

**Roundtable discussion the mid-term review of the implementation of all
international drug policy commitments**

Thursday 1 February 2024, 8:30-9:30 EST, virtual

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is a great honor to speak during this roundtable discussion. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the important linkages between the work of the Commission on Population and Development and international drug policy commitments.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, adopted in Cairo in 1994, has extraordinary breadth and depth across a spectrum of population issues, while having people and their dignity and rights at its heart. Consequently, the issue of drug use cannot be discussed in isolation from conversations, consensus, and public policies regarding population. The CND Ministerial Declaration itself expresses "deep concern at the high price paid by society and by individuals and their families as a result of the world drug problem". In addressing persistent and emerging challenges related to the world drug problem, we must never lose sight of human rights, and must take into account non-discrimination and the guarantee of individual rights.

The Programme of Action addressed the issue of illicit drugs in the context of its major themes, such as child poverty, health including chronic diseases and spread of HIV, the family, and urbanization. The CPD itself has addressed illicit drugs in relevant resolutions, including on health, morbidity and mortality (2010) and adolescents and youth (2012). The issue of illicit drugs was also present in several of the regional agreements negotiated in the lead-up to the 20-year review of ICPD in 2014.

The interlinkages between the population and development agenda and the international drug policy commitments are multiple, and they are also reflected in the 2030 Agenda. Let me give a few examples:

1. The Programme of Action emphasizes many aspects of SDG3 such as sexual and reproductive health; maternal and child health; HIV prevention, treatment and care; and lifelong health including prevention and treatment of NCDs. Strong attention is given especially to adolescents and youth, and the importance of equipping them with knowledge and life skills to adopt responsible behaviors that will promote future health and well-being. In this context, the public health crisis generated by problematic drug use is an element that must be considered as an urgent issue for the population agenda.

2. Gender equality and women's empowerment (covered under SDG5) are also at the core of the Programme of Action, consistent with drug agreements that focus on women affected by drug use as users or as family or community members.
3. ICPD Chapter X on international migration was an important precursor to later global agreements, urging Governments to prevent trafficking and ensure the respect of basic human rights.

But most of all, the Programme of Action is a guiding blueprint for development, eradication of poverty and addressing social and structural inequalities, and therefore must be taken into account when constructing drug policies. It can play a crucial role in mitigating factors that contribute to problematic drug use. It can address the conditions that cause people and communities to turn to the drug trade, consistent with agreements on alternative development to give people viable options to escape reliance on drug production or trafficking.

Dear colleagues,

Let me finish by stressing how demography serves as a pivotal element fostering cooperation among ECOSOC bodies, including CPD and CND. A crucial technical contribution of the population agenda to drug policy discussions involves the generation of data. The availability of reliable and timely demographic data, possibly disaggregated by major social and economic components, is essential to ensure more precise identification of factors such as age, gender, geographic location, and socio-economic conditions enabling the identification of trends and prevalence of drug and illicit substance use, thereby strengthening the response and making it more assertive.

At its 30th anniversary, the ICPD Programme of Action is important more than ever. It touches on issues central to individual, national and cultural identities that are too often relegated to the sidelines as too sensitive to negotiate, and in this context the CPD plays an important role in keeping these topics in the international conversation. It is time for member States to recommit to accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Thank you for your attention.