

High-level Thematic Debate in support of the process towards the 2016 Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem

H.E. Mr. Khaled SHAMAA

Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations (Vienna) and Chair of the Board tasked by the CND with UNGASS Preparations

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure for me to speak to you today in my capacity as Chair of the Board tasked by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with UNGASS preparations.

I would like to thank H.E. Mr. Kutesa, the President of the General Assembly, for the invitation.

I would also like to thank all of you for the interesting statements and the lively discussion today.

As we were reminded today: while there have been many achievements in addressing the world drug problem, many challenges remain. The deliberations today have shown again that, while we all face challenges, the realities on the ground are different from region to region, and within regions, from country to country. **Learning from each other – discussing the challenges faced, successes gained and lessons learnt - is crucial in our preparations for 2016.**

In that spirit, we have committed ourselves to **inclusive** preparations – **inclusive** when it comes to the substantial issues covered and **inclusive** when it comes to the involvement of all concerned throughout the process.

In terms of **substance**, a number of issues have been raised today: the importance of a balanced approach covering the health aspects, including prevention, treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care as well as access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; the need to address drug-related crime, including the various forms of organized crime and money laundering, while considering new threats and emerging issues; the importance of upholding human rights, while giving special

attention also for the needs of women, children and youth as well as the need to address socio-economic issues and the importance of strengthening alternative development and international cooperation.

As you will recall, these issues have been dealt with in the interactive discussions held by the Commission during the *special segment on UNGASS preparations* in March, and they are also covered in the interactive multi-stakeholder round tables which the Commission has recommended for holding at UNGASS 2016. Hence, we should endeavour to make good use of the opportunity to look into these matters in further depth.

In order to make a real impact and to focus on urgently needed results, we need to take a practical, operational, approach with a view to strengthen the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, whose underlining principle is the principle of “common and shared responsibility”. Special attention is thereby to be paid to the needs of the developing world.

In terms of **participation**, let me reiterate that, pursuant to the mandate provided by the Assembly, the UNGASS preparations led by the CND are conducted in an open-ended manner.

As I mentioned at many occasions before, we also need to hear the voices from those based on the ground. Therefore the CND will further make best possible use of the tools it has developed to involve those who cannot take part in person: by further webcasting its meetings, using video-conferencing and skype and promoting the UNGASS website, which is our joint online platform.

In terms of involving the **various stakeholders**, I would like to applaud civil society, who has enthusiastically responded to the opportunities provided to enrich the work of the Commission: more than 200 representatives from around 70 NGOs participated in the March CND session, each of the interactive discussions during the UNGASS Special Segment benefited from the expertise of panellists chosen by the Civil Society Task Force.

We have also heard today about the importance of involving **UN entities and specialized organizations**. The last CND session very much benefited from the expertise brought by WHO and many other UN entities and we look forward to hearing from all United Nations and intergovernmental bodies, organs, agencies, entities and organizations. Speaking about the UN system, it is imperative to note the major contributions made by **UNODC**, which has been called upon by the Assembly to maintain its leading role in the international efforts to counter the world drug problem.

We all agree that we need to base our discussions on **evidence** – “what works” and “what does not work”. I am pleased that our March CND session could take advantage of the

input from **participants of the Scientific Consultation**, which was held in parallel, as was already mentioned by Ambassador Srisamoot, Chair of the current 58th session of the CND, this morning. We look forward to a continued interaction with the scientists in the future.

As essential is the involvement of the **youth**, our most precious good, our leaders of tomorrow. Their reporting back from their own youth forum, also held in parallel to the March CND session, has been refreshing and inspiring. We need more of their views and ideas.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNGASS 2016 should be, and will be, about **human beings**. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that addressing the world drug problem in 2016 is based on ensuring the well-being of peoples and societies.

Thus, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, through its UNGASS preparations Board, will continue exerting all efforts throughout the preparatory process with that goal in mind.

Thank you.