

## UNODC: Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 59th Session and UNGASS Preparation Segment

14<sup>th</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, Vienna

### Report



*Group photo of CSTF Team*

As a member of CSTF, OFAP has to contribute as a voice representing “Family Area” in the UNODC, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 59<sup>th</sup> Session. Nuno Maria Roque Jorge, as the President of OFAP, attended the meetings in Vienna from 14<sup>th</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

As a matter of fact, CND is a meeting that can address many elements in the way to ensure a successful UNGASS, including Health, Human rights, Criminal Justice, Sustainable Development Goals and International Cooperation. During the meeting, different approaches were discussed and concluded that UNGASS must provide clear operational recommendations and bring discussion to a global audience.

INCB noted that some of the targets of the 2009 declaration are not met, such as availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes around the world. Globally, the illicit demand and supply of drugs has not been reduced, NPS still emerging. Thus INCB will continue to pursue their ultimate goal, while hoping the State parties to find a response to this challenge and the UNGASS can turn the table around. They hope that we will discuss for a better implement approach of the political declaration and treaties, where health and welfare is at the core, human rights are promoted and the principle of proportionality applies

base on the current signed drug control framework.



*President Jorge, between V.P. of IAS Dr. Wilson Hon and V.P. of OFAP Augusto Nogueira, with other delegates*

### **Side event – Decriminalising drug use: Concept and practice**

This event aims to discuss how decriminalization is interpreted and implemented.

Edward Fox, Policy and Communications Manager of Release makes his first remark. Release is launching an update of their 2012 report “A Quiet Revolution: Drug Decriminalization Policy Area the Globe”. They look at a range of jurisdictions that have decriminalized drugs. However, among different countries, there is a wide variation. For example, their ultimate goals are the same – decriminalization – however, Portugal shift to decriminalization in 2001 and led to massive improvements in the health of the drug users and reduced in injecting, it thus turns



*Side Event*

out to be a huge savings in the society. However, at the same time, in a research by the UK Home Office, confirmed that “there was no obvious relationship” between the toughness of a country’s law and its level of drug use. But Release will continue to support decriminalization, as it show improve in health and social outcomes.

Gloria Lai, Senior Policy Officer of International Drug Policy Consortium continues to address the problem. Decriminalization means the removal or non-enforcement of criminal penalties for drug use,

and for the possession of drugs, possession of drug use equipment and cultivation of drugs for the purpose of personal consumption. They have published a report on what is the best models of decriminalization that improve public health and social outcomes.

Jindřich Vobořil, National Drug Coordinator, Czech Republic replied that they followed Portugal's policy in the 90s, they were not that rich, that is why they cannot spend lots of money on incarceration and law enforcement. However, this does have an effect, they have the lowest drug overdose rate on the planet. Less than 20 people a year die from overdoses. HIV prevalence among injecting drug users is under 1%. If they take a less punitive approach, they would then open a Pandora's box. They need decriminalization to be complemented by treatment and prevention and define addiction as an illness – a medical issue.

One participant asked should each country decide its own approach?

Gloria replied that people have to question the supposed deterrent effect of criminalization. In Asia, especially, people are using drugs at increasingly younger ages, and rates of consumption aren't falling despite incredibly harsh sentences that include corporal punishment or the use of drug detention center, such as those found in China.



*OFAP delegate with Counsellor Wu Haiwen and the First Secretary Wuhong Shi of Permanent Mission of China to the UN and other International Organizations in Vienna*

#### **Side Event- Roadmaps to Regulation: Coca, Cocaine and Derivatives**



Dave Bewley Taylor, GDPO introduced five key themes that were important in the control of Coca, Cocaine and derivatives:

1. Path dependency: it is important to evaluate the criteria to involve coca and cocaine in the system. Once the criteria is settled, all the related substances were just following the same path to be included.
2. Unintended consequences: before the UN establishment, there was little international control, there was then no control to the black market.
3. Disregard for evidence and censorship: the evidence base on coca was weak.
4. In consistency and ambiguities within the system: the plant is not actually controlled yet.
5. System challenge: Some of those low-cocaine products are also suggested to be used in harm reduction.

