



26 - 27

November

2015

UNGASS
2016

**SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM**

**FINAL REPORT ON THE UNGASS REGIONAL
CONSULTATION WORKSHOP
ISTANBUL
NOVEMBER 26 – 27**

I. Preface

This report is the final document of the UNGASS Regional Consultation Workshop which was held on November 26-27, 2015 in Istanbul.

As the representative of Eastern Europe and Central Asia within the Civil Society Task Force (CSTF), the Turkish Green Crescent Society (TGCS) organized the workshop program to collect different perspectives and recommendation based on the drug policies and implementations prior to the upcoming event UNGASS in April, 2016. The workshop was attended by civil society organizations' representatives including academics, volunteers, and experts from Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions. In total, there were 27 international and 24 local participants from 20 countries. The organizations were exclusively selected as prevention-focused, treatment-focused, and harm reduction-focused organizations, which helped to create an ideal environment for the discussions. In conjunction with the workshop sessions, a National Workshop was held on the evaluation of Turkish drug policy with the participation of local civil society organizations.

This final document aims to provide the main conclusions of the discussions and recommendations on the highlighted topics which will be addressed on the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) 2016.

Contents

- I. Preface 1
- II. Background 3
- III. UNGASS Activities of the Turkish Green Crescent Society 3
 - a. Global Civil Society Survey 3
 - b. Regional Consultation Workshop..... 4
- IV. Recommendations..... 7
 - A. Drugs and Health 7
 - B. Drugs and Crime..... 10
 - C. Drugs and Human Rights, Women, Children, and Communities 15
 - D. New Challenges..... 18
 - E. Alternative Development..... 20
 - F. Additional Notes of the National (Turkish) Workshop..... 23

II. Background

The United Nations General Assembly will hold a Special Session on world drug problem on April 19th -21st, 2016 (UNGASS 2016). That is a great opportunity to hold high level debates regarding global drug control policies. Therefore, all country authorities, intergovernmental organizations, UN Bodies, non-governmental organizations are invited to engage in the preparatory process and share their evaluation on the global drug policy practices.

In consideration of the fact that civil society involvement is required in the policy making process, the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) and the New York NGO Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC) joined forces to launch Civil Society Task Force(CSTF). This CSTF will highlight the voices of civil society on global drug problem in the preparatory process of UNGASS. The inclusion of civil society organizations thereby has been highly acknowledged, and regional representatives on specific thematic areas were determined in order to fully accomplish the civil society engagement to this policy making process. CSTF has 30 members in total, 18 regional representative, and 8 representatives of affected populations and 4 for steering committee. It works in coordination with the UNODC during the UNGASS 2016 process. Turkish Green Crescent Society was selected as one of the representatives of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

III. UNGASS Activities of the Turkish Green Crescent Society

a. Global Civil Society Survey

Global Civil Society Survey was designed to provide an initial assessment on the civil society contributions in the policy making process. It is also utilised to measure the level of awareness and knowledge within the civil society as well as to analyse their level of interest in the UNGASS 2016 process. These were all important initiations to encourage civil society involvement at global levels.

The results of the civil society survey were expected to reflect in which areas the CSOs are specialized, their priorities and concerns to be addressed, and best practices. The survey was translated into 10 languages such as Arabic, Vietnamese, Russian, Portuguese, and Turkish. It was disseminated by especially the CSOs within the CSTF.

A preliminary compilation of the survey results was used in order to create the document titled “Civil Society Task Force Recommendations for the Zero Draft of the Outcome Document

for UNGASS 2016". Prior civil society collaborations including Civil Society Hearings and the Declaration adopted in connection with Beyond 2008 were also examined in the preparation of the final document.

TGCS played a role in dissemination of the Global Civil Society Survey within the CSOs in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Turkey. A comprehensive research was conducted so as to prepare a list of CSOs in the region. The local and international NGOs are given the importance of the survey and kindly invited to complete the survey. In total, 301 CSOs were invited to participate in the survey through e-mail with the required information and survey links. 240 CSOs from Eastern Europe while 61 CSOs from Turkey were called on to complete the survey.

b. Regional Consultation Workshop

Regional Consultations are a part of the process on the way to UNGASS 2016 to collect more comprehensive, objective and critical assessments on the global drug policy. Accordingly Regional Consultation Workshops play a vital role in collecting regional CSOs ideas and experiences which may be helpful and are important for UNGASS process.

