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Thank you Chair,

Let me, at the outset, congratulate you, Ambassador Galuska, on your election. I also praise the work of the Board tasked with preparations for UNGASS, and particularly the leadership of Ambassador Khaled Shamaa. We also thank the Secretariat for the outstanding preparations for this meeting and its support throughout the UNGASS preparation process.

Brazil welcomes the open and inclusive discussions that have been taking place as we move towards UNGASS – [*discussions not only in Vienna and other UN headquarters, but also within our regions and countries,*] with active engagement of all stakeholders.

At this point, it seems just obvious to state that the World Drug Problem remains an extremely difficult and complex challenge to all countries, requiring additional multilateral, regional and national efforts, as well as an open attitude to consider critical views on what may not be working.

Even before the UNGASS itself, we believe that we can already say that important progress has been achieved in the consideration of the World Drug Problem by the international community:

- we have reaffirmed a broad consensus on the view that the three Conventions remain the legal framework of the international drug control system and that they are flexible enough to accommodate different national perspectives on the World Drug Problem;
- we have also reaffirmed that drug policies should primarily focus on the health and welfare of humankind;
- there is a growing promotion of the view that drug (abuse and dependence) are primarily health issues and that the World Drug Problem should be addressed in full respect for human rights;
- we have witnessed more realistic assessments about the World Drug Problem, about the importance of evidence-based policies and the need to constantly evaluate what is working and what is not.

My delegation would like to recognize the important and positive role played by the UNODC and the INCB in these discussions, contributing to promote a public health and human rights approach to drug policies. Brazil appreciated, for instance, Executive Director Yury Fedotov's and INCB's contributions to this session, with a critical view on

the excessive use of imprisonment for drug-related offenses of a minor nature. We also welcome statements by both the Executive Director and the INCB calling for countries to consider abolishing the death-penalty for drug-related crimes.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Brazil has been actively participating in the UNGASS preparation process. We have subscribed input documents submitted by Regional Organizations. Brazil attaches the highest possible priority to cooperation and coordination among all Latin American and Caribbean countries in order to effectively address drug challenges in our region, with due regard for different national realities. In this vein, countries of CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries) held a ministerial meeting early this month on the World Drug Problem and issued the Declaration of Santo Domingo, which constitutes an up-to-date contribution of the region to this final stage of negotiations. Brazil fully subscribes to this Declaration.

Throughout the preparation process, in its national capacity, Brazil has been highlighting guidelines or principles such as the importance of a health and human rights approach, without stigmatizing people who use drugs; the end of compulsory treatment; the promotion of harm reduction policies, including for stimulant users; access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; new indicators, or metrics, to assess drug policies; real balance between investments in supply and demand reduction policies; focus on countering organized crime and the strongest links of illicit drug markets; proportionality of sentences; and alternatives to incarceration for minor drug-related offences, among others.

Brazil's vision regarding the World Drug Problem and UNGASS is based on the progress we have achieved and the challenges we have been facing at the national level. We seek to implement an integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary approach, based on scientific evidence, with a health perspective and in full respect for human rights. Without detriment to the priority of fighting organized crime and drug trafficking, the present Brazilian Drug Law represented a paradigm-shift in Brazilian drug policies, stipulating that people who use drugs **should not** be imprisoned. However, the adequate implementation of humane policies under this new legal framework is not without remaining challenges. Just to mention one example: too high a number of people who use drugs, particularly Brazilians of African descent and poor backgrounds, continue to be incarcerated as drug traffickers, with negative consequences for the criminal justice system as a whole.

In this context, UNGASS provides an opportunity for further discussions regarding drug policies , as well as for action at the national level. Let me emphasize, therefore, that

our national contribution document to the UNGASS did not only aim at improving international responses to the World Drug Problem. It was also – and perhaps primarily – a call on ourselves, on Brazil, to continuously review and improve our own drug policies and their implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the fact that many – or perhaps most -- of the inputs submitted by Brazil will probably have full, or at least some form of, positive consideration in the outcome document. However, while we remain encouraged by the constructive and pragmatic spirit in negotiations on the outcome document, we regret that we have not been able to make progress on two key issues.

First, while welcoming the special attention given by the draft outcome document to youth, women, and communities in the human rights section, we believe that the document should also include a racial perspective, recognizing the special needs of ethnic groups with a history of exclusion from public policies.

The second is the death penalty for drug-related crimes. Respect for sovereign national decisions is a key principle of Brazil's foreign policy. This is why we would like to respectfully propose that countries, with due regard for their national realities, at least consider the possibility of taking steps towards a moratorium on the application of the death-penalty for drug-related crimes. We look forward to further consideration of this issue as we move towards the 2019 review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Brazil will continue to engage, domestically and abroad, in discussions with civil society organizations on the World Drug Problem. We value their critical contributions regarding our drug policies, as well as their concrete support to drug-related projects and actions. Brazil thanks the civil society organizations for the many discussion papers and newsletters circulated in Vienna. In Brazil, civil society is now an essential partner in initiatives to address the World Drug Problem. In this context, my delegation would like to highlight the presence in Vienna, at this moment, of leading representatives of Brazilian civil society organizations working with drug issues.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to a successful and meaningful outcome document for UNGASS. We are confident that we will be able, here in Vienna, under the leadership of the Board, to conclude negotiations in our present session. The work done so far indicates that the document will be action-oriented and forward-looking,

and we hope it will point to a positive review, in 2019, of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Thank you.