

**Intervention by the International Drug Policy Consortium
CND Intersessional, 27th October**

Delivered by Ann Fordham, Executive Director, on Chapter 6 ‘Strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility’

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this intervention on behalf of the International Drug Policy Consortium, or IDPC.

IDPC is a global network that promotes drug policies that are based on human rights, human security, social inclusion and public health. At present IDPC has 163 members from all over the world and over 60% of our membership is based outside of Western Europe and North America. On behalf of our members, we engaged closely throughout the UNGASS preparations, including as part of the civil society task force.

IDPC welcomes the much improved broader seven-theme structure of the UNGASS outcome document, and we urge member states to maintain this structure as the basis for future documents and debates. In addition, the outcome document represents the latest agreed language on many key aspects of drug policy, in particular for health, human rights and development, and this progress should be acknowledged and built upon in the lead up to 2019.

To address some of the specific points made under chapter 6 of the UNGASS outcome document, I will focus my intervention firstly on the significance of ensuring greater UN system-wide coherence in drug control, and secondly on the importance of addressing the linkages between drug control policies and the Sustainable Development Goals, towards ensuring their achievement. In fact, the two priorities of system-wide coherence on drugs and achievement of the SDGs are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing.

UN system-wide coherence

The preamble of the outcome document welcomes efforts towards enhanced coherence within the UN system at all levels and this is echoed throughout the document. In chapter 6, enhanced cooperation between all relevant UN entities and international and regional organisations is deemed necessary to assist member states in addressing the ‘health, socioeconomic, human rights, justice and law enforcement aspects’ of drug policies and programmes.

The proactive and visible engagement from the broader UN family in the UNGASS preparations and debates is therefore to be welcomed, and the CND should continue to facilitate and encourage this momentum. UN agencies such as the WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights all have mandates that are directly impacted by drug policies, and their continued attention to this issue, and collaboration with

each other and with UNODC, will serve to ensure greater policy coherence at the UN level. The visibility and engagement of all relevant UN entities will be critical for a considered and honest evaluation of global drug policies in the lead up to 2019.

SDGs and drug policy:

Strongly related to encouraging enhanced system-wide coherence, is the need to ensure coherence between drug policy targets and objectives and the SDGs, which are highlighted in several places in the outcome document, including chapter 6.

The adoption of the SDGs just prior to the UNGASS was positive and has been essential to incorporating development issues more firmly within the drug control debate. This process has also raised a number of questions – in particular consideration of how drug control priorities help or harm development outcomes.

In striving to achieve the SDGs, it becomes crucial to consider the underlying socio-economic causes of why people engage in the illicit drug trade and examine how certain responses fuel social marginalization and economic deprivation or increase insecurity. A clear example relates to subsistence farmers who engage in illicit cultivation; in the absence of alternative livelihoods, forced eradication efforts deprive them of their only available means to live a life in dignity by driving them deeper into poverty. Another example is the use of criminalisation and punishment for people who use drugs, a practice which drives them away from seeking health services, ultimately undermining their health and wellbeing. Finally, mass incarceration, militarised responses and the use of extra-judicial killings have taken place in efforts to eradicate the illicit drug trade, but while failing to achieve a reduction in the scale of the illicit drug market, these responses have served to destabilise communities and undermine peace and security. The impact of drug control policies on achievement of the SDGs should not be underestimated and this intersect requires careful and thoughtful examination.

Finally, in reviewing this intersect, it would seem timely for member states to consider developing a set of new targets and indicators for measuring the effectiveness of drug policies and programmes that are in line with the latest global political commitments. Monitoring progress towards those new targets using additional indicators may also require a revision of the Annual Reports Questionnaire or ARQs currently in use.

In closing, IDPC supports the request to the Secretary General in the draft omnibus resolution, currently being negotiated in New York, to further strengthen cooperation between all relevant entities of the UN system towards enhancing system-wide coherence.

We appreciate that the CND structured this initial round of debates on the UNGASS follow-up and implementation according to the seven thematic areas of the outcome document, and we are supportive of the suggestion made in the draft omnibus resolution, to carry this work forward in seven working groups that could further operationalise effective implementation of the UNGASS outcome and make recommendations for how to proceed beyond 2019.

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

