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# COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS BACKGROUND GUIDE 2017

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). This year's staff is: Director Simon Arias and Assistant Director Lainey Godwin. Simon completed his B.A. in International Political Economy and Diplomacy at the University of Bridgeport. He is currently pursuing his masters in Conflict Management at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington DC. This will be his second year on DC staff and he is excited to return to NMUN•DC. Lainey graduated with a B.A. in Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations from Texas Christian University in 2014. She currently lives in DC and works in student programming for a public interest law firm. This will be her first year on DC staff, and she is looking forward to being a part of the NMUN•DC team.

The topics under discussion for CND are:

1. Mitigating Drug Supply through Alternative Development
2. Engaging Civil Society in Addressing the World Drug Problem

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is the leading UN body tasked with determining new and innovative drug-related policies and supervising the application of the international drug control treaties and policies for the international community. The world drug problem has become a critical issue for the global community - it affects the health and wellbeing of users, those around them, and their communities. The illegal trafficking of drugs raises serious security concerns as illegal narcotics negatively impact development in many Member States. Policies regarding this issue should attempt to mitigate illegal drug supplies and strive to engage all levels of society. CND's role remains crucial in this regard, especially in relation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a [Position Paper](#) by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 13 October 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Deputy Secretary-General, Jess Mace, at [dsg.dc@nmun.org](mailto:dsg.dc@nmun.org).

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Simon Arias, *Director*  
Lainey Godwin, *Assistant Director*



## Committee Overview

### **Introduction**

In the context of modern international drug control, a “drug” is any substance placed in schedule I or II of the 1961 *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs*.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) website offers this simple definition of a drug in pharmacological terms: it is “any chemical agent that alters the biochemical or physiological processes of tissues or organisms.”<sup>2</sup>

The **Commission on Narcotic Drugs** (CND) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Maintaining a coherent international strategy for narcotics control was a priority following the Second World War and the establishment of the UN, and in 1946, the newly formed Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) to advise it on drug policy, with ECOSOC resolution 9(1).<sup>3</sup> In the early years of CND, a number of drug protocols were established, the most significant of which was the 1953 Opium Protocol.<sup>4</sup> This protocol reaffirmed that opium and related substances could only be used for scientific or medical purposes, and mandated for Member States that ratified the protocol to set up dedicated drugs agencies in their respective countries.<sup>5</sup>

The modern CND, however, is very much defined around three treaties: the *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961), the *Convention on Psychotropic Substances* (1971), and the *Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* (1988).<sup>6</sup> The Single Convention was so named because it amalgamated and superseded all pre-existing drug control treaties.<sup>7</sup> While earlier drug control treaties had largely been limited to controlling the supply of narcotics and limiting their usage to medical and research purposes, from the 1970s onwards demand reduction began to take a more prominent role in the language of international treaties.<sup>8</sup> For example, the 1971 *Convention on Psychotropic Substances* requires signatories to take “all active measures to for the prevention of abuse of psychotropic substances.”<sup>9</sup> The 1961 and 1971 Conventions, along with the *Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* (1988), form the bedrock of the international drug control framework, of which CND is the central body.<sup>10</sup>

### **Governance, Structure and Membership**

There are 53 members of CND, with 11 seats each reserved for African and Asian states, 10 for Latin America, six for Eastern Europe, and 14 for Western Europe and others.<sup>11</sup> The remaining seat rotates between Asian and Latin American or Caribbean states every four years.<sup>12</sup> Members must be party to the 1961 *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs*, and “adequate representation” must be ensured for Member States that are either key producers of opium or coca leaves, are key places where illicit narcotics are manufactured, or where the use of illicit narcotics is particularly concerning.<sup>13</sup> Members of CND are elected by an organizational session of ECOSOC.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNODC, *Information About Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Resolution on the Establishment of a Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/RES/9(1))*, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> UNODC, *A Century of International Drugs Control*, 2008, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> UN Opium Conference, *Protocol and Final Act*, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs*, 1961; *United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances*, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> UNODC, *A Century of International Drugs Control*, 2008, p. 60.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances*, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> *United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> UNODC, *CND: Membership*, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> UNODC, *CND/CCPCJ: Fact Sheet on Membership*.



CND is led internally by the Bureau and Extended Bureau of the Commission.<sup>15</sup> The Bureau is composed of a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons, and a Rapporteur, who are elected at the end of each session of CND (to serve in the next session).<sup>16</sup> The Extended Bureau includes representatives from the five main global geographic regions, in addition to the European Union (EU), China, and the Group of 77 developing nations.<sup>17</sup> As well as chairing meetings, the Bureau works with the UN Secretariat to prepare CND sessions, as well as undertaking organizational work between sessions.<sup>18</sup> Currently the bureau is made up of Chairperson, Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen of Norway, and Vice-Chairpersons, Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro Massieu of Mexico and Ambassador Reza Najafi of the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>19</sup> CND, along with other bodies, such as the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), is one of the functional commissions of ECOSOC.<sup>20</sup> CND's reports are considered at the substantive session of ECOSOC each year: some are adopted and become ECOSOC resolutions, and some ECOSOC refers to the General Assembly, to potentially become General Assembly resolutions.<sup>21</sup> There are several smaller bodies that report directly to CND. The Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East was formed in 1973, and exists to facilitate cooperation between governments in the region, and to offer a focused regional perspective.<sup>22</sup> There are also the four Regional Meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA).<sup>23</sup> These bodies, one each for Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, exist to improve high-level coordination between regional drug law enforcement agencies.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Mandate, Functions and Powers***

