



Note on the contribution of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to the 2016 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on “Ensuring that no one is left behind”

Introduction

This paper is submitted on behalf of the H.E. Mr. Vladimír Galuška (Czech Republic), Chair of the 59th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and has been prepared in close cooperation with the Extended Bureau of the Commission, in response to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council inviting the Commission to provide substantive inputs to the 2016 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will convene under the auspices of ECOSOC at UN headquarters in New York from 11 to 20 July 2016, on the theme of the 2016 session “Ensuring that no one is left behind”.ⁱ

An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “Ensuring that no one is left behind”

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development taking centre stage globally – embracing a multidimensional approach to development and committing the international community to work together in a spirit of common and shared responsibility also in addressing the world drug problem – the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem (UNGASS 2016) took place at a historical juncture highlighting the important linkages between the 2030 Agenda and the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND).

As outlined in the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”*ⁱⁱ, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 19 April 2016 and had been elaborated during a series of open-ended negotiations convened by the CND acting as UNGASS preparatory body, it is key that “efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing”^{iii, iv}. The Assembly, in the *UNGASS outcome document*, encouraged the CND, as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters “to contribute to the global follow-up and support the thematic review of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, within its mandates, bearing in mind the integrated nature of the Goals as well as the interlinkages between them,

ⁱ The submission includes the specific inputs received from the Governments of Brazil, Colombia and the United States of America as well as from the European Union.

ⁱⁱ UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “*Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*”, preambular paragraph 10 (contained in document A/RES/S-30/1)

ⁱⁱⁱ UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “*Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*”, preambular paragraphs 16 and 21.

^{iv} “*The many manifestations of the world drug problem (including the lack of citizen security, food security and lack of sustainable livelihoods, the complex relationship between drugs and violence, corruption and the undermining of state institutions) have a direct impact on the ability of member states to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.*”: excerpt from the contribution by Brazil.

and make that information available to the high-level political forum on sustainable development through the appropriate institutional framework, taking into account General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015”.^v

“Ensuring that no one is left behind” features prominently throughout the work of the CND, giving the Commission an important role in realizing this principle, when implementing the operational recommendations of the *UNGASS outcome document*.

The theme is not only reflected in the substantive work of the Commission, but also in how the Commission organizes its work. In particular, in the lead up to UNGASS 2016, the Commission, tasked by the General Assembly^{vi} to lead the preparatory process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner, placed utmost importance on ensuring an inclusive, transparent and open-ended process, inviting all stakeholders, including UN entities, international and regional organizations, civil society, the scientific community and academia and other stakeholders to actively support the Commission’s preparations, in line with the SDGs to foster inclusive partnerships at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Considering cross-cutting issues related to the world drug problem also in a broader development context as well as links between drug-related issues and achieving sustainable development has always been on the Commission’s agenda. In 2009, when adopting the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, Member States noted that the world drug problem undermined, *inter alia*, sustainable development, including efforts to eradicate poverty and reiterated that interventions should address vulnerabilities that undermine human development, such as poverty and social marginalization.^{vii, viii}

In the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action*, Member States furthermore highlighted that interventions would too often target the general population at large with a single standard approach and would hence not provide specialized programmes tailored to vulnerable members of society with specific needs. In its efforts to **“Ensuring that no one is left behind”** when addressing and countering the world drug problem, the Commission emphasizes the importance of **responding to the specific needs of vulnerable members of society**, including children, adolescents, vulnerable youth, women, including pregnant women, people with medical and psychiatric co-morbidities, ethnic minorities and socially marginalized individuals.^{ix, x}

^v UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “*Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*”, para 6 (e).

^{vi} GA resolution 69/200 entitled “*Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016*” and GA resolution 69/201, entitled “*International cooperation against the world drug problem*”.

^{vii} *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, paragraph 21 (contained in document E/2009/28).

^{viii} “*Illicit drugs can undermine development, particularly when criminal organizations threaten the welfare, prosperity and security of citizens as they promote and support illicit cultivation, production and trafficking. While illegal drug crops can give immediate cash income, they also prevent economic development. Businesses do not invest in areas affected by drug cultivation and trafficking due to the instability of the security situation. Often essential community needs cannot be met because doctors, nurses, educators and other service providers do not want to work in these insecure areas.*”: excerpt from the contribution by the United States of America.

