

Resolution 61/11

Promoting non-stigmatizing attitudes to ensure the availability of, access to and delivery of health, care and social services for drug users

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Mindful of its commitment to addressing and countering the world drug problem to help ensure that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity, and reaffirming its determination to address public health, safety and social problems resulting from drug abuse,

Recalling the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,⁵⁴ in which Member States reaffirmed their determination to tackle the world drug problem and to actively promote a society free of drug abuse in order to help ensure that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity, as well as their determination to address public health, safety and social problems resulting from drug abuse,

Reaffirming its commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug control conventions, including concern about the health and welfare of humankind as well as the individual and public health-related social and safety problems resulting from the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances,

Recalling its resolution 57/4 of 21 March 2014 in which it recognized that efforts supporting recovery from substance use disorders needed to be consistent with human rights obligations and be within the framework of the international drug control conventions,

Recalling also that, in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, Member States recommended the recognition of drug dependence as a complex, multifactorial health disorder characterized by a chronic and relapsing nature with social causes and consequences that can be prevented and treated through, inter alia, effective scientific evidence-based drug treatment, care and rehabilitation programmes, including community-based programmes, and the strengthening of capacity for aftercare for and the rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration of individuals with substance use disorders, including, as appropriate, through assistance for effective reintegration into the labour market and other support services,

Recognizing, as part of a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to addressing and countering the world drug problem, that appropriate emphasis should be placed on individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, with a view to promoting and protecting the health, safety and well-being of all humanity,

Recognizing that marginalization, stigmatizing attitudes, discrimination and fear of social, employment-related or legal repercussions may dissuade many who need help from accessing it and lead those who are in stable long-term recovery from a substance use disorder to avoid disclosure of their status as a person in recovery from addiction,

Guided by the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly to prevent social marginalization and promote non-stigmatizing attitudes and to encourage the voluntary participation of individuals with drug use disorders in treatment programmes, with informed consent, where consistent with national legislation, and develop and implement outreach programmes and campaigns, involving drug users in long-term recovery, where appropriate, to prevent social marginalization and promote non-stigmatizing attitudes, as well as to encourage drug

⁵⁴ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

users to seek treatment and care, and take measures to facilitate access to treatment and expand capacity,

Guided also by the reaffirmation, in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, of the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, in their efforts to support Member States in the implementation of international drug control treaties in accordance with applicable human rights obligations and to promote protection of and respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals in the context of drug programmes, strategies and policies,

Noting that, in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, Member States also recommended promoting and strengthening regional and international cooperation in developing and implementing treatment-related initiatives, enhancing technical assistance and capacity-building and ensuring non-discriminatory access to a broad range of interventions, including psychosocial, behavioural and medication-assisted treatment, as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, as well as to rehabilitation, social reintegration and recovery-support programmes, including access to such services in prisons and after imprisonment, giving special attention to the specific needs of women, children and youth in that regard,

Recalling the operational recommendation contained in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly to ensure non-discriminatory access to health, care and social services in prevention, primary care and treatment programmes, including those offered to persons in prison or pretrial detention, which are to be on a level equal to those available in the community, and ensure that women, including detained women, have access to adequate health services and counselling, including those particularly needed during pregnancy,

Recalling also the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem,⁵⁵ in which Member States were called upon, inter alia, to provide appropriate training within criminal justice and/or prison systems to support measures that are based on scientific evidence and are ethical and to ensure that staff attitudes are respectful, non-judgmental and non-stigmatizing,

Reiterating the commitment of Member States to promoting, developing, reviewing or strengthening effective, comprehensive, integrated drug demand reduction programmes, based on scientific evidence and covering a range of measures, including primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, social reintegration and related support services, aimed at promoting health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities and reducing the adverse consequences of drug use for individuals and society as a whole, taking into account the particular challenges faced by drug users,

Acknowledging the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁵⁶ in which Member States pledged that no one would be left behind in the pursuit of the goals set out in that Agenda,

Also acknowledging that removing stigmatizing attitudes in line with the purposes of the present resolution may require comprehensive and balanced efforts by Member States, in accordance with national legislation and national and regional contexts, while respecting cultural diversity, as appropriate, and in a way that does not undermine judicial procedures or any legitimate and necessary measures for crime prevention and protecting the public interest,

⁵⁵ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

⁵⁶ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

Recalling its resolution 59/5 of 22 March 2016, and underlining the importance of taking into account the challenges and needs faced by women and girls who use drugs or who are affected by the drug use of others and of mainstreaming a gender perspective into national drug policies,

1. *Encourages* Member States, as appropriate, within their national and regional contexts, to promote, among their relevant agencies and social service sectors, non-stigmatizing attitudes in the development and implementation of scientific evidence-based policies related to the availability of, access to and delivery of health, care and social services for drug users, and to reduce any possible discrimination, exclusion or prejudice those people may encounter;

2. *Requests* Member States, as appropriate, within their national and regional contexts, to continue to enhance inclusiveness in developing relevant programmes and strategies, to seek opinions and contributions from drug users and from organizations and family and community members who work with them and support them, to facilitate the development of scientific evidence-based policies regarding the availability of, access to and delivery of health, care and social services;

3. *Urges* Member States, in accordance with their national and regional contexts, as appropriate, and cultural traditions, to include in their existing training programmes information on the effect that stigmatizing attitudes have on the availability of, access to and delivery of services to drug users;

4. *Calls upon* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to integrate awareness of stigmatizing attitudes into existing training programmes for agencies with tasks in the areas of health, care and social services, and other relevant officials, and, where appropriate, in cooperation with other relevant regional, interregional and international organizations;

5. *Also calls upon* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to coordinate efforts with other relevant United Nations entities to support an increasing awareness of the negative effects of stigmatizing attitudes on the availability of, access to and delivery of health, care and social services for drug users, while bearing in mind respect for the human rights and dignity of all individuals in the context of drug programmes, strategies and policies;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-third session on how the Office has implemented the aspects of the present resolution that are relevant to its work;

7. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for these purposes, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations;

8. *Reaffirms* that the provisions in the present resolution are to be undertaken in accordance with States' international legal obligations.