

Bijlage 1

**General statement the Netherlands**

**66<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (13-17 March 2023)**

**Agenda item 3**

Distinguished Chair, ladies and gentlemen,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the Presidency of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following:

Mr Chair,

In 2019 we reaffirmed the drug policy commitments we made in the past decade -with the UNGASS Outcome document as the most comprehensive policy document -and agreed to step up our efforts.

Next year we will review the progress we made in accelerating the implementation of our commitments and decide our course for the next 5 years.

When we look at the global **drug situation today** the World Drug Report and other data sources indicate that the problems and challenges we face as an international community have by and large not diminished since 2019. This is true not only for countering drug production, trafficking and related crime and violence, as we also experience in the Netherlands, but also for access to and availability of controlled substances and for prevalence of drug use, drug dependence, health and social harms to users and drug related deaths.

In order to assess where we stand in the implementation of our commitments, we need a thorough and **evidence-based stock taking** on each of these elements to help guide our work for the next 5 years.

Strengthening a balanced focus on health and human rights on the one hand and law enforcement and crime prevention on the other hand is key for our work.

This balanced approach on the **health** side prioritizes evidence based prevention interventions, voluntary access to quality treatment and care, risk- and harm-reduction interventions and other measures to protect and support people who use drugs, and reducing stigma. In the Netherlands our effective harm reduction policy also includes supervised drug consumption rooms and drug checking services.

On the **security** side the focus is on the dismantling of organized crime groups, drug trafficking and money laundering routes, countering subversive crime, protecting people working on the frontline, increasing resilience of public officials and the private sector against the corruptible influence of organized crime, stricter border controls, information sharing and preventing youth from getting involved in drug-related crime.

**Human rights** are central to our work as a Commission and should be part of the stock taking. It includes looking at national drug law reform, specifically alternatives to coercive sanctions, proportionate sentencing, the abolition of the death penalty, and decriminalization of drug use. The expertise of other UN bodies and documents such as the UNGASS outcome document, the UN Common Position, and the international guidelines on human rights and drug policy give us concrete guidance in this respect, and we should fully take advantage of them.

**International cooperation** and exchange between States Parties, United Nations bodies, civil society and the scientific community is of utmost importance to attain our common goals. The intersessional meetings we had the past years are a good example of fruitful exchange an excellent opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and best practices that can contribute to accelerating the implementation of our shared commitments.

Mr Chair,

We all want our citizens to be safe and well. When it comes to the risks and harms of drugs (to individuals and society at large) and the **effectiveness of our drug policies** we need to be guided by data, expertise from the UN system as a whole, good practices, civil society knowledge and lived experiences from people who use drugs and affected communities.

Learning from each other – from both successes and failures – and collaboration on shared challenges are crucial to improve our responses to the world drug situation. We must continue to explore innovative solutions to address the challenges we face.

Thank you, Mr Chair.