The specific aims of the Regional Consultation Workshop are to;

- Have comprehensive, inclusive and high level debates on global drug problem in the Eurasia region,
- Discuss and evaluate the current drug policies, implementations, success and challenges in regional and international levels,
- Review and examine the best practices and challenges faced in the process to overcome drug problem
- Make comparisons among the different approaches and strategies adopted by the concerned local authorities, NGO's or Drug Control Commissions
- Contribute to create documents and materials which will be later submitted to the UN authorities
- Benefit from the latest works of specialists, NGO representatives and academics
- Engage to work in collaboration with all stakeholders in drug related fields.

During the two-day workshop in Istanbul, 51 participants from 20 countries generously shared their thoughts, works and ideas on five thematic areas. The Regional Consultation Workshop was structured on the three basic sessions:

1. Presentations: A brief introduction of UNGASS was followed by the presentations on the specific topics to be also discussed among the discussion groups.

2. Discussion Groups: The participants were assigned to work within the groups in accordance with their choice of expertise and interest. A moderator took the responsibility to ensure a healthy and fruitful environment for the discussions while a reporter took notes during the discussion session.

3. Report Declarations: The declaration of what the groups discussed and recommended on the thematic areas was presented by the reporter.

The five thematic areas are;

1. Drugs and Health
2. Drugs and Crime
3. Drugs and Human Rights, Women, Children, and Communities
4. New Challenges
5. Alternative Development

Participating Countries and NGOs

1. AIDS Foundation East West (Kyrgyzstan)
2. Albania Green Crescent (Albania)
3. Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice (Russia)
4. Association Diogenis (Greece)
5. Azerbaijan Green Crescent
6. Bağımlılığı Engelleme, Mücadele ve Eğitim Vakfı (Turkey)
7. Bosnia Green Crescent(Bosnia)
8. Buzurg (Tajikistan)
9. Cyprus Green Crescent (Cyprus)
10. Drug Enforcement Department (Qatar)
11. Ergoterapi Derneği (Turkey)
12. EURAD (Belgium)
13. Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs (Russia)
14. Montenegro Green Crescent
15. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Turkey
16. NGO Legal Development and Democracy (Azerbaijan)

17. NGO Stijena (Croatia)
18. Organization for Harm Reduction in Afghanistan (Afghanistan)
19. Podruga (Kyrgyzstan)
20. Proslavi Oporavak (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
21. Rebirth Charity Society (Iran)
22. South Caucasus Office on Drugs and Crime (Georgia)
23. VNGOC (Vienna)
24. World Federation against Drugs (Sweden)
25. Yemen without Qat (Yemen)

IV. Recommendations

The overall discussions, conclusions and recommendations based on the five thematic areas are presented as follows:

A. Drugs and Health

a. Discussions

Different approaches and pathways to recovery from drug addiction were discussed in drugs and health group. Community-based services, public health approach, stigmatization, cooperation between civil society and government were among the main topics touched upon within the scope of drugs and health.

Most organizations think that recovery needs to be recognized as a foundation for different approaches to drug dependence disorders. Many drug policies have shifted focus to recovery-oriented systems, through which an individual is enabled to move on from drug use problem towards a drug-free life as an active and contributing member of society. Also, it is highlighted that there is a need to invest more in treatment and social reintegration, and to protect children from illicit drugs.

