

**REGIONAL VISION OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN COUNCIL
ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM FOR UNGASS 2016**

1. The world drug problem - including its economic and social determinants as well as its political, economic, social and environmental costs - is an increasingly complex, dynamic, and multi-causal phenomenon, with negative effects on health, social harmony, democracy, human development, and implications for citizen security.
2. We reaffirm the human being as the primary focus of drug policies, in recognition that the ultimate objective of the Conventions is to ensure the health and wellbeing of humanity, as well as to promote and guarantee respect for human rights.
3. We reaffirm the validity of the Principle of Common and Shared Responsibility. This principle is one of the main points for confronting the world drug problem, guiding the individual and joint actions of all the States, and ensuring their commitment to addressing it in all its dimensions, increasingly encouraging international cooperation in the strengthening of national capacities based on a broad, comprehensive, balanced, and multidisciplinary approach.
4. The UNASUR Member States have repeatedly expressed their commitment to addressing the world drug problem, in conformity with International Human Rights Law, within the framework of the three international conventions on drugs, International Public Law, the United Nations Charter and other relevant instruments, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States, non-interference in internal affairs, and mutual respect among the States
5. UNASUR notes with particular attention that, despite the advances that have been made, the States continue to face major, persistent challenges in addressing the World Drug Problem. Recently, the countries in this region have adopted important initiatives

using alternative approaches oriented toward effective protection of the human being, based on their own current situations.

- 6.** Several initiatives have been launched in our region, centered on dignity and human rights, recognizing that the social, cultural and economic diversity of the countries of this region necessitates the formulation of comprehensive and balanced policies which prioritize preventive measures for addressing all components of the world drug problem; with the objective of strengthening the social fabric and well-being of individuals, within the framework of International Human Rights Law, the United Nations Conventions, and other relevant international instruments.

We recognize and are paying attention to sovereign initiatives that have been adopted by various countries based on the current scientific evidence, and in the spirit of continuing to create and collect evidence for confronting the world drug problem, and to address its causes and consequences using this new outlook.

- 7.** All drug policy approaches must be understood as responses to the challenges we face with relation to all aspects of the world drug problem, in particular as a socio-economic phenomenon, always based on respect for human rights, inter-cultural aspects, scientific evidence, public health and social inclusion, and within the framework of the United Nations Conventions on Drugs, and the international drug control system.
- 8.** The UNGASS 2016 mandate is to evaluate progress made in applying the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an evaluation of the achievements and challenges in the task of confronting the world drug problem, within the framework of the three Conventions on international drug control, and other relevant United Nations instruments.
- 9.** In this context, there should be open, frank, and realistic debate regarding assessment of achievements and the routes for confronting the pre-existing and emerging challenges of the world drug problem, especially regarding measures for achieving an effective balance between reduction of supply and demand, and how to address its key causes and consequences, including those in the fields of health, society, human rights, the economy, justice, and security.
- 10.** The UNASUR countries recognize the need for the States to strengthen their strategies for preventing, detecting, and punishing

corruption as a complementary tool for combatting illegal drug trafficking and its related crimes.

11. Therefore, with the objective of making public policies pertaining to drugs stronger and more efficient, and contributing to our societies' being able to live with health, dignity, peace, well-being, and citizen security, the countries of UNASUR, **in preparation for the UNGASS 2016, recommend an emphasis that includes but is not limited to the following:**

12. A comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary, and sustainable approach

Encourage a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary and sustainable approach. The available evidence indicates that the best results of policies on the drug problem, as a multicausal phenomenon, are based on balanced development of all its components, which include: reduction of demand, reduction of supply, comprehensive and sustainable alternative development including prevention, judicial cooperation and international cooperation. It is not considered beneficial to prioritize any one component over another.

13. A transversal human rights approach

- Policies addressing the world drug problem must be developed in conformity with full respect for civil, political, economic, societal, and cultural rights, and the right to a healthy and adequate environment, within the framework of national laws and in conformity with applicable international law.
- A transversal human rights approach must ensure access of individuals to health, social assistance, education, work, and justice, by implementing measures that consider their environment and favor their wellbeing.
- Eliminate institutional practices that could generate prejudice or attitudes of discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization of drug users, in conformity with national legislation.
- Ensure the drug users' right to health care, with full access to treatment, which protects and respects their fundamental rights and freedoms, within the framework of national and international standards.

