

## OPENING REMARKS

### AT THE SIDE EVENT “RENEWING COMMITMENT TO END THE DEATH PENALTY FOR DRUG OFFENCES” DURING THE 69<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE CND

Vienna, 12 March 2026

Distinguished Speakers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Harm Reduction International and the other organizers for providing this important opportunity to contribute our voices to the protection of the fundamental human right to life and to advocate for alternatives to the death penalty for crimes such as drug offences.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to all participants who share a strong commitment to human rights and human dignity and who have joined us here today in the room, as well as online.

Drug-related offences are serious crimes that threaten human health, safety, and social stability, as well as values such as family wellbeing and the protection of future generations. However, even in the face of these serious concerns, the death penalty cannot be considered an effective solution.

The death penalty may also reinforce cycles of violence rather than prevent them. Instead of relying solely on punitive approaches, justice systems should prioritize prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society.

The 2025 World Drug Report highlights the continuing expansion of the global drug market, including the rapid growth

of synthetic drugs and record levels of cocaine production. These developments demonstrate that even in regions where harsh penalties exist, drug-related crimes continue to persist.

Mongolia abolished the death penalty de facto on 1 January 2010, when the then President of Mongolia announced a moratorium on capital punishment. This decision reflected a strong commitment to the protection of the right to life.

However, the transition from a moratorium to full abolition is often a long and careful process. It requires sustained engagement from the legislative branch, as well as meaningful dialogue with the public. During this process, it is essential to raise awareness and ensure that citizens understand the human rights principles, legal safeguards, and societal benefits associated with abolishing the death penalty. Public discussions, advocacy campaigns, and educational initiatives play an important role in helping society understand that justice can be upheld without resorting to capital punishment.

Following sustained advocacy by the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, together with international and civil society organizations, legal professionals, and academics, the Parliament of Mongolia ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 13 March 2012. Subsequently, the revised Criminal Code removed the death penalty from the list of criminal sanctions and entered into force on 1 July 2017, marking the full and formal abolition of the death penalty in Mongolia.

In recent years, however, there has been a concerning trend in which some have considered reintroducing the death penalty or slowing progress toward abolition in response to rising transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and terrorism. Nevertheless, the international human rights community must

continue encouraging states to carefully reconsider whether the death penalty truly achieves its intended goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Continued international cooperation remains essential. We must work together to encourage more states to join the global movement toward a moratorium on the death penalty and to strengthen their commitments under international human rights law.

I am confident that today's side event provides an important opportunity to demonstrate that the path toward abolition is both realistic and achievable, while maintaining open and constructive dialogue among all countries.

Every person possesses inherent dignity and deserves to be treated with respect and humanity.

Thank you for your attention.