Community-based services

It is agreed that the current systems do not function properly. We need a professional help system not only for drug users but also for families affected by drugs. In addition to that, sharing of experience, peer to peer support, and relapse prevention which are the most significant parts of recovery should play a key role in the new drug policies. The real challenges begin when the specialized treatment programme ends and the individual goes back to real life: maintaining abstinence, finding a job and generating income; seeking a home and starting a new household; establishing new social networks; choosing leisure time activities, etc. Universally, those needs are routinely ignored, resulting in a failed recovery and an enormous waste of human and financial resources. The group has agreed that community-based services, such as 12 steps program of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are extremely important. NA supports recovery, total abstinence, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

Public health

The issue of public health approach was also discussed. The health oriented approach in drug policy is now replacing the former punitive approach. Problems related to substance use are increasingly being considered as health problems and are being managed in public health systems. Public health approach differs from individual medical interventions in that it is population-based, relies on coordination of all parties, and emphasizes a collective responsibility for the prevention of diseases. Primary, secondary and tertiary preventions should be applied in a balanced manner. Primary prevention is the early intervention to avoid initiation of drug use or addiction. Secondary prevention includes interventions to avoid complications of drug use. Tertiary intervention is treatment, rehabilitation and social integration of affected people and harm reduction.

Stigmatization

It was also highlighted that people using drugs and recovered users should not be stigmatized, discriminated and/or punished but receive support for recovery, social cohesion and integration. The new policies should focus on eliminating the stigmatization of drug users in the society.

Civil society – government cooperation

The group has highlighted that there is a need for greater civil society involvement. NGOs needs support, financial and capacity building as well as strengthening cooperation with government. Furthermore, cooperation between all stakeholders; governmental, non-governmental, religious leaders; law enforcement; teachers, and medical professionals is essential for future work in the field of drugs.

b. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The group highlighted that multiple pathways to recovery are essential to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of people suffering from drug disorders and dependence. In order to reach a safe set of policies and a healthy global community, Member States and UN agencies should develop effective drug strategies that integrate prevention, treatment, recovery, enforcement, and harm reduction such as the expansion of opiate substitution treatment (OST) and the availability of naloxone.

In short, a single approach is not enough; a coordinated, comprehensive mixture of different approaches should be implemented in order to provide each individual with a solution.

- Treatment should be evidence-based and culturally appropriate. Such treatment should be accessible, affordable or free for those who seek it, and it should also be possible to include families in this care. Countries need to focus on reducing inequalities in terms of access to treatment particularly for women and youth. Accessible outpatient treatment should be given importance and treatment as an alternative to criminal sanctions should be the priority. Providing drug treatment alone (e.g. substitute prescribing) without additional support or services has only limited and inconsistent effects on recovery from addiction.
- The aim of prevention should be to support and promote science-based approaches that target individual and environmental vulnerabilities to risky behaviour at different developmental stages of growth and in different social settings (school, family, workplace, and community).
- New treatment responses to the spread of new psychoactive substances should also be taken into consideration. Since most services target opioid users, users of other drugs may have less access to treatment.
- All programs need to incorporate strategies for greater involvement of affected populations including users, recovered users and families in order to increase treatment outcomes.
- Communities like Narcotics Anonymous which offer an efficient recovery system to the users represent people in recovery and should be recognized, included and promoted in addiction treatment system as a cost-effective community based service.
- There is a need to strengthen the capacity of NGOs for greater civil society involvement and better cooperation among all stakeholders working in the field of drugs.
- Special programs for training of professionals are needed in most counties. Technical assistance is needed related to data collection, evidence-driven intervention implementation, and for the development of a knowledgeable and qualified team of professionals. People in long term recovery should be included in these training programs.

- There is a need for anti-discrimination legislation; and Governments and UN agencies should continue efforts to ensure that discrimination against people who use drugs and recovered users does not prevent the fulfilment of fundamental human rights.
- The group has agreed that legalization is dangerous and all delegates are against legalization. Some organizations are for decriminalization of possession for personal use. Characteristics of countries are important when choosing drug policies. For example, legalization of cannabis cannot be considered as an option where its use-rate is low. Any policy or program that normalizes recreational drug use is harmful to the public interest. However, Member States should be encouraged to shift focus from a criminal perspective of drug problems to a health care perspective. The new global drug policies should include public health approach.
- Countries must ensure access to controlled essential medicines for severe pain, palliative care, and dependence treatment. Countries' failure to do so is a violation of their citizens' rights to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

B. Drugs and Crime

a. Discussions

The group started off by discussing how drugs and crime are connected and agreed that drugs is not always the factor that is leading to crime, there are a lot of cases where crime is the factor leading to drugs. There was, however a total agreement that drugs and crime are interconnected and they both need to be taken into account while working on addiction issue. There was also a common view that we need to have more research around this to understand the connection between drugs and crime so we can develop our work.

