

Draft Statement to be delivered by
H.E. Morakot Sriswasdi,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand,
On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group
At the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
Vienna, 2 – 6 March 2020

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Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Chair of the 63rd Session of the
Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Madame Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of
the Asia-Pacific Group.

I wish to congratulate Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan on his election as
Chair of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I also wish to
congratulate the Bureau and to express the Group's readiness to working closely
with and lending our full support to the Bureau for the fruitful and successful
session.

The Group extends our warm welcome to Madame Ghada Fathi Waly, the
newly appointed Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and
Crime (UNODC) and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna.
The Group looks forward to working with you to strengthen our collective
efforts and to advance our work in the field of drugs and crime. The Group
takes this opportunity to reaffirm that the UNODC is the leading entity within
the UN system to address and counter the world drug problem and that the

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has the principal role and prime responsibility in relation to drug control matters.

Mr. Chair,

The Asia-Pacific Group reaffirms our belief that the world drug problem remains a multi-faceted challenge to be effectively addressed in a multilateral setting based on an integrated, multidisciplinary, balanced and comprehensive approach; the principle of common and shared responsibility; as well as effective international cooperation and support. In this regard, the Group fully supports the efforts aiming at reinforcing regional and international cooperation and coordination, including through policy coordination, operational cooperation, and exchange of information. The Group further underlines the need to enhance North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

At the same time, the Group recognizes the tireless efforts undertaken by our national authorities in various relevant fields, including law enforcement, criminal justice, health, and education, with an aim to achieving a society free of drug abuse. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the importance of increasing provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to those national authorities.

The Group expresses its firm commitment to ensuring that all the efforts to address and counter the world drug problem through demand reduction and related measures, supply reduction and related measures, and international cooperation be undertaken with full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, fundamental freedoms, the inherent dignity of all individuals and the principles of equal rights and mutual respect among States.

The Group also reiterates that efforts to effectively address and counter the world drug problems and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Mr. Chair,

The Group reiterates that the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control system and underscores the critical importance of complying with these conventions.

Furthermore, the Group underlines the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the above-mentioned three international drug control conventions with relevant milestone documents, including the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement, the Outcome Document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem.

The Group welcomes the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, “Strengthening our actions at the national, regional and international levels to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem” and reaffirms our commitments as well as our full efforts in implementing them.

Mr. Chair,

The complexity of the world drug problem has greatly evolved in the past few years. The Group expresses the need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption, and other forms of organized crime, including, trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and money-laundering, and, in some cases, terrorism including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, by using an integrated, multidisciplinary approach, such as through promoting and supporting reliable data collection, research and, as appropriate, intelligence and analysis-sharing to ensure effective policy making and interventions.

This year Member States also experience the complexity in dealing with one particular issue regarding the world drug problem: WHO recommendations on scheduling of cannabis and cannabis-related substances. The Group would be seriously remiss if we fail to recognize the tireless efforts of the Chair, Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, in trying to bridge the differences among Member States. The Group expresses our appreciation towards his dedication to preserve the Vienna spirit of consensus.

The Group reiterates that, the recommendations must be carefully and responsibly considered for the benefit of international community and society as a whole without unnecessary delay, considering that cannabis is the most abused drug in the world and these recommendations could have significant economic, social, legal and administrative impacts on society. In this regard, the Group supports the Chair's efforts on further consultation and deliberation, with a view to achieving consensual solution and evidence-based decision. Before closing, the Group underlines that the CND has to play a responsible role by making a well-informed and accountable decision for the common and shared interest of the international community.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

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