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Follow-up to the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem**Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration*****Summary*

In the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, entitled “*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*”, Member States committed to ensuring that the Commission-led follow-up on the implementation of all commitments to address and counter the world drug problem made since 2009 was done in a single track. The present Note by the Secretariat aims to reflect the comprehensive efforts undertaken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, thereby providing an overview of measures taken to enhance the practical implementation of all political commitments reflected in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Declaration and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

The conference room paper is to be read in conjunction with the summary by H.E. Ambassador Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart (Switzerland), Second Vice-Chair of the Commission at its sixty-third session, who chaired the thematic discussions of the sixty-third session, held from 19 to 21 October 2020. The summary has been submitted to the Commission at its sixty-fourth session in the form of a conference room paper (E/CN.7/2021/CRP.1).

* E/CN.7/2021/1.

** This document has not been edited.



I. Background

1. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, at its fifty-second session in 2009, reviewed the progress made since the 1998 Special Session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem and adopted a new framework – the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. In the Plan of Action, structured in three parts: (a) demand reduction and related measures; (b) supply reduction and related measures; and (c) countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation to enhance international cooperation, Member States adopted measures to enhance international cooperation, identified problems and areas requiring further action, as well as set goals and targets to address the world drug problem. In addition, Member States decided that the Commission was to conduct at its fifty-seventh session in 2014 a high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the 2009 Political Declaration and its Plan of Action and recommended that the General Assembly hold a special session to address the world drug problem.

2. In line with the decision contained in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the Commission conducted at its fifty-seventh session a high-level review and adopted the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement, which identifies achievements, challenges and priorities for further action, in the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

3. The General Assembly decided in December 2012, in its resolution [67/193](#), to hold a Special Session on the World Drug Problem in early 2016, to review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [69/200](#) and [69/201](#), the CND was tasked to lead an open-ended and inclusive preparatory process for the Special Session, held in April 2016, at which occasion the Assembly unanimously adopted the outcome document “*Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*”, containing operational recommendations in seven thematic chapters: (a) demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues; (b) ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion; (c) supply reduction and related measures; effective law enforcement; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation; (d) cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities; (e) cross-cutting issues: evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats; (f) strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility; and (g) alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy. Immediately following the adoption of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, the Commission initiated an intensive follow-up process to support the practical implementation of the operational recommendations contained in the seven chapters (*see Chapter II for more information*).

4. In March 2019, ten years after the adoption of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, Ministers and government representatives met in Vienna to take stock of the implementation of the commitments made over the past decade to jointly address and counter the world drug problem, in particular in light of the 2019 target date set in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and to enhance efforts beyond 2019. At the opening of the Ministerial Segment, Ministers and government representatives adopted by consensus the 2019 Ministerial Declaration on “*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". In the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, Member States, while acknowledging that tangible progress had been achieved over the past decade, noted with concern the persistent and emerging challenges posed by the world drug problem and committed to accelerating, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, the full implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement and the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, aimed at achieving all commitments, operational recommendations and aspirational goals set out therein. The 2019 Ministerial Declaration concludes with the resolve to review in the Commission in 2029 the progress in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, with a midterm review in 2024.

5. In the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, Member States committed to ensuring that the Commission-led follow-up on the implementation of all commitments to address and counter the world drug problem made since 2009 was done in a single track, which entailed (a) devoting a single standing agenda item at each regular session of the Commission to the implementation of all commitments; (b) ensuring that collection of reliable and comparable data, through a strengthened and streamlined annual report questionnaire reflected all commitments; and (c) requesting the Executive Director of UNODC to adapt the existing biennial report, transforming it into a single report, to be prepared on a biennial basis, on the basis of the responses provided by Member States to a strengthened and streamlined annual report questionnaire on progress made to implement all commitments at the national, regional and international levels, the first of which reports to be submitted for consideration by the Commission at its 65th session, in 2022.

