



STATEMENT FOR THE 63rd CND SESSION

2 – 6 March 2020

H.E. Ms. Natasha Meli Daudey,

Permanent Representative of Malta, Vienna

Excellencies, Representatives of Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen.

May I start by joining others in thanking you Ambassador Khan, for your tireless efforts throughout the past weeks. I am confident that under your able leadership we will continue to work constructively throughout the year with a view to upholding the Vienna Spirit.

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union but allow me to add some remarks in our national capacity.

Just a year ago this Commission reached a consensus on the latest Ministerial Declaration, which continues to build upon in the main on the Outcome Document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly. Both documents reaffirm the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities, in their efforts to support Member States in the implementation of international drug control treaties in accordance with our human rights obligations while promoting the dignity of all individuals in the context of drug policies, laws, strategies and programmes.

Challenged with an ever-evolving drugs' market, reducing drug demand and supply requires an adequate and effective response, through coordinated multi sectorial



actions at a national level as well as coordination at an international level. Malta believes that the involvement of civil society, the scientific community and academia have an important role to play to assist policy makers in formulating strategies in this context, to be able to relate drug policy to a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All policies must be based on evidence and best practice, supported by objective monitoring and evaluation systems. It is imperative that we have accurate, reliable and relevant data that provides us with information on both emerging trends such as newly developed substances and emerging markets. Accurate data must also measure how effective our responses are proving to be.

Translating evidence into policy improvement and human rights protection is not an easy or obvious task, yet this was precisely what the side event we planned to co-host on Tuesday, together with Switzerland, Portugal and the Pompidou Group from the Council of Europe would have sought to explore. We regret that we were obliged to cancel this side event due to travel cancellations as a result of the Corona virus, by almost all the speakers. Based on a very useful set of guidelines, namely the Human Rights and Drug Policy, launched last year, during this side event we aimed to explore the necessary self-assessment tools and indicators necessary to monitor how well policy is reflected by the outcome it produces. We look forward to holding this side event at a future date.

In Malta, we have over the years, recognised the need to build a drug information system that guides both policy and practice. The success of the instruments in place today, have enabled us to implement policy measures that have indeed had some measurable impact. To mention a concrete example, the change in the law in 2015,



enabled us to have a better understanding of drug users, meaning that those being brought before the Commissioner of Justice for small amounts for personal use were treated and not punished. Moreover, as several individuals were below the age of eighteen the Government understood the need to set up community services for this cohort. For more serious cases, the Authorities are in the process of setting up a residential and community service which will open in September this year.

While a lot still needs to be done in relation to tackling existing and emerging challenges, in relation to drug use and abuse, we think it is essential to frame our rationale for the drug policy in question on evidence-based information and approaches that respect and promote human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We hope that many others will join us in this approach, and we welcome the exchange of best practices and lessons learned from all involved in this endeavour.

Mr Chair, may I conclude by showing our appreciation of your Presidency to date and hope that this paves the path, for the way forward for the timely mid-term assessment in 2024. Thank you