

**Summary Report**  
**Northern Africa and the Middle East/Central Asia**  
**National and Regional Consultations**  
**Tehran-Iran**

The following summary report encompasses:

- 1. Iran Country Consultation Meeting of the Civil Society towards UNGASS 2016, August 2015, Tehran**
- 2. An online survey on the views of CSOs on selected drug control themes**
- 3. Consultation of Civil Society Organizations towards UNGASS 2016; Northern Africa and the Middle East/Central Asia, February 2016, Tehran**

What worked best was designing an Expert Advisory Group in advance consisting of experienced experts in the field of narcotic drugs. In fact, they technically contributed to designing and formulating the contents and materials of the two consultations together with the online survey so that the preparations were easily facilitated and managed. Another best practice was that we contacted, invited and covered representatives from almost all regional countries in order to prepare and provide a comprehensive input accordingly.

The main challenge was lack of funding to plan, hold and organize the consultations so that both were postponed especially the regional one. In fact, having financially supported the consultations, Rebirth is really with financial difficulties.

**Action-orientated recommendations for the UNGASS roundtables:**

**1. Drugs and Health: Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion**

- Governments should ensure access to controlled substances for patients
- Provision of opioid antidote preparations to field workers and affected populations
- Drug prevention and treatment need to be standardized
- Stigma-free general health and psychosocial support services for PWUD and their families
- MSs should observe their responsibility in ensuring widely accessible comprehensive services for prevention, treatment and care of HIV and other blood borne diseases
- Effectiveness and results of drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction programmes should be regularly monitored based on defined metrics and indicators

**2. Drugs and Crime: Supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation**

- Criminalization and punishment of drug abusers for possession of drugs for personal use should be mitigable to alternative punishments, with a view to achieving the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of drug users, advancing the well-being of individuals and communities and reducing overcrowding in prisons; in all circumstances, punishment should be proportional to the severity of a crime, may considering soft and hard drugs. And to consider alternatives to criminalization and incarceration of people who use drugs and to focus criminal justice efforts on drug traffickers, particularly on the most disruptive and violent, proportionately

- Encourage Member States to consider abolition of the use of death penalty and capital punishment for minor and non –violent drug-related offenses
- Imprisoning of people who use drugs and compulsory treatment are costly and diminish the chances of the rehabilitation and reintegration
- Fighting corruption especially systemic and institutionalized corruption together with establishing good governance and the rule of law should be on the agenda of all countries
- CSOs acknowledge the link between terrorism and the issue of drugs within the region
- Countries should have monitoring and evaluation frameworks allowing the measurement of the effectiveness of drug-related law enforcement and punitive actions

### **3. Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities**

- Lower drug purity leads to more harm for the individual and the community
- Drug dependence should be considered as a mental health disorder
- Accessible drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction services need to offer a wide spectrum of programmes
- At any point, people have the right to choose to become abstinent or not and the right of people not willing to become abstinent should be respected by laws and policies

### **4. Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation**

- All international bodies should endorse harm reduction as one of the important pillars of drug control strategies explicitly and formally
- The existing mistrust versus International bodies could be resolved
- One of the impediments in successful drug control lies in the lack of sound information, data collection, statistics, surveillance systems, research on the situation of the drugs issue
- The CS, academia and scientists need to be more closely involved in decision-making in substance-related regulations
- There is a need for formulating region-specific policies in addition to global policies
- Most Important International organizations like UNODC need to be inclusive in their actions
- The current degree of involvement of CSOs in policy making and budgeting of drug control is far from desirable at national and international levels
- The trend of emerging of NPSs needs to be closely monitored with the technical support of international organizations

### **5- Alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues**

- Governments should strive for inclusive economic growth that improves the human development index; good governance; sustainable development; stability and security
- Controlling corruption as one of the integral elements of development needs to be pursued vigorously starting with measuring the extent of corruption
- Eradication of crops has been shown to be ineffective and should be complemented by preventive alternative development

- MSs should aid striking balance between safety of work and avoiding discrimination and stigmatisation