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Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

High-level segment

High-level Declaration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the 2024 midterm review, following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration

We, the Ministers and government representatives participating in the high-level segment of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna on 14 and 15 March 2024, have met to undertake a midterm review of progress made in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted at the ministerial segment of the sixty-second session of the Commission, in 2019.

I. Our shared commitments

1. We reaffirm the commitments made therein to accelerating, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, the full implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, aimed at achieving all commitments, operational recommendations and aspirational goals set out therein.
2. We also reaffirm our commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, all human rights, fundamental freedoms, the inherent dignity of all individuals and the principles of equal rights and mutual respect among States.
3. We further reaffirm our determination to address and counter the world drug problem and to actively promote a society free of drug abuse in order to help ensure

* E/CN.7/2024/1.

that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity, and reaffirm our determination to address public health, safety and social problems resulting from drug abuse.

4. We reiterate our commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals and the rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies.

5. We underscore that the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and other relevant instruments constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control system, welcome the efforts made by States parties to comply with the provisions and ensure the effective implementation of those conventions, and urge all Member States that have not yet done so to consider taking measures to ratify or accede to those instruments.

6. We recognize that there are persistent, new and evolving challenges that should be addressed in conformity with the three international drug control conventions, which allow for sufficient flexibility for States parties to design and implement national drug policies according to their priorities and needs, consistent with the principle of common and shared responsibility and applicable international law.

7. We reaffirm our commitment to a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary and scientific evidence-based approach to the world drug problem, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, and recognize the importance of appropriately mainstreaming a gender and age perspective into drug-related policies and programmes and that appropriate emphasis should be placed on individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, with a particular focus on women, children and youth, with a view to promoting and protecting health, including access to treatment, safety and the well-being of all humanity.

8. We also reaffirm the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters and our support and appreciation for the efforts of the relevant United Nations entities, in particular those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the leading entity of the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem, and further reaffirm the treaty-mandated roles of the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization.

9. We reiterate our resolve, in the framework of existing policy documents, *inter alia*, to prevent, significantly reduce and work towards the elimination of illicit crop cultivation and the production and manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, as well as to prevent, significantly reduce and work towards the elimination of the diversion of and illicit trafficking in precursors, and money-laundering related to drug-related crimes; to ensure access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, and address existing barriers in this regard, including affordability; to strengthen effective, comprehensive, scientific evidence-based demand reduction initiatives covering prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures on a non-discriminatory basis, as well as, in accordance with national legislation, initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse; to address drug-related socioeconomic issues related to illicit crop cultivation and the production and manufacture of and trafficking in drugs, including through the implementation of long-term comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented and balanced drug control policies and programmes; and to promote, consistent with the three international drug control conventions and domestic law, and in accordance with national, constitutional, legal and administrative systems, alternative or additional measures with regard to conviction or punishment in cases of an appropriate nature.

10. We express deep concern at the high price paid by society and by individuals and their families as a result of the world drug problem, and pay special tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives and those who dedicate themselves to addressing and countering the world drug problem.

11. We underscore the important role played by all relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement, judicial and health-care personnel, civil society, the scientific community and academia, as well as the private sector, supporting our efforts to implement our joint commitments at all levels, and underscore the importance of promoting relevant partnerships.

12. We reiterate that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

13. We recall further the resolve to review in 2029 progress made in implementing all our international drug policy commitments, and resolve to improve and accelerate their implementation in the period from 2024 to 2029.

II. Stocktaking

14. We recognize that the world drug problem continues to present challenges to the health, safety, security, and well-being of all humanity.

15. We take note of the contributions made, including during the Commission's regular sessions and thematic discussions¹, which are testament to our collective efforts in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem and support our review of the progress made in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments.

16. We express gratitude to the Chairpersons of the 62nd to 66th sessions for facilitating thematic discussions from 2019 to 2023, with a view to accelerating the implementation all international drug policy commitments, and extend our appreciation to all participants, comprising representatives of Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization, other relevant entities of the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations, for their contributions to this review process.

17. We underscore the continued relevance of the challenges identified in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration² and we recognize that despite significant efforts undertaken by the international community, and while progress has been made considerable gaps remain in the implementation of many of our international drug policy commitments.

