

**Statement of the Asia-Pacific Group
At the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
Vienna, 12-16 April 2021**

*To be delivered on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group by H.E. Manizha Bakhtari, Ambassador
and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Incumbent
Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group in Vienna*

H.E. Ambassador Dominika Krois, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its 64th session,
H.E. 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.

1. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I wish to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Dominika Krois on her election as Chair of the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In the same vein, I also wish to congratulate the other elected members of the Bureau and to express the Group's readiness and support in making this session a success.
2. The Group extends its full support to H.E. Madame Ghada Fathi Waly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna. The Group looks forward to working with you to strengthen our collective efforts to combat the spread of the illicit use of drugs. 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.
3. The Group also appreciates the professionalism of the Secretariat in making excellent preparations for this session despite the difficult situation due to the rapid spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic. We particularly appreciate the Chair's efforts in facilitating discussions on the statement on the impact of the pandemic on our efforts to address and counter the world drug problem.

Madame Chairperson,

4. 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 aimed 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.

5. 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 the increasing provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to those national authorities where necessary.
6. 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 strong 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.
7. 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.

Madame Chairperson,

8. The Group reaffirms 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. The Group underscores the critical importance of complying with these conventions.
9. Furthermore, the Group underlines the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of 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 and the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

Madame Chairperson,

10. The Group fully supports all efforts aimed at reinforcing regional and international cooperation and coordination to effectively counter illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, and trafficking in drugs, addressing supply, demand as well as trafficking in and diversion of scheduled precursor chemicals.
11. The Group underscores the importance of continuing and further strengthening regional, intra-regional, inter-regional and international cooperation, in the context of illicit drugs, including through policy coordination, operational collaboration, and exchange of information where appropriate.

12. The Group remains strongly convinced that upholding multilateralism is essential to improve solidarity, international cooperation framework and reinforce States' capabilities to address and counter the world drug problem.

Madame Chairperson,

13. The complexity of the world drug problem has dramatically 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, money-laundering and, in some case, terrorism including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism. Such measures should be executed 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 policymaking and interventions.
14. The Group reaffirms its determination to address and counter the world drug problem. The Group is committed to working towards universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes and treatment, care and related support services, in full compliance with the international drug control conventions and in accordance with national legislation.
15. We emphasize the need to address the specific needs of the most affected by the world drug problem especially women, children and youth, in promoting balanced and integrated drug-related policies and programmes.

I thank you, Madame Chairperson.
