

**Statement of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during the 66th Session of the
Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
Vienna, 13-17 March 2023**

Mr. Chair, [H.E. Ambassador Ruiz Blanco, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia]

At the outset, I wish to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Ruiz Blanco on his election as Chair of the 66th Session of the Commission, as well as to the other elected members of the Bureau. I also wish to extend my full support to Executive Director H.E. Madame Ghada Fathi Waly and look forward to working with you and the Secretariat to strengthen our collective efforts to effectively address and counter the aggravated drug problem in Afghanistan and in the region.

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the drug situation in Afghanistan has worsened significantly. Opium cultivation in Afghanistan increased and seizures of opiates around Afghanistan indicate that trafficking of Afghan opium and heroin has not stopped. According to UNODC findings, Afghanistan now supplies 80% of global opiate demand. The continued high prices for opium tripled the income made by farmers from opium sales and incentivizes farmers to cultivate more illegal crops. Lastly, the large amounts of precursors and non-scheduled precursors being diverted and smuggled into Afghanistan poses new threats and challenges.

The recent behavior of the Taliban in Afghanistan, including the complete disregard for women's rights and their reluctance to listen to the demands of the international community, has not inspired confidence in their ability to handle the drug problem in the country and the region. Particularly concerning are the serious challenges posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, including terrorism. The Taliban's history of profiting from the drug trade and their involvement in drug trafficking and international terrorist networks raises concerns about their willingness to combat drug production and trafficking.

The drug problem in Afghanistan is a significant issue that affects not only Afghanistan but the entire region and the world. As the world's largest producer of opium, Afghanistan's drug production and trafficking have far-reaching consequences, including fueling the opioid epidemic in many countries.

The international community must work together to support Afghanistan in developing effective drug control strategies and addressing the underlying social, economic, and political factors that contribute to drug production and trafficking. This will require a multi-faceted approach based on the principle of common and shared responsibility that addresses the root causes of drug production, disrupts the supply chain, and provides support to those affected by drug addiction.

The most effective solution to the drug problem in Afghanistan requires the establishment of a truly democratic, inclusive and representative government that upholds the rights and freedoms of all citizens, with a particular focus on women, and ensures that the country does not become a safe haven for terrorist activities that threaten regional and global security, while also effectively combatting the spread of illicit drug use.

I thank you Mr. Chair for your attention.