

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

We, the Ministers and government representatives participating in the ministerial segment of the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, have met at the United Nations in Vienna to take stock of the implementation of the commitments made over the past decade to jointly address and counter the world drug problem, in particular in the light of the 2019 target date set in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem of 2009,¹ and to enhance our efforts beyond 2019;

We reaffirm our shared commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem, which requires concerted and sustained action at the national and international levels, including accelerating the implementation of existing drug policy commitments;

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,² 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;

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 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;

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;

We underscore that the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol,³ the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,⁴ the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988⁵ 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;

We emphasize that 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

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8* (E/2009/28), chap. I, sect. C.

² General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

Political Declaration and Plan of Action⁶ and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,⁷ represent the commitments made by the international community over the preceding decade to counter the world drug problem and address, in a balanced manner, all aspects of demand reduction and related measures, supply reduction and related measures and international cooperation identified in the 2009 Political Declaration, as well as additional issues elaborated upon and identified in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, held in 2016, and recognize that those documents are complementary and mutually reinforcing;

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;

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;

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;

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

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2014, Supplement No. 8* (E/2014/28), chap. I, sect. C.

⁷ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

with national, constitutional, legal and administrative systems, alternative or additional measures with regard to conviction or punishment in cases of an appropriate nature;

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;

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;

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

Stocktaking

Bearing in mind the biennial reports submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on progress made by Member States in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the annual *World Drug Report* and the annual reports of the International Narcotics Control Board, and highlighting the experiences, lessons learned and good practices in the implementation of the joint commitments shared by Member States and other stakeholders at the annual sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as well as the thematic sessions held during the sixtieth and sixty-first sessions of the Commission,

We acknowledge that tangible progress has been achieved in the implementation of the commitments made over the past decade in addressing and countering the world drug problem, including with regard to an improved understanding of the problem, the development, elaboration and implementation of national strategies, the enhanced sharing of information, and the enhanced capacity of national competent authorities;

We note with concern persistent and emerging challenges related to the world drug problem, including the following: that both the range of drugs and drugs markets are expanding and diversifying; 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; that increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and money-laundering and, in some cases, terrorism, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, are observed; that the value of confiscated proceeds of crime related to money-laundering arising from drug trafficking at the global level remains low; 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; that drug treatment and health services continue to fall short of meeting needs and deaths related to drug use have increased; and 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; that the adverse health consequences of and risks associated with new psychoactive substances have reached alarming levels; 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; that the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies for illicit

drug-related activities is increasing; that the geographical coverage and availability of reliable data on the various aspects on the world drug problem requires improvement; 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; and to that end:

Way forward

We commit to safeguarding our future and ensuring that no one affected by the world drug problem is left behind by enhancing our efforts to bridge the gaps in addressing the persistent and emerging trends and challenges through the implementation of balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary and scientific evidence-based responses to the world drug problem, placing the safety, health and well-being of all members of society, in particular our youth and children, at the centre of our efforts;

We commit 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 2016⁸, aimed at achieving all commitments, operational recommendations and aspirational goals set out therein;

We commit to further strengthening cooperation and coordination among national authorities, particularly in the health, education, social, justice and law enforcement sectors, and between governmental agencies and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, at all levels, including through technical assistance;

We commit to strengthening bilateral, regional and international cooperation and promoting information-sharing, in particular among judicial and law enforcement authorities, in order to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and money-laundering, and in some cases terrorism, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, and to effectively identify, trace, freeze, seize, and confiscate assets and proceeds of drug-related crime and ensure their disposal, including sharing, in accordance with the 1988 Convention, and, as appropriate, their return, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption⁹ and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;¹⁰

We commit to continuing to mobilize 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;

We commit 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;

⁸ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2225, No. 39574

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;

We commit to strengthening the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with the World Health Organization and the International Narcotics Control Board, within their treaty-based mandates, as well as with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to continue to facilitate informed scheduling decisions on the most persistent, prevalent and harmful substances, including synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, precursors, chemicals and solvents, while ensuring their availability for medical and scientific purposes, and commit to strengthening the dialogue of the Commission with the International Narcotics Control Board on the implementation of the three international drug control conventions, and with relevant international organizations;

We commit to ensuring that the Commission-led follow-up on the implementation of all commitments to address and counter the world drug problem made since 2009 is done in a single track, which entails the following:

- (a) Devoting a single standing agenda item at each regular session of the Commission to the implementation of all commitments;
- (b) Ensuring that collection of reliable and comparable data, through a strengthened and streamlined annual report questionnaire, reflects all commitments;
- (c) Requesting the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to adapt the existing biennial report, transforming it into a single report, to be prepared on a biennial basis, within existing resources, on the basis of the responses provided by Member States to the strengthened and streamlined annual report questionnaire on progress made to implement all commitments at the national, regional and international levels, the first of which reports should be submitted for consideration by the Commission at its sixty-fifth session, in 2022;

We commit to promoting and improving the collection, analysis and sharing of quality and comparable data, in particular through targeted, effective and sustainable capacity-building, in close cooperation with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, as well as with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant partners, including through the cooperation between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Statistical Commission, with a view to strengthening national data-collection capacity in order to improve the response rate and expand the geographical and thematic reporting of related data in accordance with all commitments;

We request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in close cooperation with Member States, to continue, in an inclusive manner, expert-level consultations on strengthening and streamlining the existing annual report questionnaire and to reflect on possibilities to review other existing tools for the collection and analysis of drug control data as deemed necessary to reflect and assess progress made in the implementation of all commitments contained in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, and to submit an improved and streamlined annual report questionnaire for consideration at the sixty-third session of the Commission, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources;

We also request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to provide enhanced technical and substantive support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in supporting the implementation of and conducting follow-up to all commitments, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources;

We further request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to enhance technical assistance and capacity-building for the implementation of all commitments, in consultation with requesting Member States and in cooperation with other relevant United Nations entities and stakeholders, and to invite existing and emerging donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for this purpose;

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, upon their request, to strengthen international and inter-agency cooperation, and encourage them to make available relevant information to 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;

Following up to this Ministerial Declaration, we resolve to review in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2029 our progress in implementing all our international drug policy commitments, with a mid-term review in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2024.