



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on Narcotic Drugs

### Sixty-fifth session

Vienna, 14–18 March 2022

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Inter-agency cooperation and coordination of  
efforts in addressing and countering the world drug  
problem**

## **Statement submitted by Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/CN.7/2022/1.

\*\* Issued without formal editing.



## Introducing the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Common Position on Drugs

Building on developments at the international level – including the 2019 Ministerial Declaration on strengthening actions for the world drug problem Asia-Pacific Civil Society Common Position on Drugs (“the document”) sought to incorporate the perspectives and guide the work of a wide range of drug-related NGOs from across the Asia-Pacific Region. The VNGOC is delighted to be supporting this initiative alongside our Asia-Pacific partners.

Because the document exceeds the word limit for written submissions, please find here an overview. It was first drafted in late 2020 by the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) Asia-Pacific Ad-Hoc Working Group whose members sought to build a broad consensus in the region and broaden civil society engagement on drug related matters. Since then, the document has been through three rounds of extensive consultation with NGOs from the Asia-Pacific Region. A first open consultation meeting was held in February 2021 online, to collect feedback on and topics for the Common Position. The initial draft was then shared with a broad range of Asia-Pacific NGOs and a second online consultation was held in July 2021 and inputs were solicited via email in August 2021. A final draft was circulated among civil society partners across the Asia-Pacific between November and December 2021, with a third online consultation meeting taking place mid-December 2021.

The final version, with sign-ons from across the region, will be formally launched and presented at the *Introducing the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Common Position on Drugs* side event during the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) on 15 March 2022.

The document seeks to help shape and guide civil society and governmental responses in the Asia-Pacific region in coming years, providing support to NGOs working in the region, creating opportunities for civil society, government agencies and regional mechanisms across the region to work together towards common goals.

This paper is a summary of the *Asia-Pacific Civil Society Common Position on Drugs* available to read and for NGOs to sign on to through the VNGOC website: <https://vngoc.org/asia-pacific-civil-society-common-position-on-drugs/>.

- The Common Position seeks to capture a consensus among civil society organizations from across the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting the need for placing human rights, health, and evidence at the centre of all drug policies.
- The critical role of civil society organizations in the region is recognized in the document, which also briefly outlines the achievements and challenges of civil society in the region.
- 24 recommendations from civil society are presented in the document, issuing a call to action for Member States and multilateral bodies to work alongside civil society, in relation to:
  - Existing international commitments and treaties relating to drug policy.
  - The inclusion of civil society.
  - Human rights.
  - Health.
  - Criminal justice responses.
  - Development.
  - Cross-cutting issues.

Through this document, civil society organizations whose work relates to narcotic drugs in the Asia-Pacific region commit to working with ASEAN, Member States from the region, and multilateral bodies to ensure the voice of civil society is heard

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in the creation of evidenced-based laws, policies, and interventions in line with regional and international treaties and declarations.

**We urge Member States from the Asia-Pacific region to recognize these recommendations and work with local civil society organizations to implement the recommendations within local responses to the world drug situation.**

**Finally, we urge Member States to work with civil society organizations to strive to continue to overcome challenges and continue to build on our achievements to place human rights, health, and evidence at the centre of all drug policies.**

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