



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
JAURÈSGASSE 3, 1030 VIENNA

Statement

by

H.E. Eskandar Momeni
Secretary General of
Drug Control Headquarters

Before

Sixty-second Session of the
Commission on Narcotic Drugs

on

General Debate of the Ministerial Segment

15 March 2019
Vienna, Austria

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Please, check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Esteemed delegates,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet for his election as the president of the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and also appreciate the UNODC Executive Director, H.E. Mr. Yuri Fedotov, and his colleagues at the secretariat for organizing this important meeting. My appreciation also goes to Bureau for its efforts in the past one year. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is pleased that the Ministerial Declaration 2019 has been adopted. It is expected that this declaration would accelerate full implementation of all commitments made during the past decade.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to begin my statement with quoting a verse from the Holy Quran: *"And whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind."*

This divine commandment has been the Islamic Republic of Iran's guideline in the past forty years in the campaign against drug problem regardless of color, race and nationality of all humans, in particular the youths. We attach equal importance to the health and exuberance of Iranian youths and youths from other countries. The courageous Iranian law enforcement forces act in a dedicated manner in their fight against drug transit and some of them mostly young people have lost their lives as martyrs in combating narcotic drugs.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Islamic Republic of Iran's experiences gained from four decades of indefatigable combat against drug traffickers while sustaining irreparable human and financial losses such as the dedication of 3,811 martyrs and 12,000 wounded people has led to the designing of broad-based plans in parallel with demand and harms reduction programs aimed at a smart fight against international mafia and regional gangs in order to halt drug cultivation and production from the point of origin to the final destination. Such plans have been put on the agenda of policies for combating the drug supply. In the past three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has seized approximately 11,000 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It should be noted that in accordance with UNODC reports, approximately 76 percent of global opium seizures and more than 30 percent of global heroin seizures are made in Iran. Meanwhile, the law enforcement agencies carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers and international networks in 2018, shattering 2,114 gangs and seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances including 45 tons of heroin and morphine. It is noteworthy that Iran prevents alone the entry of more than 30 percent of illicit heroin from the producing country into the illicit international market that sheds light on the importance of Iran's drug control activities.

The availability of narcotic drugs for medical purposes within the framework of international conventions is an integral part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's balanced strategy, while countering their diversion to illicit markets, implementing demand reduction policies aimed at minimizing the negative consequences of drug abuse, as well as promoting public health and creation of a society free from drug abuse. While based on the UNODC report, one addict has access to the treatment

services out of every six addicts at the global level, but more than two persons have access to the same services in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to prepare the grounds for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of individuals while trying to prevent the perpetration of crimes through improving national legislations and procedures. On this basis, alternative punishments have also been put into practice. Of course, the Islamic Republic of Iran's achievements in various aspects related to drug control are the result of adherence to the genuine and developed humanitarian and Islamic teachings prevailing in the country, rather than financial and technical support by other countries and international organizations.

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that unilateral coercive measures and sanctions against any country including the Islamic Republic of Iran are illegitimate and illegal. The United States through imposing such sanctions has hampered international cooperation to combat drugs and implementation of joint bilateral and regional initiatives, thus is directly accountable for the disastrous consequences of disrupting the international campaign against illicit drugs and diminishing the capacities in this regard. Based on scientific pieces of evidence, sanctions have caused a shift in the consumption pattern among addicts to patterns with higher risks, which led to a sharp rise in the rate of mortality among the addicts. In the meantime, one of the new and most important challenges today is intervention by politics in the development of international humanitarian cooperation against drug trafficking as well as the protection of human dignity of individuals affected by drug use.

Mr. Chairperson,

Statistics presented by the UNODC world report indicate that there were 328,000 hectares of land under poppy cultivation in the country of origin in 2017 excluding

the land under cannabis cultivation. There is a legitimate question considering the presence of trans-regional forces, why only 200 tons of opium was seized from the lands under cultivation in which case their area even exceed the size of several countries, while the Islamic Republic of Iran which is under unjust sanctions for the past forty years and has not enjoyed the international assistance has managed to seize more than 800 tons in the same year. Responding to this question can provide us with an appropriate solution in order to tackle the drug problem.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policy-making and decision-making body concerning the global drug control policies, the role of the UNODC as the sole technical organ dealing with the issue of drug control within the UN system, the status of the three international conventions as the pillars of the drug control international regime, as well as the determining role of the INCB for facilitating the availability of narcotics for scientific and medical purposes. The Islamic Republic of Iran also stresses the need to refrain from any national and international approach that is in contrast with the role and status of these bodies. On this basis, I wish to draw the attention of this august body to a key issue. The drug-related challenges differ from one region to another and the solutions must be defined and adjusted in conformity with the extent of the problem and requirements of every country. For instance, if traffic in narcotic drugs takes place along with acts of violence and insecurity by armed drug trafficking convoys, such criminal actions are considered as a threat to national security in all countries including the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, one should avoid imposing on other countries, the solutions prescribed for countries of destination where drug trafficking takes place through the retail sale of drugs on streets. We believe that a balanced approach based on international drug control

conventions must be the guideline for all measures at national, regional and international levels. Hence, we do oppose any approach aimed at decriminalization and legalization of narcotic drugs or the imposition of any particular approach with any motive or objective.

The members of the global community share a unanimous view today concerning the need to adopt an alternative development strategy for providing sustainable livelihood and reducing dependency on drug trafficking and production as well as drug-related offenses in cultivation zones. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the success of alternative development projects at the national level is contingent upon socio-economic development and elimination of poverty particularly in rural and border areas as well as among slum-dwellers. It also requires participation of the global community based on the principle of shared responsibility and the UN guidelines concerning alternative development.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The ministerial segment is expected to pave the way for cooperation and participation of the global community in order to combat the global problem of narcotic drugs based on full respect for the cultural and social beliefs of nations, regional requirements and sensitivities, as well as respecting the sovereignty of nations and their equality.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the global problem of narcotic drugs is a human, technical and broad-based issue and its politicization will not help countering the problem, but would divert the process of a comprehensive and effective campaign and cause shifts in the national approaches in this regard.

I thank you for your kind attention.