



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

30TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

It has been 18 years since we came together here in New York and set out to achieve a drug-free world – by 2008 no less. Our collective failure is obvious. Today, no country in the world is drug-free, and the level of illicit drug use has remained high over the past years. This Special Session is therefore an opportunity for reflection and to challenge our thinking from the past, which has clearly not delivered the intended results.

Let us remember our goals. The international drug control framework was meant to address the health and welfare of humankind. Yet in practice, health is not a priority: USD 100 billion are spent every year on global drug enforcement, mostly to reduce supply rather than demand. UNODC's World Drug Report found that the unintended consequences of current drug policies have shifted precious resources away from public health to law enforcement. The current regime facilitates very lucrative and violent criminal black markets, while criminalizing and marginalizing drug *users*. These are not just minor side-effects.

Women are disproportionately affected by these consequences: their lack of economic opportunity increases their risk of being pushed into illegal drug trading, especially in countries

affected by political instability. Drug networks are often involved in sex trafficking. Furthermore, domestic drug policies often lack a gender-sensitive approach, especially in the area of enforcement.

We are also greatly alarmed by the continued imposition of the death penalty for drug-related offenses. The OHCHR estimates that this is currently practiced in 33 countries and territories, and some of them impose mandatory death sentences¹. These crimes do *not* meet the threshold of “most serious crimes”; these executions are thus in clear violation of Article 6 of the ICCPR. We strongly urge the countries concerned to end this practice, which has no deterrent effect.

Mr. President,

This session will only be remembered as special if we begin to change course. We must place health and welfare at the center of our efforts, based on human rights, and based on evidence. Particular efforts should go into prevention, harm reduction, access to treatment and social reintegration of drug users. We must assist them in finding meaningful alternatives for livelihoods and economic activity. In the 2030 Agenda, we committed ourselves to strengthen the prevention of substance abuse and to combat all forms of organized crime. The Agenda is founded on human rights and human dignity, and our answer to the world drug problem must be as well.

¹ <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Statement-by-Mr.-Zeid-OHCHR.pdf>