

Vienna International Center's Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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During March 2nd through the 6th, Vienna International Center hosted the annual session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). The 63rd CND session gathered 1500 participants from 137 countries, 370 civil society representatives, colleagues from 17 int'l and regional organizations, 17 IGOs, and 99 NGOs according to Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/39 to address drug issues around the globe.

This year, the CND session, chaired by Mansoor Ahmed Khan Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in Vienna, was started

with a virtual message from the World Health Organization addressing the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Highlighting the significant commitment of the UN in tackling drug problems such as "threats from new psychoactive substances" and encouraging the member states to contribute to this session to achieve this shared objective.

Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, the new Executive Director of UNODC, said during the opening session that "international standards developed by UNODC and WHO help deliver rights-based prevention and treatment of drug use disorders and enable reintegration and rehabilitation to ensure the health and welfare of our societies."

The opening session went on with a speech delivered by Mr. Cornelis de Joncheere, the President of International Narcotics Control Board emphasizing the "focus on substance use prevention and treatment for young people".

"The Board expresses its serious concern with the continued reports of great human rights violations perpetrated in the name of drug control. We call for the immediate end to extrajudicial responses to suspected drug criminality and sue," he continued.

CND 2020 provided a platform for the Member states and NGOs to evaluate the implementation of adopted Ministerial Declaration 2019 on strengthening action at national, regional and international levels and bridging the gaps in the implementation of conventions and enhancing efforts to address and tackle the world drug use problems.

At its regular session, the commission adopted 5 resolutions:

- strengthening partnerships w/private sector
- improving the collection and analysis of data
- youth drug prevention
- access of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes
- alternative development

The Member states also voted on putting 13 substances under international control.

In addition to the formal proceedings, more than 100 side events and 50 exhibitions were organized and co-sponsored by the member states, UN entities, international and regional organizations, and civil society, covering worldwide drug problems. Moreover, on the margins of UNODC's CND 2020, Youth forum 2020 with 45 participants addressed the policy-makers and expressed their vision of building a society free of substance use and drug use disorders.