

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALBERTO ELÍAS BELTRÁN,
ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MEXICO, AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 61ST SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

Vienna, Austria, 13 March 2018

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Heads of Delegation, Representatives from civil society, regional organizations and specialized agencies,

We are gathered here today once again by the collective interest in building a common response to the world drug problem, which poses complex challenges and constitutes one of the greatest trials we currently face.

The joint efforts of the international community have continued to move forward along the path we have agreed on within the United Nations, currently under the framework adopted in 2009, and most recently, in 2019.

Conscious of the progress achieved so far in the field of drug policies, but also aware of the considerable work that remains ahead, Mexico attaches the utmost importance to its Chairpersonship of Commission on Narcotic Drugs, towards contributing to strengthening its work by consolidating plural, comprehensive, substantive and results-oriented discussions, building on the work undertaken to date in its regular sessions, at its subsidiary bodies, as well as during the intersessional period.

In this regard, we look forward to objectively and adequately taking stock of the results achieved so far, and to recognizing the evolution of drug policies, as well as to identifying those areas in which further understandings need to be pursued, with a view to bridging positions,

Mexico recognizes the outcome of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS 2016) as the most recent consensus, and as a milestone in the efforts of the international community. UNGASS 2016 indeed represents a new paradigm for the international debate on drug policies, and in our joint commitment towards a truly comprehensive and balanced global strategy.

My country therefore places great importance to replicating the good practices and lessons learned as a result of that process, at the national, sub regional and regional level.

In this regard, allow me to share with you all that the implementation of the operational recommendation contained in the UNGASS outcome document in my country has been accompanied by a series of national dialogues that have gathered all interested stakeholders, from relevant government institutions to a wide range of experts and civil society representatives.

Furthermore, in exercising the Chairmanship of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the 2017-2018 period, Mexico has clearly manifested its commitment towards pursuing implementation of the UNGASS operational recommendations at the regional level.

Within CICAD, the Mexican Chair is fully committed to promoting a drug policy agenda that builds, within the Americas, on the seven thematic chapters outlined in the outcome document of the Special Session.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge that new approaches based on comprehensive drug policies include ambitious goals that require adequate prioritization. The creation of an Expert Group on UNGASS Implementation has been proposed within CICAD, with a view to assessing the needs and challenges of its Member States, and subsequently aligning agendas at the regional level.

Madam Chairperson,

The paradigm shift which we agreed upon nearly two years ago, has effectively become the international benchmark on which all countries increasingly base their efforts.

Although persistent challenges remain, while new ones emerge, the guiding principles and lines of action which have been agreed on by consensus offer a comprehensive assessment of the world drug problem from all its angles, based on one central premise: that individuals must be at the center of all our drug-related interventions.

As previously stated, the Mexican Government is convinced that we must continue to work towards consolidating this new paradigm, by designing and implementing strategies and institutional arrangements leading towards the formulation of more effective drug policies.

In this regard, a National Office on Drug Policies has been established within the Office of the Attorney General, which will function as the central body responsible for providing a strategic and comprehensive overview for the medium and long-term development of State drug policies, as well as for articulating, evaluating and implementing a wide-ranging response to address the drug problem.

In regards to the efforts aimed at countering criminal organizations involved in illicit trafficking of drugs, targeting their financial structures remains a high priority for my country, with a view to weakening their transnational scope. It is therefore most relevant to strengthen national intelligence agencies, with a view to more effectively carrying out our law enforcement activities.

Additionally, allow me to underscore the enhanced coordination among the various entities and authorities within the Mexican government over the past years, in response to the new guiding principles that apply to drug policies. It is essential that we transit towards an all-inclusive approach by overcoming a compartmentalized view of national efforts, in favor of common objectives in this field.

Madam Chairperson,

In Mexico's view, a comprehensive and balanced drug policy requires adequate indicators and evaluation methods, which is why my delegation would like to underscore the adoption of the omnibus resolution on drugs by the General Assembly, entitled "International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem".

In this resolution, the General Assembly unanimously agreed to remain involved in the work of the Commission, particularly with a view to promoting an open, substantive, and action-oriented review of the implementation of our policies to date, as part of the preparatory process leading the ministerial segment in 2019.

In this regard, my country attaches the utmost relevance to continuing the follow-up and progressive review of the international cooperation on the world drug problem as regards the preparations for 2019, in order to undertake a comprehensive stocktaking of the recommendations adopted until now by Member States.

The course of our future action has already been set out in the UNGASS outcome document, which certainly builds on the previous agreements and commitments.

While considerable progress has been achieved by the Member States, the world drug problem remains a challenge and a threat to the health, security and welfare of societies. Efforts to respond to it will therefore need to continue to fully adhere to the principle of common and share responsibility, which requires an effective bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

We must continue to review and benefit from the inputs of a broad wealth of studies and data elaborated by all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and academia, in order to improve our common understanding of the negative aspects of the world drug problem.

Mexico will thus continue to encourage that the Commission draws from the experience and knowledge of specialized United Nations agencies and entities, which contribute to the broader efforts within the UN system towards progress in achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing to those aimed at effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.

Madam Chairperson,

In closing, allow me to reiterate the need to further strengthen synergies among States, in light of the many challenges posed by the need to constantly adapt our drug-related responses to an evolving reality.

We have already agreed on the basic definitions that should allow our work to move forward, and should now move on towards setting a stage for an evaluation that sets the stage for the necessary review that will take place in 2019.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.