^{ix} *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, paragraph 13 (contained in document E/2009/28).

^x “*Relative to their numbers in the general population and among drug offenders, people of certain racial or ethnic groups are, in many countries, disproportionately arrested, convicted and incarcerated on drug charges. Investigating the causes and promoting measures to correct such distortions are essential to achieving SDG 10 (“Reduce inequality within and among countries”) and its target 10.3 (“By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origins, religion or economic or other status.”)*”: excerpt from the contribution by Brazil.

In the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document* Member States agreed on a comprehensive set of operational recommendations for implementation; they resolved to take the necessary steps to implement these operational recommendations, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, and to share with the CND, as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters, timely information on progress made in the implementation of these recommendations.

Member States further reaffirmed the support and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations to enhance coherence at all levels, in particular the efforts of the UNODC as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem, for which the CND acts as governing body, as well as the need to strengthen cooperation between UNODC and other United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, in their efforts to support Member States in the implementation of international drug control treaties in accordance with applicable human rights obligations and to promote protection of and respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals in the context of drug programmes, strategies and policies.

Gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges; valuable lessons learned on ensuring that no one is left behind and emerging issues likely to affect the realization of this principle:

Pursuing a people-centred approach to addressing the drug problem, the CND has continuously stressed the need to ensure non-discriminatory access to health, care and social services in prevention, primary care and treatment programmes; the need to provide specialized programmes tailored to vulnerable members of society with specific needs^{xi} as well as the importance of addressing social exclusion as a possible enabler for the illicit use of drugs, poor health, poverty and inequality.^{xii} The Commission relies on a long standing data collection system (the annual report questionnaire – ARQ)^{xiii} that provides data for evidence based policy making and, as such, is very well placed to participate in the review of progress towards goals that relate to its mandates in the 2030 Development Agenda.

Addressing specific needs of women in the context of comprehensive and integrated drug demand reduction programmes and strategies, for example, has been highlighted in a number of CND resolutions^{xiv} as well as policy documents, such as the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action*, the *Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 High-Level Review by the CND*^{xv} as well as the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document*. At its most recent session, the Commission, in its resolution 59/5 entitled “*Mainstreaming a gender perspective in drug-related policies and programmes*”, underlined that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls made a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and called upon Member States to develop, as needed, and implement national drug policies and programmes in full conformity with the international drug control conventions that take into account the specific needs of women and girls, including the need for access to health services

^{xi} Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, paragraph 13 (contained in document E/2009/28).

^{xii} CND resolution 59/6, entitled “Promoting prevention strategies and policies”, operative paragraph 15 (contained in future document E/2016/28).

^{xiii} CND resolution 53/16, entitled “Streamlining of the annual report questionnaire (see E/2010/28/Add.1).

^{xiv} see for example Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/5, entitled “Promoting strategies and measures addressing specific needs of women in the context of comprehensive and integrated drug demand reduction programmes and strategies” (see E/2012/28); CND resolution 59/6, entitled “Promoting prevention strategies and policies” (contained in future E/2016/28); CND resolution 52/1, entitled “Promoting international cooperation in addressing the involvement of women and girls in drug trafficking, especially as couriers” (see E/2009/28).

^{xv} E/2014/28

developed specifically for their needs, and the needs of women who are the sole or primary caretakers of minors and others.

