

Statement delivered by Mr. Dag Endal, International Coordinator for the Alcohol, Drugs and Development Program, FORUT – Campaign for Development and Solidarity Norway, on the occasion of the Fourth Intersessional Meeting of the 59th Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Thank you for inviting NGOs this opportunity to present viewpoints on the road towards 2019. Luckily, the road map is already there in the form of the Outcome Document from UNGASS in New York. It offers an excellent strategy for a comprehensive, balanced and effective policy to reduce both drug use and its related harm, - if all the nice words are made into practical action.

The most obvious weakness, in the Outcome Document as well as in the UNGASS discussions, is the lack of focus on how we can mobilize ordinary people. Many of the good interventions in the Outcome Document require peoples' participation and mobilization of local communities.

Primary prevention and early intervention is by far the most powerful, the most humane and the cheapest way to reduce drug-related harm. Prevention is not only a nice concept and a fluffy theory. It is a rock solid reality. Prevention takes place all the time, every day, 365 days a year. Prevention started with the first woman and man who established a family way back in history, and it will last forever. It happens in all of UN's member states and in millions and millions of communities around the world. Luckily we can build on this simple fact. The wheel is already invented, and it works!

The UNODC International Standards on Drug Use Prevention list a selection of methods and interventions that have been rated with three and four stars, meaning that they are likely to have a good effect. The most effective of all is probably when many of the individual programmes and interventions are combined into what the UNODC Guidelines have termed "Community-based multi-component initiatives".

This is also why our international network, Drug Policy Futures, has identified one big and hairy challenge both for governments and NGOs in the period towards 2019: To mobilize one million communities in a global wave of prevention. The challenge is described in a statement that we circulate during this meeting.

I would like to use the last part of this intervention to sketch a model that can be used worldwide, with local adaptations. It is based on experiences from community mobilization programmes by our local partners in Africa and Asia. Furthermore it draws on experiences from the Norwegian SLT programme; in English: Community coordination of drug and crime prevention. Lastly the model is greatly inspired by the Icelandic model for national and local prevention which is now also an international effort, called Youth in Europe. Let me describe the model by identifying key elements:

Element 1: Mapping of the ground situation to find out what the drug situation is in the project area. This serves a double purpose: To create a baseline and to understand the challenges. It is best done by scientific surveys, but it can also be done by lay people by simple mapping techniques.

Element 2: To identify risk factor and protective factors. They will often be the same from one community to the other, but it is also important to be aware of differences and local particularities.

Element 3: To select programmes and interventions that address the identified risk factors and protective factors. Good alternatives appear to be, among others: Parenting skills programmes,

improvement of school environments and classroom management, availability of positive spare time activities, involvement of responsible parents and other adults in such activities, mobilisation of peer leaders, development of personal and social skills – and many more.

Element 4: To establish a local structure for collaboration, information sharing and coordination. This should involve all relevant actors in the community; local government, public institutions like schools, health centres, policy, social services etc, and then lastly but not the least; community-based NGOs and networks.

Element 5: Regular monitoring of activities and results. It is of particular interest to monitor developments in drug use prevalence and attitudes towards drugs.

Lastly, element number 6: To establish a national structure or an umbrella over all the different community initiatives. Such a national umbrella should serve several functions: To give technical guidance to local initiatives. To develop working methods for local use and facilitate exchange of experiences among the community groups. To build a team spirit among prevention activists, and to give them a feeling of being part of something big and important. Lastly; to stimulate local activists by presenting awards, to hold up best practices, to make activists and communities visible in media, politics and the public opinion.

The very good news in all this is that so many people are already on board. Around 95 % of the world's adults did not use any narcotic drugs last 12 months, according to estimates in the World Drug Report. If established information and campaign theory is correct, it is easier to consolidate established attitudes and practices than to change them.

Our appeal is therefore, in brief: Let us devote our energy to three years of action. To mobilization of citizens and communities. One million communities before 2019!