

**Opening Remarks for the General Debate of the
65th Session of the
United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Presented by Carol Anne Chénard

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Mister Chair, Ministers, Heads of Delegation, Distinguished Delegates, and Civil Society Representatives:

It is with a heavy heart and grave concern, that I address the Commission on Narcotic Drugs today as we are entering the third week of Vladimir Putin's senseless, unprovoked, illegal and violent aggression against Ukraine. This war is a clear violation of the UN Charter. It is an attack on democracy and the tenants of the rule of law and multilateralism, which this body is committed to uphold and strengthen. Vladimir Putin's criminal behavior is causing widespread humanitarian consequences, resulting in the senseless deaths of innocent people, and creating chaos and lawlessness -- an environment in which criminal actors and drug trafficking can thrive. Canada stands with the government of Ukraine and its brave and resilient people and joins the international community in calling on the President of the Russian

Federation to end its illegal war of aggression and pursue a resolution through diplomacy.

With respect to our national statement, the Government of Canada recognizes that the opioid overdose crisis is one of the most serious and unprecedented public health threats in Canada's recent history, with more than 24,626 lives lost since 2016. Tragically, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the overdose crisis, with most jurisdictions in Canada reporting record high rates of overdose deaths and harms. This impact is even greater within Indigenous communities across Canada.

La réponse du gouvernement du Canada à la crise des surdoses est guidée par notre stratégie nationale antidrogue, qui est toujours harmonisée avec les Objectifs de développement durable 2030. La réduction des méfaits est un volet important de la réponse fédérale du Canada à la crise des surdoses. Les mesures de réduction des méfaits, comme la naloxone, les sites

de consommation supervisés, le contrôle des drogues, et les services qui fournissent des médicaments plus sûrs – de qualité pharmaceutique, sauvent des vies et guident des milliers de personnes vers le mieux-être et les nombreuses voies de soins.

Mister Chair, the domestic policies outlined are all tied to the importance of reducing stigma as it is the main reason why so many hide their substance use and avoid seeking help.

Addressing stigma is a critical step in recognizing the fundamental rights and dignity of all people, including people who use drugs.

Canada also recognizes the importance of measures to address the illegal drug supply as part of a comprehensive and balanced approach. Despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19, Canada has continued to work bilaterally and multilaterally with international partners to monitor illegal drug supply trends and the trafficking of opioids, related analogues, and new psychoactive substances. This collaborative approach supports our individual

efforts to quickly identify and mitigate threats to the public health and safety of our populations.

As outlined in the UNGASS outcome document, it is critical for enforcement and supply reduction interventions to be aligned with national and international human rights obligations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Canada welcomes the statement from the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as we remain gravely concerned about the ongoing violations and abuses committed in the name of the world drug problem, including extrajudicial killings and mass incarceration.

Pour conclure, nous attendons avec impatience de poursuivre notre travail avec la Commission, ainsi qu'avec d'autres entités pertinentes des Nations Unies, notamment l'équipe spéciale de coordination du système des Nations Unies, et la société civile, afin d'examiner des approches en matière de politiques sur les drogues, au-delà de la COVID-19, ainsi que des manières de

faire progresser nos objectifs en matière de politique antidrogue, conformément aux Objectifs de développement durable. Je vous souhaite une session fructueuse.

THANK YOU