Distinguished Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In addition to what has been said on behalf of the EU, I would like to make several remarks in my national capacity.

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to focus on one of the questions for this session and on mainly the first topic Mr Tedy introduced: What concrete initiatives have you implemented to protect children from the non-medical use of controlled substances and/or to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances? (2nd pillar as introduced)

When we are talking about human rights in the context of the drug situation we must look at the issue also from the perspective of children and young ones and their right to safe environment, education, empowerment, their right and capability to say NO. (some of these Human Rights have not been mentioned in the introduction). We must raise our children to become free, independent and resilient and we must teach their parents and communities how to help them do that.

I would like to talk about recognizing the value of evidence-based prevention, including early education and family skills programmes, so, about that EARLY PREVENTION.

Mr Chairperson,

For Slovenia prevention is one of the cornerstones around which our national drug policy has been built and is also included in latest National programme on illicit drugs for 2023 – 2030, that was approved by our Parliament unanimously.

It prioritises programmes to enhance social and emotional competences that are evidence based and cost efficient, early prevention in schools, social and health systems, providing more accessibility of these programmes for vulnerable groups and strengthening programmes for early prevention for children and families of drug abusers.

We have different programmes for early prevention like School for parents at prenatal and infancy stage, where we address the issue of health risks associated
with substance use, because it influences both – mother and child. Strengthening and scaling up women's mental health services in the perinatal period has proven positive short and long-term effects on the health of women, children, parents and families, increasing the chances of a child's good development, preventing the deepening of inequalities and transgenerational transmission of harm and trauma.

To follow up Slovenia has a programme called Health in Kindergarten, where we work with young children in different preventive activities, so that they soon acquire a healthy lifestyle. This together with close interaction with parents is the most important.

Programme Healthy Schools Network reinforces health messages through projects and activities aimed at healthy lifestyles, and by encouraging the involvement of parents, the local community, the health service and other interested institutions and individuals.

The Incredible Years programme is meant for children with emotional and behavioural problems caused by aggression. They are at high risk of failure, dropping out, poor mental health, delinquency, violence and substance abuse. There is strong evidence that parents and teachers can be trained through evidence-based early interventions to provide appropriate and supportive responses in their interactions with children and help them succeed in life.

We have set up a school curriculum on prevention called "Unplugged" that is focused on minimising the number of children and young people that begin using drugs in the first place and prolonging the time from experimenting to regular usage of drugs.

We also have a project that is focused on Capacity building for police officers in local and school environment with the emphasis on prevention of drug abuse and cooperation of Police with key stakeholders in local community.

There is no easy fix and there are no fast solutions to the challenges we are facing today but we are convinced that evidence-based prevention and early prevention will work in the long run, as also Mr Tettey said.

To conclude, Mr Chairperson,

I am extremely glad that Slovenian resolution on Early prevention last year got such great support. And I am also very happy that Justice mentioned the briefing next week on the new UNODC prevention framework, called the CHAMPS initiative, that "aims to demonstrate the value of an amplification of prevention services in building the resilience of children from birth to adolescence to prevent the use of drugs and other psychoactive substances". Camilo, challenge taken! Will continue being champion of early prevention and in this case of the CHAMP.

On the note of support to UNODC and their work: I thank you Mr. Chairperson.