6. At its 63rd session, on 4 March 2020, the Commission adopted the improved and streamlined annual report questionnaire (CND decision 63/15), to reflect and assess progress made in the implementation of all commitments contained in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly held in 2016. Further, the Commission requested Member States to complete and submit the annual report questionnaire, to the best of their capabilities and in accordance with national legislation, promptly and not later than 30 June of each year and to appoint a national focal point, as appropriate in their national context, to facilitate the completion of the annual report questionnaire, working in consultation with their Permanent Mission accredited to the United Nations Office at Vienna.

7. In line with the intensive follow-up process which the CND had started immediately after the adoption of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document and which focused on the practical implementation of international drug policy commitments, Member States highlighted in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration their commitment to supporting the CND to continue fostering broad, transparent and inclusive discussions within the Commission. Based on the challenges identified in the declaration, the Commission, in its follow-up process, adopted in June 2019 a multi-year workplan to discuss, through annual thematic sessions, how these challenges can be addressed through effectively implementing the provisions contained in the 2016, 2014 and 2009 documents (*see Chapter II for more information*).

II. Implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration

8. With the decision of Member States to focus on the practical implementation of all international drug policy commitments made since 2009, the Commission, supported by the Secretariat, has been working to support Member States with the implementation of these commitments.

9. Since its last regular session in March 2020, the Commission has been faced with unprecedented challenges due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 related restrictions posed a number of challenges to the well-established intergovernmental processes in the United Nations system, including those of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

10. Since the outbreak, ensuring business continuity of the Commission has been the top priority of the Secretariat to the Commission. By quickly adapting to new ways of working, through online and hybrid meetings, the Commission was able to continue discharging its functions, including the follow-up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, in line with the commitment of Member States to accelerate the practical implementation of all international drug policy commitments made since 2009. While remote participation and a certain degree of digitalization was not novel for the Commission, the COVID-19 pandemic set this process on a fast track, forcing the Office, Member States and stakeholders to quickly adapt to new working methods and communication to ensure business continuity of the Commission.

11. The meetings the Commissions conducted since April 2020 in an online or hybrid format showed an incremental increase of Member States' experts and stakeholders participating in the meetings from around the world. The experiences gained have, however, also made it evident that maintaining an effective framework for intergovernmental meetings in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and adding an online component, is labour intensive and requires adequate and predictable financial resources to support both the professional and the administrative support levels. A conference room paper on the working methods of the Vienna-based functional Commissions of the ECOSOC during the COVID-19 pandemic was brought to the attention of the reconvened sixty-third session of the Commission in December 2020 (E/CN.7/2020/CRP.21-E/CN.15/2020/CRP.2).

(a) CND Thematic Discussions

12. A core part of the Commission-led follow-up process to policy commitments are the thematic discussions that are focused on the exchange of good practices, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments. The annual thematic sessions were initiated after the adoption of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, transforming the CND into a forum for exchange of expertise and experience among all interested stakeholders, including Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental and international organizations, and civil society.

13. Since the first round of CND thematic discussions on the UNGASS implementation in autumn 2016, over 450 Member States' interventions were made, and around 150 representatives of civil society addressed the Commission. In over 140 contributions, experts from various United Nations, international and regional partners, including UNODC, UN-Women, WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, OHCHR, Universal Postal Union (UPU), INCB, INTERPOL, IAEA, Europol, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Council of Europe, OSCE, the European Union, and the Organization of American States (OAS), contributed to the Commission's discussions.

(i) Thematic discussions before 2020

14. The first round of thematic discussions was held in October 2016, six months after the adoption of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, under the leadership of the Chair of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission, H.E. Ambassador Vladimír Galuška (Czechia), facilitated by H.E. Ambassador Pedro Moitinho de Almeida (Portugal), who was appointed as CND Facilitator for post UNGASS matters. The thematic discussions were structured according to the seven thematic chapters of the UNGASS outcome document, calling on stakeholders to share good practices, challenges and lessons learned in their efforts to implement the operational recommendations contained in the outcome document. Additional two rounds of

thematic discussions, focused on the UNGASS chapters and the preparations for 2019, were held in January 2017 and from September to November 2017, under the leadership of the Chair of the sixtieth session of the Commission, H.E. Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen (Norway), and facilitated by H.E. Ambassador Moitinho, the CND Facilitator for post-UNGASS matters. Conference room papers¹ with remarks by the Facilitator, summarizing the deliberations of the thematic discussions on the UNGASS chapters, as well as a background paper² by the Chair, H.E. Ambassador Angell-Hansen, were brought to the attention of the Commission. The presentations made during the meetings are available on the Commission's website.³