In the same resolution, the CND urged Member States to implement broad-based programmes aimed at preventing women and girls from being used as couriers for trafficking in drugs^{xvi} and requested UNODC to assist States in developing such programmes to counter the use and participation of women in the illicit drug trade and to continue to mainstream a gender perspective in all its practices, policies and programmes related to the world drug problem.^{xvii} UNODC's global work on the prevention of drug use and the treatment of drug use disorders specifically addresses the unique needs of women and girls, within a framework of human rights through the publication of guidance documents, training of professionals and the implementation of gender-based services meeting the needs of children, adolescent girls and women.^{xviii}

In ***“Ensuring that no one is left behind”***, the Commission's work also involves addressing **stigmatization and discrimination of people living with or affected by HIV, including people who use drugs, in particular people who inject drugs.**^{xix} UNODC assists Member States in addressing the gap in access to comprehensive prevention programmes and treatment, care and related support services.^{xx} In the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document*, Member States also reiterated their commitment to end by 2030 the epidemics of AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as combat viral hepatitis, other communicable diseases, inter alia, among people who use drugs, including people who inject drugs.^{xxi}

In its resolution *“Achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for drug users and people living with or affected by HIV”*^{xxii}, the Commission encouraged Member States to intensify efforts to ensure that a wide range of evidence-based HIV prevention programmes taking account of concentrated epidemics and local circumstances is available in all countries, providing access to correct information and adequate health-care and social services and targeting vulnerable population groups; and to remove obstacles to the achievement of the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and related support services so that people living with HIV, or at elevated risk of contracting HIV, including drug users, may use available services – in line with the principle ***“Ensuring that no one is left behind”***.

The **prison population** is another population group which requires special attention in the provision of prevention and treatment services. In the same CND resolution, the Commission urged UNODC, as the lead partner in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for

^{xvi} CND resolution 59/5, entitled “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in drug-related policies and programmes”, operative paragraphs 1,5 and 10 (contained in future document E/2016/28).

^{xvii} Ibid.

^{xviii} UNODC, E/CN.7/2016/CRP.1-E/CN.15/2016/CRP.1 “Contribution by UNODC in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and a proposed role of the CND and CCPCJ in reviewing the progress of the SDGs”, page 4.

^{xix} “*In devising and implementing policies aimed at reducing HIV infection among drug users, it is important not to focus exclusively on people who inject drugs. Even though people who inject drugs are the main and most obvious target of such initiatives, it is well known that drug abusers in general (including stimulant users), through a number of behaviours and vulnerabilities, are considerably more exposed to contracting HIV and other infectious diseases than the general population.*”: excerpt from the contribution by Brazil.

^{xx} CND resolution 56/6, entitled “Intensifying the efforts to achieve the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS among people who use drugs, in particular the target to reduce HIV transmission among people who inject drugs by 50 per cent by 2015” operative paragraph 2 (contained in document E/2013/28).

^{xxi} UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 April 2016, preambular paragraph 24 (contained in document A/RES/S-30/1).

^{xxii} CND resolution 53/9, entitled “Achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for drug users and people living with or affected by HIV”, operative paragraph 1 (contained in document E/2010/28).

the HIV response among injecting drug users and people in prison settings, to work with other relevant entities in the United Nations system, in particular the World Health Organization, as well as other relevant initiatives to fight HIV/AIDS.^{xxiii}

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs not only focuses on people with drug use disorders imprisoned, but also on the promotion of programmes aimed at the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of **drug-dependent persons released from prison settings**. At its 55th session, the Commission adopted resolution 55/2, encouraging Member States to integrate measures addressing the specific needs of drug-dependent persons released from prison settings into comprehensive national strategies on drug demand reduction.^{xxiv}

The **availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes** is another priority of the CND, which is also closely linked to the commitment “*Ensuring that no one is left behind*”. In the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document*^{xxv}, Member States noted with concern that the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes remained low to non-existent in many countries of the world. The Commission has at numerous occasions^{xxvi} underlined the importance of enhancing national efforts and international cooperation to ensure the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering. As a priority UNGASS topic, Member States devoted a stand-alone subsection to the availability of, and access to, controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes in the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document* thereby reiterating their strong commitment to improving access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes by, among others, appropriately addressing existing barriers in this regard, including those related to legislation, regulatory systems, health-care systems, affordability, the training of health-care professionals, education, awareness-raising, estimates, assessment and reporting, benchmarks for consumption of substances under control, and international cooperation and coordination, while concurrently preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking.^{xxvii} UNODC partners in particular with the WHO to support Member States to ensure the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes.^{xxviii}

^{xxiii} Ibid.

