

## Joint Statement

On the occasion of the High Level Debate on the world drug problem convened by the President of the General Assembly on May 7<sup>th</sup> 2015, a cross-regional group of delegations consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Benin, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Senegal, Uruguay, express the following:

The world drug problem remains as a global challenge that must be addressed by placing the individuals and societies at the center of our policy and cooperation efforts, under the principle of common and shared responsibility, in line with the three United Nations drug-control conventions and other relevant international instruments, including those related to human rights.

The efforts undertaken by the international community in all relevant fora must be cohesive, and greater coordination and engagement among UN mechanisms and entities is needed. Regional actions are also valuable as well as cross-regional cooperation and dialogue.

Having in mind the need to ensure that drug policies contribute to the prevention of the social damages caused by the world drug problem, such as violence, exclusion and the weakening of social ties, we stress the need to highlight a socially inclusive and people-centered approach and responses.

We also recognize the importance of taking advantage of existing mandates and of tasking appropriate actions, to ensure the availability of and accessibility to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while reviewing the mechanisms used to control substances, including new substances. It is also important to take advantage of the scientific evidence, information, ideas and proposals made by academia, civil society organizations and specialists from all regions of the world, as appropriate, both at the UNGASS itself as well as in its preparations.

In the lead-up to UNGASS 2016 we must strive to incorporate progress made and reflection currently underway on the many issues related to the world drug problem. These include, among other fields, human rights, social inclusion, public health, development, fair and humane criminal justice responses and international cooperation, including in the fight against transnational organized crime.

We are committed to continue our engagement towards and open and inclusive special session of the General Assembly in 2016 on the world drug problem, in order to better address longstanding and emerging challenges.