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**Statement by Mr. Werner Sipp
President
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

**INCB side event to UNGASS 2016:
The drug control conventions: a multi-faceted framework
for the promotion of the health & welfare of humankind**

**19 April 2016, 11:30-12:30 hrs.
Conference Room 11**

Introduction

Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you together with other Members of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) to today's side event on the drug control conventions. Let me introduce my colleagues from the Board:

Professor Sri Suryawati, First Vice-President
Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, Second Vice-President,
Mr. Bernard Leroy, our rapporteur, and members
Professor Richard P. Mattick,
Professor Francisco E. Thoumi.

In my capacity as president of INCB and on behalf of the Board, it is an honour for me to address you today on the **multi-faceted framework for the promotion of the health & welfare of humankind** in the light of the **drug control conventions**. I will make a short introduction; then some of my colleagues would add a few words, after which we should have at least 35 minutes for discussion.

In 2015, INCB addressed the issue of "[health and welfare of mankind](#)"¹ in chapter one of our Annual Report. Then and now, we emphasized that the ultimate goal of the 3 conventions is to ensure "**health and welfare of humankind**". This means that drug policy has to put the focus on prevention and health.

I do not need to tell you about the complexity of the drug problem. It affects health, development, security, political stability, the environment, societies, families, education; the list is long. The drug problem cannot be tackled in isolation; strategies and measures must be comprehensive, integrated and balanced.

Proportionality (of sanctions) is central to the drug treaties and must be central to a balanced approach. This unfortunately has not always been the case. Sanctions (punishment) must be proportionate to the severity of the offence and the degree of criminal responsibility of the offender. Disproportionate responses undermine the aims of the conventions and the rule of law. What we wrote in our [2007 Annual Report](#)² remains the

¹ [E/INCB/2015/1](#).

² [E/INCB/2007/1](#).

seminal guidance to States. It is good to note that more and more governments are reforming their approaches to criminal justice in this spirit.

Today, as openers to our discussions, my colleagues will briefly address the challenges associated to drug control and health with reference to elements contained within the UNGASS draft outcome document, namely:

- state responses to drug-related criminal activity;
- regulatory aspects of drug control;
- health & welfare; and
- the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.

INCB wants to contribute to a differentiated assessment of the drug control problem in light of our mandate and experience. We aim to enhance knowledge on various aspects of the world drug problem in order to promote national and international drug policies that are balanced, respect human rights and protect the health, safety and welfare of humankind.

Before giving the floor to my colleagues, let me say that the Board takes note of the fact that the UNGASS draft outcome document which will be discussed these days reaffirms the foundational function of the international drug control conventions and the treaty-mandated role of the INCB.

On behalf of INCB, please allow me to welcome you once again. After our short statements, we look forward to your questions and comments.

Thank you.