^{xxiv} CND resolution 55/2, entitled “Promoting programmes aimed at the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug-dependent persons released from prison settings”, operative paragraph 4, (contained in document E/2012/28)

^{xxv} UNGASS 2016 outcome document, preambular paragraph 5.

^{xxvi} See for example CND resolution 54/6, entitled “Promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse”; Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 54/6, entitled “Promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled licit drugs for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse” (contained in document E/2011/28), Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 High-Level Review by the CND; UNGASS 2016 outcome document, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 April 2016.

^{xxvii} UNGASS 2016 outcome document, operative paragraph 2.

^{xxviii} UNODC, E/CN.7/2016/CRP.1-E/CN.15/2016/CRP.1 “Contribution by UNODC in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and a proposed role of the CND and CCPCJ in reviewing the progress of the SDGs”, page 3.

Promoting **alternative development** is another means towards “*Ensuring that no one is left behind*”. The work of the Commission *inter alia* focuses on addressing drug-related socioeconomic issues related to the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and the illicit manufacture and production and trafficking of drugs through the implementation of long-term, comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented and balanced drug control policies and programmes as highlighted in the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document*.^{xxix} Alternative development^{xxx, xxxi, xxxii} has been the subject of a number of CND resolutions, including the adoption by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Commission, of resolution 68/196 on “*United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development*”. The respective operational recommendations in the *UNGASS 2016 outcome document* encourage the promotion of inclusive economic growth and support initiatives that contribute to poverty eradication and the sustainability of social and economic development as well the elaboration and implementation of comprehensive and sustainable alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development, as appropriate, that support sustainable crop control strategies to prevent and significantly, durably and measurably reduce illicit crop cultivation and other illicit drug-related activities, thereby ensuring the empowerment, ownership and responsibility of affected local communities, including farmers and their cooperatives, by taking into account the vulnerabilities and specific needs of communities affected by, or at risk of, illicit cultivation, in cooperation with UNODC.^{xxxiii}

The gathering of expertise and the facilitation of international consensus building by the CND supports a wide range of outcomes across the sustainable development agenda – notably those related to inclusive growth, safe and sound institutions, prevention of corruption and promotion of the rule of law.

“*Ensuring that no one is left behind*” also refers to the need to combat **money laundering, the financing of terrorism, illicit financial flows and transnational organised crime**, which is crucial to sustainable development and at the core of the work of the CND. In 2015, the CND addressed the negative impact of these activities on Member States and also highlighted possible links to the financing of terrorism and the threat they pose to peace and security.^{xxxiv} The CND has advanced the need to combat money laundering and has been developing data and expertise on the issue since the coming into force of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The CND has, supported

^{xxix} UNGASS 2016 outcome document, operative paragraph 7.

^{xxx} “*Alternative Development remains the most effective strategy in promoting opportunities for inclusive and comprehensive economic development to farmers, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities affected by the presence of illicit crops. Also, recognizing the complementarity and reciprocity of the issues addressed by Alternative Development with the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important that member countries join efforts with each other and with civil society, to address specialized attention to human communities inhabiting territories in post-conflict scenarios through particular and sustainable alternative development mechanisms that allow the effective return of the conditions that allow the effective exercise of human rights and inclusive social and economic growth.*”: excerpt from the contribution by Colombia.

^{xxxi} “*Brazil strongly believes that the concept of alternative development should not be limited to rural areas, but extended to urban environments. By focusing solely on the eradication or substitution of crops, alternative development strategies neglect all those involved in the trafficking economy in urban areas, many of them in a situation of great vulnerability and exposed to different degrees of violence. Therefore, it would be essential to provide licit economic alternatives to populations living in areas where drug trafficking is the main – and sometimes the only – major economic activity. The promotion of actions and programs aimed at generating employment and income to urban populations involved in drug trafficking would be a huge step towards drug policies that achieve a better balance between supply and demand reduction strategies.*”: excerpt from the contribution by Brazil.

^{xxxii} “*Gaps exist in linking alternative development programs – holistic programs aimed at fostering alternative livelihoods for those engaged in illicit crop cultivation -- to specific drug control targets to ensure the elimination of drug crops. Additionally, crop elimination programs must be accompanied by timely and effective alternative development programs.*”: excerpt from the contribution by United States of America.