- Strengthen respect for human rights throughout the oversight mechanisms existing at the time of implementing and executing policies for confronting the world drug problem.
- Drug use should not be criminalized because this limits the probability that drug users will seek treatment, as well as limiting access to work, education, and other rights.
- Encourage exchange of experiences and cooperation, with the objective of identifying measures for attending to the needs of victims of violence and crime associated with the illegal drug trade.
- Ensure the application of the principle of proportionality of sentencing, even for offenses related to drugs.
- In accordance with the legislation of each State, international law, and international human rights law, adopt alternatives to imprisonment for minor drug offenses; in accordance with the United Nations Conventions on Drugs, thereby preventing impunity.
- Highlighting the achievement that in South America capital punishment was eliminated for drug offenses, we propose the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offenses.

14. Approach focusing on gender issues and attention to vulnerable groups

- A drug policy approach focused on gender issues and attention to vulnerable groups must be transversal and prioritized, with special emphasis on addressing prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social inclusion of protected individuals and vulnerable groups, with the objective of protecting and guaranteeing their human rights, promotion of equality, and non-discrimination.
- Within the framework of respect for human rights and respects for the rights of indigenous peoples, protect ethnic and cultural diversity, as recognized in the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples.

15. Ensure medical and scientific uses of controlled substances

In order to ensure access to controlled substances for medical and scientific uses, in accordance with the various national laws and the three international conventions on matters of narcotics control, the following is recommended:

- Consider reclassification of substances under the international drug control system by virtue of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, when such substances are included on the World Health Organization lists of essential medications, in order to facilitate the people's access to adequate medical treatment;
- Strengthen measures that improve equitable access to the use of medications for medical and scientific purposes;
- Continue and deepen research on narcotics and psychotropic substances with medical and scientific uses, carried out by institutions and universities, in accordance with the United Nations Conventions on Drugs and the legislation of each State.

16. Strengthen democracy and the State of Law

- Deepen social inclusion policies as a way of strengthening citizen participation, democracy, and the State of Law, improving the conditions for addressing the world drug problem.
- Strengthen democratic institutions and policies for preventing and combating corruption, with the objective of making the efforts of the States addressing the world drug problem more effective.
- Promote citizen participation in the design, formulation, and implementation of public policies on drug issues.

17. A territorial approach to drug policy

- Drug policies must take into account economic and social factors that fuel and sustain the world drug problem, which requires considering a territorial approach closely linked with development policies, promoting the interconnection between interventions of the national government and local governments.
- Offer comprehensive and sustainable responses that take into account, in addition to interdiction, interventions that promote social development, addressing the vulnerabilities of the territories affected by illegal production and trafficking of drugs.

- These interventions must be based on a diagnosis of the problem, which would enable adaptation of responses to the specificities of the territories affected, with active participation of all the actors in the community, in order to strengthen the States' response addressing this phenomenon, and contribute to improving the population's quality of life and ensuring the full exercise of their rights, so that our societies may find optimal conditions that enable them to live with health, dignity, peace, security, and wellbeing.

18. Reduction of demand

- We recognize that consumption of drugs is a public health issue, and in that sense the States must ensure that policies for reducing demand consider: a) the gender perspective; b) measures for preventing and reducing negative consequences, including the social as well as the health consequences, within the framework of the laws of each country, adapted to their needs, with special attention to the vulnerable groups and those in need of special protection; c) rehabilitation and social inclusion of persons affected by problematic consumption of drugs; and d) strategies for preventing marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination.
- Drug consumption is a social problem whose most damaging consequences are manifest primarily in the most vulnerable youth sectors. Therefore, it is necessary to reinforce programs for universal prevention, which is selective and indicated in the realms of school, family, and work, and prioritizing the territorial and community perspective. Prevention policies must include, as essential elements, various levels of intervention, which follow the life cycle, must take into consideration the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the population groups they are directed to.
- Promote the elimination of compulsory treatment.
- The States and the international community must commit to continue allocating the resources needed for developing effective local and national policies and strategies for prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social inclusion; which would reduce deaths, HIV infection, other communicable diseases, and other negative consequences resulting from the problematic consumption of drugs.
- Strengthen the health care systems through effective, continuous training of the professionals, technicians, and workers involved in

carrying out initiatives aimed at reducing the demand for drugs, or the care and treatment of persons with problematic consumption of drugs.

