

**Statement by the IDPC Consortium on Agenda Item 3 of the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Delivered by Marie Nougier

12th April 2021

\*\*\*Check against delivery\*\*\*

Madame Chair, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving me the floor.

This statement is made on behalf of the International Drug Policy Consortium, a global network of NGOs that come together to promote drug policies that advance social justice and human rights.

2021 marks the 5-year anniversary of the UNGASS. For the occasion, IDPC has launched a new report entitled: 'Taking stock of half a decade of drug policy: An evaluation of UNGASS implementation'.

Using data from the UN, academia, civil society and the community, our research shows that progress has undeniably been made towards the implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document, especially in UN agency collaboration, with the adoption of the UN System Common Position on drugs. The shift in rhetoric towards human rights, public health and development is also to be applauded. At the national level, various countries have improved access to harm reduction, controlled medicines, and alternatives to punishment.

However, these positive reforms have not been able to counterbalance the lack of progress made in other countries and aspects of drug control.

- Billions of people remain without access to controlled medicines.
- People who use drugs continue to be criminalised in 85% of countries around the world driving stigma and discrimination, and creating a serious structural barrier to harm reduction and treatment services.
- As a result, 585,000 preventable drug use-related deaths were recorded in 2017. This represents a life lost every 54 seconds.
- Disproportionate and unjustly harsh penalties for drug offences fuel arbitrary detention, mass incarceration and prison overcrowding.
- 2.5 million people are in prison for a drug offence.
- Hundreds of thousands more people are detained against their will in compulsory detention centres and private rehab clinics.

- At least 3000 people remain on death row for a drug offence, while people suspected of drug offences are victims of racial profiling, gender-based violence and extrajudicial killings.
- Subsistence farmers of crops like coca or cannabis are subject to violent forced eradication campaigns that deprive them and their families of their livelihoods.
- In parallel, civil society space has become increasingly restricted at both national and international levels.

This bleak picture highlights the urgent need for reforms to address, and redress, the ongoing harms caused by punitive drug control. There is still much work to be done to fulfil the important commitments made at the 2016 UNGASS.

As member states have gathered this week to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1961 Single Convention, it is increasingly clear that we cannot wait for another 60 years to truly align drug policies with health, human rights and development.

Thank you very much for your attention.