

**Video message
64th Convention on Narcotic Drugs
UN Office on Drugs and Crime
12 April 2021**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues and friends,

Every year, the harmful use of psychoactive drugs leads to half a million deaths around the world.

At the same time, most of the world's people still lack access to safe and effective medicines to relieve pain and suffering.

The harmful use of psychoactive substances, including for inappropriate medical purposes, requires a proportionate response that protects both public health and human rights.

Since their entry into force, the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances have provided a unified framework for the international community to respond to substance use disorders, and to improve health and well-being.

WHO, through the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, provides scientific and medical expertise to identify substances that should be considered for control, using the criteria set out in each of the Conventions.

In line with the goals of the conventions and UNGASS 2016, WHO supports countries to provide education, prevention, harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation to address harmful drug use, drug use disorders and related health conditions.

We must work together, across disciplines and institutions, to support fair, humane and sustainable global drug policies.

I thank you.

[196 words]