

## *Check against delivery*

### **Statement by Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, President of the International Narcotics Control Board**

#### **Commission on Narcotic Drugs Thematic discussions 2022**

**Implementation of all our international drug policy commitments, following-up  
to the 2019 ministerial declaration:**

***“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”***

#### **Opening segment**

**21 September 2022**

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege to participate on behalf of the International Narcotics Control Board in this important thematic discussion of the Commission.

The three international drug control conventions are among the most widely ratified international instruments and this was recognized in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, as the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

This highlights the fact that the drug control conventions remain relevant today and continue to represent a broad-based consensus within the international community.

Their implementation over the past decades has greatly contributed to advancing the stated objectives of the conventions to safeguard the health and welfare of humanity.

Yet the multifaceted, complex, and dynamic nature of the world drug problem has posed challenges to the international community’s attempt to find solutions to the intricate problems it poses.

In the evolution of the approaches to drug control, Member States made legislative and policy choices to implement the provisions of the conventions. These were often heavily emphasizing supply reduction efforts and also led to stigmatization and marginalization of drug users in the social context. Along the way, Member States have re-examined the approaches to drug use and dependence. The overly punitive, stigmatizing approaches are giving way to approaches with a greater human rights emphasis and introducing a focus on prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of drug users.

Today, the understanding of the complexity of the world drug problem has evolved and favours a variety of approaches to the various aspects of the world drug problem.

The flexibility provided for in the drug control conventions, to adopt tailored and measured approaches, in particular to drug-related behaviours when committed by people who use drugs, have not been completely utilized. Indeed the conventions, as they were written, do give discretion to States in adopting policies which advance the goals of demand reduction through a health-centred approach while continuing to effectively target large-scale drug-related criminality.

The drug control conventions grant the Board an important oversight function in monitoring the implementation by State Parties of their legal obligations, a mandate which is also acknowledged and reaffirmed in the UNGASS outcome document.

The Board's mandate and functions are summarized in article 9 (4) of the Single Convention which states that "the Board, in cooperation with Governments, and subject to the terms of this Convention, shall endeavour to limit the cultivation, production, manufacture and use of drugs to an adequate amount required for medical and scientific purposes, ... and to prevent illicit cultivation, production and manufacture of, and illicit trafficking in and use of drugs."

Since its inception, the Board has worked with Parties and partner organization in the fulfilment of this mandate and in its capacity as an independent, quasi-judicial monitoring body.

The Board has striven to take into account evolving realities and matters of international agreement in its work, including the considerable developments made in the fields of treatment, criminal justice and human rights since the drug control

conventions came into effect. The Board's positions on various issues have evolved over the years to reflect international legal and policy developments, scientific and technical progress and new evidence-based approaches to drug use and dependence, to name but a few.

The Board is very concerned about a number of significant challenges to full implementation of the drug control conventions and human rights obligations.

One of these is persistent disparity in availability of controlled substances for medical purposes, which has been amplified in recent awareness-raising events led by the Chair of the Commission.

This afternoon I will share the Board's perspective on the implementation of the conventions, including the worrying developments in a small number of countries that are permitting the non-medical use of drugs. Tomorrow I will focus on the human rights violations that continue to be seen in some countries in violation of the provisions of the conventions that are purportedly committed in the name of drug control.

Discussions such as these have the potential to advance shared understanding among Member States, international and regional bodies and civil society. I look forward to hearing your perspectives over the next two days, and wish all participants a fruitful discussion. I hope that the insights gained can contribute to future efforts of the Commission and States Parties to improve implementation of the drug control conventions and the related drug policy commitments in accordance with human rights obligations, and ultimately achieve the health and well-being objectives envisaged by the drafters and signatories of the conventions.

The Board stands ready to support this process through its work.

Thank you for your attention.