

Agenda Item 3
General Debate
Draft Statement

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Harm Reduction International (HRI) welcomes the High Commissioner report on Human Rights Challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem, and the Secretary-General's report on the question of the death penalty.

Both reports urge States to refrain from using the death penalty for drug offences.

Drug offences do not meet the definition of 'most serious crimes' to which international standards requires the death penalty be limited to, in retentionist countries. Yet, HRI's Global Overview 2022 shows that 35 countries and territories still retain death penalty for drug offences.

The Death penalty is ineffective, disproportionate and violates human rights.

Excellencies,

Despite UN bodies and agencies calling for a rights-based approach to drug policy, HRI's research shows that over 900 million of aid money -supposed to support international development- was spent in so called 'narcotic control' projects in the last ten years, with at least 70 million spent in countries that have death penalty for drug offences. While funding for evidence-based harm reduction interventions keeps falling below what is needed, undermining global development goals.

So, it is high time to divest from punitive drug control responses that violates human rights and invest in rights-based policies that put people first, including harm reduction interventions.

We thank you.