



**AMBASSADOR KHOJESTA FANA EBRAHIMKHEL STATEMENT FOR CND  
SPECIAL EVENT COMMEMORATING THE UNITED NATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING  
LAUNCH OF THE WORLD DRUG REPORT 2020**

**Agenda Item. Discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug  
situation**

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Friday, 26 June 2020, starting at 2:00 p.m., Vienna Time (CEST), VIRTUAL  
MEETING

**Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of UNODC,  
H.E. Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad KHAN, Chair, Commission on Narcotic Drugs,  
Deputy Director General Mr. Olivier Onidi, EU DG HOME, European Commission,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me start by thanking the European Union and the UNODC for co-sponsoring this discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the World Drug Situation. I would also like to thank again the UNODC, particularly to Ms. Angela Me and her team, for their yet again excellent effort in preparing us for this important discussion.

We very much welcome the idea of Ms. Angela Me and the researcher's team of focusing on the issue of COVID-19 in the first booklet of the World Drug Report.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We greatly applaud the support and the initiatives of UNODC, and welcome Ms. Ghada Waly's leadership in these difficult times. The efforts undertaken by UNODC, as well as those of the UN agencies and international organizations are essential in these trying times, and speaking as the representative from a least developed nation, let me reiterate our appreciation for all support we have been receiving.

With this in mind, dear colleagues, let me say that this fight is far from over. While many developed countries have been successful in curbing the worst humanitarian consequences of this deadly virus, countries like ours (which are least developed) are in a much more dire situation. The fight against this virus is a global fight. As an international community, it is our mission to concentrate our support towards the least equipped countries like Afghanistan, for

which the humanitarian and economic consequences of an unchecked virus could eradicate decades of progress towards humanitarian development and economic prosperity.

With limited resources and with 60 percent of our population living under the poverty line and with most of them dependent on daily income, nation-wide lockdowns and the enforcement of such measures become difficult.

Lack of medical resources and testing equipment has reduced our daily testing capacity to an already low number of 2000 people per day to almost at zero on some days.

At the same time, our border with Pakistan has been blocked for Afghan exports, while Pakistani's products have been flowing freely to Afghanistan with no interruption. Denied access to our main transit route, Pakistan, has culminated to the plummeting of prices of legal agricultural products meaningfully decreasing the market for licit agricultural products.

This has created an excellent platform for drug traffickers to push farmers to choose for, at the moment, the more profitable market of opium and the illicit production of drugs. Farmers right now have a reliable market only for opium. They do not have meaningful access to global licit market.

Next to the virus, Afghanistan is fighting also a fight for peace against terrorism and insecurity, initiatives all at jeopardy due to this crisis.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, all of our resources have been allocated in the fight against the virus and in containing its spread, resulting in decreased actions and policy directions dedicated to countering the drug problem.

Furthermore, the recent developments in the peace process and the increased recognition of the Taliban by the countries in the region is giving the insurgent group new impetus to expand their drug trafficking network, as well as violence throughout the country. As a result, last week has been the bloodiest week for our security forces of the last 19 years, significantly diminishing our capacity to focus on the Drug Problem.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As members of the UNODC, I ask us to come together in this global fight and allocate available resources swiftly and effectively towards those who need it most. I appreciate the tremendous effort the UNODC and its member states have already undertaken to battle this virus and remain hopeful that we – as an international community – can prevail, and together stop the most horrible consequences of this pandemic from happening.

The people of Afghanistan need you. And today, more than ever, it is not the moment to forget Afghanistan. Afghans count on the solidarity and commitment of the International Community.

**Thank you.**