

## Summary launch of the UNODC World Drug Report 2016

23 June 2016, CND Special Event, Vienna

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) [World Drug Report \(WDR\) 2016](#) was launched on 23 June 2016 in Vienna, Geneva and New York, on the occasion of the commemoration of the [International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking](#) (26 June).

In Vienna, a special event was organised in the framework of the intersessional work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs ([CND](#)), featuring H.E. Mr. Vladimír Galuška, Chair, 59<sup>th</sup> CND; H.E. Mr. Khaled Shamaa, Chair, UNGASS Board; H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President, ECOSOC; H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, UNODC; H.E. Mr. San Lwin, Permanent Representative of Myanmar; H.E. Mr. Susan Le Jeune d'Allegeershecque; Mr. Esbjörn Hörnberg, Chair, Civil Society Task Force ([CSTF](#)) for UNGASS 2016 and Ms. Angela Me, Chief, Research and Trends Analysis Branch, UNODC.

The following are key issues raised during the interventions made:

- The most reiterated message by all speakers focused on the complementarity and mutually reinforcing relation between the implementation of the [UNGASS outcome document](#) and of the [Agenda 2030](#), making sure no one was left behind. It was underlined that shared responsibility was at the core of efforts still needed to address the world drug problem in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this sense, Chapter 2 of the WDR 2016, analysing the links between the SDGs and the world drug problem was welcomed by participants. Also, the [CND](#) and the [Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice](#) have submitted contributions to ECOSOC for the upcoming High Level Political Forum's discussions on the implementation of the Agenda 2030.
- It was noted, that in order to implement the UNGASS outcome document within the SDG framework, progress against the commitments made had to be monitored, so as to inform the process leading up to 2019. The UK volunteered to take a leading role to facilitate reporting on the implementation of NPS recommendations. It was considered that an integrated review of the UNGASS outcome document and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action will ensure much needed coherence and that new issues, such as NPS, were included.
- Effective alternative development programs to poppy cultivation, such as coffee cultivation or reforestation, as rolled out in Myanmar were highlighted as a best practice. At the same time,

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IOGT International <b>Sweden</b>	Int. Association for Hospice and Palliative Care <b>United States of America</b>	Int. Council of AIDS Service Organisations <b>Saint Lucia</b>	Int. Harm Reduction Association <b>United Kingdom</b>	Centro Des Estudios Legales Y Sociales <b>Argentina</b>	Zimbabwe Civil Liberties Union <b>Zimbabwe</b>	Maria Idomir <b>Romania</b>

currently, a national drug survey is currently being conducted in Myanmar, targeting some 53,000 households. This study will shed light on socio-economic factors contributing to demand and supply routes in Myanmar and will provide the evidence base needed for effective responses in the framework of implementing the SDGs. The Peruvian model of a balanced and comprehensive alternative development model, which aims at eliminating social exclusion and environmental degradation was also mentioned.

- Particular attention was drawn to the serious challenges posed across the world by new psychoactive substances (NPS) and the trafficking of precursor chemicals for their illicit production.
- Attention was also drawn to the proportionality of criminal justice responses to drug related offences, calling for the use of alternatives to incarceration for minor drug related offences. It was stated that excessive use of imprisonment does not reduce drug related crime and leads to overcrowding, whereas alternatives can save money.
- The role civil society is playing in addressing the world problem was highlighted, along with a commitment made to continue the work of UNODC with civil society in addressing the world drug problem. The recognition of civil society as a partner in the implementation of the operational recommendations included in the UNGASS outcome document was welcomed, in particular at national level where grass roots experience and expertise can go a long way in contributing to the success of effective drug policies covering the entire continuum of care (prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, rehabilitation, social reintegration, and access to controlled medicines for the relief of pain and suffering). It was stated that civil society has been making a significant contribution to understanding the extent to which some drug policies work better than others in different contexts, and why that is the case for drug abuse, illicit trafficking and alternative development. This can be achieved through the use of existent and newly available sets of indicators, such as the SDGs ones.

During the Q&A session that followed, speakers called for genuine political will to implement the UNGASS outcome document in the SDG framework, maintaining the focus on achieving a public health approach and human rights. The focus on gender, social equality, economic development, environmental sustainability and the rule of law among others, in Chapter 2 of the WDR 2016 was welcomed. Calls were also made to address (i) supply reduction, especially in transit countries that are most affected by the illicit drug trade; (ii) inequalities at country and international level and (iii) decline in the funding allotted to addressing the world drug problem (as shown in the WDR 2016).

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The triple launch of the WDR 2016 was welcome as a sign of greater coordination and system-wide coherence in the UN system. Nonetheless, it was underlined that common efforts to address the world drug problem remained unsatisfactory and that, in the best of scenarios, nothing much had changed. Further attention was called for to achieve gender equality and to empower women and girls in addressing the world drug problem and implementing the SDGs. A new [study](#) on the cultivation of poppy in Mexico was announced, based on data from Mexico's illicit crop monitoring system in 2014-2015, which will serve as evidence-base.

Focus on effective prevention measures, social cohesion, and a better system of data collection for the emergence of trends and approaches of law enforcement authorities. The relevance of evaluating the effectiveness of drug policies was highlighted, so that goals and their unintended consequences may be reviewed, bearing in mind that within the Agenda 2030, drug policies must place the person at the centre, protect human rights and have a minimum negative impact on development.

Concerns were raised about the consequences of legalising cannabis use for recreational purposes, such as a rapid increase in use, an increase in the number of users in treatment centers and of users driving under the influence of cannabis. Also, it was noticed that, based on the results of the WDR 2016, a direct correlation between illicit drug trafficking and violence could not be established, which means that legalisation might not curb violence linked to illicit drug trafficking. Further research was demanded on cannabis policies. Based on available data, preliminary results were deemed inconclusive and policy implications at national level (such as potential decriminalisation of possession for personal consumption) could not be determined.

A new comprehensive and balanced [National Drug Action Plan](#) was announced by Afghanistan, meant to foster good governance, security and stability. 90% of poppy production is in the poorest areas, where farmers lack market access to sell alternative products, have no socio-economic opportunities, face security concerns and there is no proper infrastructure in place. Addressing these underlying factors, in addition to encouraging women's empowerment, could prevent further exploitation by terrorist groups. In implementing the SDGs, mainstreaming alternative development into viable and sustainable economic programs was called for and it was hoped that funding would be made available.

Attention was also drawn to the increasing use of the dark net by illicit drug traffickers.

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Further information:

- World Drug Report 2016: <https://www.unodc.org/wdr2016/>
- UNODC web story on launch of WDR 2016:  
[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2016/June/number-of-drug-dependent-adults-up-for-first-time-in-six-years--now-at-29-million\\_-unodc-world-drug-report-2016.html?ref=fs1](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2016/June/number-of-drug-dependent-adults-up-for-first-time-in-six-years--now-at-29-million_-unodc-world-drug-report-2016.html?ref=fs1)
- UNODC Listen First campaign on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking: <http://www.unodc.org/listenfirst/>
- Statement of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: <http://www.unodc.org/listenfirst/en/WDD/sg-statement.html>
- Statement of UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov:  
<http://www.unodc.org/listenfirst/en/WDD/ED-statement.html>
- Statement of Mr. Esbjörn Hörnberg, Chair, CSTF for UNGASS 2016:  
<http://www.cstfondrugs.org/documentation/statements>

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