18. We reiterate our concern about persistent and emerging challenges related to the world drug problem as set out in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, including the following:

(a) that both the range of drugs and drugs markets are expanding and diversifying;

(b) that the abuse, illicit cultivation and production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors, have reached record levels, and that the illicit demand for and the domestic diversion of precursor chemicals are on the rise;

(c) that increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms,

¹ Available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/session/sessions.html and www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/Mandate_Functions/thematic-discussions.html.

cybercrime and money-laundering and, in some cases, terrorism, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, are observed;

(d) that the value of confiscated proceeds of crime related to money-laundering arising from drug trafficking at the global level remains low;

(e) that the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and palliative care, remains low to non-existent in many parts of the world;

(f) that drug treatment and health services continue to fall short of meeting needs and deaths related to drug use have increased; and

(g) that the rate of transmission of HIV, the hepatitis C virus and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug use, including injecting drug use in some countries, remains high;

(h) that the adverse health consequences of and risks associated with new psychoactive substances have reached alarming levels;

(i) that synthetic opioids and the non-medical use of prescription drugs pose increasing risks to public health and safety, as well as scientific, legal and regulatory challenges, including with regard to the scheduling of substances;

(j) that the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies for illicit drug-related activities is increasing;

(k) that the geographical coverage and availability of reliable data on the various aspects on the world drug problem requires improvement;

(l) and that responses not in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and not in conformity with applicable international human rights obligations pose a challenge to the implementation of joint commitments based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.

19. We recognize the evolving nature of these challenges and that some of them have intensified and spread with unprecedented impact on public health and public security.

20. We further express concern about, among others,

(a) the proliferation and surge in the illicit manufacture, trafficking, and consumption of synthetic drugs;

(b) the significant increase in illicit cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking, and consumption of plant based drugs;

(c) the increasing sophistication and violence of drug trafficking networks;

(d) the increasing criminal misuse of technology and technological advancements for illicit drug-related activities;

(e) inadequacy of financial and other resources and international technical assistance allocated to support long-term, comprehensive and sustainable strategies that address various aspects of the world drug problem, including, but not limited to public health, welfare and safety;

(f) inadequate access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, due to the lack of affordability and other existing barriers in this regard;

(g) and the human toll related to all aspects of the world drug problem;

21. We recognize that illicit drug-related activities can adversely affect the environment and local communities, and acknowledge the need to address these impacts and their root causes.

22. We recognize that misperceptions of drug-related risks, along with other behavioral and socioeconomic factors, in societies can lead to increased or more

harmful illicit drug use and requires more scientific evidence-based evaluation and further systematic and sustainable preventive approaches to protect people, in particular children and youth from illicit drug use.

23. We recognize the efforts of all Member States, through scientific evidence-based, approaches to prevention, treatment, care and recovery as well as other public health interventions to address the harm associated with illicit drug use as part of comprehensive, systematic and sustainable demand reduction initiatives.

24. We also recognize the efforts of Member States in countering the challenges posed by illicit drug trafficking and other illicit drug-related activities through law enforcement efforts as part of a comprehensive and sustainable supply reduction strategy.

25. We acknowledge the continuously changing environment, and the necessity for more proactive, scientific evidence-based, comprehensive and balanced approaches to our joint efforts, and we strive to ensure that our strategies and actions remain agile, effectively responding to new developments and persistent challenges, including related to illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and consumption patterns and trends.

26. We recognize the negative impact of transnational criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking on public security, human dignity, safety and wellbeing of societies, and their role in the surge of violence in some regions, including in some producer, transit, and consumer countries, the need to embrace a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing and countering the expansion of such activities.

III. Way forward

A. Cooperation at all levels

27. We recognize the urgent need to take further ambitious, effective, improved and decisive actions, including where appropriate, innovative measures in accordance with applicable international law, to propel concrete, comprehensive, balanced, integrated, multidisciplinary and scientific evidence-based policies and initiatives, in order to promote a better implementation of all international drug policy commitments placing the health and wellbeing, human rights, public security and safety of all members of society, in particular those most affected by or at risk of illicit drug-related activities at the center of our efforts, to ensure that no one affected by the world drug problem is left behind and to commit to enhancing our efforts to bridge the gaps in addressing persistent and emerging trends and challenges.

28. We stress the importance of strengthening, including through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and, as appropriate, its subsidiary bodies, the regular exchange of information, good practices and lessons learned among national practitioners from different fields and at all levels to effectively implement an integrated and balanced approach to the world drug problem and its various aspects to further facilitate meaningful discussion among those practitioners.

