

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY
MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER
FOR HOME AFFAIRS JOSEPHINE TEO
AT THE 66TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

Mr Chair,

1. I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the 66th CND.

Global Trends in Drug Supply and Abuse

2. The current global trends in drug supply and abuse are worrying.

3. Around 284 million people consumed drugs last year. This is a quarter more than in 2010. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated half a million drug-related deaths in 2020.

4. Compared with previous generations, drug users today are younger today. Higher prevalence of cannabis abuse was recorded for adolescents (12 to 17 years of age) across all regions.

Global hospital admissions related to cannabinoid dependence and withdrawal, and for cannabis-related psychotic disorders, have also increased by more than eightfold.

5. Are these trends inevitable? Or have we not prevented the preventable? Could it have been partly due to the increasing liberalisation of drugs, especially cannabis, for non-medical use?

6. Should we have acted against the increased potency of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in products targeted at vulnerable youth, such as edibles and vape?

Singapore's approach towards drugs

7. These questions make us think harder about our drug policies.

8. Singapore is a transport hub situated close to a major drug production region. This makes us an attractive transit and transshipment node that could be exploited by drug syndicates. We cannot change this fact.

9. At different times in our history, we have seen drugs destroy lives and deprive people of their right to live in a safe environment. To this day, we cannot eliminate this risk.

10. For example, as recently as 2019, a 25-year-old man in Singapore, after taking lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), stabbed his mother and punched his grandmother, resulting in both their deaths.

11. To mitigate such risks, we adopt a multi-pronged, holistic harm prevention approach aimed at reducing drug demand and supply.

12. We do this through:

- a. Preventive drug education through extensive partnerships with the local community and the use of social media to reach out to the public about the harms of drugs;
- b. Tough laws and robust enforcement to disrupt drug supply and demand. Laws are regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to be relevant; and

- c. Structured and evidence-informed rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

These include education, employment training and social skills programmes. We also work closely with our community to support drug abusers' recovery.

- d. Our experience has taught us that art can play an instrumental role in the rehabilitation process. Through art, participants develop discipline and social skills to aid their reintegration.

I encourage delegations to visit Singapore's art exhibition which showcases the artwork created by individuals undergoing our rehabilitation programmes.

International Cooperation

13. Drug trafficking is a transnational crime, and the drug problem is a worldwide problem.

14. In this regard, Singapore reaffirms our commitment to adhering to the three international drug conventions and acknowledges the important role of the INCB in monitoring adherence to the conventions.

15. The CND is an important platform. The upcoming mid-term review in 2024 of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration is an important step towards achieving a drug free world for our children and future generations.

Conclusions

16. Before concluding, I would like to remind delegates of Singapore's candidature for the term 2024-2027. We look forward to your support and hope to do more to contribute to the work of the CND as a member of the Commission.

17. Thank you.