Another area that was identified as an area where we need more knowledge are the social roots for drugs and crime. It was highlighted that we need to know more in order to provide good answers on how to tackle the problem. The issue of children committing crimes and/or using drugs was also highlighted and the group agreed that this needs to be tackled differently than if an adult is doing the same, a child perspective is needed. There was a call for common policies both to protect children from drug and also to protect children from unequal judicial implementations, all in line with the Conventions of the Rights of the Child.

The group also discussed the role that media, including movies, series, and music, and popular culture can have for crime and drugs. Using drugs such as cannabis is promoted in many cases. However, one person suggested that the society and influential people need to take their responsibility in this regard, since media and influential people can also be used to decrease the number of people using drugs by creating a negative image of drugs and the related life style. An issue which came up was the actual debate about drug testing of the leading politicians in Albania. Drug tests are done to athletes in order to prove that they deserve the medal. It was argued that politicians should do the same to show their honest commitment to serve the people who elected them. The most important point of such a conduct is that they will send a message about healthy life and dignity, taking their role as strongly effective people in the community.

The group discussed pros and cons around legalization and decriminalization, where some argued that we need to liberalize the drug laws and put more focus on harm reduction and others saw the criminal justice system as a tool that is useful as an engine in the work of prevention and treatment, a tool that can be used to encourage people to move towards recovery. The group agreed that there is a problem with proportionality of sentencing. For example, in Georgia one can receive 6 years imprisonment for possession of drugs, and up to 11 years for drug dealing, while 6-8 years for rape. The group agreed that this issue is of high importance and urged member states to consider proportionality in sentencing.

Supply reduction in the respective countries was also discussed and different country specifics were highlighted. In Albania the government destroyed the cultivation of cannabis that was concentrated in a specific place in Albania, but that did not solve the problem of illicit cultivation in Albania. On the other hand, the action made it more difficult since the government did not have enough resources to follow up the intervention. As a result, the cultivation tripled and scattered out all over Albania, the supply now is hence higher than before. The group also agreed that countries have different preconditions and this needs to be taken into account when deciding on the appropriate response because most countries do not have the same resources and/or welfare system.

It was also highlighted that the countries are connected with each other. For example, Afghanistan is the provider and Iran, together with some other neighboring countries to Afghanistan, is the route to transit. However, it is also very important to remember that only 10% of the world population have access to essential medications when trying to tackle this issue.

The group also highlighted that in order for seizure to be effective you need to seize at least 2/3 of the total to be effective, and we are not even close to that, for example we only inspect 2% of 500 million of the containers being shipped. International cooperation between states should also be stronger and they should agree on working together against the terrorist groups that often get their income and control the international drug market.

The group agreed that one of the most important issue to tackle when it comes to supply reduction is demand reduction. For example, much of the cannabis produced in Albania is sold to the Netherlands. Hence, there is a need to see where the source of the problem is and tackle that, and to recognize that most of the demand is coming from Western Europe. It was stated that one of the possible explanations was that people are stressed and many come from broken families. There is a need to take the shared responsibility more seriously and to cooperate for a better society. For example, schools and the civil society can cooperate in the implementation of drug policies.

The group agreed that corruption is the obstacle in solving the problem with drugs and crime, it is an engine for crime and drugs. Even if we try to perfect the education and structures in the society, it won't be enough unless we tackle the issue of corruption. Many of the countries in the region have poor structures in the society. So, as long as the mentality is corrupted it does not matter if we raise customs officers' salaries, for instance. Changing mentalities takes time and dedication which is lacking in many of the countries represented. One exception in the region is Georgia. Georgia managed to lower the rate of corruption by, for example, expanding the services of the government, offering services that earlier only was available by bribing, such as express passport services. The difference is that the money goes to the state, and that the state is able to offer what the people want.