29. We encourage further contributions of relevant United Nations entities, international financial institutions and relevant regional and international organizations, within their respective mandates, to the work of the Commission and the efforts of Member States to address and counter the world drug problem, to strengthen international and inter-agency cooperation, and encourage them to make available relevant information to the Commission, including during the future thematic discussions of the Commission, in order to facilitate its work and to enhance coherence within the United Nations system at all levels with regard to the world drug problem.

30. We commit to supporting the Commission on Narcotic Drugs continuing, within its mandate, as the principal policymaking body of the United Nations with prime

responsibility for drug control matters, including, but not limited to, fostering broad, transparent and inclusive discussions within the Commission, involving, as appropriate, all relevant stakeholders, such as law enforcement, judicial and health-care personnel, civil society, academia and relevant United Nations entities, on effective strategies to address and counter the world drug problem at all levels, including through the sharing of information, best practices and lessons learned.

31. We reaffirm our commitment in line with the principle of common and shared responsibility to implement tangible and efficient measures, within our respective means, to counter criminal organizations involved in illicit drug trafficking, and to address the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, and we express our resolve to strengthen international cooperation in this regard.

B. Data collection and analysis

32. We recognize the indispensable role of quality, timely, relevant, disaggregated, including geographically disaggregated, and reliable data in driving scientific evidence-based policies to better understand persistent, new and emerging trends, patterns and dynamics, and we commit to sharing data, in particular through the UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire and other UNODC, INCB, and WHO tools, as appropriate and achievable.

33. We commit to promote effective and sustainable capacity-building to strengthen national data-collection, analysis and sharing in order to improve the response rate and quality, and expand the geographical and thematic reporting of related data in accordance with all commitments, including through the above mentioned tools and in close cooperation with the UNODC, the INCB and the WHO, as well as with other relevant partners, and through the cooperation between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Statistical Commission.

34. We underscore the importance of conducting domestic scientific evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of our own actions with a view to improve them and determine, where appropriate, the effectiveness of our drug policies and tools as well as the impact on progress made in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments.

C. Technological innovation

35. We recognize the importance of benefitting from technological innovation and know-how to address persistent, new and emerging trends and challenges, and we acknowledge the need for increased international cooperation aimed at addressing and overcoming effectively challenges, obstacles and impediments at all levels to leverage these advancements for our joint efforts.

36. We acknowledge the importance of addressing existing technological gaps and the need to strengthen Member States' capabilities, through specialized, targeted, effective and sustainable technical assistance to Member States upon their request.

D. Capacity-building and resource mobilization

37. We reaffirm our commitment to continue mobilizing resources, including for the provision of technical assistance and capacity building, at all levels, to ensure that all Member States can effectively address and counter emerging and persistent drug-related challenges.

38. We reiterate our commitment to increasing the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States, upon request, in particular those most

affected by the world drug problem, including by illicit cultivation and production, transit and consumption.

39. We recognize the importance of increased efforts to promote viable domestic economic alternatives to the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, and trafficking of drugs, including , through long-term comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable alternative development programs and development-oriented interventions and initiatives that benefit all and in particular those local communities and regions affected by or at risk of the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropics substances and the illicit manufacture and production of and trafficking in drugs, as well as other illicit drug-related activities in urban and rural areas, bearing in mind the United Nations guiding principles on alternative development and noting its 10th anniversary.

40. We request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue providing enhanced technical and substantive support to the Commission, for the implementation of and conducting follow-up to all international drug policy commitments, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

41. We recognize the importance of supporting Member States, upon request, in their efforts to achieve the aims and implement the international drug control conventions, including through and in cooperation with UNODC, as well as the WHO and other relevant UN entities and international and regional organizations within their respective mandates, by providing specialized, targeted, effective and sustainable technical assistance, including through effective actions aimed at enhancing capacity building, mobilizing adequate financial assistance, and on a voluntary and mutually agreed basis transfer of technology³.

E. Review in 2029

42. We reiterate our resolve to review, within the CND in 2029, our progress in implementing all our international drug policy commitments, in line with the 2019 Ministerial Declaration and taking into account the outcomes of the 2024 mid-term review.

³ Some delegations noted the recommendations on the need for technology transfer on mutually agreed terms as highlighted in para 45 of the Bridgetown Covenant “From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity to all” UNCTAD document of 10 November 2021;