

**Sixty-Sixth Commission
on Narcotic Drugs**

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New Zealand Statement

delivered by

Mr Ross Bell

Group Manager

Public Health Strategy and Engagement

New Zealand Ministry of Health



NEW ZEALAND

Thank you Chair

Tēnā Koutou Katoa – greetings to you all. Aotearoa New Zealand is pleased to address the sixty-sixth Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Chair

New Zealand strongly and unequivocally condemns Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which is a direct attack on the UN Charter and the international rules-based system that we rely on for our peace, security and prosperity. Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine affected by the ongoing conflict.

Chair,

New Zealand's approach to drug policy is founded on the principles of innovation, compassion, and proportion. We are committed to evidence-based solutions developed in cooperation with communities affected by drug use. With changes to our drug law in 2019, we have seen significant reductions in drug convictions and increased access to harm reduction and treatment services for people who use drugs.

New Zealand is also implementing far-reaching reforms to our public health system to better meet the needs and aspirations of all people, particularly Indigenous people, who experience inequitable health outcomes.



Alongside these structural reforms, we are realigning our mental health and drug dependency treatment system around Indigenous concepts of holistic wellbeing.

This approach, called *Kia Manawanui Aotearoa*, recognises that wellbeing can only be built on the foundation of all people having access to basic resources and living in healthy environments. This means supporting self-determination, reducing exclusion and stigma of all kinds, investing in families and communities, and focussing on harm minimisation approaches.

Chair,

Aotearoa New Zealand values the significant partnership between government, non-government and peer-based organisations in delivering harm reduction services. Thanks to this cooperation, we have successfully implemented our drug checking system, enabling people who use drugs to make informed choices and to alert communities to new, emerging or unknown substances.

Information from drug checking contributes to our early warning system on harmful drugs. This is a successful joint operation between the Health, Customs and Police authorities and civil society, supported by health and social sector professionals. This integrated system of legalised and government-funded drug checking and the early warning system has to date prevented overdose fatalities from a number of notifications about dangerous substance, most notably fentanyl.



New Zealand's opioid treatment services have long been recognised for their recovery-focused harm reduction approach to people dependent on opioids. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, these services demonstrated great responsiveness and flexibility to ensure the continued supply of medications and support to tāngata whai ora [people who use those health services.].

Chair,

At the heart of this Commission's work are human rights, and we reaffirm the centrality of human rights in our work as we prepare for next year's mid-term review. In this vein, New Zealand would welcome greater attention being given to human rights, for example in a thematic chapter in a future UNODC World Drug Report. And like many other countries, New Zealand remains very concerned about use of the death penalty for drug offences. We continue to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty for all offences.

New Zealand looks forward to a productive CND. Ngā mihi nui.

