



NAME OF EVENT: Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), 59th Session incl. 1st and 2nd Pre-Inter-Session Meetings

DATE: 27th January, 24rd February and 14 to 18 March 2016

PLACE: Vienna International Centre (VIC)

Subject of meetings:

Both Inter-Sessions were most interesting because they provided drafts of the proposed resolution that will be presented at the Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS). It will be held in New York in April 2016. 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. At both Inter-Sessions there were also representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) participating via Skype from Geneva. This draft resolution recognizes the important role the Civil Society (CS) can play in assisting Governments in developing drug control programmes, and in providing services for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The draft resolution also recommends enhanced operational cooperation across the UN System (UNESCO and UNICEF in addition to WHO) as well as with the relevant international, regional and local institutions under the leadership of UNODC.

The main subject at the **59th Session of CND** was the preparatory process for UNGASS 2016. An important aspect in the preparation is the involvement of the CS organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) that has been widely acknowledged by the CND, strongly supported by the Chairman of UNGASS, H.E. Ambassador Khaled Shamaa (Egypt).

At the Plenary Meeting, the agenda was adopted (E/CN.7/2016/1) and paper ED/2016/1 was introduced by the Executive Director of UNODC summarizing key issues related to the drug domain, such as health, violence, human rights, sustainable development, gender and youth.

Six half-day special meetings were held in preparation for UNGASS considering the outcome of special segments. Documentation is available on the UNODC web-site www.unodc.org. In addition, CND issued a comprehensive briefing note on the 59th session for NGOs and CSOs in preparation for UNGASS.

Furthermore, the **59th session** addressed emerging issues including (i) prevention focusing on the protection of children and 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 law incl. the three drug control conventions; (vi) strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation; and (vii) strengthening regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy while addressing socio-economic issues.

During the lunch break of the 1st day of the CND session (14th March 2016), a meeting of the Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS (CSTF) was convened. It was chaired by a Panel consisting of Mr. Esbjörn Hörnberg, Chair of the Vienna NGO Committee against Drugs (VNGOC), H.E. Ambassador Shamaa, Chair of UNGASS, Mr. Fedotov, Executive Director UNODC, Ms. Heather Haase, Chair, New York NGO on Drugs (NYNGOD) and Ms. Linda Nilsson, CSTF Representative Global Voice. A series of reports were provided from regional and thematic consultations. Furthermore, the CSTF activities up to and at UNGASS were discussed. The event was webcast at www.unodc.org. There will be five interactive panel discussions at UNGASS with NGOs' involvement. The third one dealing with cross-cutting issues such as drugs an human rights, youth, women, children and communities will be of particular interest to GWI's representation.

In the mornings (prior to the session of the of the 59th CND) as well as during lunch hours, I represented GWI at a number of side events:

(1) *Prevention and treatment of substance use disorder in underserved populations* organized by the Government of the United States of America, the WHO, UNODC Drug Prevention and Health Branch. The victims are often young women and children.

(2) *Alternatives to imprisonment and Proportionate Responses to Drug Offences* organized by the Government of United States, the United Kingdom and Columbia, WHO, UNODC Justice Section and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals USA. The aim should be rehabilitation rather than punishment.

(3) *Cooperation, Involvement and Inclusion: How to Promote Cooperation between Peers and Professionals in Drug Work* organized by the Governments of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Cooperation is quite often difficult because of terminology.

(4) *Effective Prevention of Drug Use in Schools – Global Experiences* organized by the Government of Brazil, the UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Branch, the WHO and the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Unfortunately, many young children and girls are affected by drug abuse.

(5) *Drug Policy and Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities* organized by the Government of Norway, Christian Aid, the International Drug policy Consortium and Health Poverty Action.

(6) *UNGASS: Women who Use Drugs in Focus* organized by Eurasian Harm Reduction Network of People who Use Drugs and the Women and Harm Reduction International Network. Women are disadvantaged when it comes to treatment and rehabilitation.

(7) *Countering Violent Extremism: Illicit Drug Business as a Source of Terrorism Financing* organized by the Journalists and Writers Foundation, Abant Platform and Friede Institut fuer Dialog.

Intervention by GWI rep: I asked pertinent question during the Q&R parts of the presentations. I had a longer discussion with the representative of CSTF members. I expressed hope that UNICEF and UNESCO will be represented at UNGASS (as mentioned in the draft resolution). In future, these UN Organizations should strengthen their cooperation with UNODC. They should be involved in drug prevention of children and women because drug abuse is now shifting towards young people, children, women.

How this serves GWI members:

a) **Trends and developments:** The role and input of the civil society represented by NGOs, and CSOs especially those with ECOSOC status, is significantly enhanced thanks to the Chair of UNGASS and Senior Management of UNODC that maintain and foster the excellent cooperation with **VNGOC**.

b) **Why these trends and developments are relevant to GWI members:**

Children, youth and women become a prominent topic for UNGASS. The role of education, especially of young women and the family context (communities) are very important issues in drug prevention and rehabilitation.

In addition, I will be in New York during UNGASS, *i.e.* from 19th to 21st April 2016. Although I have a valid Ground Pass as former Staff of UNHQ permitting entry to all UN events, I registered with UNGASS. **I will closely cooperate with UNODC, Vienna and NYUNODC, New York.** I also intend to meet with representatives of UNICEF office in New York.

c) **What needs to be done at international and national levels:**

Next steps: Foster the collaboration between GWI and UNICEF. Follow up on cooperation with UNESCO.

Other matters:

During the 59th Session of CND, a **Meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)** was scheduled. It was held in a large meeting room provided by UNODC and well attended by many members from NGOs fighting against drugs in all regions of the world.

Please find attached the Annotated Draft Agenda and VNGOC's Annual Report of Activities in 2015. This report shows the number of NGOs that are members of VNGOC.

Discussions focused on UNGASS and representation of the civil society, possible draft resolutions and sponsoring countries.

Ingrid H. Szabolcs, PhD.