^{xxxiii} UNGASS 2016 outcome document, operative paragraph 7.

^{xxxiv} CND resolution 58/6, entitled “*Strengthening International cooperation in preventing and combatting illicit financial flows linked to drug trafficking from the anti-money laundering perspective*” (contained in document E/2015/28).

by UNODC, worked to understand the risk of these illicit financial flows and to prevent and mitigate their potential to “threaten the security and stability of financial institutions and systems and which may weaken governance systems and undermine national economies and the rule of law”^{xxxv}.

Areas where political guidance by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is required:

The High-level Political Forum could be very effective in advoca

ting for the strengthening of the mechanisms for data collection and programme development within the CND. In doing so, the High-level Political Forum can explain the value and relevance of the CND to the sustainable development agenda in its entirety and the support that can be provided to Member States by UNODC, working in close cooperation with all other relevant stakeholders, in that regard.^{xxxvi}

Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress for those at risk of being left behind:

Member States are encouraged to implement the operational recommendations contained in the UNGASS outcome document, adopted during the General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem, held in April 2016, and ensure support for the UNODC in leading a UN system coordinated response to the implementation of the operational recommendations^{xxxvii}, which include – amongst others – the following:

- Member States are encouraged to promote the health, welfare and well-being of all individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, and facilitate healthy lifestyles through effective, comprehensive, scientific evidence-based demand reduction initiatives at all levels, covering, in accordance with national legislation and the three international drug control conventions, prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures, as well as initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse;
- Member States are encouraged to improve access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes by appropriately addressing existing barriers in this regard, including those related to legislation, regulatory systems, health-care systems, affordability, the training of health-care professionals, education, awareness-raising, estimates, assessment and reporting, benchmarks for consumption of substances under control, and international cooperation and coordination, while concurrently preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking;

^{xxxv} Ibid.

^{xxxvi} “The High-level Political Forum is an opportunity to emphasize: 1) that governments, UN organizations, and other civil society stakeholders must prioritize alternative development programs; 2) development alone will not solve the world drug problem and cannot replace alternative development programs; and 3) alternative development programs must be closely linked to targets to eliminate drug crops. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a complementary set of priorities and does not replace the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs leading role in developing drug control policies within the United Nations.”: excerpt from contribution by the United States of America.

^{xxxvii} “Emphasizing development and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals can help address the drug problem. Recognizing the complementarity of drug policies, including alternative development measures, with the 2030 Strategic Development Agenda is a good first step to ensure that no one is left behind. The UNGASS recognized the role of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime as the leading entity in the United Nations for addressing and countering the world drug problem. It is will be important for UNODC to take a leadership role with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and other UN agencies to ensure coordinated alternative development is a key component of the implementation of the Sustainable development goals as well as to promote effective public health goals and recommendations the UNGASS outcome document in order to leave no one behind.”: excerpt from the contribution by the United States of America.

- Member States are encouraged to protect the safety and assure the security of individuals, societies and communities by intensifying efforts to prevent and counter the illicit cultivation, production and manufacture of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as drug-related crime and violence, through inter alia, more effective drug-related crime prevention and law enforcement measures, as well as by addressing links with other forms of organized crime, including money-laundering, corruption and other criminal activities, mindful of their social and economic causes and consequences;
- Member States are encouraged to respect, protect and promote all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals and the rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies;’
- Member States are encouraged to strengthen efforts in addressing and countering emerging and persistent challenges and threats of all aspects of the world drug problem, and to note the need to effectively respond to the evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances through comprehensive, integrated and balanced drug control policies and programmes that take into account their transnational implications and that are in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments, and to strengthen our international, regional and sub-regional cooperation;
- Member States are encouraged to address drug-related socioeconomic issues related to the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and the illicit manufacture and production and trafficking of drugs through the implementation of long-term, comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented and balanced drug control policies and programmes, including alternative development and, as appropriate, preventive alternative development programmes, which are part of sustainable crop control strategies.