



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 April 2015

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 6 March 2015, I am pleased to forward a Concept Note for the High-Level Thematic Debate in support of the process towards the 2016 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem scheduled for 7 May 2015.

The Event will provide an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to discuss and share experiences on achievements and challenges in addressing the world drug problem.

Additional information, including a provisional programme, will be available in due course. I have the honour to invite Member States to participate at the highest possible level.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Sam Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

CONCEPT NOTE

High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate in support of the process towards the 2016 Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem 7 May 2015

Introduction

Pursuant to resolution 69/201 of the General Assembly, the President of the General Assembly, in cooperation with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), as the central policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters and having the leading role in the preparation of the special session of the Assembly, will hold a high-level thematic debate in support of process towards the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem with Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

Background

Through its resolution 67/193, the General Assembly decided to convene in early 2016 a special session for reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

In March 2014, the CND adopted a Joint Ministerial Statement of its high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. The Joint Statement reiterated that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed in a multilateral setting through effective and increased international cooperation and demanded an integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing, balanced and comprehensive approach to supply and demand reduction strategies.

The Joint Statement also recognized that, 15 years after the commitments made in 1998 at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to address the world drug problem, notwithstanding the ever-increasing efforts and progress made by States, relevant international organizations and civil society, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity, in particular youth.

The Joint Statement also took note of the ongoing discussions in some regions on how to address the world drug problem, in the light of the current situation and policies, and emphasized the importance of a broad, transparent, inclusive and scientific evidence-based discussion among Member States, with inputs from other relevant stakeholders, on the most effective ways to counter the world drug problem.

At its 69th Session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/200, in which it stressed the importance of the special session in 2016 as a milestone on the way to 2019, which had been set as the target date in the Political Declaration for the review of its implementation.

In the resolution, the General Assembly stated that the CND as the central policymaking body within the UN system dealing with drug-related matters shall lead that process by

addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner. In this regard, the President of the General Assembly was invited to support, guide and stay involved in the process. The Assembly noted with appreciation the efforts made by the CND to ensure adequate preparation for the special session in 2016, and requested that the Commission continue to take all necessary measures to prepare for the session. In preparation for the special session, the 58th Session of the CND adopted resolution 58/XX, entitled “Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem to be held in 2016”.

Objectives of the High Level Thematic Debate

The high level thematic debate will contribute to the ongoing General Assembly 2016 special session preparatory process discussions led by the CND.

It will address the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments by, *inter alia*, addressing measures to reach an effective balance between supply and demand reduction measures and addressing all the consequences of the world drug problem, including in the health, social, human rights, economic, justice and security fields.

The event will also serve as an opportunity to discuss and highlight concrete measures that can strengthen international cooperation and promote the effective implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action’s underlying principle of ‘common and shared responsibility’ when addressing the world drug problem.

Format

This will be a one-day event consisting of an opening session, a high-level segment, two interactive multi-stakeholder panel discussions and a closing session.

The morning panel will focus on achievements and challenges by Member States in countering the world drug problem.

Some questions to guide the panel discussion are as follows:

1. What have been the major achievements and challenges in addressing the world drug problem?
2. To this end, what lessons have been learned and what best practices in dealing with the drug world problem can be shared?
3. What should be the priorities in reviewing the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action?

The afternoon panel will focus on the importance for Member States of implementing a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach in addressing the world drug problem.

Some questions to guide the panel discussion are as follows:

1. What approaches are being followed to facilitate a multi-dimensional approach, covering the health, social, human rights, economic, justice and security fields?

2. What coordination mechanisms exist at national level; which departments/actors are involved; and what are the challenges they face?
3. What kind of cooperation, if any, exists between Governments and other stakeholders, including the non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, youth, the private sector; and what lessons could be shared?

To foster an interactive debate, participants are encouraged to make succinct interventions, not exceeding three minutes. Complete statements can be posted on the PaperSmart portal.

Outcome

President's Summary will be circulated to all Member States and stakeholders, as well as transmitted to the CND for consideration.

Participation

Consistent with the existing practice and in line with the resolutions 69/200 and 69/201 of the General Assembly, the high level thematic debate will be open to Member States, organs, entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders. Participants are encouraged to attend at the highest possible level.