



slum child foundation



Dear Colleagues,

I hope this mail finds you all well and in good health, in what is a strange global situation to say the least!

Thank you all for signing onto "[Beyond 2019: The African Civil Society Common Position on Drugs](#)". I am happy to report that the document was given its formal launch at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at the beginning of this month, at a side event co-hosted by the African Union, UNODC, the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, and the Slum Child Foundation. The event was very well attended by civil society, governments and UN staff.

During the side event, our ally from the African Union Commission – Ms Cisse Mariama Mohamed, Director of the Department of Social Affairs – delivered a very strong intervention and opened her hands to work with us fully on issues related to drugs at the continental level. After the side event, we also had the opportunity of an informal dialogue with the African Union delegation. As we championed the Global South agenda, and in the spirit of 'nothing about us without us' that means the poorest people affected by drugs should always be at the centre of our discussions, Ms Cisse threw ball back to us and challenged all of us to establish an African civil society working group on these issues. As you may have seen, the Vienna NGO Committee also launched a call last year for an ad-hoc regional working group to support engagement of African NGOs.

There is therefore a wonderful opportunity here to combine efforts together in an all-inclusive way. I am happy to report that we have formed a small technical team, in an acting capacity to begin with, that will spearhead the working group. Care has been taken to include representatives from Anglophone and Francophone Africa, working in the field of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and palliative care.

There is an opportunity to launch and further develop this working group later this year, starting our engagement with the African Union in their forthcoming meetings (the dates and venue will be communicated as soon as practical). We will do everything to facilitate participation here, including online participation.

In the meantime, please continue to share and promote the [Common Position on Drugs](#) – we currently have 106 signed-up, which is amazing. But we can aim higher!

Finally, I would like to thank once again the entire UNODC Civil Society Team, the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, and the African Union Commission for coming on board and supporting this initiative.

Once again thank you all, and I am looking forward to more fruitful engagement and to your comments and thoughts.

Yours Sincerely,
Mr. George Ochieng Odalo
Executive Director, Slum Child Foundation