

STATEMENT
Agenda Item 4

Strategic Management, Budgetary and Administrative Questions

- (a)** Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;
- (b)** Directives on policy and budgetary issues for the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;
- (c)** Working methods of the Commission; and
- (d)** Staff composition of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other related matters

Mr. Chair,

My delegation would like to place on record its appreciation to you and the Secretariat for the action taken to ensure continuity of the Commission's work in what has been an unprecedented year.

These measures, as outlined in the Note by the Secretariat on the working methods of the UNODC Governing Bodies during the COVID-19 pandemic, are indeed commendable. We are particularly grateful for those efforts geared towards facilitating the participation of Members, like Jamaica, which is without a physical representation in Vienna, whilst we navigate the various restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging test for the International Community, including the UNODC, which has not escaped the financial turmoil brought by the pandemic. In this regard, we note the proactive response of the UNODC including re-adjustments to its budget, implementation of cost saving measures and alignment to the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan, the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 and the Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19.

Chair,

At the 63rd Session convened in March this year, Jamaica expressed concerns regarding the precarious financial situation of the Organisation, in particular the continued decline in the availability of un-earmarked funds.

There is no doubt that the global pandemic has further exacerbated this situation and we therefore reiterate the call on donors to give serious consideration to providing predictable and flexible funding to the Organisation in support of its mandate and the vital work being undertaken globally.

My Delegation thanks the Executive Director for her report on gender balance and geographical representation within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We commend her for the top-down approach towards the goal of gender balance throughout the UNODC. Further, we recognise, in particular, her role as an International Gender Champion; commitment to systematically strengthen and promote an inclusive and enabling organizational culture and to improve the representation of women at the staff levels where parity has not yet been achieved.

On the matter of geographical representation and diversity we support the UNODC's outreach, recruitment and retention efforts and their associated activities and take particular note of the Geographical Diversity Strategy and the "diversity corner" launched earlier this year. However, we re-iterate our disappointment regarding the low level of representation from the Caribbean Sub-region and we look forward to improved efforts on this matter.

Chair, COVID-19 has brought to the fore in all fora and at all levels of society questions regarding our future work. Whilst the report highlights the COVID-19 remote work survey and related flexible work arrangements, there is no indication whether a detailed assessment of the impact of the pandemic on the Organisation's hiring practices, policies and work arrangements. Such an assessment would serve to identify best practices and lessons learnt in the event of similar crises in the future.

Chair

In closing, we support the recommendations put forward in the respective reports and in addition, further recommend greater efforts towards sub-regional representation in the Organisation and a detailed assessment of the pandemic on the UNODC's hiring practices and works arrangements.

I thank you

