



# UN COMMON POSITION ON DRUGS

**Overview for  
UNODC field  
representatives**

**July 2023**

# INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination adopted a common position as a framework for collaboration within the UN system on drug-related matters.

The common position emphasizes a commitment to collaboration within the UN system to support Member States in developing and implementing responses to the world drug problem through shared principles and directions for action.

## SHARED PRINCIPLES

As a cornerstone of the common position, the shared principles support the outcome document of the UNGASS and the 2030 Agenda.



# DIRECTIONS FOR ACTION



In addition to ongoing efforts, we commit to harnessing synergies and strengthening interagency cooperation, making best use of the expertise within the United Nations system, to further enhance consistent sharing of information and lessons learned and the production of more comprehensive data on the impact of drug policies, including with a view to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**- UN COMMON POSITION ON DRUGS, 2018**

## TASK TEAM

To oversee the implementation and coordination of the common position, a UNODC-led task team was established. As of June 2023, the Task Team consists of these organizations.



# UN Common Position on Drugs

supporting the implementation of  
international drug control policy through  
effective inter-agency collaboration

In response to the UN General Assembly Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem in 2016, the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination adopted a common position in 2018 to support collaboration within the UN system on implementing international drug control policy.

The **common position** features **eight shared principles** that support the **outcome document of the UNGASS** and the framework of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.



To read the full text of the UN Common Position on Drugs and access relevant resources, please visit:

**[https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/  
un-common-position-drugs/index.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/un-common-position-drugs/index.html)**



# UN COMMON POSITION ON DRUGS

**Talking points for  
UNODC field  
representatives**

**July 2023**

# SCOPE & PURPOSE

## of the Common Position on Drugs

1. Reiterates the UN's commitment to supporting Member States in developing and implementing truly balanced, comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based, human rights-based, development-oriented and sustainable responses to the world drug problem
2. Aims to guide approaches across the UN system, ensuring no one is left behind
3. Inspires the planning and implementation of UN activities, including joint inter-agency activities
4. Makes it possible to speak with one voice and raise awareness of the multifaceted nature of the world drug problem

# EIGHT SHARED VALUES

## of the Common Position on Drugs

1. Commits support to the practical implementation of the UNGASS outcome document
2. Recognizes that the world drug problem is complex and multifaceted and that challenges posed by drugs have wide-ranging adverse impacts on security, human rights and development
3. Underscores that the world drug problem requires a comprehensive approach that includes law enforcement efforts ensuring people's security and efforts promoting health, human rights, including equality and non-discrimination, and sustainable development
4. Acknowledges a common and shared responsibility to work together, in particular through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to pursue a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach leading to evidence-based and sustainable solutions
5. Commits to promoting a truly evidence-based and balanced approach, whereby sufficient attention is given to measures that address the root causes of drug abuse and cultivation and other involvement in the drug trade
6. Recognizes that the concern for the health and welfare of humankind underpins the three international drug control conventions
7. Acknowledges that the three international drug control conventions allow for sufficient flexibility for countries to design and implement national drug policies according to their priorities and needs, consistent with international law
8. Acknowledges that the international drug control conventions, international human rights treaties and other relevant instruments and the 2030 Agenda are complementary and mutually reinforcing

# 19 ACTION POINTS

## of the Common Position on Drugs

1. Harnessing synergies and strengthening inter-agency cooperation, making best use of the expertise within the United Nations system, to further enhance consistent sharing of information and lessons learned and the production of more comprehensive data on the impact of drug policies, including with a view to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda
2. Supporting the development and implementation of policies that put people, health and human rights at the centre, by providing a scientific evidence -based, available, accessible and affordable recovery-oriented continuum of care based upon prevention, treatment and support, and to promote a rebalancing of drug policies and interventions towards public health approaches
3. Promoting the increased investment in measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health consequences of drug abuse, sometimes referred to as harm reduction, which reduce new HIV infections, improve health outcomes and deliver broader social benefits by reducing pressure on health-care and criminal justice systems
4. Ensuring the provision of drug prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and general support services, including health care and social protection in prison settings, ensuring that they are equivalent to and that they provide continuity of care with those in the community
5. Ensuring the respect for the dignity and human rights of people who use drugs in all aspects of drug and social policies, including providing equal access for people who use drugs to public services, including housing, health care and education
6. Calling for universal health coverage for people with drug use disorders and for the positioning of drug use disorders as with other health conditions that should be included in the overall universal health coverage framework in national health systems
7. Enhancing access to controlled medicines for legitimate medical and scientific purposes, including the relief of pain and treatment of drug dependence



# 19 ACTION POINTS

## of the Common Position on Drugs

8. Enhancing international support for effective capacity-building in developing countries to support the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

9. Supporting the identification of prevalent, persistent and harmful psychoactive drugs, including new psychoactive substances, and their associated health risks, using global and regional agencies' early warning and alert systems

