



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the
63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 2–6 March 2020

Agenda item 7: Inter-agency cooperation and coordination of efforts in addressing and countering the world drug problem

Distinguished Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Last year, by adopting the Ministerial Declaration, we committed to strengthening our action to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination is essential for us to be able to do so effectively.

Distinguished Chair,

We are committed to address the world drug situation in a way that reflects the complexity of the drugs phenomenon and focuses on a broad range of policy issues. In practice, this means we will continue to focus on health, including prevention, early detection, interventions risk and harm reduction, treatment, rehabilitation, social integration and recovery. We also need to guarantee that drugs policy fully respects human rights, and that we foster proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences, and alternative or additional measures to coercive sanctions. At the same time, a strong link needs to be made with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. In parallel, and with equal effort, we need to continue to implement supply-reduction measures, including effective law enforcement, and to counter money-laundering, facilitate judicial cooperation, and promote alternative development.

Distinguished Chair,

We support the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as the policymaking body, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the leading entity in the UN system, in addressing the world drug situation. However, it is clear that the broad range of policy issues we need to focus on also intersects with the mandate and expertise of other UN entities and international and regional organisations. These include WHO, INCB, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Women and OHCHR. It is therefore crucial for the CND and UNODC to further develop and benefit from synergies and cost-effectiveness with these UN entities, and international and regional organisations.

For that reason, the EU and its Member States support the UN System's new Common Position on Drugs, and the UN Task Team in charge of its implementation. The EU organised two awareness-raising events last year, in Vienna and in Geneva, and plans on organising a third one in New York in the coming months. We believe this is important to underline interagency cooperation and collaboration and illustrate it through concrete examples of how UN agencies can cooperate on the implementation of drug-related commitments.

Distinguished Chair,

Indeed, interagency cooperation and collaboration can bring concrete results.

For example, synergies between WHO, UNODC and the INCB are instrumental in providing technical guidance and assistance to tackle existing barriers and to guarantee the availability and accessibility of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes for those in need. Collaboration between UNODC and OHCHR is key to ensuring respect for the dignity and human rights of people who use drugs, in all aspects of drug and social policies. As regards Alternative Development, coordination between UNODC and UNDP is necessary to give a coherent response to the challenge of illicit crops, while fostering security and development.

Overall, interagency cooperation and collaboration is key to rebalancing the public health and human rights dimension of the world drug situation so that they receive the same attention and commitment as the law enforcement side, as well as to reaching our objectives as per the Sustainable Development Goals.

Distinguished Chair, dear colleagues,

We strongly encourage the contributions of relevant United Nations entities, international financial institutions and relevant regional and international organisations, within their respective mandates, to the work of the CND, to strengthen international and inter-agency cooperation and to enhance coherence within the United Nations system at all levels.

Thank you very much, Distinguished Chair.
