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**Statement by Dr. Viroj Sumyai, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

Sixty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

**Special Event:
Countries at the Centre: INCB, UNODC and WHO supporting Member States
in implementing UNGASS 2016**

12 March 2018, Vienna Austria

Brief welcome remarks

It is a pleasure to be here today to speak about the collaboration among INCB, UNODC and WHO on supporting Member States' implementation of the operational recommendations of the UNGASS outcome document.

I am grateful to the Executive Director of UNODC and the Director-General of WHO for accepting my invitation to engage in a tripartite cooperative initiative.

Statement

Several aspects of the UNGASS document call for collaboration between INCB, UNODC and WHO. Let me focus on demand reduction and improving access to controlled substances for medical purposes.

The first operational recommendation is about demand reduction, an area monitored by the Board and in which WHO and UNODC provide important assistance to countries.

The thematic chapter of the INCB Annual Report 2017 deals with the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of people affected by drug use disorders.

Our Report shows that treatment of drug dependence is highly cost-effective. Most importantly, treatment of drug dependence should be seen as part of "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health", as an element of the right to health.

The second operational recommendation is about ensuring access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical purposes. This has been a priority of INCB for many years, central to the mandate of the Board and a core objective of the drug control conventions.

In 2016, INCB issued a special report on the "Availability of Internationally Controlled Drugs: Ensuring Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes" as an input to UNGASS 2016.

We analyzed the global situation and made recommendations on how to address the current imbalance, including issues of legislation and regulations, adequate estimates and

assessments of actual needs as well as the affordability and national supply management systems for controlled substances, which were mirrored in the UNGASS outcome document.

The analysis of the latest trends in the consumption of opioids for pain relief show a dramatic increase in the consumption of fentanyl over the past 20 years. At a lower level, the consumption of oxycodone has also increased significantly since the 1990s, surpassing morphine consumption in 2009. On the other hand, the consumption of morphine has remained relatively stable over the same period.

INCB is working with Governments to facilitate availability of psychotropic substances such as anti-epileptics, anxiolytics and sedatives, substances that are essential in the treatment of various neurological and mental health conditions, including epilepsy, anxiety and Alzheimer's disease. Regrettably, these substances are also the subject of abuse.

Consumption data on psychotropic substances are essential for any meaningful analysis of their availability. In 2016, more than 80 countries submitted data on consumption compared to 35 countries in 2010. Submission of complete and consistent of consumption data for psychotropic substances is essential for understanding issues of adequate access, availability and use. We strongly encourage Governments to develop methods for collection of consumption statistics. The Board and its secretariat will assist competent national authorities in this endeavour.

Reporting on the consumption of psychotropic substances will enable the Board to analyse consumption trends and, ultimately, promote their adequate availability for medical and scientific purposes.

I am also glad to inform that INCB is preparing a new special report on the initiatives taken by Member States to implement the relevant recommendations of the UNGASS outcome document. This report will provide an update on our [Availability publication of 2016](#).

To this end, INCB sent a questionnaire to Member States requesting inputs on the progress achieved in implementing those recommendations. Their responses will provide the basis for the new report, which will contain updated analyses of trends in the production, trade and consumption of controlled substances for medical use. We will make the report available in time for the high-level session of the Commission in March 2019.

INCB is also supporting the implementation of the recommendation on access and availability through training and capacity-building. Through INCB Learning, we have provided training, since 2016, for officials from 68 countries through seminars delivered in East Africa and South and South-East Asia, Oceania, Europe and Central America. This has been done in collaboration with WHO and UNODC. A training workshop for African French-speaking countries is in the pipeline. INCB's notes the contributions of Australia, Belgium, France, the United States, Thailand and Guatemala and calls on these and other Governments to renew their support.

The Board continues to emphasize the need to ensure the rational use of medicines containing controlled substances. We hope to encourage further cooperation. WHO has a major expert role to play here, promoting rational use, developing guidelines and supporting the development of training and curricula for health care professionals. We hope to work with them in this. Governments are also fundamental to adequate access, availability and rational use by ensuring that their medical and nursing schools provide appropriate training to their health care professionals and ensure rational prescribing through supervision of prescribing and dispensing practices to prevent diversion and reduce the risk of abuse.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your participation and express my hope that cooperation between INCB, WHO and UNODC will continue to benefit countries in the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document. Ultimately, your continued efforts to implement the provisions of the drug control conventions will contribute to improve the health and welfare of individuals around the world.

Thank you.