

UNDP Intervention
Commission on Narcotic Drugs
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Thank you Madame Chair and congratulations on your appointment as the chairperson of the CND.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

I welcome this opportunity to share some of UNDP's recent work to foster policy coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and international commitments in human rights and drug control. My intervention will focus first, on the nexus between drug policy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and second, the role of human rights guidelines for drug policy.

Nexus between drug policy and sustainable development

In September 2015, United Nations Member States adopted by consensus the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which encompasses 17 sustainable development goals or SDGs. In so doing, they committed to 'leaving no one behind'. In the outcome document of the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs, UN Member States acknowledged that efforts to achieve the SDGs were "complementary and mutually reinforcing" to efforts to address the so-called "world drug problem".

Illicit drug markets and efforts to address them cut across almost every one of the 17 SDGs. The most impacted include goals relating to poverty eradication, food security and sustainable agriculture, health and well-being, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, making cities and settlements safe, biodiversity, peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and inclusive and accountable institutions. Ensuring that drug policy and the sustainable development agenda are coherent is essential to the successful attainment of the SDGs by UN Member States.

UNDP's recently approved Strategic Plan of 2018-2021 highlights the importance of country platforms for integrated multisectoral development responses. Given its presence in 170 countries around the world and its breadth of expertise and partnerships, UNDP, together with UN Member States and entities and civil society, can play an important role in supporting countries to shape drug policies that promote the achievement of the SDGs.

In June 2015, UNDP released a discussion paper elaborating further on these and other development dimensions of drug policy.¹ A second paper, released in April 2016, described innovative alternatives to current drug policies that can be used to meet the SDGs.²

The case for human rights guidelines

For more than two decades, UN Member States have affirmed their commitment to ensure that drug control efforts be conducted in full conformity with the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this context, UNDP welcomes the International Narcotics Control Board's recent call to all States to implement international drug control conventions in accordance with their commitments to human rights treaties and the rule of law.

Despite these commitments, there is little clear, comprehensive assessment of what it means to apply human rights to drug control policy. As a result, UN Member States, UN entities and civil society often struggle to meaningfully incorporate human rights into national policymaking or to systematically engage human rights issues in international fora.

International guidelines on human rights and drug control would help provide guidance on how to systematically integrate a human rights framework into international drug control. They would strengthen accountability, assist with implementation at the national level and further implementation of the global development agenda.

In adopting the 2030 Agenda, governments committed to “pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors.” To this end, UNDP has supported the UN Secretary-General's initiatives to strengthen system-wide actions to support implementation of the 2016 UNGASS on drugs' recommendations on health, human rights and sustainable development.

As part of these efforts, UNDP, with the generous support of the German, Swiss and Colombian governments, has partnered with the University of Essex, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and Harm Reduction International and UN partners to develop international guidelines on human rights and drug control. The process of

¹ UNDP, 2015, “Addressing the Development Dimensions of Drug Policy,” <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/HIV-AIDS/Discussion-Paper--Addressing-the-Development-Dimensions-of-Drug-Policy.pdf>

² UNDP, 2016, “Reflections on Drug Policy and its Impact on Human Development: Innovative Approaches,” <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/reflections-on-drug-policy-and-its-impact-on-human-development--.html>

developing the guidelines also involves close consultation with several UN Member States, international organisations, civil society and communities of people affected by drugs.

In March 2019, the commitments made by the international community to address the world drug problem, including those in the outcome document of the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs, which represents the most recent consensus, will be reviewed and updated. Such guidelines will provide an important tool for governments to meet their commitments to address the world drug problem and to leave no one behind.

Thank you Madame Chair.