CND's mandate is to “monitor the world drug situation, develop strategies on international drug control and recommends measures to combat the world drug problem, including through reducing demand for drugs, promoting alternative development initiatives, and adopting supply reduction measures.”<sup>25</sup> Like many older UN agencies, the mandate of CND has evolved over time. The original mandate, as set out in ECOSOC resolution 9(1), which established CND, called for the new body to assist ECOSOC, supervise existing narcotics control treaties, and “advise the council on all matters pertaining to the control of narcotic drugs.”<sup>26</sup> What this means is that CND has always had a functional, operational aspect to its mandate, in addition to a normative policymaking mandate.<sup>27</sup> However, this division of roles was only clarified and formalized in 1999 with the adoption of ECOSOC resolution 1999/30, which required CND to structure its agenda into two distinct sections: a normative section, centered around policy issues and the upholding of treaties, and an operational section, where CND exercises its role as the governing body of UNODC.<sup>28</sup> UNODC itself was formed in 1997 by the merging of the secretariats of the UN International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP), although the merged office was not renamed until 2002.<sup>29</sup> As a governing body, CND is responsible for administrative and budgetary matters of the UNDCP, as well as “strategic oversight.”<sup>30</sup> This means that while CND is not responsible for the day to day running of the UNDCP, it is recognized as the central drug policy-making organ of the UN, makes

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<sup>15</sup> UNODC, *Bureau and Extended Bureau*, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> UNODC, *Bureau and Extended Bureau*, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> UNODC, *Bureau of the Commissions*, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> UNODC, *The Economic and Social Council and the CND and CCPCJ*, 2017; UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> UNODC, *The Economic and Social Council and the CND and CCPCJ*, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2014-2015*, 2014, p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 144.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>25</sup> UNODC, *CND*, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Resolution on the Establishment of a Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/RES/9(1))*, 1946.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Review of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme: strengthening the United Nations machinery for international drug control within the scope of the existing international drug control treaties and in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations (E/RES/1999/30)*, 1999.

<sup>29</sup> UNODC, *A Century of International Drugs Control*, 2008, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> UN CND, *Annotated Provisional Agenda, 58<sup>th</sup> Session (E/CN.7/2015/A)*, 2014.

suggestions as to the direction of UNDCP policy, and offers guidance on strengthening its programs.<sup>31</sup> The first part of the agenda of CND sessions is devoted to this task.<sup>32</sup>

Given that CND is mandated to uphold narcotics control treaties, it is natural that the major treaties in the area have shaped its mandate further. Under the *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961), CND is responsible for placing drugs into one of five schedules, depending on their harmfulness.<sup>33</sup> However, changes to drug scheduling can only be made on the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>34</sup> Drug scheduling changes can only be overruled by the full ECOSOC.<sup>35</sup> The Single Convention established the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and charged it to limit drug production and use to an amount adequate for scientific and medical purposes to prevent illicit drug activity.<sup>36</sup> As such, it is the INCB that works directly with governments to ensure compliance with the convention, not CND.<sup>37</sup> The INCB focuses primarily on the regulation of legal drug markets, working with government agencies to ensure that controlled substances do not fall into the wrong hands.<sup>38</sup> UNODC, meanwhile, focuses more on illicit drug markets, working with governments on demand reduction, police cooperation, and tackling organized crime.<sup>39</sup> CND works closely with both bodies, as governing body of UNODC, and in an advisory capacity to INCB.<sup>40</sup> As the governing body of UNODC, CND is responsible for approving the International Drug Control Program Fund budget; this fund accounts for 90% of UN Drug Control resources.<sup>41</sup>

CND's mandate was further shaped in 2009 during the annual meeting's high-level segment (the ministerial or head of state level); at this, Member States adopted the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem* (hereafter referred to as "the Plan").<sup>42</sup> The Plan committed members to the ambitious goal of eventually eliminating illicit drug consumption in its entirety.<sup>43</sup> CND is named as the UN body that should play the main role in encouraging and assisting Member States in implementing the Plan, and is also tasked with developing new "indicators and instruments" by which to measure the extent of the global drug problem.<sup>44</sup> The Plan itself is focused on both demand and supply reduction, the steps Member States should take to achieve this, and aims to eradicate both the demand and supply of illicit drugs by 2019.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Recent Sessions and Current Priorities***

Between 13 and 17 March 2017, CND held its 60<sup>th</sup> session.<sup>46</sup> During this session the CND focused extensively on ensuring the implementation of the various drug control treaties through the passage of resolutions.<sup>47</sup> At the 60<sup>th</sup> session, CND adopted nine resolutions and 13 decisions.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, CND produced a draft resolution for the General Assembly focusing on alternative development as a component of fighting drugs.<sup>49</sup> CND has stated that the success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential for the success of its mandate, especially in terms

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs*, 1961.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> UNODC, *Commentary on the Single Convention*, 1961, p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> *Convention on Narcotic Drugs*, 1961.

<sup>37</sup> UNODC, *A Century of International Drugs Control*, 2008, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> UN ECOSOC *Review of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme: strengthening the United Nations machinery for international drug control within the scope of the existing international drug control treaties and in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations (E/RES/1999/30)*, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> UNODC, *CND*, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> UNODC, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, 2009, p. iii.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> UN CND, *Program of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session*, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> UN CND, *Drug Related Resolutions and Decisions*, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

of the illicit cultivation of drugs being the main source of income for the most marginalized communities.<sup>50</sup> As of 2014, global drug use has remained stable at 1 in 20 adults worldwide, but a major concern for CND remains the lack of objective data on drug use for accurate analysis.<sup>51</sup> Opioids continue to be a significant concern of CND, with opioids accounting for one third to one half of drug related deaths world-wide.<sup>52</sup> As the opioid epidemic continues, pharmaceutical opioids remain a particular concern in North America.<sup>53</sup> A major focus of CND is the increasing trend of heroin use in developed Member States, in the United States of America, for example, there has been an upsurge of fatal overdoses and there has been an indication of an increase in western and central Europe.<sup>54</sup>

