

**Statement of the Asia-Pacific Group
At the 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
Vienna, 13-17 March 2023**

*To be delivered on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group by H.E. Takeshi HIKIHARA, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of Japan, and Acting
Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group in Vienna*

H.E. Ambassador Ruiz Blanco, H.E. Madame Ghada Fathi Waly, Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Member States of the Asia-Pacific Group, I wish to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Ruiz Blanco on his election as Chair of the 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). 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 continuously working with you to strengthen our collective efforts to combat the spread of the illicit drug use. The Group reaffirms its position that the UNODC is the leading entity within the UN system to address and counter the world drug problem and that the CND has the principle role and prime responsibility in relation to providing policy making guidance to Member States on drug control matters.
3. The Group also appreciates the professionalism and dedication of the Secretariat in making excellent preparations for this session.

Mr. Chair,

4. The Asia-Pacific Group reaffirms our belief that the world drug problem remains a multifaceted 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.

Mr. Chair,

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.
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, and international cooperation framework and reinforce States' capabilities to address and counter the world drug problem.
13. The Group stresses the importance of our work in 2023 in light of preparations for the 2024 mid-term review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. We express our firm commitment to the review process as a stock taking exercise, by identifying the progress achieved thus far, remaining challenges and a viable road map for 2029.

Mr. Chair,

14. The Group expresses its concern over the threat and challenges posed by rapid increase and spread of amphetamine type stimulants (ATS), especially methamphetamine, the proliferation of new psychoactive substances (NPS) as well as the diversion of non-scheduled precursor chemicals.

15. The Group welcomes the important contribution of the UNODC and INCB including early warning advisory on new psychoactive substances (NPS) in identifying new dangerous substances appearing on illicit markets, and improving the capacity of Member States to generate, manage, analyze, report and use information on illicit synthetic drugs. The Group stresses the importance to enhance the capacity of law enforcement, and strengthen cooperation with industries as appropriate to address the emerging challenge of illicit synthetic drugs.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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, Mr. Chair.
