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Delegation of Denmark

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**Minister for Health Ms. Sophie Løhde**

Statement of Denmark on the occasion of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the world drug problem

**General debate**

*Check against delivery*

Mr. President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I refer to the statement of the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States – a statement fully supported by the Government of Denmark.

The Government of Denmark welcomes this opportunity for the Member States of the United Nations to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Since its adoption in 2009, progress has been achieved.

However, the drug problem continues to present challenges to the health, safety and well-being of people who use drugs and society as a whole.

Please allow me to dwell on a few points that are essential to the achievement of further progress.

Drug policies should be balanced.

Prohibition and control cannot stand alone.

Supply reduction has to be balanced with a sharp focus on evidence-based prevention, treatment and harm reduction, including reduction of drug-related deaths.

It is important to keep in mind that the overall aims of drug policies are the health and welfare of human beings as well as the addressing of drug abuse and the harms resulting from drug abuse.

On this background, harm reduction measures have been introduced in Denmark and they have proved to be an essential element of our drug policy.

This approach is based on the conviction that drug policies should be built on human rights.

Everybody, including people who use drugs, has the right to be treated with dignity.

Consequently, the Government of Denmark deeply regrets that the outcome document does not address the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related crimes.

Denmark is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances.

To the achievement of further progress it is also essential that civil society is involved in drug policies at national and international level.

To conclude; despite our joint efforts we are still facing challenges – not least the number of drug-related deaths and the proportions of harm resulting from drug abuse.

Balanced and evidence-based drug policies built on human rights as well as developed and implemented through the involvement of civil society are essential to meet these challenges.

Thank you.