10. Providing guidance and technical assistance to strengthen cross-border law enforcement and judicial cooperation

11. Promoting sustainable livelihoods through adequately-sequenced, well-funded and long-term development-oriented drug policies in rural and urban areas affected by illicit drug activities, including cultivation, production and trafficking, bearing in mind environmental protection and sustainability

12. Promoting alternatives to conviction and punishment in appropriate cases, including the decriminalization of drug possession for personal use, and to promote the principle of proportionality, to address prison overcrowding and overincarceration by people accused of drug crimes, to support implementation of effective criminal justice responses that ensure legal guarantees and due process safeguards pertaining to criminal justice proceedings and ensure timely access to legal aid and the right to a fair trial, and to support practical measures to prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and torture

13. Calling changes in laws, policies and practices that threaten the health and human rights of people

14. Promoting measures aimed at reducing stigma and eliminating discrimination and achieving universal coverage of evidence-based prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

15. Cooperating to ensure human rights-based drug control and address impunity for serious human rights violations in the context of drug control efforts

# 19 ACTION POINTS

## of the Common Position on Drugs

16. Assisting Member States in implementing non-discriminatory policies, including with regard to ethnicity, race, sex, language, religion or other status

17. Promoting active involvement and participation of civil society and local communities, including people who use drugs, as well as women and young people

18. Providing Member States with the evidence base necessary to make informed policy decisions and to better understand the risks and benefits of new approaches to drug control, including those relating to cannabis

19. Compiling, analysing and producing data reflecting United Nations system-wide practices and lessons-learned in drug-related matters, and to produce systemwide data and analysis, including in the light of the 2019 ministerial segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the advancement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda



# UN COMMON POSITION ON DRUGS

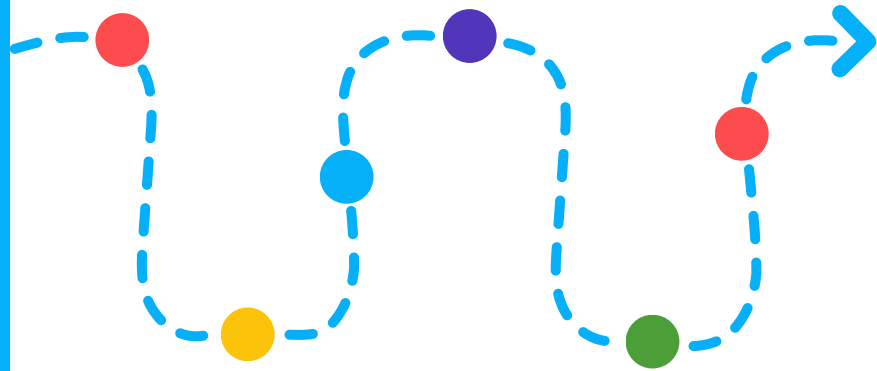
**Action plan for  
UNODC field  
representatives**

**July 2023**

# NEXT STEPS

UNODC's field offices have a key role to play in supporting the implementation of the common position.

To establish a clear and effective definition of this role (i.e. the objectives, the deliverables and the milestones), several actions are proposed for the second half of 2023.



# ACTION PLAN

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>DELIVERY</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>BRIEFING PACKAGE</b>	DLSSB to prepare and deliver a briefing package on UN Common Position to UNODC field representatives, which includes an overview, talking points, and action plan for 2023.	UNODC field representatives will have a better understanding of the UN Common Position on Drugs and their role in its implementation.	July 2023
<b>2</b>	<b>TRANSLATIONS</b>	DLSSB to translate the UN Common Position document, website, and talking points in all six UN languages.	UNODC field representatives will be able to share and engage on the UN Common Position with key counterparts directly in the language(s) of their respective region.	Sep. 2023
<b>3</b>	<b>MANDATE RESEARCH</b>	DLSSB to conduct desk research of drug-related mandates of UN agencies. The research will inform a new "UN Agencies' Mandates" section of the UN Common Position website ( <a href="https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/un-common-position-drugs/index.html">https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/un-common-position-drugs/index.html</a> ).	UNODC field representatives will have a clear overview of UN agencies' mandates related to drugs.	Oct. 2023
<b>4</b>	<b>COLLABORATIONS MAP</b>	DLSSB to conduct a mapping of all intra-UN collaborations (e.g. joint programming) on drugs. The mapping will be done in close coordination with UNODC field offices.	UNODC field representatives will be able to highlight existing intra-UN collaborations and identify new opportunities.	Oct. 2023
<b>5</b>	<b>TASK TEAM COORDINATION MEETING</b>	DLSSB to organize a joint meeting of UNODC field representations and the UN Common Position Task Team. The findings of the mandate research and collaborations map will be presented.	UNODC field representatives will be able to engage directly with the Task Team to highlight collaborations and future opportunities.	Dec. 2023
<b>6</b>	<b>ACTION PLAN 2024</b>	DLSSB to prepare an Action Plan 2024 in close coordination with UNODC field representatives and the Task Team during the Dec. 2023 Task Team coordination meeting.	UNODC field representatives will have a well-informed action plan that will guide their implementation of the UN Common Position for 2024.	Jan. 2024