

**SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MRS JOSEPHINE TEO,
MINISTER, PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, SECOND MINISTER FOR MANPOWER AND
SECOND MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS, AT THE 61ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
ON NARCOTIC DRUGS ON 12 MARCH 2018, IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

Madam Chair
Executive Director of the UNODC
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

Singapore congratulates Madam Chair on your appointment as the Chair of the 61st CND.

2. Our problem with drugs is a matter of life and death. Every year, millions of years of healthy life are lost worldwide because of drug abuse, resulting in premature deaths and disabilities. This battle to save lives is far from over. But together, we can counter the world drug problem.

3. Singapore reaffirms our support for the CND as the UN body with prime responsibility for drug control matters. We underscore the three international drug control conventions as the cornerstone of the international drug control system. In the last decade, the international community has made commitments through three complementary and mutually reinforcing documents. They are:

- a. The 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action;
- b. The 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement; and
- c. The 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document.

4. Singapore reaffirms our strong commitment to the spirit and recommendations in these documents.

THE WORLD DRUG SITUATION AND IMPACT ON SINGAPORE

5. According to the latest United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report, 255 million people (or 1 in 20 adults) used drugs worldwide in 2015. Global seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants reached 191 tonnes, more than double that in 2010. East and South-East Asia also became the leading sub-regions for methamphetamine seizures worldwide, surpassing North America for the first time.

6. As a highly connected city in the heart of South-East Asia, Singapore is not immune to global and regional drug threats. In 2017, methamphetamine abusers made up 2 out of 3 drug abusers (1,989 out of 3,089) and 4 out of 5 new drug abusers (1,000 out of 1,249). Most new drug abusers are young and educated; instead of fulfilling their human potential, they and their families could face a lifetime of misery.

SINGAPORE'S APPROACH TOWARDS DRUGS

7. Singapore firmly believes that every person has the right to live, work and play in a safe environment free from the scourge of drugs. This right should not be diminished or even taken away through failure to control drug abuse.

8. We adopt a comprehensive harm prevention strategy, which seeks to proactively address the drug problem through targeted prevention; robust enforcement; and evidence-based rehabilitation.

9. Our first line of defence is preventive drug education. We run a nationwide Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign every year. We conduct anti-drug talks and activities in schools, workplaces and community events.

10. We use social media and involve youths in anti-drug advocacy targeted at their peers. One of our youth advocates, Ms Nur Afikah, is only 18 but a passionate and persuasive campaigner against drug abuse because she has experienced the devastation of drug abuse on family members. Nur Afikah is here with us today. In fact, she has come to Vienna to participate in the UNODC Youth Forum held in conjunction with the CND. Madam Chair, with your permission, may I invite delegates to welcome and encourage this very brave young lady. Thank you for your great work on advocacy.

11. The second pillar of our harm prevention strategy comprises tough laws and robust enforcement, which are strongly supported by the Singaporean public. They understand these are necessary to deter and stamp out drug trafficking and abuse.

12. Last year, we held over 1,600 operations at our land, air and sea checkpoints. Major operations led by our Central Narcotics Bureau crippled 23 drug syndicates. Tough laws and robust enforcement are still needed to keep our streets free from drugs and protect our society from the harms of drugs.

13. The third pillar of our harm prevention strategy is evidence-based rehabilitation. We invest heavily in programmes that are designed based on scientific evidence to help abusers give up their drug habits and reintegrate into society. Depending on their risk profile and needs, abusers are supported by different interventions.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

14. Singapore recognises the importance of regional and international cooperation. We are committed to achieving the goals and targets set out in the 2009 Political Declaration, and reaffirmed in the 2014 Ministerial Statement, through implementing the operational recommendations of the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, in accordance with our national priorities and circumstances.

15. Last September, Singapore collaborated with the UNODC to host a pilot regional training programme to combat the growing challenges posed by new psychoactive substances (NPS). 23 officials from 11 South-East Asian and Pacific Island countries took part. The course

allowed participants to gain a better understanding of the recent trends in the global and regional markets for NPS, and identify best practices in detection and investigation.

16. In October last year, Singapore hosted the 4th Drug Focal Point Meeting of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme. The meeting brought together delegates from 20 Colombo Plan member countries to share best practices in drug prevention, rehabilitation and supply reduction, as well as discuss potential areas for collaboration.

17. Singapore also hosted the Asia-Pacific Forum Against Drugs, where local and foreign delegates from government agencies, NGOs and civil society groups discussed how to secure a world free of drug abuse for future generations.

18. Singapore will continue to promote regional and international cooperation, and be a constructive partner with the UNODC and other relevant international organisations in our efforts to address and counter the world drug problem.

CONCLUSION

19. Singapore has an approach that is effective and has worked well for us. We are one of the few countries in the world where the drug situation has been under control. But every country is different and there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

20. We should respect every country's sovereign right and responsibility to address its own drug challenges taking into account the historical, political, economic and social contexts of its society.

21. At the 62nd CND in 2019, the international community will take stock of our progress in achieving the goals and targets set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

22. Singapore joins all Member States in reinforcing the Vienna spirit of consensus to effect an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem.

23. Drug abuse is extremely harmful and must be strenuously prevented. The battle to save lives from drugs can, and must be won.

24. Thank you Madam Chair.
