

UK

Chair and distinguished guests.

Let me start by welcoming you, Ambassador, into the chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and express the United Kingdom's support for your distinguished leadership. Allow me also to pass on our congratulations to the Executive Director on her recent appointment.

I would also like to thank the Commission Secretariat for the timely information and support in the preparation for this Commission.

The United Kingdom supports the UNODC, WHO and INCB in their treaty mandated role.

It is important that civil society, the scientific community and academia continue to meaningfully participate in the Commission.

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM

Chair,

This meeting marks an important opportunity for the Commission to progress the implementation of our joint commitments - it is imperative that we turn our attentions to concerted action to counter the world drug problem.

Despite efforts by the global community, we face unprecedented challenges.

Over the last two decades global opium production and cocaine manufacture doubled and hundreds of NPS have been synthesised in recent years.

All the while, Organised Crime Groups make considerable profit from the global illicit drug market and in the UK alone, it is estimated that the illicit drugs market is worth £9.4 billion a year.

We must step up international efforts to choke off the supply of harmful drugs and pursue the organised criminals behind this trade.

In 2017, there were more than half a million drug-related deaths.

Global access to treatment is alarming low and we must do more to implement the UNGASS recommendations on *demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, and other health-related issues*.

Collectively, we must also strengthen efforts to make material progress in increasing access to controlled medicines, in accordance with the Global Goals 2030 roadmap and WHO's Roadmap for Access to Medicines (2019-2023).

The UK are extremely concerned that international efforts to reduce HIV transmission among people who inject drugs by 50 per cent by 2015 has been missed. We must therefore, redouble our efforts to combat HIV among people who use drugs, and in so doing support delivery of the Global Goals.

Human rights violations continue to be committed in the name of drug control. The UK oppose the use of the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We urge all Member States who still use the death penalty to abolish this unacceptable and ineffective practice.

UK RESPONSE

The United Kingdom is delivering a modern, balanced and evidence-based response to drugs within the UN Drug Control Conventions.

Yet illegal drugs continue to have a devastating impact on UK communities – it is estimated that the economic cost of drugs to society is almost £20 billion a year and the number of drug-related deaths is extremely concerning.

That is why we commissioned an independent review of drugs led by Dame Carol Black. Whilst the findings of that review are concerning – they will inform the Government response going forward.

We are increasing our enforcement response to disrupt drug supply and will take a new approach to treatment to reduce drug deaths and break the cycle of crime linked to addiction.

We continue to support a range of evidence-based approaches to reduce drug harms, such as supporting heroin assisted treatment and we are committed to widening the availability of naloxone to prevent overdose deaths.

Through this work, the United Kingdom is implementing the UNGASS Outcome Document's recommendation to take a truly comprehensive approach to addressing drug misuse.

CANNABIS CONTROLS

Chair,

We note the Commission was able to come to consensus on the way forward World Health Organisation's recommendations regarding cannabis and related substances, but it is imperative that the vote takes place in December in order for the CND to fulfil its treaty mandated role.

CONCLUSION

Chair,

I will conclude by reiterating the UK's commitment to the work here at the Commission to address and counter the world drug problem.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission.