

STATEMENT of the REPUBLIC of TURKEY
63rd CND Intersessional Meeting
(8 October 2020)

Mr. President,

Thank you. Good to see you again. I thank you for all your efforts in addressing this important issue.

I also express our appreciation to the UNODC Secretariat for the preparation of this important meeting.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I reiterate that Turkey is fully committed to the three international drug conventions, which are the cornerstones of the international drug control system. Their full and universal implementation is crucial for the effectiveness of the system and we all bear the responsibility of securing it.

The CND as the primary policy making body and the UNODC as the leading entity for international drug policies should continue to steer our endeavors.

Mr. President,

Before we vote World Health Organization's recommendations regarding cannabis and cannabis-related substances in December this year, three thematic meetings were held. These meetings enabled national experts from several countries to discuss this matter in a more comprehensive manner.

Turkish experts also attended actively to these discussions. These thematic discussions were very helpful for all of us to better understand the essence of the matter, which is perhaps the most important and challenging topic among UNODC issues.

During these discussions, we once again witnessed that in addition to the fact that there is no consensus on such an important issue, national experts from different countries, who will be expected to implement the recommendations if agreed, have different interpretations and different concerns.

This is a very important fact we should keep in mind before making this important decision.

With respect to the recommendations of WHO, we are of the opinion that, cannabis is not an irreplaceable substance for medical purposes. The medical use of these substances is very limited. Also, legalization of the production will create a wrong public impression that these substances are not dangerous for health.

Also, we want to remind that the WHO recommendations were made long before we experienced Covid-19 pandemic. We invite all countries to keep in mind the new situation after facing such a global disease and the effects of such pandemic on food security and agriculture. We believe that an increase in cannabis production will have a negative impact on the food security, on efforts to reduce hunger and poverty in many regions of the world.

On the other hand, as we now observe in some countries which already legalized cannabis production, changing the scheduling of these substances will result in an increase in the use of narcotics.

Turkey considers that the negative effects of re-scheduling of these substances are much bigger than its benefits. In addition, an increase in the production of cannabis and cannabis related substances will have a negative effect on the struggle against financing of terrorism.

Furthermore, we also have procedural and legal concerns. Any change in the scheduling of cannabis and cannabis-related substances may create additional burden for some Parliaments and will also provoke public discussions.

Mr. President,

We must all keep in mind that this is a global anti-drug system constituted by international conventions.

Cannabis is still the most abused drug and a major concern in the world drug problem. If the recommendations are accepted, and after that if some countries face difficulty on fulfilling the reporting and other administrative obligations, all countries will face the negative results of this possible situation.

To be frank with all our partners, we believe that the responsibility of any weakening of the international system we now have, will be on the countries which support the recommendations.

Therefore, I want to reaffirm my country's strong commitment to our common efforts and the global anti-drug system. In this regard, we are strongly against the WHO recommendations.

Thank you.