



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on Narcotic Drugs

### Reconvened sixty-third session

Vienna, 2–4 December 2020

Item 9 of the provisional agenda\*

**Contributions by the Commission to the work of the Economic and Social Council, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/305, including follow-up to and review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

## **Statement submitted by the International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/CN.7/2020/1/Add.1.

\*\* Issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care thanks Executive Director Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly for endorsing the Joint Statement on Access to Internationally Controlled Medicines during the COVID-19 Pandemic published on August 14th of this year in coordination with WHO and INCB.

The INCB has noted that the vast disparities in access to international controlled essential medicines causing severe health-related suffering in many CND member States. Patients in lower- and middle-income countries who require medicines listed in the Schedules of the international drug control conventions to relieve severe pain and symptoms faced barriers to accessing those medications even *before* COVID-19. The pandemic has interrupted global pharmaceutical supply chains for controlled medicines used by both intensive care and palliative care providers, exacerbating pre-existing global inequities. Since supply chains for controlled medicines are particularly susceptible to disruption, we urge member States to coordinate with INCB and competent authorities to ensure availability per their commitments under the drug control conventions.

As palliative care practitioners with experience and knowledge about the situation in countries with low and inadequate access to internationally controlled essential medicines, IAHPC and our global partners request CND member States to work with civil society, academia, appropriate United Nations, regional, and national competent authorities to take the following four steps:

- (1) Identify and encourage manufacturers to produce cost effective generics;
- (2) Work with the international financial institutions and development banks, set up regional or global pooled procurement of controlled medicines and financing mechanisms. Pooled procured mechanisms such as the Pan American Health Organizations Strategic Fund, the Pharmaceutical Procurement Service in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Gulf Corporation Council, and UNICEF can help to resupply and build buffer stocks, as the markets will take/are taking advantage of increased demand to raise prices;
- (3) Work with INCB to increase regional and global buffer stocks, and use simplified control procedures for the export, transportation and provisions of internationally controlled medicines;
- (4) Coordinate with humanitarian agencies and competent authorities to ensure that medicines reach populations living in crisis situations.

The added COVID-19 burden of health-related suffering only underscores member States' obligations to take a balanced approach to the regulation of internationally controlled substances to develop appropriate policies in partnership with clinical associations, and ensure the availability of essential medicines for primary, intensive, and palliative care.

The IAHPC is standing by to collaborate with CND member States and UNODC upon request.

We thank you.

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