

STATEMENT

by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Kairat UMAROV at the General Debate of the 66th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
(13 March 2023, Vienna)

Mr. Chair, Madam Executive Director of the UNODC, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Miguel Camilo RUIZ BLANCO of Colombia on his election as Chair of this important body, as well as the other members of the Bureau, and assure them of the full support of our delegation.

Distinguished delegates,

The fight against drug production and trafficking is one of the most **important components of our state and foreign policy**. Kazakhstan is committed to the implementation of all three international drug conventions and to enhancing regional and international cooperation in this regard.

I would like to thank Madame Ghada WALY and UNODC for the many important projects within the **UNODC Programme for Central Asia**. We especially appreciate your support to projects on drug control, prevention, treatment and care, as well as enhancing cross-border cooperation, which would not have been possible without generous support from our donors – USA, Canada, Germany, Japan.

We hope that the final stage of Kazakhstan's membership (2020-2023) in the Commission will contribute to the promotion of common interests in this area.

I would like to take this opportunity to seek your support for our **membership bid for the term 2026 to 2029**.

Distinguished delegates,

The current instability in the world once again demonstrates the importance of the Commission's activities. UNODC's latest research survey showed that opium cultivation in Afghanistan in 2022 grew by 32% despite Taliban's *de jure* ban. The income from the drug business accounts for a third of the country's GDP. Therefore, the drug business continues flourishing in our region.

In this regard, the role of regional counter-narcotic initiatives increases significantly. One such organization is the **Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for combating the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors (CARICC)**, located in Almaty. The Center is UNODC's flagship project, which was created and operates with its support. CARICC provides coordination for international controlled deliveries, allows for information exchange, and produces its own research available to all its 7 Member States and 21 observers.

Over the years, the Centre has shown great results in coordinating over 50 counter-narcotic operations, which led to seizure of 700 kg of heavy drugs and arrests of 53 members of transnational organized crime groups. For example, last year, an international controlled delivery to the Netherlands led to detention of two suspects and seizure of 30 kg of heroin and 500 kg of cannabis.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite you to join **CARICC's side event on March 14.**

Distinguished delegates,

Last year we adopted a **Comprehensive Plan to Combat Drug Addiction and Drug Trafficking for 2023-2025**. It is aimed at stabilizing the drug situation, countering the import and transit of heroin, suppressing clandestine production and distribution of synthetic drugs, improving the efficiency of treatment and rehabilitation. The budget allocated for these activities is around 55

billion tenge, or **125 million US dollars**.

In addition, Kazakhstan made amendments to allow for preventive methods in the fight against new types of drugs. We also modernized the state control over drug trafficking and strengthened responsibility for the distribution and advertising of drugs via Internet.

Distinguished delegates,

Kazakhstan is committed to strengthening the fight against drug crime, in which hundreds of our citizens, especially minors, are fallen victims.

In this regard, we are ready to expand international cooperation in this area, and promote the implementation of Commission's decisions.

Thank you.