19. The States must continue contributing to and strengthening ongoing academic and scientific research that could support the formulation of public policies on drugs.

20. Comprehensive and sustainable alternative development, including prevention

- Reaffirm the validity of implementing measures for comprehensive and sustainable alternative development, including prevention, as an effective strategy for preventing and controlling illegal crops. For that purpose, we recognize the importance of continuing to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development.
- Address the problem of small farmers holistically, which means taking into consideration and attending to the social dimensions of the phenomenon.
- Strengthen cooperation for promoting comprehensive and sustainable alternative development programs, including prevention and social inclusion, which would allow us to confront and reverse the vulnerability of sectors affected by illegal production or trafficking of drugs and, specifically, would be conducive to providing balanced and comprehensive attention to those aspects, taking into account the UN Guiding Principles on Alternative Development.
- Continue promoting programs and measures for comprehensive and sustainable development, including prevention, oriented to eliminating the factors that cause poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and environmental degradation, for purposes that include preventing involvement of the population in activities linked to illegal drug production and trafficking.

21. Control Measures for reducing supply

- Adopt the measures necessary to strengthen coordination and cooperation among police, investigative, and judicial organizations on effective prosecution of organized crime in order to optimize the resources invested by the States;
- Promote development of joint actions at the national and international levels that enable identification and dismantling of organized crime

groups involved in any activities related to drug trafficking and its related crimes.

- Strengthen measures to prevent diversion of precursors and chemical substances used for illicit manufacture of drugs.
- Improve the States' responses in confronting new psychoactive substances by promoting increased forensic capacity and scientific research, analysis, and exchange of information regarding those substances.
- The States, under the principle of shared and common responsibility, must promote the development and improvement of effective tools for investigation of assets, which would enable identification, tracking, confiscation, freezing, or timely seizure of funds or assets from illegal drug trafficking or laundering of assets; thereby decreasing the probability of financial reward from those crimes, and consequently discouraging their perpetration or recurrence.
- Warn about the specific risks presented by the existence of tax havens or jurisdictions with financial or corporate opacity that could be used for laundering money from the illegal drug trade and related crimes, and encourage the countries to take the necessary measures to counter this problem.
- International cooperation, exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned, based on mutual trust between States; as well as strengthening judicial cooperation and technical assistance, are indispensable for confronting these challenges.
- Encourage the States to continue in their efforts toward development and improvement of comprehensive and balanced measures for reducing the availability and supply of illegal drugs.

22. International Cooperation

- Strengthen international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Drugs, which is a central component of the efforts for addressing the world drug problem as well as combating money laundering, corruption, illegal firearms trafficking, trade of humans, and related crimes.

- Establish cooperation in drug matters as an independent chapter from other topics, without the limitations applied to cooperation on development, which must include, above all, a concentration of efforts for addressing the world drug problem.
- Make use of the tools contained in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Convention against Corruption. Likewise, the States must promote cooperation among police, judiciary, and other agencies for addressing the world drug problem in conformity with international instruments in the matter.

23. Improve coordination and harmonization of the United Nations System

- Recommend improving coordination and harmonization among the various agencies of the United Nations System, including the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the United Nations' main body on drugs; the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB, or *JIFE* in Spanish); the World Health Organization (WHO, or *OMS* in Spanish); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, or *ONUDD* in Spanish); in conjunction with the Human Rights Council; the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, or *PNUD* in Spanish), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); garnering the participation of various societal entities and academia, to fulfill the ultimate objective of the International Conventions on drugs: the health and wellbeing of humanity.
- Recommend an independent evaluation of follow-up on the UNGASS resolutions.