



Thematic discussions, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 21 September

Agenda item “Responses not in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and not in conformity with applicable international human rights obligations pose a challenge to the implementation of joint commitments based on the principle of common and shared responsibility”

Statement by Switzerland read by Amb. Raphaël Nägeli

Monsieur le Président,
Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs,

As it is the first time I am taking the floor in the framework of the CND, allow me to congratulate you for your election and to express the strong support of the Swiss delegation to your work.

Switzerland condemns Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine and calls on Russia to deescalate the situation immediately, cease all hostilities and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay. Switzerland calls on all parties to strictly respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

On the topic of the thematic discussions, Switzerland wishes to emphasize two elements: First, the importance of the human rights commitments made by Member States in their drug policies and second the importance of “welfare and health” enshrined in the drug conventions.

On the first topic, in the 2016 Special Session on drugs, the international community definitely enshrined the critical place of human rights within our joint commitment to address the world drug situation. This commitment has been reiterated in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. To take another important example, the INCB President said in her [latest statement](#) on International Human Rights Day in 2021 that [QUOTE]“Member States have the responsibility to place human rights at the centre of drug control policies” [END OF QUOTE].

Switzerland is proud of its long track record in promoting human rights in international drug policy, which is consistent with its human rights commitments. With this aim in mind,

Switzerland co-financed, together with Germany the International guidelines on human rights drug policy to integrate human rights commitment into national, regional and global policy programmes. This is just to mention one example of Switzerland's activities.

Switzerland is convinced of a holistic approach that looks at the drug situation from a human rights and public health perspective. For all these reasons, my delegation as well as many others would ask for a specific chapter in the *World Drug report 2023* that would include human rights and drug policy.

I will turn now to the second part of my intervention about the conventions, which emphasize already in their preamble, the importance of the "health and welfare of people". Thus, everyone should be entitled to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, also in the context of drug laws, policies, and practices.

In this respect, Switzerland started promoting and supporting the implementation of harm reduction interventions, such as needle and syringe programs or drug consumption rooms, more than 30 years ago.

Such interventions are part of the comprehensive Swiss approach to address the consequences of problematic substance use. At the time of the introduction of these measures, they came under much criticism at the international level. Now, harm reduction has become mainstream in many countries. Various UN entities, call for the implementation of such measures as a means of reducing the spread of sexually transmissible infections such as the WHO and UNODC in their Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS

Especially the COVID 19 pandemic has also made clear that public health measures can only be successful, if they include all groups within a population, in particular the most vulnerable. This also applies to detainees, in line with the stipulations of the Nelson Mandela Rules.

To conclude, the conventions also refer on many occasions to the World Health Organization acknowledging the importance of inter-agency cooperation, as stated in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. Therefore, Switzerland underlines the importance of a strengthened coordination between UNODC, WHO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other relevant UN agencies.

Thank you.