

Advocacy Report

GWI advocacy goals

1. 100% of UN Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
 2. By 2030 100% of UN low income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
 3. 100% of UN Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
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Meeting attended:

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), 60th Session, plus side-events

Subject of meeting:

The topics of this session were: (1) Follow-up of the Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) that was held in New York in April 2016; (2) New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) including their detection and identification, early warning systems, prevention and treatment; (3) Decriminalizing and destigmatizing of drug users, especially women; (4) Rehabilitation and prevention, (5) Developing a framework in line with Sustainable Development Goals. The Chair of the session was H.E. Mrs. Bente Angell-Hansen, Ambassador of Norway.

The Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Yury Fedotov, as well as relevant high level staff of the branches concerned were present at these proceedings. As usual, there were also representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) actively participating. In line with the UNGASS resolution, recognizing the important role the Civil Society (CS) can play in assisting governments in developing drug control programs, there were several speakers from NGOs from around the world at the plenary forum.

A special emphasis was put on youth groups. They were given the floor to address the plenary session even before national or regional representatives took the floor. NGOs providing services for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, were scheduled to contribute during the session.

The Vienna NGO Committee against Drugs (VNGOC) was even given the floor on the first day of the session. The VNGOC statement was delivered by Mr. Estbjörn Hörnberg, chairperson of VNGOC that now comprises 456 international, regional and national NGOs (GWI is one of the founding members of VNGOC).

Although the UNGASS resolution recommends enhanced operational cooperation in addition to WHO and across the UN System, i.e. UNESCO and UNICEF, as well as with the relevant

international, regional and local institutions under the leadership of UNODC, there were no speakers from these agencies at the plenary forum.

At the plenary meeting, the agenda (E/CN.7/2017/1) was adopted and papers E/CN.7/2017/2 and E/CN.15/2017 were introduced by the executive director of UNODC, summarizing key issues related to the drug domain such as health, human rights, sustainable development, prevention, treatment, reintegration, violence, gender and youth. Refer to www.unodc.org.

Furthermore, the 60th session of the CND addressed emerging issues including (i) prevention focusing on the protection of children, young people and women; (ii) ensuring availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; (iii) prevention of crime and drug trafficking; (iv) drugs and human rights, especially in relation to youth, women, children and communities; (v) new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international laws including the three drug control conventions, especially in the light of NPS; (vi) strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation; and (vii) strengthening the regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy while addressing socio-economic issues.

During the afternoon of the CND session on March 16, 2017, a meeting of VNGOC was held. It was chaired by a panel consisting of Mr. Esbjörn Hörnberg, chair, Ms. Katherine Pettus, vice-chair VNGOC and Gilberto Gerra, a high-level representative of UNODC as well as Vladimir Poznyak, WHO representative to UNODC.

Ms. Linda Nilsson, Civil Society Task Force (CSTF) representative of Global Voice requested that the work be continued in follow-up to the UNGASS resolution especially in regard to cross-cutting issues such as drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities. This will be of particular interest to GWI's representation.

In the mornings (prior to the sessions of the 60th CND) as well as during lunch hours, our team (Dominika Stiger as coordinator, Dr. Amrei Klemmer and Ingrid Szabolcs) represented GWI at a number of side events:

(1) Synthetic Drugs organized by the governments of the United States of America, Canada, China and Estonia. At present, there is a proliferation of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) leading to more fatalities. Most of the estimated 700 NPS are not yet included in the WHO schedules aggravating possibilities for treatment and legal actions. China offered their cooperation because it has already identified a large number of NPS and taken steps to control these NPS under national legislation. In this respect, it should be noted that an international action group on NPS – an informal network of over 30 member states and international organizations prepared a report reflecting a joint position (E/CN.7/2017/CRP.5). Refer to www.unodc.org. Synthetic drugs pose one of the most significant drug problems worldwide. More than 30.000 people died of an overdose last year in the United States. Even tough methadone programs are widely criticized, people cannot get that feeling of being high as they do with drugs such as heroin or fentanyl. A special emphasis was put on the narcotic drug fentanyl. It is the strongest opioid available for medical use in humans, with about 100 times the potency of morphine. It is highly valued for

its analgesic and sedative effects and widely used in the management of severe pain anesthesia. An increasing number of deaths have been associated with the use of fentanyl, especially in Canada. In Canada, most overdose deaths are already caused by fentanyl. The government of Canada demands that there be a shift “from a community of interest to a community of action”. They want to decrease the exponentially growing drug problem by informing people about the risk of synthetic drugs. China proposes that the drug problem has to be solved globally and not only by one country. In Estonia, fentanyl is already the third most widely abused drug, after cannabis and heroin. Estonia points out that fentanyl is much stronger than heroin and is no longer just a temporary problem. Furthermore, fentanyl is easier to smuggle, as lower doses are required to achieve for the same “high” and it is even cheaper. All those issues contribute to the fact that fentanyl is the main reason for overdose in Estonia.

