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**Statement by Prof. Jallal Toufiq, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

**Commission on Narcotic Drugs Thematic Discussions on the
Implementation of All International Drug Policy Commitments,
Following-up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration**

**Opening segment
23 October 2023**

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to express on behalf of INCB my deep condolences to every single family that has lost a loved one in these very difficult times we are going through.

The International Narcotics Control Board is committed to supporting Member States in implementing the three drug control conventions and the international drug policy commitments. In those commitments, Member States underscored the conventions as the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

The fundamental concern of the conventions is to safeguard the health and welfare of humankind, and I encourage you to keep this concern at the forefront of your discussions.

As we approach the mid-point review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, and at the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030

Agenda, it is heart-breaking to note the slow progress on Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and wellbeing.

I myself have spent decades supporting patients in improving their mental health and overcoming drug and substance use disorders, and have witnessed how many of the issues discussed by the Commission here in Vienna and the Vienna International Centre are impacting the lives of individuals, families and communities around the world.

Over the coming days, together with my friend Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, the former President of the Board, and our secretariat, I will be sharing INCB's perspectives on the progress made in addressing the challenges identified in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

On the expanding and diversifying range of drugs and drug markets, I will discuss the threat posed by trafficking in new psychoactive substances and non-medical synthetic opioids, and the support provided to national authorities under the INCB GRIDS Programme.

On the record levels of illicit production and manufacture of drugs and trafficking in drugs and precursors, and increasing domestic diversion of precursors, I will highlight the work of the INCB precursors control programme, the ongoing efforts under article 12 of the 1988 Convention, new efforts under article 13 to address equipment used in illicit drug manufacture, and the support for Government cooperation with industry, for example through our new industry mapping initiative.

Our operational support under these programmes can help Member States address the growing threat posed by trafficking in synthetic drugs and their precursors, which will be the topic of our consultations with Member States during the upcoming INCB session. I hope to see many of you there.

Later this week, we will share perspectives gleaned under the INCB GRIDS Programme on the increasing exploitation of Internet-based technologies for trafficking in new psychoactive substances and non-medical synthetic opioids, and measures that we are taking to support Governments, including through partnerships with these legitimate industries. The misuse of the Internet and social media is also the topic of the thematic chapter of the INCB Annual Report for 2023.

On responses not in conformity with the drug control conventions, we will address the challenges posed by the legalization in some countries of the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes and the need to ensure availability of controlled substances for medical, scientific and industrial purposes. On human rights, INCB reiterates that drug control measures must respect international human rights obligations, and that any drug control measure that violates human rights also violates the drug control conventions.

I look forward to our discussions this week, and to continuing to support Governments, during the mid-term review and beyond, in safeguarding health and wellbeing.

Thank you.