim of reducing dependency on drug production, traffic in narcotic drugs and drug-related crimes.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the success of alternative development plans at the national level is contingent upon social and economic development and removal of deprivation particularly in rural and border areas as well as shanty towns. It requires global participation based on the principle of shared responsibility and UN guidelines concerning alternative development. Alternative development follow-up in a separate way will cause the drug mafia to look for new zones due to the termination of cultivation in one region. But developmental measures and removal of deprivation in areas susceptible to cultivation of opiates will lead to the failure of schemes by the drug mafia.

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished*

*delegates,*

The UN General Assembly Special Session is expected to prepare conducive ground for the global community's participation in tackling the global scourge of narcotic drugs based on full respect to world nations' social and cultural beliefs, regional sensitivities and circumstances while respecting world countries' sovereignty and equality.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the global problem of drugs as a humanitarian, technical and all-encompassing issue and its politicization will not be supportive for the drug control campaign and may even divert an effective and comprehensive campaign in this regard.

In conclusion while stressing the importance of the three drug control conventions and other relevant documents as the cornerstone of the international drug control system, I hope that the UN General Assembly Special Session would turn into a milestone in attaining the goals reiterated by the Political Declaration and the realization of the Plan of Action till 2019 and set the targets for the global community regardless of political considerations and on the basis of protecting human health and welfare.

Thank you for your patience.

