

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM ON THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

28 September 2015, Geneva

H.E. AMBASSADOR ARTHAYUDH SRISAMOOT, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its 58th session

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address the Human Rights Council today, in my current capacity as the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The United Nations General Assembly special session on the world drug problem is rapidly approaching. In a few months, the international community will convene in New York to review the progress made and assess the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem.

Addressing the world drug problem successfully can and should be done in full respect for human rights. This need is highlighted in the first operative paragraph of the 2009 Political Declaration.

Full compliance with human rights law and full compliance with the international drug control framework go "hand in hand". There is no need for a balancing act, it is not "one" or "the other", but they "are" mutually supportive and reinforcing.

Promoting "full respect for all human rights, fundamental freedoms, the inherent dignity of all individuals" is very prominent in the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. At its most recent session in March 2015, the Commission emphasized the importance of human rights in a number of resolutions on various topics, such as evidence-based treatment and care for children and young people with substance use disorders, the quality and reliability of drug analysis results, as well as alternative development,

This is also the case for the work the Commission is undertaking in terms of UNGASS preparations. As you will know the CND is the UN organ with the prime - responsibility for drug control matters. It has been requested by the Assembly to lead the preparatory process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an - open-ended manner. The Commission has been benefitting from the contributions made by a wide range of stakeholders, including UN organs, entities and organizations, international and regional organizations and -last but not least- civil society, in particular a large number of non-governmental organizations.

The Commission has embarked on an intensive journey, under the leadership of my predecessor, Ambassador Khaled Shamaa, now Chair of the Board tasked by the CND with UNGASS preparations. The Board, which includes one representative of each regional group, reaches out and works closely with all Member States and other - stakeholders. I hope you all had the opportunity to attend during lunch time the information briefing by the UNGASS Board on the methods of work in preparation for the special session, hosted by the Permanent Mission of Portugal in cooperation with UNODC.

Respect for human rights has been rightly identified as one of the "cross-cutting - issues" in UNGASS preparations. This has been recognized by the CND at its most - recent 58th session in March 2015. During its "*Special segment on UNGASS preparations*". It devoted one of the 5 interactive discussions to cross-cutting issues, namely to: "drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities".

In accordance with the modalities contained in the resolution recommended by ECOSOC for adoption by the General Assembly at its upcoming 70th session, one of the five interactive multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions at UNGASS will also be devoted to the same cross-cutting theme on "drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities". Human rights issues will be equally present in each of the other four round tables, on "Drugs and Health", "Drugs and Crime", "New challenges, threats and realities" and "Alternative Development".

Human rights will also play a central role in the work the CND is currently initiating on the production of a "*short, substantive, concise and action-oriented outcome document comprising a set of operational recommendations*" for adoption at UNGASS.

Elements that are discussed in this context, include the following – amongst others:

- we need to protect the health and welfare of mankind against risks associated with drug use. through implementation of scientific-based and health-oriented prevention, treatment social rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.
- It is our responsibility to ensure access to treatment for people who use drugs, including those in prisons, and access to measures outlined in the WHO, - UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide aiming to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among drug users
- Caring about the health and welfare of people means that we must give enough attention to prevention. In accordance with Article 33 of the Convention on the rights of the child, our most valuable – children - are to be protected from the illicit use. of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and prevented from being used in the illicit production and trafficking of drugs. It is our collective responsibility to ensure the right of children and adolescents to be protected from the dangerous effects of drugs and provide them the opportunity to develop life, skills, enjoy equal positive opportunities and supporting parenting.
- It is also our collective responsibility to address the situation in which three quarters of the world's population live in countries where access to medicines for relieve of pain and for palliative care is low or non-existent. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 recognizes the medical use of narcotic drugs as indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering and foresees that adequate provision must be made to ensure their availability for this purpose. The 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement highlighted the need for Member States, the CND and the INCB, in cooperation with UNODC and WHO, to address the situation, and promote measures to ensure the availability and accessibility of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while simultaneously preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking. As was stressed during a special CND event hosted by the Permanent Missions of Norway and Australia last week, in which experts from WHO and UNODC participated, technical assistance and enhanced capacity building needs to be a top priority and resources need to be made available for this purpose.
- Ensuring a balanced approach between supply and demand reduction means that it is also our collective responsibility to ensure full enjoyment of the right of people to a safe and sound society. Drug-related organized criminal activities and violence undermine the legitimate economies, stability and security of our people. Addressing the threat posed by new psychoactive Substances, issues related to insecurity and inSurgency associated with drug trafficking, while tackling corruption and money-laundering and fostering international cooperation are only a few among many elements the

international community, as a whole, should address in the upcoming period.

In preparation for UNGASS 2016 and as the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, I call on you, States Members to take this opportunity, provide support to the UNGASS Board in its preparations, and be actively involved in the work of the Commission. Let us ensure a productive debate during the period leading up to UNGASS, as well as during the Special Session itself. Pursuant to your resolution 28/28, we look forward to receiving the summary by the Office of the High Commissioner on the panel discussion today.

Thank you.