



**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj,
Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN
at the 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
(Agenda Item 3 - General Debate)
Vienna, 13-17 March 2022**

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Ministers, Executive Director of the UNODC, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to what has been said by Sweden on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make some comments in my national capacity.

Before I begin with my official statement, I would like to point out that we consider Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as a technical commission. However, we cannot pretend to live in a vacuum and isolation from the pressing situation endured by the people of Ukraine. I would like to underline that Slovenia condemns in the strongest possible terms the unjustified and unlawful war against Ukraine.

Mr Chairperson,

Slovenia highly appreciates CND's work. It facilitates an important exchange of experience in the search for the best possible solutions to the problems of production, trade and use of illicit drugs at the global, regional and national levels. It also treats this complex challenge in a comprehensive manner and from the viewpoint of fundamental human rights and principles of public health. With this being said, Slovenia not only supports the work of UNODC politically, but also financially, and it is my pleasure to announce that Slovenia will again renew its extrabudgetary financial support for the work of the UNODC.

Like other countries around the world, Slovenia is not immune to a variety of drug-related challenges. In responding to this problem my country employs an approach that is interdisciplinary, comprehensive and balanced. The Slovene Ministry of Health systematically promotes scientifically proven measures and cooperation among different stakeholders, including governmental experts, scientists and non-governmental actors. It is also for this reason that Slovenia is organizing its traditional side-event on Early prevention on Tuesday, 14 April. The aim is to explore what constitutes effective and efficient early prevention and to streamline implementation of evidence-based programmes, in line with the UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. We fully support the UNODC's

Conference Room Paper: A call for action to positively redirect the developmental trajectory of children through “Promoting comprehensive and scientific evidence-based early prevention”. We are positive that the document is an excellent departure for a discussion on the need to support further development of the field of early prevention.

Mr Chairperson,

We are convinced that reducing the supply of illicit drugs is one of the guiding principles in comprehensive and balanced drugs policy. In this context it is important to mention that the traditional Balkan drug trafficking route is still active in both directions. Slovenia is mostly a transit country, but also a target country for illicit drugs. In this regard, Slovenia has built up knowledge and best practices, which we are willing to share. This is especially important in the framework of enhanced regional cooperation, particularly in the South-East Europe. Slovenia commends the UNODC for all its endeavors in the region, which we strongly support.

To conclude, we believe that the challenges posed by the world drug situation can only be solved through international cooperation, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Progress must be based on human rights, verifiable facts, and promotion of a broad dialogue between all stakeholders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.