IDPC statement – The way forward to 2019, Friday 17th December

Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, civil society colleagues

Thank you for the opportunity to address the CND today as part of this discussion on ‘the way forward’. I am making this statement on behalf of the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC). IDPC is a global network that promotes drug policies that are based on human rights, human security, social inclusion and public health.

Firstly, we would like to join other civil society colleagues in thanking the CND Chair, the UNGASS facilitator and the CND Secretariat for supporting the prominent inclusion of civil society perspectives in the thematic intersessional on UNGASS follow-up. Civil society representatives from all over the world have been able share perspectives and experiences with member states, and further enrich and contextualise these important discussions on implementing the UNGASS recommendations.

We would like to take this opportunity to give a few short reflections on the process for 2019 when member states will “take stock of the implementation of the commitments made to jointly address and counter the world drug problem, in particular in light of the 2019 target date”.

The 2019 moment is an important opportunity to build on and consolidate the progress made in the UNGASS Outcome Document. It is also a critical moment to honestly assess the progress made since 2009, as well as acknowledge the failures of global drug control and its negative impacts upon health, human security, human rights and development. This honest evaluation did not take place in 2014 (the mid-term review) or at the UNGASS in 2016.

A genuine, transparent, scientific and inclusive review process ahead of 2019 will allow member states to reflect on the ongoing validity, and utility, of targets focused on the elimination of the drug market and the establishment of a society free of drug abuse.

The UNGASS outcome document, representing the most recent global consensus on drugs, provides a strong framework based on its forward-looking 7-theme structure for elaborating much more meaningful and measurable targets on progress – such as towards achieving universal access to controlled medicines, reducing the prevalence of HIV and Hepatitis C infections among people who inject drugs, reducing poverty (as a socio-economic determinant of engagement in the illicit drug market) and reducing over-incarceration – to name a few. There is also much to be gained from reviewing data-collection efforts, current metrics and indicators, as well as the “quality and effectiveness” of the ARQ in light of the UNGASS recommendations, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

The process of review, and of reflection, ahead of agreeing an outcome for the ‘ministerial segment’, should be open and inclusive, involving all relevant UN entities, civil society, academia and affected populations. The strong engagement of other relevant UN agencies in the post-UNGASS intersessionals is very much welcomed – giving both a different perspective as well as offering their technical expertise on key issues relating to their mandates and the intersect with drug policies. The CND should continue to encourage and formalise their participation in the upcoming review process. The active participation of all Member States should also be strongly encouraged, in order to "foster an in-depth exchange of information and expertise on efforts, achievements, challenges and best practices" with respect to drug policy.

Finally, in terms of civil society participation, we welcome the suggestion for a civil society hearing ahead of the ministerial segment. We highlight that meaningful civil society participation will require opportunities to provide input to the review process as well towards the recommendations for beyond 2019 in addition to the proposed hearing. Civil society participation in the UNGASS process was very encouraging and now provides an important benchmark as we move forward.

Thank you for your consideration, and your continued commitment to the meaningful participation of civil society.