



**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Torture
10th Session of the Human Rights Council
Joint statement of the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) and
Human Rights Watch**

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am making this statement on behalf of the International Harm Reduction Association and Human Rights Watch. We warmly welcome Professor Nowak's report, and in particular his call for a human rights based approach to drug policy, one which has now been echoed by the High Commissioner.

The list of human rights abuses committed in the name of the 'war on drugs' is even longer than Professor Nowak's report indicates, and includes torture and ill-treatment by police, extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention, racial discrimination, discrimination in access to health care, including HIV prevention and treatment, and the denial of access to essential medicines - all related to a disproportionate focus on restrictive drug policies over public health and human rights.

This is not just a national issue. Drug policy is a truly global issue and it is connected to an international drug control system that has neglected human rights for over sixty years. The UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs has never once condemned any of these abuses, nor has it taken action to address them.

Today, following a review of progress since the 1998 General Assembly special session, the CND will agree to a new political declaration that will guide the next decade of international drug control. So far, input from Professor Nowak, the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, UNAIDS, and over 300 civil society organisations has been effectively ignored. Sadly, this declaration reflects none of the lessons learned from the last ten years, and sets the tone for another decade of human rights neglect within the UN drug control system.

Together with the International AIDS Society, we have called for its rejection.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council can be an engine of change in international drug policy. In this connection, we would like to ask Professor Nowak the following:

- How can the human rights machinery within the UN, including this Council, begin to mainstream human rights into international drug policy?
- And what can be done on an urgent basis to ensure that the CND addresses the concerns raised in your report?

Thank you, Mr. President.