

Sovereign Order of Malta

Statement by H. E. Ambassador Günther A. Granser
Permanent Observer to the United Nations and other
International Organizations

Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 63rd session
Vienna, 2 – 6 March 2020

Thank you Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all I would like to convey my congratulations on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta on your election as chair of the 63rd Commission on Narcotic Drugs. We look forward to a valuable and productive meeting, working together under your able leadership. We also continue to look to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to play a critical role in leveraging international support for counternarcotics issues.

The Sovereign Order of Malta, being with more than 950 years of existence the oldest humanitarian entity worldwide, with diplomatic relations with over 109 States and Permanent Observer status with the United Nations and other International Organizations. The Order has a specific vocation in the protection of health and assistance to the most vulnerable and poor people affected by disease and suffering.

We must confront the enormity of the problem we face. Drug misuse is a problem for individuals and communities. But the phenomenon also threatens the political and economic security of nations. We must treat it with the seriousness it needs.

We must develop and use evidence of what works – in reducing supply as well as in reducing demand. To do that, we must develop robust ways to measure and analyze successes and failures. The response to the drug related crimes from both law enforcement and the judiciary established as pillars of the fight

against illegal drugs in the three Drug Control Conventions must be in line with universal human rights obligations and strive for true and authentic justice.

The Sovereign Order of Malta has a specific mission in the protection of health and assistance to people and has been proud to support UNODC where it counts most, among the most vulnerable.

The Mission of Order of Malta is proudly in a position to continue to support also financially the UNODC Youth Initiative and the yearly Youth Forum, which are promoting young people worldwide not to be only a target of drug prevention initiatives, but protagonists of prevention and health education. With this initiative the Order of Malta is continuing its work to protect the health of the most vulnerable and support prevention initiatives in schools and communities.

The Order wants to express appreciation to the health oriented approach adopted by UNODC in the application of the international treaties and, in particular, for the work of drug demand reduction, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation targeting children and adolescent at risk.

The United Nations drugs bodies are supposed to take their part in wider UN goals. The drug problem cannot be isolated from other social problems that the UN has to confront. One should ensure that the UN drug strategy actively supports the UN Millennium Goals, the work of UNAIDS, the World Health Organization's Access to Controlled Medication Programme.

In conclusion, the Sovereign Order of Malta is pledging full support and active participation in addressing the problem of substance abuse from a humanitarian perspective and commend and support the work of the UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section in this respect and call on Member States to join forces to support its work, both with regard to youth participation and to evidence-based prevention of drug use.

Mr. President, thank you for your attention