

**TOWN HALL MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN VIENNA & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AGAINST DRUGS AND CRIME**

**MRS GHADA WALY**

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 \* 11:30 hrs. \* MS Teams

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to our current Chair of the GRULAC-Vienna, my dear friend and colleague Amb. Alejandro Solano for organizing this meeting and for proving yet again, that with talent and dedication there is always room for Latin America and the Caribbean to come together for addressing the challenges that our countries face.

One of the many reasons why we cherish your appointment by the Secretary General Guterres, Madame Waly, is because you are bringing to this house a perspective and even a personal journey that is undeniably closer to our own realities, coming from a country and a region that had never before held such a high honor, and by bringing your direct involvement in the Development field. Our voices calling for comprehensive, multidimensional strategies to prevent and combat crime and to address all challenges related to drugs will certainly resonate stronger, having an ally as yourself.

Your predecessor made important steps in recognizing the role that, while helping States to build and strengthen their national capacities for addressing drugs, crime and corruption, UNODC plays in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030. He also laid considerable basis on strengthening the capacities of UNODC on data collection and information analysis. Those are two areas in which, with your natural penchant, UNODC will be better itself in providing technical assistance to States.

But there are other areas in which there is ample room for improvement. The first and most urgent is on provoking the different units and teams of your Office to work more in a transversal and integrated fashion. For example: the corrosive influence of drug traffickers does not limit itself to damage done to the consumers, as they, the traffickers, are also involved or the cause for other crimes, such as trafficking in firearms and corrupting public officials.

As evidence has amply demonstrated many criminal organizations which are involved in drug – trafficking, are also active in other types of crimes, such as firearms trafficking, trafficking in wildlife or crimes occurring in the fisheries, forestry and mining sectors, contraband or counterfeit goods or trafficking in cultural property, or that are deeply connected with other criminal organizations. If criminals don't work in silos, there is simply any reason for UNODC to continue undertaking its mandate in that manner.

Criminal organizations are also continuously demonstrating their ability in adapting to changing environments and to learning to use new technologies for committing their crimes. Under your leadership, Madame, UNODC has to foster its partnerships and associations with other UN entities, international organizations, regional organizations, civil society, academia and even the private sector. UNODC needs to benefit from all the expertise, knowledge and capabilities available, in order to be better placed to face new and evolving trends and challenges.

Madame Waly,

Recently my Government undertook the step of transforming its foreign policy into a Feminist one. That means that, more than ever before, all our actions including in the multilateral arena are

aimed to advancing on empowering women and girls and guaranteeing that they will have equal opportunities in life.

Your appointment, Madame, sends a potent message to young girls around the world that there is not a level of responsibility nor an area of professional development that women cannot undertake or where they cannot excel at. We are looking forward to continuing working with you in advancing a Gender agenda for UNOV and UNODC.

Thank you very much.