

**Contribution by the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

2025 Theme:

“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”

II to VI to be uploaded here:

[Inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\) in 2025 \(office.com\)](#)

I. Introduction

This contribution is submitted by **H.E. Ambassador Shambhu Santha KUMARAN**, the **Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its sixty-eighth session**, in response to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council of 18 December 2024, inviting the Commission to provide an input to the 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The 2025 HLPF will be organized under the auspices of ECOSOC at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 14 to 23 July 2025, on the theme **“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”**.

The CND is the **principal drug policy-making body** within the United Nations. Together with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), it acts as one of the two governing bodies of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The Commission works on a large portfolio of issues; the ones addressed in this contribution do not reflect the work of the Commission in a comprehensive manner, but represent recent **examples related to the 2025 HLPF theme and selected SDGs, especially SDGs 3 on good health and well-being, 5 on gender-equality, 8 on decent work and economic growth and 17 on partnerships for the Goals**.

The contribution covers mostly **the period March 2024-to February 2025**.

The CND held its 67th session on 14-22 March 2024 and gathered 2.500 participants from nearly 140 Member States, 18 intergovernmental organizations, nine United Nations entities and 141 non-governmental organizations. At the margins of the 67th session, 190 side events were organized. On 14

and 15 March 2024, the Commission held the High-Level Segment of the 67th session with a focus on the [Midterm Review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration](#) to assess progress made in the implementation of all international drug policy commitments set forth in the declaration. A [“Pledge4Action”](#) initiative was launched to mobilize Member States' commitment toward concrete, impactful actions along the key challenges outlined in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration including the cross-cutting challenge on data collection. Total of 71 pledges were made, 69 during the regular session and 2 during the reconvened session, held on 5-6 December 2024 (67 pledges by Member States, 1 by UNODC, 1 by the African Union, 1 by the European Union and 1 by the Vienna NGO Committee on behalf of a number of NGOs).

As an outcome of the Mid-Term Review, the Commission adopted the [High-level declaration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the 2024 midterm review, following up to the Ministerial Declaration of 2019](#). Further, the Commission adopted **four resolutions**:

- [Resolution 67/1](#), on recovery and related support services for people with drug use disorders
- [Resolution 67/2](#), on access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the treatment of children, and ensuring their rational use
- [Resolution 67/3](#), on alternative development, and
- [Resolution 67/4](#), on preventing and responding to drug overdose.

The Commission also decided to place one benzodiazepine, one synthetic opioid, two stimulants, one dissociative-type substance, sixteen precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants and two fentanyl precursors under **international control**.

On 12-14 November 2024, the Commission held [thematic sessions on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments](#), following up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. In particular, the Commission discussed the challenges relating to the expanding range of drugs and diversifying markets; synthetic opioids and the non-medical use of prescription drugs; challenges in illicit cultivation and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; illicit trafficking in substances and precursors, and domestic diversion of precursor chemicals; as well as legal, scientific, and regulatory challenges in scheduling substances.

The regular 68th session of the Commission will be held from 10 to 14 March 2025.

II. Impacts of multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17

- **SDG 3:** The access to comprehensive, scientific evidence-based demand reduction services and related measures can be affected or disrupted, especially for vulnerable members of society in socially and economically marginalized situations, and in the context of emergencies such as the COVID pandemic, in situations of armed conflict or humanitarian disaster ([resolution 65/4](#)).
- **SDG 5:** Women are generally more affected by challenges in access to treatment ([World Drug Report 2024](#)). The Commission has consistently called for gender mainstreaming and the perspective of women and girls in services for people with drug use disorders ([resolution 67/1](#)), alternative development ([resolutions 67/3](#)) and in addressing the world drug problem in general ([2024 High-Level Declaration](#)).
- **SDG 8:** The development of sustainable livelihoods of populations affected by or vulnerable to the illicit cultivation of drug crops can be impacted by multiple and interconnected crises. Alternative development programmes support such populations, including through market-driven approaches, contribute to efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises ([resolution 66/4](#)).
- **SDG 14:** Crises can disrupt or weaken the efforts to seize, safely handle and dispose of synthetic drugs, their precursors and other chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, thereby leading to their release into air, water and soil and creating detrimental effects on the environment and on human health ([resolution 66/2](#)).
- **SDG 17:** Crises can also pose challenges to the partnership between stakeholders, including law enforcement, judicial and health-care personnel, civil society, the scientific community and academia and the private sector; as well as pose challenges to specialized, targeted, effective and sustainable technical assistance – both underscored in the [2024 High-level Declaration](#).

III. Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets

In the [2024 High-level Declaration](#), Member States reaffirmed their commitment to a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and scientific evidence-based approach to the world drug problem. The indispensable role of data for scientific evidence-based policies was underlined. The Commission has spelled out these commitments in three key areas:

Area 1: Support services for people with drug use disorders (SDG3 and 5)

In its [resolution 67/1](#), the Commission called upon Member States to provide recovery and related support services, while also noting that such services should be accessible, voluntary, affordable, gender- and age-sensitive and comprehensive (**targets 3.5, 5.1** – see also [resolutions 67/4](#) and [64/3](#)).

