Statement by Ms. Giovanna Campello, Chief, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section on behalf of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime under Item 13.2 Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

The work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime strongly supports and contributes the efforts of the international community in addressing non-communicable diseases and as such we are proud to be an active participant in the UN Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs.

The mandate and vision of UNODC is all about promoting a health-centred approach to drugs and drug use disorders, a key mental health condition. We work to prevent substance and drug use, supporting mental health and preventing other risky behaviours, particularly amongst children and youth. We promote evidence- and human-rights based treatment, health care, social protection and rehabilitation for people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders. Treatment is also promoted as an alternative to conviction and punishment for people with drug use disorders in contact with the criminal justice system and people in prison and other closed settings.

We have published Standards jointly with WHO, both on prevention and on treatment, and the Standards have become a reference point globally having been recognized by Member States multiple times in the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Annually, UNODC is active in 40 countries, reaching 90,000 family members and 67,000 people with drug use disorders. This year, our Listen First campaign reached 5 million people and we thank Dr. Nicholas BANATVALA, the Head of the Secretariat of the Task Force, for personally participating in the campaign, highlighting the importance of substance use prevention in the context of NCDs.

Finally, we also work with WHO and the International Narcotics Control Board to promote access to controlled medicines, particularly for the treatment and management of pain, and this field has been of particular interest to the work of the Task Force on cancer.

We are grateful that the Task Force has brought together organizations weekly since the beginning of the pandemic, advocating and providing resource materials to the most vulnerable populations around the world, and we value this important collaboration as a best practice beyond the pandemic. Thank you!