The legal problem of new psychoactive substances (NPS) was also discussed. The countries had different legal approaches; many had already solved the legal problem but still struggled with the implementation of the laws. The group saw the need to further develop the implementation of the law and this is an area where more international cooperation is needed. One suggestion to solve it and to be able to direct people to less dangerous drugs was to have harder punishment for more dangerous drugs.

Substitution treatment for people who are addicted to heroin was discussed and the group agreed that substitution treatment is decreasing the level of crime. The group also agreed that it is important to combine the substitution treatment with psycho-social support. One member of the group also highlighted the importance to have the goal, to reduce harm, in focus when we talk about substitution treatment. The group also emphasized that drug-free treatment for recovery should be available as well.

Relapse was also discussed, the group agreed that relapse should not be seen as a loss, it could be part of the recovery of the person. The group emphasized that rather than seeing it as a loss we need to learn how to handle it in treatment.

The group was concerned over the lack of long term commitment and planning when it comes to decreasing the level of crime and drug use. Often the civil society are forced to work with 1-2 years project plans when it could take ten years for prevention measures to produce positive results. For example it was mentioned that in Georgia the financing that is available for the civil society is mainly for harm reduction interventions for 1-2 years, and practically there is nothing on prevention.

b. Conclusions and Recommendations

- More research should be done in order to efficiently understand the connection between drugs and crime. What leads to drug use, why do (some) drug users commit crime, why do criminals use drugs etc. should be questioned.
- The social roots for drugs and crime should be identified so as to have a better understanding. Only so, we will be able to find the right and effective solutions to the current problems.

- Different age groups should be treated differently. Drug policies may be prepared in cooperation with pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists etc. in order to reach an efficient, strong set of policies each of which is specialized for different age groups. Specific conventions and agreements like Conventions of the Rights of the Child should be taken into consideration while deciding on the new policies.
- The media including movies, series, and music and influential people should be a medium in reaching the whole society and be used to convey messages against drugs and related life style. Promotion of drugs through movies, series or music should be banned.
- Proportionality in sentencing should be given attention. Some crimes related to drug using, dealing or possession is relatively high when compared with other crimes.
- Measures against supply reduction should be carefully implemented by planning the whole process from the beginning to the end. Country specific conditions should be taken into account when deciding on the appropriate response. Otherwise, the situation can get worse as experienced by different countries.
- The international community should coordinate their efforts and cooperate against drug dealers to conduct successful seizure operations.
- Demand reduction is important in that it shows where the source of the problem is. The countries or the regions where the demand for drugs should be analysed. Then the reasons causing the demand should be the focus of the policies and practices regarding the drugs.
- Comprehensive measures and practices against corruption should be included in the national laws and regulations. International community should support and control each other in fighting against corruption.
- Substitution treatment is efficient in decreasing the level of crime. Combining it with psycho-social support gives better results in integrating addicts into life. However, drug-free treatment should also be available for the ones who demand it.
- Long term commitment and planning is of vital importance. Short term projects are not useful enough to produce constant and permanent results. The governments should think long term and plan their policies accordingly. They should cooperate with civil society for long term practices and projects.

C. Drugs and Human Rights, Women, Children, and Communities

a. Discussions

In the field of drug use, there are numerous examples of human rights' violations. We defined several specific areas of human rights that are in the focus and are being violated the most. Some of them are written in details; however, we believe that some do not need explanation therefore they will be seen as listed shortly.

Rights to health and healthcare

- In some countries, people need to pay for the treatment themselves. In others, there is no official treatment for drug addicts. In third ones, there are big waiting lists to receive treatment.
- Some countries are cutting budgets for treatment so we see therapeutic communities being shut down.
- There are frequent examples of taking advantage of drug addicts while in prison or in police custody (forcing confession of crimes...) with no treatment available.
- There are also examples of keeping drug addicts on medication and substitution therapy for too long instead of getting the best possible treatment with a goal to recover.
- In some countries, there is a lack of access to hepatitis, HIV and other side effects diseases treatment.

