



*The Permanent Representative of Italy
to the International Organizations
in Vienna*

ITALY

Statement at the 61st Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Vienna, 12 March 2018

Thank you, Madame Ambassador, and congratulations for chairing the 61st session of the CND: please, rest assured of Italy's full support in your endeavors.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and I would like to add just a few remarks in my national capacity.

The world drug problem has considerably changed over the past decade, and so has the response of the international community. The UNGASS Outcome Document of 2016 contains the most comprehensive and ambitious set of commitments that we ever made and expresses the global consensus on relevant policies.

As we wrap up a decade of collective efforts to tackle the issue at stake and we prepare to set the course for the post-2019 era, our focus must remain on the full implementation of the seven thematic areas identified by the UNGASS Outcome Document. The document recognizes that drug policies can be successful only if they address matters related to people's health and welfare, in full respect of human rights and personal dignity. To this end, from our point of view, the ideal approach to the challenge we face at both national and international level is based on a mix of measures:

- we must invest in prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, social reintegration, risk and harm reduction;
- we must mainstream gender and age perspectives;
- we must care for the safety and guarantee the security of individuals and communities, also by tackling the links that exist between drug trafficking and organized crime;
- we must ensure access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;
- we must address the socio-economic and cultural challenges that constitute a major cause for drug abuse also in the framework of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- we must ensure that our criminal justice systems provide proportionate responses to drug-related offences also by envisaging alternatives to conviction and to punishment.

In this respect, Italy reiterates its strong appeal to the CND to deal as soon as possible with the question of death penalty for drug-related crimes, in the firm belief that death penalty does not contribute at all to fighting crime but, on the contrary, it undermines the value of relief strategies and hampers international cooperation.

This multi-faceted approach to the world drug problem inspires Italy's policies, and I would like to illustrate the most significant recent initiatives adopted by my Government in this regard.

In the area of demand reduction, we have improved our early prevention capacity in schools and we have intensified actions to raise the awareness of young people about the risks associated to drug consumption with a special emphasis on the misleading and even illicit role of the Internet.

Concerning the new psychoactive substances, we have reinforced the National Warning System by introducing a specific function dedicated to monitoring the NPS distributed through the web.

In recognition of the importance of scientific research and objective data collection, we have strengthened the mission of the Italian Permanent National Observatory on drug addiction by establishing an extended consultation group aimed at enhancing the dialogue with civil society.

As regards the supply side, I can confirm the unwavering work of law enforcement agencies to counter drug trafficking and I am glad to inform the membership about the exceptional results obtained last year also thanks to the cooperation with foreign counterparts. The overall increase of seizures clearly shows that our effectiveness improves if we act together.

Madame Chair,

We must recognize that Governments cannot fight this battle alone: they need the help and the engagement of the civil society. Non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in facing the plague of drug abuse at grass root level. We support their active involvement in our work and we hope that they can continue to contribute to the debate in this Commission, especially in preparation for and during the 2019 ministerial segment.

Thank you.