

Joint Statement on the report on the human rights challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem

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Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the member states of the core group of the resolution 52/24, namely Albania, Brazil, Colombia, Greece, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Portugal, Uruguay and my own country Switzerland.

We hereby welcome the OHCHR report on the human rights challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem and we are pleased that a high number of states, UN entities, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil society organizations have submitted their contribution to this study.

We appreciate that the report elaborates on the major impacts of drug policy on human rights and we welcome the emphasis on the role of decriminalization of usage and of harm reduction approaches in addressing the world drug problem with regard to human rights.

The right to the highest attainable standard of health applies equally in the context of drug laws, policies and practices, and includes access to harm reduction services and drug dependence treatment. However, it is with great concern that we note that the demand for treating drug-related disorders as well as access to internationally controlled medicines remains largely unmet and that people who use drugs are still disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, we express our deep concern over the use of death sentences over drug-related offenses, since the death penalty should strictly be limited to the “most serious crimes” in States that have not yet abolished the death penalty. As stressed additionally by the Secretary-General, there is no evidence that the death penalty deters drug-related crimes more than other methods of punishment or that it affects crime reduction.

We recall that the punitive characteristics of the “war on drugs” have grave implications and disproportionate impacts on specific groups, namely young people, people of African descent, Indigenous People and women.

Finally, we urge states to implement the key recommendations presented in the report and we encourage the High Commission to pursue his work on the matter.

I thank you.