Rights to equality and non-discrimination (stigma problem)

- There are many examples of states where drug addicts are treated in mental health institutions so drug addicts and their families are hesitant to start treatment because of stigma problem.
- There are numerous evidence of widespread false opinion: "Once an addict, always an addict." which is a basis for discrimination on almost every field of everyday life.
- There are also many examples of recovered users that have problem with an officially excepted diagnose of drug use as a "chronic relapsing brain disease", this diagnose puts lifelong stigma on people.

- In Tajikistan, for example, government imposes extremely high fines for sex workers so they cannot afford it. As a result, drug users among this population are put in extremely hard situation.

Women's rights

This is a specific and extra sensitive in the field of drugs.

- women with children in prison
- pregnant women in prisons
- pregnant women using drugs
- drug user women who are sex workers
- women in rehabilitation treatment (with or without children)
- moral stigmatization for women on drugs, especially for those who are also sex workers
- unemployment of women

Children's rights

- children working in production of illegal drugs
- children working in dealing drugs
- children working in drug trafficking
- children with drug addicted parents
- children with a drug addicted single parent family
- children with a drug user and sex worker mother

Youth's rights

- alcohol and tobacco use among youth
- new psychoactive substances
- explicit/implicit promotion of drug use in music, movies etc.
- (positive) promotion of criminal life
- protection from peer pressure

Communities

There is a need to put emphasis on few communities with high risk factors: refugees, army soldiers after war, gypsies and other minorities.

b. Conclusions and Recommendations

- States should organize their treatment methods according to best world practices and evidence-based suggestions from UN and its different agencies.
- We recommend that there should be guidelines for substitution therapy in order to prevent doctors of taking advantage of addicts as vulnerable group (misconduct).
- We urge that drug addicts in prisons and under police custody should be able to access proper treatment for their dependence, and states should support therapeutic communities instead of cutting their budgets and making treatment inaccessible.
- States should exclude drug use treatment from mental health institutions. Also, there should be a new and evidence-based diagnose for drug use as a treatable and preventable disease/disorder etc.
- States should avoid imposing fines for drug addicts who already have a poor financial situation.
- Women are a minority group among drug users and should be in focus of protection wherever and whenever possible. There should be a special concern over treatment in prison or therapeutic community for women that are pregnant or already have children.
- Since it is harder for women to regain their social status, there should be special employment programs for women in recovery.
- Alternative development, family education, building social networks for families with drug users/parents/sex workers, prevention for risk group factors can be the key concepts for protecting children's rights in the fight against drugs.
- Education, parents and family education, and school-based initiatives can help prevent young people from using drugs. Promoting positive values, quality, and productive use of free time (sports, creativity, languages, peer support groups, positive activism) as well as strengthening primary interventions can also be useful methods for protecting them.
- Tailor-made programs for the mentioned groups should be developed in collaboration with specialists working in the field of drugs.

- We strongly suggest that professionals working on human rights should be involved when states create their drug policies, laws and regulations.
- It is important to build bridges between human rights and drug policies not only at national but also at international level. For example, connecting Human Rights Watch and WHO working in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Finally, we see a great need that civil society should have more support. It is also important that they partners of the states while developing drug policies so they can make sure that human rights are considered and implemented in all areas.

D. New Challenges

a. Discussions

The workshop on New Challenges discussed, based on the countries of the participants, the situation in Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

Challenges and current situation

In the specific case of Yemen, the widespread high-level use of khat (qat) was seen as a threat to the physical wellbeing of inhabitants. It was furthermore described as having socio-economic consequences for the entire nation. The lack of regulation at national and international level and the absence of leadership along with the acceptance of use throughout all levels of society were identified as major hindrances of reduced use.

In countries of the region, especially in Kyrgyzstan, challenges were identified as the lack of capacity of the government to implement prevention strategies and to provide treatment to drug users; disproportionate and stigmatizing responses by law enforcement to drug users with a high level of incarceration, and the decreasing availability of international funding for NGOs that were until now able to offer a wide range of services from prevention to harm reduction. It is feared that harm reduction services would need to be scaled down due to the lack of NGO capacity and funding. It was further noted that harm reduction services should have a legislative basis unless they already have.