In 2016, the General Assembly convened the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS).<sup>55</sup> CND provided the preparatory work, including planning and preparing recommendations.<sup>56</sup> At the UNGASS, delegates recommitted to over 100 operational recommendations.<sup>57</sup> During the 62<sup>nd</sup> session, in 2019, CND will produce a follow-up document on the UNGASS.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, in response to UNGASS, CND has committed to strengthening its subsidiary bodies.<sup>59</sup> In the implementation of the SDGs the UNODC has highlighted the following as priorities for both subsidiary commissions: “promoting the rule of law and equal access to justice; combatting terrorism and crime; eliminating violence against women and children; eradicating human trafficking; advancing sustainable development in illicit drug crop areas; ending poaching and trafficking of protected flora and fauna; reducing illicit financial flows, as well as flows of arms; reducing corruption and bribery, and strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets; and ensuring healthy lives by strengthening prevention and treatment of substance abuse.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Conclusion**

CND is the primary body for drug policy decision-making within the UN system. The international framework for controlling illicit substances is built primarily on the 1961, 1971, and 1988 Conventions, and CND is the central body tasked with upholding these treaties.<sup>61</sup> Its dual role as both a normative policymaking body and as a functional committee, acting as a governing body of the UNODC with control of over 90% of the UN’s anti-drugs budget, makes it a committee of critical importance.<sup>62</sup> Arguably, however, the challenges CND must face are greater than ever. Creatively addressing the complex challenges involved in maintaining a workable and humane global drug policy should be at the forefront of delegate’s minds as CND works to prepare the UNGASS follow-up documents for its 62<sup>nd</sup> session.

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*This handbook, produced annually by New Zealand since 1961, is a well-regarded guide to the United Nations. Pages 140-144 detail CND, including its purpose, current membership, and the*

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<sup>50</sup> Healthy Poverty Action, *Drug Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> UN ECOSOC, *World Situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2017/4)*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> UN ECOSOC, *World Situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2017/4)*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30/1)*, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> UN CND, *CND Blog: CND intersessional – 25 January 2017: Preparations for the 62nd Session in 2019*, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30/1)*, 2016.

<sup>60</sup> UNODC, *Special event of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) & the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2017.

<sup>61</sup> *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs*, 1961; *United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances*, 1971; *United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 1988.

<sup>62</sup> UNODC, *CND*.

*sub-commissions reporting to CND, including the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, and the Regional Meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA). It is useful as a brief overview of the committee, as well as other committees of the UN, which are also included in the guide. The handbook is also available as a smartphone application.*

Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. (1961). Retrieved 19 May 2017 from:

[https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention\\_1961\\_en.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1961_en.pdf)

*The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs is an international treaty to limit the production and distribution of a number of narcotics, with limited exceptions made for medical treatment and research. It consolidated a number of earlier treaties, and expanded their scope to include other substances, for example cannabis and related substances. In tandem with the later Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), which included synthetic psychoactive substances such as LSD, which were not widely understood in 1961, these two treaties form the bedrock of international narcotics control. In the treaty, CND, alongside the WHO, was tasked to “schedule” narcotics in one of four different categories.*

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (1946). *Resolution on the Establishment of a Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/RES/9(1))* [Resolution]. Retrieved 19 May 2017 from:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/ECOSOC\\_Res-9I\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/ECOSOC_Res-9I_E.pdf)

*This resolution from 1946, one of the first adopted by the newly formed United Nations, established CND to advise and make recommendations to ECOSOC on drug control, and to ‘continually review’ narcotics control policies. The mandate makes clear CND is taking over all responsibilities of the defunct League of Nations Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs. It is useful to understand the initial mandate of CND so as to fully appreciate how it has developed.*

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *World Situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2017/4)* [Report]. Retrieved 19 May 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/CN.7/2017/4>

*This report from CND details an extensive amount of the most recent data and information available to the UNODC. It provides a list of the current concerns CND has over the current drug situation. There is discussion of the extent of drug use, and diseases transferred due to drug use. Delegates will find this document useful as it contains both global and regional data concerning drug abuse.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Thirtieth special session. (2016). *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 19 May 2017 from:

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*As the primary outcome document of the UNGASS, this document contains the most current policies and guiding principles of the United Nations system concerning drug abuse and narcotics. Some of the issues addressed include demand reduction, including prevention and treatment, and recommendations concerning cross cutting issues. This resolution can serve as the primary source of existing programs for delegates to review.*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2008). *A Century of International Drugs Control* [Report]. Retrieved 19 May 2017 from: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/100\\_Years\\_of\\_Drug\\_Control.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/100_Years_of_Drug_Control.pdf)

*This report, an extended version of a similar section of the 2008 World Drug Report, is probably the most useful overview of international drugs control that delegates can read. It details the circumstances leading to the first attempts to control narcotics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and every major development since. Delegates are strongly urged to read this report in full to better understand the history of international efforts to control narcotic drugs.*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2009). *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*. Retrieved 19 May 2017 from: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND\\_Sessions/CND\\_52/Political-Declaration2009\\_V0984963\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_52/Political-Declaration2009_V0984963_E.pdf)



*This declaration and plan was the result of the 2009 CND conference, and is the most recent overarching plan to combat the trade in illicit narcotics that the international community has produced. Many of its targets, such as eliminating the supply and demand of drugs by 2019, are clearly not going to meet, but the strategies it outlines continue to be the starting point for current discussions on global drug policy, particularly moving into the UNGASS in 2016. Delegates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with its key proposals.*

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## I. Mitigating Drug Supply through Alternative Development

*“Alternative development continues to be recognized by Member States as a fundamental pillar of a comprehensive drug control strategy and plays an important role as a development oriented drug control approach.”<sup>63</sup>*

