

Country Statement from Australia delivered by Mr Nathan Smyth, First Assistant Secretary, Population Health Division, Australian Department of Health.

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- Mr Chairperson, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates.
- This High-Level Segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is an important event and the Australian delegation is pleased to contribute to the debate.
- It is an opportunity for us to look back and recognise the achievements of the international community in addressing the goals and targets of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2009.
- It is also an opportunity to agree on areas where we need to focus our collective efforts to counter the rapidly changing, globalised nature of the illicit drug trade. And to reconfirm our commitment to realising the aims of the three international drug control conventions.
- Key to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action is our shared desire to develop an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem.
- Australia is fully committed to such an approach, which is implemented under the policy framework of Australia's own *National Drug Strategy*.
- Consistent with the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, Australia's *National Drug Strategy* aims to improve health, social and economic outcomes for individuals, families and the wider community, by preventing the uptake of illicit drug use and reducing harmful effects.
- Our strategy allows us to address drug abuse as a public health and social issue, while upholding the law and its enforcement.

- The collaboration between law enforcement and public health in addressing the world drug problem has been important to many countries, and Australian delegations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs have been pleased to work with other countries over a number of years to strengthen this approach internationally.
- An increasing challenge for law enforcement and public health over recent years has been the continued and rapid emergence of many new synthetic drugs, including amphetamine-type stimulants and new psychoactive substances.
- Australia is committed to responding to the emergence of new drugs that lie outside the system of international control and present unknown risks to health and safety.
- Australia has been pleased to work with other concerned countries to support the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses and Reporting of Trends (SMART) Programme of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to improve information on synthetic drugs, including patterns of trafficking and use.
- The Commission will recall that at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission in 2013 Australia announced a pledge to UNODC to support its development of the Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive substances under the Global SMART Programme.
- I am pleased to confirm at this session of the Commission that Australia will provide AUD 200,000 to this important project in 2014.
- In addition to supporting international efforts, Australia, like other nations, is developing new legislative options to address the issues presented by the global trade in new psychoactive substances. We remain happy to make our experiences available to interested countries and other stakeholders which face similar challenges, should the approaches we take be useful.
- Mr Chair, a key challenge for all of us is the problem of inequitable access to controlled drugs for medical purposes. The harsh reality is that the majority of the world's population does not have adequate access to medical opiates for pain relief and palliative care. The barriers to access and availability need to be urgently addressed.

- It has been important to Australia, working with other interested parties at recent Sessions of the Commission, to focus attention on ensuring appropriate access to medical opiates and other controlled drugs for legitimate medical and scientific needs
- The international community has a moral obligation to achieve a better balance between the demand for and the supply of those drugs and substances in order to ensure the relief of pain and suffering.
- Recent considerations by the World Health Organization in relation to improving access to palliative care have recognised the need to ensure adequate access to controlled medicines and highlight the need for us all to work toward improving access.
- Australia is pleased to have supported the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in revising its model law relating to availability and accessibility to controlled drugs for medical purposes.
- Australia is also very pleased to be supporting the UNODC's efforts in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the Union of International Cancer Control in the delivery of in-country training for policy makers, drug control authorities and health professionals, with the first of these projects recently commencing in Ghana. The international community must build on the momentum generated in addressing this global challenge.
- Mr Chairman, Australia joins other countries in welcoming this opportunity to consider our joint progress and shared challenges in addressing the world drug problem. As we look to 2016, we recognise the central role of the CND, the critical support provided by UNODC, as well as the valuable contributions of international civil society. In this light, Australia looks forward to the adoption of a Joint Ministerial Statement from this High-Level Review as a key outcome of this Session in preparation for the 2016 Special Session of the General Assembly.