

CND63 reconvened session: Explanation of Vote

- Thank you Chair. On behalf of the Australian delegation, we express our sincere thanks to you Ambassador Khan for your able leadership and to the Secretariat for your tireless efforts to arrange today's vote in ongoing challenging circumstances.
- Australia is committed to protecting and strengthening the international rules-based order
 - the international drug control framework and scheduling system is a critical part of the rules-based order
 - and the recommendations we are voting on today are part of our broader, collective effort to address the world drug problem.
- The treaty-mandated role of the WHO's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence is important
 - conducting medical and scientific reviews of substances help us to make informed scheduling decisions
 - and help maintain the currency of – and ongoing public support for – the international drug control framework
 - so it is important that the CND does its job in making decisions in a timely manner. After having discussed these recommendations at length, it is good that we have voted today.
- We would like to be clear and explicit upfront — Australia does not support the legalisation of cannabis for recreational use. That is not what this vote is about.
- We recognise the substantial risks that cannabis use carries. We also recognise the potential therapeutic benefits of cannabis. This assessment is based on medical and scientific evidence, which is evident from the review conducted by the WHO.
- **On this basis, Australia supported recommendation 5.1** which recognises that cannabis and cannabis resin are unlikely to produce ill-effects similar to other Schedule IV substances, and that some parties have enacted laws to enable the medical use of cannabis and cannabis resin.
 - Australia considers this approach strikes an appropriate regulatory balance and simply recognises that there is a legitimate medical use quite separate to the use of cannabis for research purposes.
- **Australia supported recommendation 5.2 and 5.3** Australia's strong preference is for dronabinol, THC and its stereoisomers to be managed consistently with cannabis and cannabis resin under Schedule I of the 1961 Convention. This would remove ambiguity and complexity, especially as it applies to trade between member states.
- **Australia supported recommendation 5.4** which will improve consistency and remove ambiguity in the regulation of cannabis extracts and preparations.
- **Australia supported recommendation 5.5** on the basis that predominantly cannabidiol preparations with low concentrations delta-9 THC are of less risk of harm than those which contain greater than 0.2%. This recommendation assists improving consistency and trade and reporting discrepancies.

- In closing Chair, Australia takes seriously its responsibility as a member of the CND. We strongly support a scientific and evidence-based approach to scheduling substances under the international drug control framework. And we acknowledge and thank civil society and academia for their important contributions to the consideration of these recommendations. Thank you.