

63. Sitzung der Suchtstoffkommission

National Statement

Mr Chairman,

Ms Executive Director

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The production and trade of illegal drugs as well as the never-ending emergence of new psychoactive substances represent just some of the aspects of the global drug problem – a problem that constitutes a major challenge for us all. This is why none of us may relent in our efforts. On the contrary, we must even intensify our joint international commitments! As the world drug problem does not recognise international borders, together we used the last 60 years to develop an international drug control system. In recent years, however, this control system has come under increasing pressure. The ideas of how international drug policy and control should continue in the future are drifting further apart. This makes international cooperation increasingly difficult and particularly benefits those who make massive amounts of money by illegally producing, smuggling and trading in drugs.

I am firmly convinced, however, that rules-based multilateralism, pursued in a spirit of trust, is the only way to seriously reduce the world drug problem! And dialogue is vital for achieving this. Dialogue is crucial for developing joint action to respond properly to the most urgent challenges posed by the global drug problem! This is why, together with international partners from governments and civil society, the Federal Government of Germany hosts the once yearly Brandenburg Forum on Drugs and Development Policies. And it is also why, every year at the beginning of March, the international community of states meets here in Vienna. Let us use the CND sessions in this spirit!

Germany is committed to a strong and rules-based international order. The current pressure placed on multilateralism, through purely national and bilateral aspirations, diverts attention away from the successes it has attained in the past few decades. And yet, active multilateralism and a rules-based world order benefit everyone! This applies to relations between states, as well as to the everyday life of each and every one of us. At the centre of this rules-based multilateralism stands the UN, with its institutions!

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

Let me use this opportunity to extend to you, dear Ms Waly, my congratulations on your appointment as Executive Director of UNODC. Germany highly respects UNODC's work. We see the organisation as a highly valued partner in the areas of security and development. UNODC is also an important partner when it comes to implementation, for instance, of Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 16. Germany is one of the UNODC's top donors and will continue to lend its support.

Together with UNODC and civil society, Germany will also continue to meet its commitments in the field of alternative development, because progressive drug policy must also mean sustainable development policy. Without closer cooperation, the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be reached. In keeping with the principle of shared responsibility, we are all obligated to support drug-cultivating countries in their efforts to find development-oriented and sustainable solutions to the world drug problem.

Another fact we should not forget is that drug policy first of all means public health policy. We have to place people at the centre of all our actions. This is what we committed to in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, as well as in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. Supply reduction and law enforcement are not going to resolve the world drug problem. We need to recognise drug addiction as the disease that it is! And people who suffer from a disease need counselling, harm reduction and treatment!

The sooner we reach drug consumers with such support opportunities, the better the outcome and the smaller the negative consequences for those affected and their relatives. The opportunities must be evidence-based and take human rights into account. Especially through harm reduction and treatment-related measures, it may be possible to stabilise drug consumers both socially and with regard to their health. This approach can also prevent them from being marginalised and stigmatised. As I said before, people need to be placed at the centre of our joint actions!

Let me conclude with an appeal: Our positions may differ from another. And we can have tough and contentious debates on the issues. But we must never lose sight of the goal we all share: To give those affected – be it those in drug-cultivating areas or the drug users themselves – access to the help and assistance they need!

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman!

