

## Sub-Sahara Africa Regional Consultations

Posted by Eze Eluchie on Oct 24, 2015



### **Report on the CSTF Regional Consultations**

***Ghana Country Consultations. Accra, Ghana.***

***Venue: Freedom Hall, Kokomlemle, Accra, Ghana. Date: 24th September, 2015***

#### **CSO Consultations:**

*Number of Participants: 12*

Upon arrival for the Consultations, each participant was presented with a copy of the CSTF Zero Draft Document and enjoined to read through and digest same and highlight areas of agreement, inquiry and disagreement therewith, as it will serve as foundation for the Consultations.

An introductory presentation was done, by the CSTF Regional Representative for Sub-Sahara Africa {Eze Eluchie} to acquaint and enlighten the participants with the following issues:

1. History of UNGASS 2016
2. The Creation, origin and intendments of the CSTF
3. The CSTF Global Online Survey and the CSTF Zero Draft Document.

Participants asked questions pertaining to the presentations, particularly regarding the

#### Key Outcomes:

Whilst agreeing with the general framework of the CSTF's Zero Draft recommendations, which formed the basis of discussions during the Consultations, participants highlighted the following areas regarding the 5 thematic areas identified in the Draft Recommendations. -

*1. Drugs and Health:* Emphasis on access to medicines for vulnerable persons; and Right of person's suffering from addiction to care, treatment and rehabilitation.

*2. Drugs and Crimes:* need to de-emphasize law and crime components in the 'war against drugs' and focus on health.

*3. Human Rights, Women, Children and Communities;* Article 33 of the CRC is quite explicit on the need for State

Parties to the CRC to protect children from drug use, production and trafficking. This is sacrosanct. Children consist of over 70% of the populations of sub-Saharan Africa and must be protected.

There is a right to life, to health but certainly not to self-destruct or pose harm or danger to the community.

Women deserve greater protection from drugs.

*4. New challenges, threats and realities in addressing the world drug problems; PUSH FOR LEGALIZATION* Sub-Saharan Africa is presently overwhelmed by basic health issues such as communicable diseases; maternal child health concerns, infectious diseases and hygiene, and cannot presently dabble into tertiary health issues (treatment, care and rehabilitation of drug users) resulting from legalization.

*'Best practices' Vs. 'Evidence Based'*. The dearth of data and scientific collation of practices and observances across Sub-Saharan Africa makes reference to 'evidence-based' appear to always mean resort to scientific truths sourced from outside the African continent. There is need to document practices in the continent.

Need to incorporate a Reporting Mechanism that will allow Alternative Reports (prepared by CSO's) on Drug abuse issues to be considered by

*5. Drugs and (Alternative) development:* Need to incorporate Crop Substitution strategies for Cannabis and Khat (the major illicit drug indigenous to Ghana and the sub-Saharan Africa region in the global agenda.

Need for more clarity in the language used to describe the right of producers of illicit substances. It is presently confusing. There should be no right to continue unregulated production of illicit drugs.

**Advocacy Visit:** 25th September 2015

A delegation comprised of 3 CSO representatives and the CSTF Representative for Sub-Saharan Africa visited the Ghana Food and Drug Administration Office to intimate the GFDA of the CSTF; explain the need for the CSTF Regional Consultations; present a copy of the CSTF Zero Draft Recommendations; and discuss the inputs of the Ghana CSO's to the Draft Recommendations and elicit that the CSO's be incorporated in preparations by the Government of Ghana towards and post UNGASS 2016.



**Katherine Pettus**

Thanks Eze!

Posted on Oct 25, 2015

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By-the-minute history for this message...