### **Introduction**

According to the *World Drug Report 2016*, it was estimated in 2014 that 207,400 drug users worldwide lost their lives due to drug-related incidents.<sup>64</sup> Youth are especially vulnerable as most are exposed to drugs during their adolescence, which can result in serious health effects.<sup>65</sup> The illicit drug supply impacts numerous tangents of society as it undermines efforts toward sustainable development and threatens the health and well-being of individuals and communities.<sup>66</sup> To address these concerns, the United Nations (UN) Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) works with Member States to develop and implement drug control policies, some of which specifically focus on alternative development.<sup>67</sup> Alternative development is recognized as a means of eliminating the illicit cultivation of narcotic and psychotropic agricultural substances (drug crops) through specifically designed rural development measures that target sustainable growth and development, while recognizing the socio-economic needs of an affected/targeted community.<sup>68</sup> The concept of alternative development focuses on the understanding that drug crops are being grown in areas that are isolated, where poverty is pervasive, and that these conditions incentivize farmers to cultivate and thereby contribute to the illicit drug supply.<sup>69</sup> Efforts to mitigate drug supply involve alternative development strategies that promote lawful and sustainable socio-economic opportunities, which can vary in a multitude of different approaches and styles specific toward the given community.<sup>70</sup> These strategies are aimed at helping communities that are dependent on the illicit cultivation of drug crops, obtain a more sustainable living by relinquishing their reliance on drug crops.<sup>71</sup>

Success in mitigating drug supply through alternative development requires an integrated and balanced approach with overarching commonality principles and cohesion among national, regional, and international strategies.<sup>72</sup> UN General Assembly resolution 68/196 of 11 February 2014, entitled the “United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development,” identified three principles: sustainable economic opportunities, stable political and financial systems that build economic drive and long-term investments, and sustained environmental protection that contributes to maximization of land tenure.<sup>73</sup> These commonalities are within the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), including alternative development as a means for sustainable growth and development.<sup>74</sup> By adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community reaffirmed the connection alternative development has on sustainable growth, further cementing the idea of mitigating the drug supply by focusing on alternative and sustainable development strategies.<sup>75</sup> Goals such as one, two, three, eight and 17 all

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<sup>63</sup> UNODC, *Outreach to New Stakeholders in the Field of Alternative Development*, 2017.

<sup>64</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. ix.

<sup>65</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2015, pp. 18-20.

<sup>66</sup> UN General Assembly, *Political Declaration (A/RES/S-20/2)*, 1998.

<sup>67</sup> UNODC, *Overview*, 2017; UNODC, *Commission on Narcotic Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> UNODC, *Overview*, 2017; UN General Assembly, *Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem*, section E p. 20, 1998; UN General Assembly, *Political Declaration (A/RES/S-20/2)*, 1998.

<sup>69</sup> UNODC, *Overview*, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem (A/RES/71/211)*, 2017; UN General Assembly, *Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem (A/RES/S-20/4)*, p. 23, 1998; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2015, pp. xviii - xix.

<sup>71</sup> UN General Assembly, *Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem (A/RES/S-20/4)*, p. 23, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> UN DPI, *Successful Fight Against Drug Trafficking Transnational Organized Crime Requires Interlocking National, Regional, International Strategies, Third Committee Told*, 2009; UN General Assembly, *Political Declaration (A/RES/S-20/2)*, 1998.

<sup>73</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (A/RES/68/196)*, 2014.

<sup>74</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

incorporate target outcomes related to aspects such as food security, health, and economic opportunity, that center on the developmental needs of communities that are contributing and/or are impacted by the illicit drug trade.<sup>76</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

There are three main international drug control conventions, the *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961), the *Convention on Psychotropic Substances* (1971), and the *United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* (1988) (the 1988 Convention).<sup>77</sup> These three conventions represent the international community's initial steps toward addressing the illicit drug supply by: defining the substances and identifying their uses, recognizing the illicit drug trade in its economic capacity, and commencing information sharing and multilateral cooperation among Member States.<sup>78</sup> Within the 1988 Convention, Member States are encouraged to undertake rural development programs that provide economically viable options that are alternative to the illicit drug cultivation and demand.<sup>79</sup> These alternative development measures include ensuring access to markets, availability of resources, along with scientific and technical information sharing.<sup>80</sup> The 1998 Plan of Action and the 2009 Political Declaration distinguish the factors driving communities into the illicit drug trade, such as a lack of education, poor economic conditions and employment opportunities, and the absence of a strong legal and criminal justice system.<sup>81</sup> In 2013, the CND adopted resolution 56/15 as a follow-up to the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action inviting Member States to expand their cooperation with other Member States, civil society organizations, and the private sector to invest in economic conditions that stem from alternative development.<sup>82</sup>

From the regional level, frameworks are developed toward the needs and conditions within impacted communities to combat the drug supply.<sup>83</sup> The *Political Declaration on Drug Trafficking and Other Organized Crimes in West Africa* (2008), adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, is one such example that targets the allocation of resources, legal frameworks, and health.<sup>84</sup> Some of these thematic areas focus on combating illicit drug trafficking and related drug abuses, others focus on providing an adequate legal framework for effective criminal justice and law enforcement.<sup>85</sup> In the Western hemisphere, the Organization of American States' (OAS) Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) published the *Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2009* that helps facilitate the reduction of the illicit cultivation and supply of illicit plant-based drugs through the use of sustainable alternative development programs and practices.<sup>86</sup> It further outlines the OAS's commitment on implementing preventative measures to reduce illicit cultivation of drug crops, which coincide with UNODC guiding principles and compliment the legal institutions of Member States.<sup>87</sup> Other regional frameworks take a longer-term approach, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) *2025: Forging Ahead Together*.<sup>88</sup> This document aims to strengthen mechanisms for combating transnational crimes in the ASEAN

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<sup>76</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016.

