

Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria  
Telephone: +43-1-26060, Telefax: +43-1-26060-5867 / 5868  
E-Mail: [incb.secretariat@un.org](mailto:incb.secretariat@un.org) Internet Address: <http://www.incub.org/>

*Check against delivery*

**Statement by Mr. Cornelis P. de Joncheere, President,  
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

**Commission on Narcotic Drugs Special Event commemorating the United Nations  
International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking,  
Launch of the UNODC World Drug Report 2019**

**26 June 2019, Vienna, Austria**

Mr. Chair, Mr. Fedotov, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate Mr. Fedotov and the staff of UNODC on the launch of the 2019 World Drug Report.

UNODC has a unique role to play as the key United Nations programme for supporting Member States across the whole spectrum of drug control issues. INCB is committed to close cooperation with CND and UNODC, which is why I have made a point to be present today at this launch event.

The drug control conventions assign specific, differentiated mandates to the Commission, INCB, the World Health Organization and, through the United Nations Secretary-General, to UNODC. I appreciate the support shown by UNODC, under the leadership of Mr. Fedotov, to the work of INCB. We operate in a difficult time of resource constraints, particularly given the financial crisis across the United Nations secretariat, and we face an increasingly complex global drug situation, as clearly evidenced in the presentation by UNODC. As the United Nations drug control organs, CND, INCB and UNODC must ensure that we each build on our strengths and expertise, towards implementing the provisions of the treaties and achieving their health and welfare objectives in line with the sustainable development goals. We all have an important contribution to make, and coordination is crucial to avoid duplication and optimize our effectiveness.

On the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, and noting this year's theme of "health for justice and justice for health", INCB has issued a [message reflecting on the importance of justice in ensuring positive health outcomes for all people, including the most vulnerable](#). The Board remains concerned that many people affected by drug use and drug trafficking suffer from a lack of justice, through extrajudicial actions, disproportionate responses, barriers to treatment and reintegration, and stigma. I have reiterated INCB's calls on States to ensure that responses to drug abuse and drug trafficking are proportional, as required by the conventions, and are founded upon the respect for human rights and dignity.

The World Drug Report 2019 shows the nature and extent of the world drug problem, and how far we have yet to go, underscoring the need for broader international cooperation to advance responses to the world drug problem. The report notes that illicit opium production remains at record levels. As you know, INCB, with the agreement of the Government of Afghanistan, recently invoked article 14 bis of the 1961 Convention with regard to Afghanistan. We urge the competent United Nations organs and specialized agencies to provide further technical and financial assistance to help address the challenges in the country. I call upon your support in addressing this critical situation.

We are very pleased to see the 2019 World Drug Report, and we are obviously concerned about its findings. A sign of our effective cooperation is the fact that UNODC could use the

Board's data on the availability of narcotic drugs for medical and scientific purposes. Improving access to controlled medicines is of critical importance for many countries and an area where we are cooperating closely, as emphasized in the joint statements that we have made at the 61<sup>st</sup> session. But we have also seen that this is an area where there can be a downside, and several of the colleagues have already referred to the opioid crisis, when this access is not well regulated. INCB already a number of years ago initiated programmes to deal with this – [project Ion](#), IONICS, and the [Global OPIOIDS project](#), and we stand ready with all of you to collaborate to counter this growing threat.

There have been joint statements made by the heads of UNODC, WHO and INCB at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission last year, and we have made a joint commitment to supporting Member States in implementing the UNGASS 2016 recommendations, again reinforced by the Ministerial Declaration of this year's CND.

Several of you also referred to the need for a holistic approach, talking about gender and youth issues. We have just launched, a few months ago, the [annual report of INCB](#), with a [supplement on access to controlled medicines for medical and scientific purposes](#). Next year's INCB Annual Report will have a special chapter on drugs and youth.

We have much work to do, individually and together. Once again, congratulations to Mr. Fedotov and the staff of UNODC on the publication of the World Drug Report, and thank you Chair of the Commission for organizing this commemorative event.

Thank you.