15. During its sixty-first session, in 2018, the Commission focused on its preparations for the 2019 Ministerial Segment, which was convened with a view to taking stock of the implementation of the commitments made to jointly address and counter the world drug problem. Under the leadership of H.E. Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro-Massieu (Mexico), Chair of the sixty-first session of the Commission, the CND dedicated a total of eleven meeting days to thematic discussions in preparation for 2019, including (a) normative segments on the implementation of the three international drug control conventions; (b) thematic segments on the implementation of the international drug policy commitments; and (c) organizational segments to prepare for the 2019 Ministerial Segment. The conference room paper submitted by the Chair on the way beyond 2019,⁴ as well as the presentations made during the meetings and short reports of the proceedings are available on the Commission's website.⁵

16. In line with the commitment made in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration to continue to foster broad, transparent and inclusive discussions, the CND, under the leadership of H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet (Sudan), and facilitated by H.E. Ambassador Vivian Okeke (Nigeria), in her capacity as CND Facilitator for 2019 preparations, adopted on 24 June 2019 a multi-year workplan on the organization of interactive thematic sessions, every autumn, in the period up to 2024. The Commission decided to focus the thematic discussions beyond 2019 on how to address the challenges identified in the stocktaking part of the Ministerial Declaration, through the effective implementation of the provisions and recommendations contained in the three policy documents (2016, 2014, 2009). The multi-year workplan of the Commission is available on the Commission's website.⁶

17. The first autumn thematic session following the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration was held from 16 to 18 October 2019, under the leadership of H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet (Sudan). The sessions started with introductory presentations by UNODC; followed by a panel discussion with five experts per panel to be nominated by the Regional Groups, experts from other relevant United Nations entities, specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, as well as one expert nominated from civil society through the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs. The panel discussion was followed by an interactive debate.

18. In line with the multi-year workplan, the Commission focused its discussions on how to address the following challenges: (a) that both the range of drugs and drugs markets are expanding and diversifying; (b) that the abuse, illicit cultivation and production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors, have reached record levels, and that the illicit demand for and the domestic diversion of precursor chemicals are on the rise, and (c) that synthetic opioids and the non-medical use of prescription drugs pose increasing risks to public health and safety, as well as

¹ E/CN.7/2016/CRP.12, E/CN.7/2017/CRP.1 and E/CN.7/2018/CRP.1.

² E/CN.7/2017/CRP.9.

³ www.unodc.org/postungass2016/en/follow-up-process.html#ThematicDiscussion.

⁴ E/CN.7/2018/CRP.14.

⁵ www.unodc.org/postungass2016/en/follow-up-process.html#ThematicDiscussion.

⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/2019/Follow-up_to_2019_Ministerial_Declaration/Intersessional_Meetings/CND_Workplan_2019-2023.pdf.

scientific, legal and regulatory challenges, including with regard to the scheduling of substances. Each day of the meetings focused on one of the three challenges. A Chair's summary of the thematic discussions, held in October 2019, was made available in the form of a conference room paper to the sixty-third session of the Commission.⁷

19. The Commission decided to continue organizing the thematic discussions, despite COVID-19 related restrictions for in-person meetings. The second round of thematic discussions, following the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, was held from 19–21 October 2020. As in previous thematic discussions, the sessions started with introductory presentations by UNODC, followed by a panel discussion, including experts nominated by the Regional Groups, United Nations entities, specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, and an interactive debate. The thematic discussions were chaired by H.E. Ambassador Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart (Switzerland), Second Vice-Chair, on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-third session.

