

## Sub-Saharan Africa

*Submitted by Eze Eluchie and Nathalie Rose, CSTF Representatives for Sub Saharan Africa*

Low and poor internet penetration across the Sub Sahara African region made it imperative to adopt physical one-on-one consultations with CSO's in their home countries as a means of eliciting the opinion and views of relevant stakeholders to issues to be discussed during UNGASS 2016. On the whole 8 sessions of the Sub Sahara Africa regional Consultations were held in the following countries: Ghana (24<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> September 2015), Senegal (28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015), Malawi (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015), Kenya (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015), Rwanda 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016), Zimbabwe (28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016), South Africa (1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016) and Nigeria (4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016). Consultations were held in the capital cities of the respective countries visited, with invited participating CSO's coming from diverse areas of the respective countries.

Each Country session featured a 1-day Consultation with CSO's/NGO's working in diverse areas of the Drug issue, from Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment and Rehabilitation, Hospices and Palliative Medicine advocates and Human Rights perspectives. The CSTF Zero Draft Recommendations was disseminated to Participants, prior to the Consultations and participants were required to discuss their views alongside the 5 thematic areas identified, and where possible arrive at a national consensus regarding the said thematic areas. Advocacy Visits were subsequently undertaken to relevant State agencies and authorities to communicate the outcomes of the CSO Consultations and express

the need for collaboration between State actors and CSO's.

### Best practices

Democratizing the Consultation process by allowing the participants to choose the rapporteurs for the Group discussions which developed around the thematic areas, allowing highly interactive discussions around the 5 identified thematic areas and making participants realize that though they are encouraged to arrive at a consensus, such was nor compulsory and that all unresolved ideas from the Group discussions were to be brought to the plenary of the Consultations; helped to ensure a healthy debate atmosphere which engendered robust discussions.

### Main challenges

The key challenge encountered during the Consultations was fund constraints to support the participation of more local/grassroots based organizations at the Consultations. The amount of funds available for the Consultations made it impossible to support the participation of economically challenged CSO's located outside the capital cities. Though participants were sourced from publicly available data-bases, such as the UNODC data-base of NGO's, some concerns, which failed to realize the tradition and predisposition towards prevention in Sub Sahara Africa, were raised regarding the participants list. The reality however is that alternate ideas are quite novel and are at their infancy.



*CSTF Kenya Consultation*



*CSTF Senegal Consultation*



*CSTF Nigeria Consultation*



*CSTF Rwanda Consultation*



*CSTF Zimbabwe Consultation*

## Action-orientated recommendations for the UNGASS roundtables:

### Drugs and Health

- ✓ Need to prioritize health considerations over law enforcement in addressing the Drug problems.
- ✓ There is need for a global fund to support economically challenged States to build capacity to improve their ability to effectively address the health component of addressing drug abuse.
- ✓ More research should be carried out in the region so as to develop our own evidence-based services in line with regional/country realities.
- ✓ States should ensure that there is access to scheduled substances for palliative care and stiffer penalties for illegal dispensing of drugs and controlled substances.

### Drugs and Crime

- ✓ Need for States to take all necessary preventive and punitive measures to curb trafficking in illicit drugs and ensure that youths are adequately sensitized on the dangers of consuming illicit drugs.
- ✓ Need for global standardization of operations of Law enforcement agencies charged with responsibility for interdiction for effective performance of their important role for society.
- ✓ There should be more synergies between partners at State, local/provincial level and CSOs with regards to health and crime.

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

- ✓ Eliminate death sentences/penalties for drug related offences.
- ✓ PWUD deserve treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration. The right of people who use drugs to treatment, social services and respect of their basic human rights remains sacrosanct.
- ✓ State parties to the Covenant on the Right of the Child (CRC) should abide by their commitments

under Art. 33 CRC and ensure that Children are protected from drug production, use and consumption.

- ✓ Considering the pre-eminence of the community in the sub-region, rights of the community/society, need to be considered alongside individual rights, in addressing the Drug situation.

### Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem

- ✓ Alternative punishment for some drug-related offences, distinct from custodial sentences, can serve to decongest jail houses where drug law related offenders overwhelm the system.
- ✓ Legislative changes should facilitate access to health and social services for PWUD, while respecting international conventions.
- ✓ Illicit drug transactions introduce 'hot money' into any economy exposing such societies to dangerous security situations.

### Alternative development

- ✓ International Funding mechanisms 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.
- ✓ National authorities to be responsible for identifying farmers involved with cultivation of illicit drugs under monitored quotas in compliance with guidelines set by international drug control bodies.
- ✓ A specificity was noted about South Africa, where Aerial spraying of cannabis crops by law enforcement agencies with harmful products like Glyphosate destroys various crops, including maize and other essential crops, and has a devastating environmental impact, and this practice was condemned.