

**Sub Sahara Africa Regional Consultations  
Report on Zimbabwe Country Consultations**

**Venue: AFDETO Centre, Reliance House, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**

Number of participants: 31

Prior to the Consultations, a copy of the CSTF Zero Draft Document had been sent to all invited participants and they had been enjoined to study same as it would form the basis of discussions during the Consultations.

An introductory presentation was done, by the CSTF Regional Representative for Sub-Saharan 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.

Thereafter the participants were voluntarily divided into 4 sub-groups to discuss, in the Zimbabwe context, each of the identified 5 thematic areas. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> thematic areas (*New Challenges, threats and realities in addressing the world drug problems and Drugs and (Alternative) Development*) were discussed by one group. Each of the groups nominated a Rapportuer who presented the views of the members of the group to all participants at the Consultation, who thereafter had an opportunity to make inputs to the views of the group prior to final collation.

Below is the summation of the views of the participants at the Consultations regarding the thematic areas, which participants at the Zimbabwe session of the Consultations feel should be incorporated in the CSTF Final recommendations to the UNGASS processes:

**Drugs and Crime:**

- If anyone commits an offence whilst acting under the influence of illicit drugs, acting under such influence should not be considered as a mitigating factor or defence to the offence committed.
- Need for States to take all necessary preventive and punitive measures to curb trafficking in illicit drugs and to ensure that youths are adequately sensitized on the dangers of consuming such illicit drugs.
- Zero tolerance for trafficking in illicit drugs.
- Drug abuse contributes negatively to societal development and often times aids the commission of crimes.
- Law enforcement agencies charged with responsibility for interdiction should be adequately trained and equipped for effective performance of their important role for society.
- Proper evaluation of drug related crimes and custodial sentences to avoid overburdening the detention and prison facilities by ensuring that only deserving culprits are given custodial sentences.

**Drugs and Health:**

- The old Zimbabwean saying that 'prevention is better than cure' should be adopted to ensure that domestic illicit drug abuse prevention best practices, which are culturally relevant to each country, are incorporated and prioritized into health care responses to drug issues.

- The dearth of 'scientific' data relating to successful local drug prevention best practices should not necessarily deter implementation of such best practices. Technical and professional assistance would be required to document and collate domestic drug prevention best practices.
- Weak public health care systems overwhelmed by basic health care needs in the areas of hygiene, immunization issues and maternal and child health concerns makes it imperative that available resources are devoted to areas of need. Interventions which tend to support and encourage illicit drug use, should not be encouraged.
- Development and donor agencies should be encouraged to provide funding for the establishment of Treatment, Care and Rehabilitation facilities to cater for persons who use illicit drugs in economically challenged States.
- The capacity of domestic health authorities to cater for all aspects of ensuring that needy persons have controlled and well regulated access to controlled medicines should be enhanced by effective manpower training and infrastructural support.

#### **Human Rights, Women, Children and Communities:**

- The death penalty should be eliminated, not only for drug offences, but also for all other offences.
- Civil society organizations should intensify their advocacy interventions on issues of drug trafficking as it
- Drug users and addicts deserve treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration.
- Gender and age tailored services should be developed, keeping in mind local peculiarities, with particular emphasis on the needs of women and children.
- Health and Reproductive Health education, taking into account the special needs of drug
- Regarding the question posed on State responsibilities to children under Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is need for all countries to ensure that Children are protected from illicit drug use, cultivation and trafficking.

#### **New Challenges, threats and realities in addressing the world drug problems:**

- New Psychoactive Substances have not surfaced in Zimbabwe in a problematic level – effective drug abuse prevention strategies coupled with adequate law enforcement interventions will be required to address this new threat.
- Open violation of international treaties is inimical to international order and cooperation. It is hoped that the need to adhere to the existing international drug Conventions will be stressed until such a time when practical and internationally agreed alternatives are attained.
- Whilst we affirm that addiction is a medical infirmity requiring treatment and as such should not be treated as a crime, we do not agree or support any efforts to at legalization of illicit drugs which may serve to make them commercial merchandize or available outside use ffor medical purposes under strict regulation and control.

#### **Drugs and (Alternative) Development:**

- Crop substitution strategies to encourage farmers engaged with the cultivation of illicit drugs should be expanded to cover drugs for which such strategies are currently not available.
- UNGASS 2016 should evolve an International Funding mechanism that will provide an equitable means of ensuring that persons illicitly engaged in the cultivation of illicit drugs are supported to find alternative means of livelihood and sustenance.