Thomas Grisaffi from UCL raised the main problem for the regulation on coca, it is because of the farmers. Bolivia came up with three pillars to solve the problem: legalized coca cultivation within limits; self-policing and industrialization.

Gabriele Fischer, Medical University Vienna mentioned that it takes a long time until we see a dependency on those drugs, thus, policy should target particularly at-risk populations (women users, sex workers, people with a history of mental health); it would save money and reduce the burden of disease.

Carla Rossi emphasized that when considering the policy, we have to take into the account of the market and the patterns of consumption.

#### **Side Event – Civil Society Task Force: Briefing to Member States in Preparation for UNGASS 2016**

The chair of CSTF said that many different groups are affected by world drug problem, and CSTF has honored this obligation and set up many events. However, working together is a challenging task, especially different groups has different point of views. The main role for Civil Society is to design and implement interventions. Also, make sure there are diverse opinions. In conclusion, when negotiating the outcome document, please make sure we are trying to promote a healthy society.

CSTF on Prevention: Based on 1,172 responses for the web-based survey, some organizations working on local level felt that they were outside of preparations. Response concerned that UNGASS will not lead to a real change, and not affect people working on the ground, especially, many voices and views are not heard enough.

### **Reports from Regional and Thematic Consultations:**

Western Europe: Consulted over 100 different organizations over 30 countries, people found that a pragmatic public health and evidence-based approach works well. There are more challenges on tackling NPS, the use of internet for supply and distribution, and funding for harm reduction services and rehabilitation programs. Broad support against the use of death penalty to prevent drug use. Focus should be on large criminal networks and governmental corruption and respect for human rights. People thought alternative development should be a key theme of the UNGASS process – not only a stronger role in drug policy, but drug policy should play a strong role in development. Programs should be bottom up to see the needs of the communities.

### **Agenda Item 5. Implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem UNGASS 2016**

China gave a strong impression towards its strategy in counter the national drug problem. It includes targeting education for the whole population, ensure women can benefit from programs without discrimination, increase the employability of people who use drugs. In reducing supply, China carried out extensive cooperation for drug control and coordination with relevant plan of action, especially in drug trafficking and smuggling in border areas. China will continue to commit for the implementation of the SDGs.

#### **Informal dialogue with UNODC Executive Director, Yury Fedotov**

As usual, the informal dialogue helped with hear the voices from NGOs. It is the first time that UNODC also has a Marketplace initiative.

Questions from Ms. Glora Lai, IDPC: We want to seek clarification around alternatives to incarceration – activities or circumstances under which UNODC is recommending.

Exec. Director Yury Fedotov replied that they recommended states use non-custodial measures to reduce overcrowding. It makes no sense to put people in jail.



*Information about drugs outside the conference*



*Information about current drug situation in Macau*

Questions from ECAD: The concept that Alcohol is also a kind of harm is important, how can we include it in UNGASS? Also, when UNODC present the data that 90% of the population don't use drugs, how can we use this prevalence figure in the outcome document of UNGASS?

Exec. Director Yury Fedotov replied that they agree there should be a more inclusive approach to the health aspect of the world drug problem and this should not be limited to just medication and treatment. They have been working among themselves, and will continue in this regard. On the second question, it has several levels, they would like to provide a positive experience for those who has been working on world drug problem for a long time, and learning the fact that the number of users is not tremendously increasing. However, it doesn't mean we doesn't see this as a small problem, it is rather to be considered as an opportunity, reflected the SDGs target 3.5. Prevention is also an important matters.

About the position on death penalty, Fedotov mentioned that they have made it very clear, that death penalty is not supported by any of the UN conventions on drug control, and we have no evidence to show that death penalty can change the situation in a country,

thirdly, the death penalty can jeopardize

international cooperation and coordination of efforts to face the world problem.



*Presentation by ARTM on Macau*

UNODC is also aware of the gender component issue. Available data reveal that women are being used as couriers and transporters. We will follow up and see if these kind of matters could be considered as minor offences, which could be dealt with in a non-custodial way.