<sup>77</sup> UNODC, *International Drug Control Conventions*, 2017; UNODC, *The International Drug Control Conventions*, 2013; *Convention on Psychotropic Substances*, 1971; *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol*, 1961; *Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 1988.

<sup>78</sup> *Convention on Psychotropic Substances*, 1971; *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol*, 1961; *Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 1988.

<sup>79</sup> *Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 1988.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> CND, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, 2009; UNODC, *Political Declarations on the World Drug Problem*, 2017; UNODC, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action of 2009*, 2017.

<sup>82</sup> CND, *Follow-up to the Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem with respect to the development of strategies on voluntary marketing tools for products stemming from alternative development, including preventative alternative development*, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> UNODC, *West and Central Africa, Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crimes and Drug Abuse in West Africa*, 2017.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, *Hemispheric Drug Strategy*, 2009, pp. 4-5.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> ASEAN, *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*, 2015.



Political-Security Community by enhancing partnerships through information sharing and multi-sectoral cooperation in pursuant of a drug-free ASEAN.<sup>89</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

During its 17<sup>th</sup> special session in February 1990, the General Assembly adopted resolution S-17/2 to address the supply and demand of illicit drugs, contributing to efforts contained in the 1987 *Declaration on the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking*.<sup>90</sup> Instead of working solely towards eradication of illicit drugs, the General Assembly adopted resolutions S-20/2 and S-20/4 in its 20<sup>th</sup> special session in 1998, shifting the focus from supply and demand of illicit drugs towards alternative development.<sup>91</sup> This shift aimed to bring communities that cultivate illicit drugs off their reliance with programs and policies that are attentive to their socio-cultural, environmental, and economic needs.<sup>92</sup> CND resolution 57/1 (2014) and 58/4 (2015) give special attention to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/196 (2014) titled, “United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development,” through continued multilateral cooperation utilizing workshops that underscore the connection of illicit drug supply with the SDGs and aimed at improving financial and political support for alternative development.<sup>93</sup> Most recently, in April 2016 the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) adopted “Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem,” welcoming the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* as being complementary and mutually reinforcing to mitigating the illicit drug supply.<sup>94</sup> General Assembly resolution 27/210 titled, “Promoting the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development,” was adopted in January 2017 and urged Member States to focus on development-oriented balanced drug control policies, focusing on the socio-economic issues and using alternative development strategies to overcome them.<sup>95</sup>

To implement alternative development strategies to mitigate illicit drug supplies, SDG Goal 17 on strengthening global partnerships pushes for Member State cooperation with civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>96</sup> The role CSOs and NGOs have in mitigating the illicit drug supply consists of formulating and implementing policies with Member States.<sup>97</sup> One example is in Egypt, where CSOs, such as the Middle East and North Africa Association (MENAHRRA), collaborated with Member States by advocating for drug users in legal and development policies with policymakers and government officials.<sup>98</sup> CSO partnerships with Member States aim to combat drug abuse and addiction by providing prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services such as needle and syringe programs and opioid substitution therapies in congruence with National Aids

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> UN General Assembly, *Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action (A/RES/S-17/2)*, 1990; UNODC, *Declaration of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking*, 1987.

<sup>91</sup> UN General Assembly, *Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem (A/RES/S-20/4)*, 1998; UN General Assembly, *Political Declaration (A/RES/S-20/2)*, 1998.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> CND, *Promoting the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and proposal to organize an international seminar/workshop on the implementation of the Guiding Principles*, 2014; CND, *Promoting the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development*, 2015; ECOSOC, *Note verbale dated 14 January 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations (Vienna) addressed to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E/CN.7/2016/13)*, annex, 2016.

<sup>94</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30.1)*, 2016.

<sup>95</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30.1)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (A/RES/71/210)*, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. xx; UNODC, *UNODC Engagement with Civil Society on Drug Crime and Prevention*, 2017.

<sup>97</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30.1)*, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Aaraj & Chouch, *Drug Policy and Harm Reduction in the Middle East and North Africa: The Role of Civil Society*, 2015; CND, *Improving the participatory role of civil society in addressing the world drug problem*, 2012.

Strategic Plans.<sup>99</sup> By raising awareness among youth on the effects of opioids and providing psychological and social rehabilitation, addicts receive access to treatments and programs necessary to overcome drug abuse and addiction.<sup>100</sup> Multisector partnerships established among the National Council, Ministry of Interior, and civil societies, such as MENAHRA, strive to address policy, resources, and services in tandem, focused on the mutual concern to combat drug prevalence among youth and improve overall well-being and community development.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Socio-Economic Conditions and Opportunities***

Some concerns arise regarding the implementation of alternative development measures on mitigating the cultivation of illicit crops in rural communities.<sup>102</sup> If not properly sequenced, alternative development efforts to eradicate illicit drug supply could do more harm than good.<sup>103</sup> Without a proper transition into a stable and secure way of living that can generate a sustainable income, through furthering education, robust employment opportunities, and other crop cultivations; such efforts could have a negative impact on food security and employment opportunities as these targeted communities could resort back to illicit drug cultivation.<sup>104</sup> Considering the underlying socio-economic factors, such as access to markets and environmental conditions, which contribute to the cultivation of illicit crops, alternative development strategies are unique to the circumstances impacting a given community and are holistic in approach.<sup>105</sup>

In Myanmar, illicit cultivation of opium poppy provided income to buy food, pay down debt and household expenses.<sup>106</sup> To mitigate the illicit drug supply of opium poppy, national alternative development initiatives were aimed at local farmers to expand their market access by improving local infrastructure and diversifying their crop cultivation.<sup>107</sup> When market access was enhanced for local farmers, it was observed that alternative resources such as fishing, hunting, rubber products, salaried jobs, and handcrafted goods became sources of income.<sup>108</sup> Myanmar's strategy looked at environmental conservation and protection in tandem with alternative development programs, resulting in the illicit opium cultivation decreasing by 11%.<sup>109</sup>

