

STATEMENT of the REPUBLIC of TURKEY
59th CND Opening/ Special Session
14 March 2016

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Galuska for his assumption of the Chairmanship and renew my delegation's support towards a successful execution of the 59th Session of the CND.

Turkey aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by Netherlands and in our national capacity we would like to express the following remarks on our priorities related to world drug problem.

Mr. Chairman,

This Session of the CND will be important while we draw near to the finalization of our preparatory work for the Special session of the UN General Assembly focusing on the world drug problem, which continues to pose a threat to the health and well being of the humankind. The process has so far served to renew awareness of the current situation among governments, law makers and civil society throughout the world.

While international community has made progress in its efforts towards addressing some aspects of this problem, there is still more to be done to keep our societies safe from the harms of drug abuse. In this context, the role of the CND and the UNODC, together with the INCB is important to steer our endeavors in the most effective way.

The drafting process of the Outcome Document has once again showed us that there might be different approaches to the drug related problems in different regions of the world. My country is of the view that only through a collective, comprehensive and balanced response, taking into account the various dimensions of this multifaceted problem, would it be possible to prevent the abuse of narcotic and psychotropic substances as well as drug related crimes. Turkey is fully committed to the letter and spirit of the three international drug conventions and believes that our drug control efforts should stay in line with the provisions of them.

We commend the open and constructive discussions held during the negotiations. Overall, the Outcome Document has become quite comprehensive with useful recommendations. Their effective implementation not only will be instrumental in achieving our goals established in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action but also will help us reach some of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellencies,

Turkey's counter drug strategy comprises a balanced approach where multidisciplinary steps are taken to further strengthen both demand and supply reduction measures. While new and comprehensive preventive methods and treatment and rehabilitation services have been introduced in the demand reduction dimension, stricter controls took effect on the traffickers and sellers of illicit drugs. We also pay importance to improving the coordination of efforts of the relevant national authorities.

Turkey lies on one of the main routes of global opium trafficking and as a consequence, counter –trafficking is one of our major policy objectives. The Turkish National Police has been successful in intercepting a significant portion of illicit opiates trafficking in our territory. Additionally, strong cooperation of the security authorities with their regional counterparts has played an essential role to dismantle some transnational drug trafficking networks.

According to a recent report published by the UNODC, the monetary value of the illicit opiates trafficked on the Balkan route is around 28 billion USD per year. A question we need to ask is where the proceeds of such an economy are spent on. Numerous evidence clearly demonstrate that these profits are used as a major source of income for terrorist organizations.

Turkey has long been emphasizing the intertwined nature of and the link between terrorism and transnational organized crime, especially drug trafficking. Today, terrorist entities continue to benefit from and depend on the drug trafficking, which is cross-border in nature. In that regard, this aspect constitutes one of the main pillars of our counter-narcotics policy.

Distinguished delegates,

Turkey adheres to the principle of shared responsibility and has been trying to contribute in a positive manner to the international efforts towards strengthening the collective responses to drug related challenges. In this vein, we have been offering assistance to many countries in their capacity building efforts. Among our assistance efforts, training programs conducted by the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime in various fields have a central place.

Similar to many other parts of the world, Turkey is seriously concerned about the increasing use of NPS as well as ATS, especially among the youth. Tackling this emerging threat is one of the priority areas in our national efforts and we believe that an enhanced international cooperation is needed to effectively address it. Therefore we support the strong language spelled in the relevant part of the Outcome Document.

Excellencies,

Despite different approaches on some of the issues, let us not forget that we all agreed on the goals that are set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and we should focus on achieving our common objectives through strengthened international cooperation.

While concluding my remarks, I would like to commend once again the work of the UNGASS Board.

Thank you.