(2) Addiction and Gender organized by the International Council of Women, Women’s International Zionist Organization and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women in Vienna. Ms. Eleonore Hauer-Rona whose organization is a long-term member of VNGOC was the moderator of this side-event. The panelists were three female doctors from Austria, Spain and Israel. The event focused on different risk factors and vulnerabilities, biological and psychological responses, and medical and social consequences of drug use in women and girls. The panel pointed out that non-discriminatory access to health, care and social services in prevention, primary care and treatment programs have to be ensured to all women. Particularly detained women or women during pregnancy with drug abuse problems are part of a very problematic group of drug users, especially in regard to infectious diseases such as HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) or HCV (Hepatitis C virus). In part, this is because initial infection with the virus is often asymptomatic. Many become chronically infected, meaning that they remain infectious to others and pose a subsequent risk of transmitting the infection, e.g. to their children. Therefore, access to adequate health services and counselling has to be available. Under appropriate medical treatment, many infectious transmissions during childbirth can be prevented.

(3) Hearing of the Informal Scientific Network at the Sixtieth Session of CND organized by the UNODC. The meeting focused on NPS. At present, the membership comprises 16 members nominated by member states. In view of the extended scope, participation of more member states would be desirable.

(4) New Initiatives in Prevention: Strengthening the Global Prevention Response organized by the governments of Singapore, Iceland, France, Qatar and the UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Branch. This event focused on positive results achieved in youths in European and DOHA countries by social integration and sports activities.

(5) Treatment and Harm Reduction Programs for Children, Women and Pregnant Women organized by the Society for Recovery and Support and the Rebirth Society. Both NGOs are supported by the Iranian State. This was reflected in their elaborations.

(6) International Standards for Treatment of Drug Use Disorder: “Each person counts, leaving no one behind”. This high-level event was jointly organized by UNODC and WHO with the governments of Norway, Sweden, USA, UK, Italy, Canada, Austria, Spain, India and Egypt as

well as VNGOC and the New York NGO Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC). An emphasis was put on treatment and rehabilitation rather than on punishment and stigmatization, however, the contributions were rather general without gender considerations.

(7) Monitoring and measuring impact of Alternative Development organized by UNODC, Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development (GPDPD) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It was based on the UNGASS documents calling on countries to promote research on impact assessment of alternative programs for measuring sustainable development. Case studies in Afghanistan and Myanmar were presented showing the difficulties in collecting relevant data models.

(8) The Economics of NPS (New Psychoactive Substances) Markets. This side-event was organized by LSE IDEAS (USA) and the Swiss Federal Office of Police. A call for global governance of managing the issues related to the NPS phenomenon with a special emphasis on the reduction of harms caused by NPS was made as NPS increasingly become a social threat.

(9) Informal Dialogue with the Chair of CND organized by VNGOC. A wide range of questions was collected in writing prior to the meeting. Most of them were answered by the chair of CND.

(10) National and Regional Approaches to Synthetic Drugs organized by the governments of Australia, Canada, Japan, UK, USA and UNODC Global SMART. The government of Australia took a leading role in this global threat.

(11) Drug Awareness on Adults: A Five Step Approach to Prevention. This side-event was organized by the Turkish Green Crescent, Dianova Portugal, EURAD, and NTAKK. A representative of each organization (except NTAKK) presented their activities in the context of trying to prevent drug abuse in adults at an early age. The organizations had organized a video competition on the topic of how to keep people from using drugs. Two of the winning films were shown.

Intervention by GWI rep:

Participated in discussion at side-events.

How this serves GWI members:

a) Trends and developments:

Document E/CN.7/2017/L.14 refers to the provisional agenda of CND's 61st session, available at www.unodc.org. It is interesting to note that under item (9), inter-agency cooperation and coordination of efforts in addressing and countering the world drug problem are again on the agenda. This item was also stated in the UNGASS document. So far, UNODC only cooperates closely with WHO. A cooperation with UNESCO and UNICEF was not apparent during the 60th CND Session.

A booklet entitled "Good Policy and Practice in Health Education – Education Sector Responses to the Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs" was published under the auspices of UNODC and WHO in 2017, which claims partnership with UNESCO.

b) Why these trends and developments are relevant to GWI members: Education is a significant factor in drug prevention programs, therefore, the cooperation of UNODC with UNESCO and UNICEF is very important. GWI representatives lobbied on several occasions.

c) What needs to be done at international and national levels: cooperation with other NGOs in stressing this interagency; close coordination is very important and CND sessions provide an appropriate forum. Furthermore, treatment and destigmatization of female drug users need special attention.

Next steps:

Continue to represent GWI at events of CND and International Crime and Drug Prevention (INCP) sessions.

Photos:



A. Klemmer and I. Szabolcs Rotunda in the VIC / UNOV.



I. Szabolcs, D. Stiger, E. Hauer-Rona, A. Klemmer at the VNGOC meeting.