In Afghanistan, the illicit cultivation of opium provides economic benefits to rural communities, thus presenting conceptual and institutional challenges to mitigating this supply through alternative development.<sup>110</sup> Prior to 2001, projects considered "alternative development" were really just rural development projects aimed to specifically achieve drug control goals by improving agricultural yields with irrigation projects and provisions of agricultural inputs and livestock interventions.<sup>111</sup> However, the challenge that prevented achieving drug control goals was the lack of a holistic and comprehensive alternative development strategy, as it failed to address the multifaceted role opium cultivation had on farmers' livelihoods.<sup>112</sup> Learning from the failed experiences, current alternative development initiatives incorporate a holistic and comprehensive strategy from multilateral and national organizations by looking at the health, education, and infrastructure conditions, while engaging local stakeholders.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Aaraj & Chouch, *Drug Policy and Harm Reduction in the Middle East and North Africa: The Role of Civil Society*, 2015; Fedotov, *Remarks at the side event on the "Project on Prevention and Rehabilitation of Youth against Drug Abuse in Egypt,"* 2017; CND, *Improving the participatory role of civil society in addressing the world drug problem*, 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Aaraj & Chouch, *Drug Policy and Harm Reduction in the Middle East and North Africa: The Role of Civil Society*, 2015; CND, *Improving the participatory role of civil society in addressing the world drug problem*, 2012.

<sup>102</sup> CND, *Outreach to new Stakeholders in the Field of Alternative Development*, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> CND, *Outreach to new Stakeholders in the Field of Alternative Development*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation Against the World Drug Problem (A/RES/70/182)*, 2016.

<sup>105</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem (A/RES/71/211)*, 2017; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016.

<sup>106</sup> UNODC, *Southeast Asia Opium Survey: Lao PDR, Myanmar*, 2015; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. 82.

<sup>107</sup> UNODC, *Southeast Asia Opium Survey: Lao PDR, Myanmar*, 2015.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. 75; UNODC, *Southeast Asia Opium Survey: Lao PDR, Myanmar*, 2015.

<sup>110</sup> East West Institute, *Afghan Narcotrafficking: Finding an alternative to alternative development*, 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.



These endeavors materialized through initiatives such as the National Priority Programs, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and Security Sector Reform, which collected and prioritized funding efforts while coordinating with local projects.<sup>114</sup>

### **Conclusion**

It is imperative that drug policies incorporate appropriate alternative development concepts and sustainable development practices to effectively mitigate the illicit drug supply.<sup>115</sup> Alternative development strategies are sensitive to the needs of targeted communities, whether it be environmental and agricultural conditions, the economic and employment opportunities, or the health and well-being of individuals.<sup>116</sup> To address this, the CND needs to encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation within the international community, and their input in the policy-making process.<sup>117</sup> This is already being demonstrated by recognizing the socio-economic needs and driving factors that influence farmers and communities to contribute to the illicit drug supply and by placing the focus on development-oriented programs for sustainable livelihoods.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, an integrated, multisector, and balanced approach should connect international, regional, and national levels and work in symbiosis to effectively mitigate drug supply.<sup>119</sup>

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[https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND\\_Sessions/CND\\_57/E-CN7-2014-CRP07\\_V1401225\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_57/E-CN7-2014-CRP07_V1401225_E.pdf)

*This document highlights the correlation between alternative development and the mitigation of drug supplies. As a fundamental component of a comprehensive drug control strategy, the development oriented approach to drug policy cannot be ignored. Main drivers of illicit drug cultivation, such as poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to markets, health, and education, and private sector involvement, can differ from region to region. To properly reduce illicit drug cultivation, the principle drives within the targeted community must be addressed in a sustainable manner. This document emphasizes the integrated and holistic approach required to address such drivers of illicit drug cultivation, including national, regional, and international level stakeholders with local communities, civil society organizations, donors, and government agencies. Provided here are key recommendations in sectors such as access to land and markets, law enforcement and legal challenges, required for stakeholder cooperation on promoting alternative development and mitigating the illicit drug supply from reducing illicit drug cultivation.*

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2009, October 8). *Successful Fight Against Drug Trafficking Transnational Organized Crime Requires Interlocking National, Regional, International Strategies, Third Committee Told* [Meeting Coverage]. Retrieved on 23 April 2017 from:

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/gashc3948.doc.htm>

*By interlocking strategic action approaches from all levels of government, Member States can recognize how successful these efforts can be in addressing the world drug problem. This resource on the topic of crime prevention, criminal justice, and drug control recognizes that the fight against drugs requires an integrated and holistic approach. More importantly, drug trade and crime have been known to contribute to additional risks such as the threat of terrorist activity, arms, human trafficking, and corruption. Delegates should use this source to gain insight on the*

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. xxiii.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation against the World Drug Problem (A/RES/70/182)*, 2016; UNODC, *Overview*, 2017; UNODC, *Commission on Narcotic Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>118</sup> CND, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, 2009; UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30.1)*, 2016; UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016.

<sup>119</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation Against the World Drug Problem (A/RES/70/182)*, 2016.