(ii) *Thematic discussions 2020*

20. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the discussions were organized in a hybrid format, combining an in-person component in the Vienna International Centre, in line with the COVID-19 preventive measures of the host country, and with online participation of interested stakeholders worldwide. Thanks to the hybrid format, over 500 experts, practitioners and policymakers from over 100 United Nations Member States, United Nations entities partners including from WHO, UNAIDS, INCB, OHCHR and IAEA, as well as other intergovernmental and international organizations and civil society experts from all over the world registered for the CND thematic discussions. The meeting was webcast to allow all interested stakeholders to follow the discussions, and over 20,000 visits to the livestream of the discussions were recorded over the three-day meeting.

21. In line with the multi-year workplan, the thematic discussions focused in 2020 on how to address the following challenges identified in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration: (a) that drug treatment and health services continue to fall short of meeting needs and deaths related to drug use have increased; (b) that the rate of transmission of HIV, the hepatitis C virus and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug use, including injecting drug use in some countries, remains high; (c) that the adverse health consequences of and risks associated with new psychoactive substances have reached alarming levels; and (d) that the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and palliative care, remains low to non-existent in many parts of the world.

22. A summary by the Vice-Chair, which was not subject to negotiations, has been made available in the form of a conference room paper to the sixty-fourth session of the Commission.⁸ The presentations made during the meetings are also made available on the Commission's website.⁹ In preparation for the thematic discussion, a background note, based on the findings of the 2020 World Drug Report and on contributions by the UNODC substantive sections, was prepared by the Secretariat to the Commission.¹⁰

⁷ E/CN.7/2020/CRP.1: Chair's summary by H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet (Sudan), Chair of the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on the thematic discussions on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration (16–18 October 2019).

⁸ E/CN.7/2021/CRP.1: Chair's summary on the thematic discussions on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration (19–21 October 2020).

⁹ <https://www.unodc.org/hlr/en/Follow-upProcess.html>.

¹⁰ https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/2020/2020.09.24_Background_Note_by_the_Secretariat.pdf.

(iii) Thematic Discussions 2021

23. The next round of thematic discussions is scheduled to be held in autumn 2021, and will be focused on another set of challenges identified in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, namely (a) that 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, are observed; (b) that the value of confiscated proceeds of crime related to money-laundering arising from drug trafficking at the global level remains low; (c) that the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies for illicit drug-related activities is increasing.

(b) CND Subsidiary Bodies

24. To further cooperation in drug law enforcement activities at the regional level, the Economic and Social Council established the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) as subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The regions covered include Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Africa. The meetings take place annually, biannually in the case of HONLEA Europe, and aim to identify salient policy and enforcement issues in their regions. They establish working groups to analyse the issues, and then bring their reports and recommendations to the attention of the Commission. The Subcommission was established in 1973 to serve as a consultative body that would provide the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with a regional perspective on dealing with illicit drug activity in the Near and Middle East.

25. These practitioners' meetings discuss the implementation and follow-up to the Commission's policy documents from their own perspective, provide the regional input to the Commission, and are key to ensuring the effective implementation of international drug policy at the national and regional levels.

26. Following the adoption of the UNGASS 2016 outcome document, in which a number of new and emerging challenges were identified, the Commission's regional practitioners' meetings now also devote time during their working groups on how the responding UNGASS operational recommendations can be most effectively implemented. Issues discussed include addressing the specific needs of women and children; new psychoactive substances; alternatives to conviction and punishment; or challenges related to the availability and accessibility of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.

27. With the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, Member States reiterated their commitment to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation and promote information sharing, in particular among judicial and law enforcement authorities.

Meetings of the subsidiary bodies 2020

28. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were held in an online scaled-down format, back to back, as an extraordinary session from 1–2 October 2020. The meeting, which was presided over by H.E. Ambassador Dominka Krois (Poland), First Vice-Chair of the CND at its sixty-third session, brought together over 400 practitioners from over 70 Member States and provided an opportunity for all participants to jointly discuss the current situation with respect to addressing and countering the world drug problem in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The joint meeting was followed by an interactive discussion taking place within the respective membership of each of the subsidiary bodies. The individual sessions were chaired by representatives from each of the regions: H.E. Ambassador Miguel Camilo Ruiz Blanco (Colombia) for HONLEA Latin America and the Caribbean; H.E. Ambassador Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel, (Afghanistan) for the Subcommission; Victor Okioma, Chief Executive Officer, National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse of Kenya, for

HONLEA Africa; and H.E. Ambassador Ganeson Sivagurunathan (Malaysia) for HONLEA Asia and the Pacific. The next regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies are anticipated to be held in the second half of 2021.

