The growing size of the prison population throughout the world places an enormous burden on not only the individuals and families but also on communities, societies and governments. As excessive use of imprisonment, particularly for drug-related offences, has greatly contributed to the global prison overcrowding problem, use of alternatives to imprisonment, wherever appropriate, is one of the key measures in responding to the global prison crisis.

This event will discuss the crucial role that alternatives to imprisonment play, particularly for people who are disproportionately affected and/or have specific needs when in contact with the criminal justice system, such as people with drug use disorders and women.

The event will further highlight the importance of coordination and cooperation between health and justice sectors and share information on recent initiatives at the regional and international levels, including the UNODC/WHO initiative on treatment and care as alternatives to conviction or punishment. Panellists will share experiences on promising practices and continued challenges on use of alternatives to imprisonment.