*issues and challenges that come from the illicit drug supply, such as hindrances to sustainable development and proponents against peace and security, and how Member States can mitigate through alternative development.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2014). *United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (A/RES/68/196)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 20 May 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/196>

*In 2014, the General Assembly adopted a set of guiding principles on alternative development. This resolution outlines general provisions and recommended actions for Member State implementation. The focus is on sustainable and long-term measures that provide alternative livelihoods for those involved in the illicit drug cultivation. Highlights include economic and employment opportunity, coordination and cooperation among government agencies on drug control and prevention programs, and further development for targeted communities and high-risk populations. Delegates are encouraged to use this source to account for current Member State initiatives and to brainstorm on potential challenges and opportunities that can arise when implementing alternative development strategies.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2016). *International Cooperation Against the World Drug Problem (A/RES/70/182)* [Resolution]. Retrieved on 23 April 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/182>

*In 2008, an integrated and comprehensive approach was identified by the international community to better address the world drug problem. The General Assembly has recognized and called upon Members States to work with academia, along with civil society and non-governmental organizations, to mitigate drug supply. Furthermore, this resolution directly incorporates the use of alternative development policies and programs that focus on socioeconomic factors, which play an important role in combating and mitigating drug supply. It calls on Member States to incorporate alternative development tools, policies, and programs into agricultural practices that address development, economic and agricultural concerns to turn away from the drug supply. Delegates are highly recommended to review this resolution and see how it connects the socioeconomic needs of communities to alternative development practices.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2017). *International Cooperation to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem (A/RES/71/211)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 23 April 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/211>

*As the most recent action taken by the General Assembly regarding the world drug problem, this resolution reviews the progress and calls more attention to the actions made by its thirtieth special session resolution, “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem” (A/RES/S-30/1). From the Political Declaration and Action Plan of 2009, the 2014 high-level review by the CDN, the Special Session of 2016, and past conventions, this resolution assesses the historical advantages and further connects them to the SDGs. What is important for delegates to take from this source is that, in addition to reviewing past action, this resolution moves forward with an integrated approach to mitigate the drug supply. Delegates should think carefully regarding what actions are mentioned here, how they differ from past actions, and how do they address the challenges that persist to the international system, regional bodies, and Member States.*

United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. (2013). *The International Drug Control Conventions* [Report]. Retrieved 23 April 2017 from:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Int\\_Drug\\_Control\\_Conventions/Ebook/The\\_International\\_Drug\\_Control\\_Conventions\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Int_Drug_Control_Conventions/Ebook/The_International_Drug_Control_Conventions_E.pdf)

*This source is a compilation of early international drug control conventions from the UNODC. It is important to see how drug control measures have evolved over time, specifically looking at the legality perspective. By reviewing the conventions, delegates will be able to conceptualize the original frameworks to address drug supply, and will be able to see how actions have adapted to address new challenges and emerging threats. These conventions provide insight into the different kinds of drugs and the use of these drugs within targeted communities. Special attention is given to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic*



*Substances (1988) as it directly indicates alternative development focused programs to be viable measures to mitigate the illicit drug cultivation, which compliments the illicit drug supply.*

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*Single Convention on Narcotic Drug, as amended by the 1972 Protocol*. (1961). Retrieved on 20 May 2017 from: [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention\\_1961\\_en.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1961_en.pdf)

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## II. Engaging Civil Society in Addressing the World Drug Problem

*“Addressing the global problem of illicit drugs is an important element of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. I am grateful for the contribution being made by civil society, and I count on you to continue to add your experienced voice to these important debates.”*<sup>120</sup>

### **Introduction**

According to the United Nations (UN), civil society is defined as the “third sector” of society, along with government and business.<sup>121</sup> This sector is comprised of civil society organizations (CSO) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>122</sup> The UN has recognized the important role that CSOs and NGOs play in addressing issues facing the global community, one of these being the world drug problem.<sup>123</sup> The world drug problem, according to the *World Drug Report 2016*, encompasses the illicit cultivation and production of drugs, the trafficking of drugs, and the use and abuse of illegal narcotics.<sup>124</sup> According to the same report, in 2014 an estimated 29 million people suffered from a drug use disorder, and these numbers have remained stable over the past few years.<sup>125</sup> Drug abuse contributes to significant global health issues, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS and opioid addiction; and the illicit production and trafficking of drugs negatively affects global development.<sup>126</sup> The UN, most prominently through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), is focused on eradicating the world drug problem, in correlation with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>127</sup> Thus far, international and regional frameworks have been developed to combat the world drug problem, alongside the critical roles international, national, and local bodies have played in addressing these issues.<sup>128</sup> In conjunction, there has been a recent emergence and recognition of CSOs as crucial components to comprehensively addressing the world drug problem.<sup>129</sup> However, additional work needs to be done in the CND, as the UNODC’s governing body, to effectively engage civil society in order to combat the world drug problem and reach the SDGs at all levels.<sup>130</sup>

### **International and Regional Framework**

The three internationally recognized legal frameworks concerning narcotic drugs are the *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961), the *Convention on Psychotropic Substances* (1971), and the *Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* (1988).<sup>131</sup> These conventions codify measures of control on narcotics for medical and scientific purposes, while aiming to monitor those drugs from entering into the black market.<sup>132</sup> In 1998, the UN General Assembly held its 20<sup>th</sup> special session focused on the world drug problem.<sup>133</sup> This session resulted in the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action* (1998), which called upon entities such as Member States, local communities, and financial organizations to address the world drug problem and work toward eradication efforts through innovative programs and supply and demand reduction efforts.<sup>134</sup> Member States were also asked to report to the CND every two years on their efforts to meet the agreed upon goals and targets to reduce the supply and demand of illicit drugs.<sup>135</sup> When the CND gathered for its 52<sup>nd</sup> session in 2009, it reflected upon the successes and failures of the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action* and determined that although progress had

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<sup>120</sup> UN CND, *Informal Stakeholder Consultation*, 2016.

<sup>121</sup> UN, *Civil Society*, 2017.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> UNODC, *UNODC Engagement with Civil Society on Drug and Crime Prevention*, 2017.

