

Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Speech of the Vice-chair of the UN Statistical Commission

17 March 2017, Vienna

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

My name is Georges-Simon Ulrich and I am one of the vice-chairs of the UN Statistical Commission. I am honoured to address you today on behalf of the Chair of the Statistical Commission, Ms. Wasmalia Bivar, who sends her regards.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you to the 60th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). 2017 seems to be a year of celebrations as last week in New York we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Statistical Commission. For this celebration we met for the first time in the General Assembly Hall, where I understand many of you met in April 2016 attending a landmark event of your Commission: the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.

Madam chair, the Statistical Commission highly appreciates your invitation to participate in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In our meeting last week we discussed the topic of “Statistics on drugs and drug use” and I would like to share with you our deliberations.

The Statistical Commission considered a document submitted by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) and UNODC on a roadmap to improve drug statistics. The Commission took note of the presentation of the Report and expressed its appreciation to INEGI and UNODC for their work in reviewing existing challenges and preparing a comprehensive roadmap.

The Statistical Commission recognized that your Commission, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is the UN policy making body with the primary responsibility with drug control matters. Therefore, the Statistical Commission - after having reviewed and recognized the statistical merits of the roadmap - recommended it for your consideration to ensure harmonization with the policy directions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The Statistical Commission also stressed the need for national statistical capacity building to support Member States in improving the quality and availability of drug statistics, and invited international and regional organizations, to support Members States in this regard, upon their request.

Distinguished colleagues,

If you allow me, I would like to draw your attention to our work on the SDG indicators, which exemplifies the Statistical Commission’s works. In this area of work, the Statistical Commission defines statistical measures of already agreed policy directions. The Statistical Commission does not discuss or define policy directions.

Indeed, the work of the Statistical Commission is rooted in the Fundamental Principles of Official statistics approved by the General Assembly in January 2014, so its aspiration is to be based only on professional statistical considerations.

Secondly, I want to inform you that the Statistical Commission adopted the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data. This Action Plan will give the global statistical community a framework for the future that helps to set priorities in improving the global and the national statistical systems.

Finally, the Statistical Commission adopted a draft resolution for ECOSOC entitled “Work of the UN Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development“. The draft resolution provides guidelines for the work of the Statistical Commission related to the 2030 agenda. This is key to work efficiently in the coming years.

Distinguished colleagues,

Improving the availability and quality of drug statistics indeed requires two types of expertise: statistical expertise and substantive knowledge of the drug problem. It requires our two Commissions to work together [under the umbrella of the Economic and Social Council]. The Statistical Commission is ready to bring what official statisticians do best: statistical competence, impartiality, scientific rigor and full transparency. The Statistical Commission stands ready to work together with you.

Thank you for your attention.