GWI advocacy goals

1. 100% of United Nations 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 United Nations low-income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
3. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
4. Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
5. All 17 SDGs will include girls’ education targets.

Meeting attended: (place, date, time, name of meeting):

United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
67th Session
Vienna, Austria, 14-22 March 2024

Subject of meeting:
The CND is the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control and other drug-related matters.

This year’s Session was the biggest gathering of the Commission ever, with 140 Member States of the United Nations represented, as well as representatives of 18 intergovernmental organizations, 141 NGOs, and nine UN entities. More than 2500 participants attended in total. Elisabeth Francis represented GWI. The formal agenda comprised a two-day high-level segment focusing on the Midterm Review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration and then five days of the regular segment focused on the implementation of international drug control treaties and drug policy commitments.
In an indication of the increasing importance attached to drug matters, particularly synthetic drugs, there were many high level attendees, including US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken. Mr. Blinken called for greater international cooperation to fight the trafficking of illicit synthetic drugs such as fentanyl, the leading cause of overdose deaths in the US. "More than 40% of the American people know someone who has died from an opioid overdose. Synthetic drugs are now the number one killer of Americans aged 18 to 45. One American is dying of a drug overdose every five minutes," Blinken said. "My message is urgent. If we want to change the trajectory of this crisis, there is only one way to succeed, and that's together."

At the 67th Session, four resolutions were adopted, covering: alternative development; rehabilitation and recovery management programmes; improving access to and availability of controlled substances for medical purposes; and preventing and responding to drug overdose. Various new drugs and precursors of fentanyl and amphetamine-type stimulants were placed under international control.

In addition to the work of the plenary, an extraordinary 174 side events took place, reflecting the huge number of issues that are being dealt with within the framework of the CND, the increasing urgency of the opioid disaster, the impact of drugs on societies globally, and the engagement of civil society.

Documentation

Refers to SDG no #: (please reference)
All. The 2023 World Drug Report highlights that world drug-related challenges are hindering SDG progress across all areas, from peace and justice to health and human rights, and the environment and equality.

Intervention by GWI rep: (what you did)
I observed various meetings of the Plenary throughout the Session and attended / participated in various side events related to GWI's mission and objectives.
Personal observations:
I will report separately on three side events that addressed issues of interest, but I think it is important to highlight some of the key messages from the 2023 World Drug Report and some of the shocking data.

- **296 million people worldwide** use drugs; **39.5 million** have drug use disorders (up 45% over 10 years); **13.2 million** inject drugs.
- Cultivation of coca and opium poppy continues to increase rapidly.
- **60 million** use opioids, 1.2% of the global adult population; opioids remain the most lethal group of drugs, accounting for two-thirds of drug related deaths.
- In 2021, there were **90,000** opioid related deaths in North America, the majority involving fentanyl.
- Law enforcement responses need to keep pace with increasingly agile criminal business models, as well as the proliferation of synthetic drugs.
- Prevention and access to evidence-based treatment and HIV and Hepatitis services must be stepped up; otherwise, drug-related challenges will leave more people behind.
- Public health must remain the priority in the context of rapidly developing drug control regulation, in particular in relation to medical use, and countries must invest more in research.
- Drug use disorders and other mental health conditions are closely interconnected: mental health conditions increase the risk of developing drug use disorders, and drugs pose the risk of exacerbating mental health problems if taken outside medical supervision. With an estimated one in eight people globally living with a diagnosed mental health condition, the need to address mental health issues in drug use prevention and treatment has increasingly become a priority.
- Illicit drug economies, converging crimes, displacement and conflict are accelerating environmental devastation and degrading human rights, especially in vulnerable groups.
- Synthetics and innovations in illegal drug manufacturing and trafficking are posing difficult challenges. Illegal drug markets are transforming rapidly and, in some regions, radically, with synthetic drugs becoming increasingly dominant. Synthetic drug manufacture is cheap, easy and fast. As synthetic drugs are not tied to geographically fixed crops, using instead a wide array of precursors, supply can be...
relocated closer to consumer markets, and seized products can be quickly replaced, defeating drug law enforcement efforts.

Link to the World Drug Report

The UNODC’s new ‘Friends in Focus’ initiative is very interesting with its focus on youth helping youth through structured cascade training – see my Side Event report.

How this serves GWI members:
The world drug problem is global – it impacts women and girls in all countries.

Next steps: (what needs to be done, who can we contact? Who did you network with?)
The drug problem is global but there are different regional and local dynamics. These issues will be familiar to NFAs but all may find the regional reports of the World Drug Report of interest and a help to local advocacy efforts.

Elisabeth Francis
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