



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Statement by
H. E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King
President of the Economic and Social Council
123rd Session of the International Narcotics Control Board
Vienna International Centre
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President,
Board Members,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to address the Board at its 123rd session. Unfortunately, I could not join you today in person during this important session of the Board, marking the 50th anniversary of its establishment.

Over the past 50 years of your existence, your work has been central to promoting cooperation and coordinated action by States to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes. You have also worked assiduously to prevent their diversion and abuse. The technical nature of your work, including through evidence-based research, and monitoring of States' implementation of key drug control treaties has made it one of the most respected and impartial bodies in the world of drug control. It is also a body that deserves to be better known not just among members of the Economic and Social Council but also across the three pillars of the United Nations – peace, human rights and development – and among key constituencies of all Member States. I will endeavour to contribute to making this happen so that your work becomes better known.

Your work on drugs is also critical to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is a very complex and difficult issue that has interlinkages with crime, health and sustainable development. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we committed to leaving no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. We also committed to targets on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse, on illicit financial flows, on violence, rule of law and other key aspects linked to drug trafficking and drug abuse. Therefore, we need a balanced, comprehensive, people-centred approach which puts the most vulnerable members of society at the centre of our work.

I also commend the Board's sustained efforts to support governments in upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2019 is a critical year. I welcome INCB's willingness to contribute to and inform the 2019 review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on international cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem.

As most of you are aware, the General Assembly undertook a review of its resolution 68/1 on ECOSOC strengthening. One of my top priority is to revive the ECOSOC to restore its "deliberative function" and have more meaningful engagement with the subsidiary bodies to enhance their contribution to the work of ECOSOC and the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

I would like to reiterate the readiness of the ECOSOC Bureau and myself to support you to enhance your coordination and collaboration with functional commissions and other expert bodies in line with the vision of the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

I wish you a successful and productive session and I look forward to our continued cooperation.

Thank you.