The increased use and availability of new psychoactive substances in the form of synthetic cannabis was described as a new challenge for Cyprus and other countries. Due to its rapid appearance, standardized responses and analysis took time. While the level of availability of treatment was overall described as increasing, a lack of appropriate rehabilitation services was identified. Imprisonment for drug offenders should be age appropriate.

Civil society is working with the government to provide new treatment and rehabilitation centres, but it needs sustainable political commitment to being able to maintain strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Drug policy is essentially a government policy, but NGOs need to increase their capacity to meaningfully engage with governments and partners.
- As well as governments, NGOs should also have a sustainable political commitment to being able to maintain strategies.
- NGO networking and cooperation at national and international level, along with sharing of best practices and experiences are extremely important in increasing NGOs' capacity in the fight against drugs.
- There is a great need to develop and adhere to an NGO code of conduct. The use of standardized evidence-based methods of intervention should be fostered among NGOs.
- Involvement of users' organisations in the planning of treatment and policy is of high importance so as to have more inclusive policies and practices.
- There is a need to strengthen social relationship.
- Being the central elements in prevention strategies, families and communities should be utilized to empower social leadership in communities.
- School-based programs, and education in general, are substantially important tools. Awareness raising campaigns should be conducted in order to a wider society.
- Use of mass media as a part of prevention strategies was positively mentioned, but there should be constant monitoring. In addition to that, media should be provided with guidelines on how to reach the audience, what to include and what not to include in the content etc.

- Training of law enforcement professional was seen as a valuable tool in increasing prevention and avoiding stigmatization of users.
- Promotion of alternative crops to producers of khat in the specific case of Yemen may be included as a new strategy in the new policy document(s).
- Possible regulation at the international level might lead to the creation of legislation at the national level and its effective implementation.
- While diverse views were expressed on the recent regulatory models of cannabis use implemented in several countries, it was commonly understood that Member States should take the diverse views from civil society into account during the UNGASS process.
- It was also agreed that these new models of regulation will need to be closely monitored and evaluated in terms of consequences and effects on the judicial system. A reliable evidence base of results should be established.
- It was furthermore agreed that examples from tobacco and alcohol regulations and experiences should be studied in detail because they may be useful in the drug policy-making process.
- The interests of business and industrialized production should also be considered in the policy-making process.

E. Alternative Development

a. Discussions

We discussed many points with regards to certain countries, particularly Afghanistan. We went on to discuss other more general issues. Several important issues have been raised regarding economic status, poverty and security situation. It was acknowledged that in most cases farmers turn to the cultivation of illicit crops out of desperation and the need to provide for their families.

b. Conclusions and Recommendations

- Depending on the need of each country, alternative development should not only comprise of providing a new basic crop for farmers but also infrastructure; economic, political and social development. Wholesale development of rural areas is needed. This

includes roads, irrigation, and electricity. Opportunities for non-farming livelihoods need to be made possible. Access to healthcare and education institutions is essential.

- Cash crops need to be utilised to compete with the price received by illicit crops. An example of this is the production of saffron in Afghanistan. Saffron is one of the most expensive spices by weight and has a number of uses. This includes uses in many cuisines as well as being used as a fabric dye. There is also research that shows it has a number of medicinal benefits. In order for production in Afghanistan to compete on the international market, international donors need to provide a great deal of assistance in terms of sales and marketing. In this sense, there is potential for the use of fair-trade or organic labelling. There are a number of other potential cash crops available depending on the country and the agricultural land.
- Alternative development projects need to be adapted to religious and cultural considerations. An example is the role of Islam in Afghanistan. Religious leaders can play a huge role in explaining that illicit drug cultivation is haraam (forbidden). There is evidence that this could have positive effect as 59% of farmers in 2013 and 60% in 2012 who had never grown opium reported that they did not do so because it is forbidden by Islam (UNODC, 2013). This is particularly needed in the case of youth, in order to discourage future generations from being involved in the illicit drug trade. This is always the case as Ahmed Rashid, author of the book "Taliban" and "Descent into Chaos", explains "Opium is permissible because it is consumed by kafirs [unbelievers] in the West, and not by Muslims or Afghans".
- Religious and cultural values also needed to be considered in terms of the level of basic needs that need to be provided in alternative development. Islamic cultures tend to be far less narcissistic than Western cultures and therefore have less desire for consistent economic growth. All they need to be provided is a living which covers the basics of them and their families along with access to education and healthcare.
- More research needs to be carried out about the situation in Yemen. As the society is moving away from khat consumption and production, new opportunities need to be found.
- The empowerment of women is an essential cornerstone of alternative development projects. In most cases of rural poverty, women are disproportionately affected in an adverse way and this needs to be addressed. Women often have the dual

