



Draft Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

Opening segment of the 68th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (video message)

10 March 2025

Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to address the 68th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

This Commission plays a vital role in shaping global drug policies and fostering international cooperation to address all the challenges that are related to drugs.

But the impact of the Commission's work is far-reaching. Your work directly advances broader social, economic, and public health targets that have been outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Last September, in the Pact for the Future, Member States committed to ensuring the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for present and future generations. Equitable access to safe, affordable, effective, and quality medicines is key to realizing this commitment. Member States also pledged to scale up efforts to combat transnational organized crime and illicit financial flows.

To tackle the world's drug problem, we need a well-rounded approach that includes proven methods to reduce demand. We must focus on prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation, and helping people reintegrate into society.

It is also important to ensure safe and fair access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, and to take strong measures against criminal activities that exploit and profit from the drug trade.

I am encouraged that 66 countries have signed on to the Chair's Pledge4Action initiative. Through this initiative, Member States are investing expertise and resources into tackling the



drug-related challenges outlined in the 2019 Declaration, including the ongoing challenge of data collection.

Excellencies,

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs serves a vital role within the ECOSOC family.

I thank Ambassador KUMARAN, Chair of the 68th session of the Commission, for his participation in the ECOSOC Coordination Segment held last month in New York.

I also commend the Commission's dedication to implementing the 2022 ECOSOC review recommendations. The roundtable organized in February with other ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies is a clear example of the Commission's commitment to strengthening collaboration and effectiveness.

The contributions of the Commissions to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development have also very much enriched all of our discussions. I thank the Commission for sending its contributions to this year's 2025 HLPF.

Excellencies,

I wish you a successful session. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of what you are doing.

Thank you so very much. Thank you.