Area 2: Access to and availability of controlled substances (SDG 3)

In the [2024 High-level Declaration](#), Member States expressed concern about the inadequate access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering. The Commission has taken this up in its [resolution 67/2](#), in which it called upon Member States to address this challenge by, inter alia, establishing, strengthening and using data and information systems for collecting disaggregated data in this area (**Goal 3, including target 3 c**)).

Area 3: International control of substances (SDG 3)

In its [resolution 66/3](#), the Commission expressed deep concern about the risks posed by synthetic drugs and the non-medical use of prescription drugs and encouraged Member States to establish and strengthen drug analysis laboratories (**targets 3.5 and 3.9**). In the [Thematic Discussions](#) held on 12-14 November 2024, the Commission discussed legal, scientific and regulatory challenges in scheduling substances, challenges to the identification of new illicit drugs, and the relevance of scientific evidence in drug policy.

IV. Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress

The evolving nature of drug-related challenges have been recognized in the [2024 High-level Declaration](#), and the Commission has addressed measures with the potential to bring progress to scale:

Measure 1: Safe handling and disposal of synthetic drugs and related chemicals (SDG 3, 14)

In its [resolution 66/2](#), the Commission made reference to the detrimental effects on the environment caused by the improper disposal of synthetic drugs, their precursors and other chemicals used in their illicit manufacture. The Commission encouraged practical procedures for the safe handling of such substances, informed and guided by scientific evidence, environmentally responsible and ensuring the health and safety of persons (**targets 3.9, 14.1 and 14.2**).

Measure 2: Preventing and responding to drug overdose (SDG 3)

In its [resolution 67/4](#), the Commission noted with concern that drug overdoses, including caused by opioids used non-medically, accounted for a quarter of drug-related deaths. It encouraged Member States to develop and implement scientific evidence-based demand reduction measures as well as other public health interventions to address the harms associated with illicit drug use (**target 3.5**). In the November [Thematic Discussion](#)s, the Commission discussed such measures regarding synthetic opioids.

[Measure 3: Alternative development \(SDG 8\)](#)

Opportunities for viable and sustainable licit livelihoods for communities affected by drug-related activities have long been in the focus of the Commission’s work. In [resolution 67/3](#), the Commission encouraged member States to increase their national, regional and international efforts in promoting viable economic alternatives through balanced, comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive alternative development programmes (**target 8.3**). This was also addressed in the [2024 High-Level Declaration](#) and in resolutions [66/4](#) and [65/1](#). Special attention should be given to the situation of SIDS, as reflected in the [Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS \(ABAS\)](#).

IV. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental / expert body to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration, Member States have reaffirmed their resolve to realize the vision of a world with **access to quality essential health-care services** and to ensure **healthy lives and promote well-being** for all at all ages. They also recommitted to addressing **challenges posed by organized crime**, preventing and combating **illicit financial flows** and implementing their obligations enshrined in the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Similarly, in the Pact for the Future, Member States committed to accelerating efforts to ensure that specifically all **young people** enjoy the **highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**, and to address transnational organized crime and illicit financial flows.

These commitments to health and security resonated during the 2024 [Midterm Review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration](#) and in the [2024 High-level Declaration](#). A “[Pledge4Action](#)” initiative mobilized Member States' commitment toward concrete, impactful actions along the key challenges outlined in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration including the cross-cutting challenge on data collection. 71 pledges were made to date by Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. During its **68th session**, the Commission will continue following up on the international drug policy

commitments by holding thematic discussions and will engage in **innovative, practitioner-oriented formats** to accelerate action and strengthen political momentum.

V. Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF

The following key messages may be included into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF:

- We are deeply concerned about the impact of multiple and interconnected crises on the world drug problem and stress that addressing and countering the world drug problem requires coordinated multidisciplinary efforts to ensure that no one affected by it is left behind;
- We recall the need to accelerate the implementation of all international drug policy commitments so that progress made at the national, regional and global levels is maintained and enhanced;
- We commit to improve data collection and evidence-based analysis to better address the various issues related to the world drug problem;
- We undertake to further strengthen measures, strategies and international cooperation to enhance access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;
- We undertake to strengthen prevention measures as well as the access to recovery and related support services for people with drug use disorders;
- We commit to further consider the development of viable economic alternatives for communities affected by or at risk of illicit cultivation of drug crops and other illicit drug-related activities in urban and rural areas;
- We are concerned by the detrimental and long-lasting effects on the environment caused by the improper disposal of synthetic drugs, their precursors and other chemicals used in their illicit manufacture, and commit to taking practical measures for the safe handling of such substances.