29. Information on action taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission are consolidated in a procedural report by the Secretariat on the extraordinary session, which is made available to the Commission at its sixty-fourth session ([E/CN.7/2021/7](#)).

(c) CND websites and tools

30. Information-sharing is key to delivering better, more efficient responses, facilitating decision-making and fostering innovation. Drawing on the wealth of information shared by the various stakeholders during the CND's regular sessions and intersessional meetings, in particular during the above-mentioned thematic discussions, a key pillar to enhance the implementation of international drug policy commitments are tools and platforms to collect and share the good practices and contributions.

31. The Secretariat has developed a set of tools to support the Commission. In addition to the Commission's regular website ([cnd.unodc.org](#)), the Secretariat has created dedicated websites for the follow-up to the 2016 UNGASS, as well as, following the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration in March, a website focused on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments.¹¹ These websites provide detailed information on the preparatory processes and respective follow-up action taken by the Commission. Statements and presentations delivered during the thematic sessions and intersessional meetings of the Commission are shared on these websites.

32. In 2017, the Secretariat was further requested to develop a "good practice portal" that would function as a platform for Member States to share good practices in the practical implementation of the operational recommendations contained in the 2016 UNGASS outcome document. In line with Member States' commitment to accelerate the implementation of all international drug policy commitments made over the past decade, the Secretariat has been encouraging governments – also in the follow-up process to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration – to use the good practice portal ([www.postungass2016.org](#)) to share information on national implementation efforts as well as their national drug policy/strategy and plans of action.¹²

33. The Commission further continues to use social media to reach out to interested stakeholders, thereby providing up-to date information on meetings, documentation, links to webcasts and contributions posted on the Commission's websites (Twitter: [@CND_tweets](#) and Instagram: [@cnd_unodc](#)).

34. To help mitigate the impact of a lack of in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in-person training, it is essential to ensure easy and hands-on access to important information on the mandates, policies and activities of the two Commissions. The Secretariat to the Commission has since the outbreak of the pandemic worked on the development of eLearning tools and concepts for online training delivery to facilitate information- and knowledge-sharing in an online format. The provision of extrabudgetary resources allowed for the development of an eLearning tool on the normative functions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs under the three international drug control conventions. The course "Introduction to Scheduling" is targeting Member States' delegates involved in the work of the Commission, as well as all other stakeholders interested in the CND and the international drug control system and is available online on the Commission's

¹¹ [www.unodc.org/hlr/index.html](#).

¹² Note: At this moment information needs to be submitted in English, since there is no extrabudgetary funding available to translate contributions received in the other official languages. Subject to the availability of additional resources, we will be able to offer this in the future.

website.¹³ The Secretariat to the Commission is also working on a eLearning tool on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, to provide a resource tool to raise awareness for the policy commitment and facilitate the practical implementation at all levels.

(d) National Implementation Workshops

35. As part of the broader initiative to strengthen the practical implementation of the international drug policy commitments at the global, regional and national levels, the Secretariat to the Commission also offers national implementation workshops for representatives of government institutions involved in drug-related matters, with a view to supporting the implementation of the policy commitments on the ground and to foster domestic coordination among various governmental institutions. The first national implementation workshops were offered by the Secretariat following the adoption of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document. Focused on the implementation of the operational recommendations contained in the seven thematic chapters. National UNGASS 2016 implementation workshops were held between 2016 and 2018 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago, Pakistan and Fiji.