responsibility, being the primary child carers and at the same time having to carry out a large share of the manual farm work. They suffer from food insecurity and being overworked, and are often illiterate. There are many opportunities for women in terms of community development and management. For this to be effective there, therefore, needs to be equal opportunities in access to education. All proposed projects should highlight the gender mainstreaming aspect in the proposal whilst to some extent considering cultural differences.

- There should be no fumigation or forced eradication of illicit crops. This only has the effect of pushing farmers further into poverty. Eradication should occur voluntarily alongside development assistance.
- Further discussions and research needs to be done as to the possibility of linking up some licit opium production with opioid replacement treatments.
- It should be remembered that the Doi Tung Project in Thailand took 30 years to become sustainable. This should act as a reminder that alternative development requires long term political and economic support from consumer states, international organisations, multilateral financing institutions, international NGOs, and civil society. Furthermore, this is required in order to genuinely reduce the global supply and not merely shift in production from one region to another.
- Civil society has an active role in advocating for the use of alternative development as the only effective strategy to reduce the supply of illicit drugs. This includes highlighting successful cases and continually applying pressure to ensure the long term commitment remains.
- Communities themselves have to be the driving force behind the change away from illicit production. Assistance and encouragement needs to be provided to ensure that projects are more bottom-up than top-down. This comes from governments sending a clear message to farming communities that assistance is available and that there will be no persecution.
- It is very clear that corruption is one of the main impediments to successfully removing illicit crop production. There is a need for an effective oversight in place to ensure that assistance goes to the right communities. Local community development needs to involve devolved and decentralised systems in order to increase accountability and trust in institutions.

F. Additional Notes of the National (Turkish) Workshop

In order to provide additional information on the basis of Turkish National Drug Policy, some recommendations and evaluation of the current practices given during the discussion as follows:

- Public health approach is important in the fight against drugs and education can be used as a tool.
- It is accepted that there are various approaches to the drug issue and they are all needed to achieve better results. However, NA Turkey argues that the main focus should be “prevention”, otherwise all approach will be left half finished.
- Precautions and measures by the governments are needed and effective in the fight against drugs. Prohibition works as seen in tobacco bans. Since public health approach is about the majority, there should be no tolerance but direct prohibition of drugs. The best treatment for addiction is the prevention of addiction in the first place.
- Family is of high importance when it comes to addiction. The methods should be based on family notion.
- Prevention-based strategies should be reviewed from the beginning because the new generation is bored of brochures or presentations talking about the harms of drugs.
- Addiction treatment and rehabilitation processes turned into a marketplace. In order to stop this, some institutions and organizations should be given legal status.
- Ergotherapy (occupational therapy) can be use a new method in the fight against drugs. Ergotherapy supports the individual to actively participate in social life.
- As seen in Amsterdam and Eindhoven, liberalization of drug use and/or harm reduction do not solve the drug problem. Drugs have a vital role in the crime rates. Family and religion should be given special attention in the fight against drugs. Especially NGOs and governments should stand against drugs with serious campaigns and a strong will.
- It was accepted by the NGO representatives that NGOs’ capacity to partner with the governments for probation system is not enough at the moment. They need capacity building programs in order to partner with the governments.
- There is a great need especially in Turkey for a cooperation between the civil society and the state. For instance, in some parts of the world the court rules that the addict

should attend NA meetings which means it is included in the legal system and is addressed by the state. This is what is needed also in Turkey. The state should monitor and control the NGOs and direct people to the ones which offer effective methods for recovery.