36. The national implementation workshops aim to bring together all relevant national authorities involved in developing, implementing or monitoring national drug policy. They provide a forum for the exchange of expertise and experience and for enhancing inter-agency cooperation, among representatives of relevant governmental actors, including from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Justice, Interior, Education, as well as other relevant authorities responsible for drug-related policies and programmes, such as judiciary, social services and police and authorities in charge of youth and gender.

37. To foster the implementation at the national level of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, Member States committed to strengthening cooperation and coordination among national authorities, particularly in the health, education, social, justice and law enforcement sectors, and between governmental agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

38. Following the methodology and format developed for the UNGASS 2016 implementation workshops, national implementation workshops covering the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, were held in the course of 2019 and 2020 in Bangladesh, Mauritius, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia. In addition, the Secretariat to the Commission organized national implementation workshops in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States in Antigua and Barbuda and in Saint Kitts and Nevis in August 2019.

39. Adapting to the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat also organized an online workshop with Kenya on 29 September 2020.

40. The workshops provide detailed substantive information on the provisions of the relevant policy documents and an analysis of the recommendations contained in these documents. In group exercises, participants jointly assess national action taken and identify gaps and future needs for technical assistance. The workshops aim to support officials participating in the training to develop the expertise needed to advance the practical implementation of all international drug policy commitments, as highlighted in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

¹³ https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/Mandate_Functions/scheduling-elearning-tutorial.html.

(e) Special Events

41. Every year the Commission organizes a number of special events. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission continued to organize special events in an online or hybrid format.

42. In the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, Member States recognized the importance of appropriately mainstreaming a gender perspective into drug-related policies and programmes. On 12 June 2020, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs hosted, together with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, a joint online high-level special event in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The special event was organized with a view to raising awareness for the commitments made in 1995 in Beijing, in particular in relation to the work of the Vienna-based Commissions and discussing how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting women and girls. After introductory remarks by the CND and CCPCJ Chair as hosts of the meeting, the UNODC Executive Director addressed the Commission. The meeting was also addressed by the Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs, in charge of Combating Poverty, Equal Opportunities, and Disabled People, of Belgium, the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, the President of the Human Rights Council, and the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women. The high-level discussion further benefited from the interventions of the Vienna-based International Gender Champions, as well as representatives of Member States and non-governmental organizations.

43. Every year in June, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs organizes a special event to commemorate the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and launch the UNODC World Drug Report. In 2020, 26 June also marked the 75th anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations. To commemorate this important anniversary, the online CND Special Event on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking started with a commemorative event, with the UNODC Executive Director and the Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, addressing the event. Following the commemorative opening, the event continued with the launch of the 2020 World Drug Report, and a dedicated discussion; co-sponsored by the European Union and UNODC, on the impact of COVID-19 on the world drug situation, from various regional perspectives.

44. On 7 October 2020, a virtual briefing on the work undertaken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was organized at the occasion of the Third Committee's deliberations on the world drug problem for delegations of the United Nations in New York and interested stakeholders. The briefing, co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York and UNODC, focused on the work undertaken by the Commission at its 63rd session, including related to its normative functions under the three international drug control conventions, such as the consideration of the recommendations by the World Health Organization on cannabis and cannabis-related substances, as well as on action taken on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, following-up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

45. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalization allowed to reduce exposure and comply with social distancing, while ensuring business continuity. However, especially in multilateral diplomacy, no online meeting will be able to live up to the in-person exchanges and deliberations, when Member States and other stakeholders look for solutions to world problems, engaging in dialogue to make compromises and reach agreements.

46. Activities by the CND Secretariat in support of the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, including the implementation workshops or technical tools to facilitate communication with interested stakeholders, are being implemented with extrabudgetary contributions provided by Member States. With the lessons learned and experience gained over the past year, adding an online component to the in-person meetings of the Commission, also post-COVID-19, would further

enhance the inclusiveness of the work of the Commission, given that the necessary resources are made available to enable the Secretariat to implement the opportunities presented by the special conditions arising from COVID-19 in order to “build back stronger”. The Secretariat to the UNODC Governing Bodies stands ready to discuss these ideas and related funding needs with interested delegations.