<sup>124</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2016*, 2016, p. 63.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>128</sup> UNODC, *Commission on Narcotic Drugs Vienna*, 2017.

<sup>129</sup> UNODC, *UNODC Engagement with Civil Society on Drug and Crime Prevention*, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> GPPi, *The Role of Civil Society in Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016.

<sup>131</sup> UNODC, *International Drug Control Conventions*, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> UNODC, *Treaties*, 2017.

<sup>133</sup> UNIDCP, *General Assembly Twentieth Special Session World Drug Problem*, 1998.

<sup>134</sup> UN CND, *Political Declarations on the world drug problem*, 2017.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*



been made in lowering the supply and demand for illicit drugs, there arose the unintended consequence of criminal markets and drug cartels which undermined Member States' security and development.<sup>136</sup>

The *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem* (The Political Declaration and Action Plan of 2009) was the CND's 52<sup>nd</sup> session outcome document.<sup>137</sup> This Declaration and Action Plan is the current framework guiding the international community's efforts to address these new security and development issues.<sup>138</sup> The Plan of Action calls for increased international, regional, and bi-lateral cooperation to lower the trafficking of drugs across borders.<sup>139</sup> This plan established 2019 as the target year for Member States to address various goals, such as reducing the demand for, distribution of, and money laundering related to illicit drugs.<sup>140</sup> The progress of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of 2009 was examined at the General Assembly's 30<sup>th</sup> Special Session (UNGASS 2016).<sup>141</sup> The adopted resolution S-30/1 on effective means to address the world drug problem contains recommendations for international cooperation and the formation of development-centric drug policy.<sup>142</sup> Similar to the Political Declaration and Action Plan of 2009, this resolution focuses on the health and welfare of communities as a whole and emphasizes the need for Member States to create programs focused on prevention, education, promotion of judicial cooperation, and an overall more holistic and development-focused approach to the world drug problem.<sup>143</sup>

On a broader scale, the SDGs provide the international community with tangible goals to work toward as Member States combat the world drug problem.<sup>144</sup> Specifically, Goal one, "No Poverty," and Goal three, "Good Health and Well-Being," are directly linked to the abuse of narcotics.<sup>145</sup> Another goal affected is Goal five, "Gender Equality."<sup>146</sup> According to the *World Drug Report 2016*, women struggling with drug abuse are stigmatized more than men and are less likely to seek treatment.<sup>147</sup> This reduces a woman's opportunity to reintegrate into society and ultimately displays illegal drugs' negative impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>148</sup> The CND is specifically committed to addressing these goals as well as Goal 17, "Working in Partnership," by inviting a wide range of relevant UN entities and specialized agencies, regional organizations, and NGOs to all meetings following UNGASS 2016, which elucidated on the linkages between the Commission's work and the SDGs.<sup>149</sup>

In conjunction with the above, there are key regional frameworks addressing the world drug problem.<sup>150</sup> Firstly, there is the *Paris Pact Initiative* (2003), which focuses on combatting the trafficking of opiates originating from Afghanistan.<sup>151</sup> PPI is made up of 58 partner countries and 22 organizations - the majority of these from Europe and West and Central Asia - and creates the critical connection of political commitment with technical assistance interventions on the ground.<sup>152</sup> It has developed into one of the most critical frameworks for fighting illegal opiate distribution.<sup>153</sup> Another is the Santo Domingo Pact/Central American Integration System (SICA)-UNODC Mechanism, a program in Central America and the Caribbean focused on defeating organized crime and drug

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<sup>136</sup> UNODC, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, 2009, p. 2.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>141</sup> UNODC, *UNGASS 2016: Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem*, 2017.

<sup>142</sup> UN General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem (A/RES/S-30/1)*, 2016.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 8.

<sup>144</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2016*, 2016, p. 66.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> UN DESA, *Commission on Narcotic Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>150</sup> UNODC, *Drug trafficking*, 2017.

<sup>151</sup> UNODC, *Paris Pact Initiative*, 2017.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

trafficking.<sup>154</sup> Regional cooperation in Central America and the Caribbean has promoted access to treatment, rehabilitation, and social integration networks for those affected by drug abuse.<sup>155</sup> The Santo Domingo Pact enables Member States to establish anti-narcotic and organized crime units, and has improved maritime security measures to better monitor and stop illegal trafficking of narcotics.<sup>156</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

The CND is the leading UN body that supervises the application of international drug control treaties and determines new and innovative drug-related policies for the international community.<sup>157</sup> In 2012, the CND adopted resolution 54/11 on enhancing CSOs' engagement, which called for an improvement of CSOs participatory role in addressing the world drug problem.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, in 2017, the CND adopted resolution 60/2 on strengthening international cooperation, which recognizes the unique role CSOs can play in addressing the world drug problem in less developed countries by framing the issue as a common and shared responsibility of international organizations and CSOs alike.<sup>159</sup> Another critical UN organization to address the world drug problem is the UNODC, which provides the global community with field-based technical projects, analytics and research, and normative work to assist Member States in the ratification and implementation of relevant treaties.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore the UNODC has specific partnerships with three CSOs to further its agenda items: The Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, the UNCAC Coalition, and The Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.<sup>161</sup>

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognized civil society's crucial role in addressing the world drug problem when they passed resolution 1996/31, which outlined different consultative roles CSOs have with varying UN bodies and ensured their ability to participate in international conferences convened by the UN.<sup>162</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) has also pledged to collaboratively address drug prevention, improve access to medicines under international control, and to monitor drug uses health consequences.<sup>163</sup> Former Director of WHO, Margaret Chan, called upon the body to listen to civil society as it addresses these issues because CSOs give those who suffer a face and a voice.<sup>164</sup> In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released a report reflecting on drug eradication efforts and the unintended consequences such as the creation of a black market, corruption, violence, instability in less developed areas, and discrimination against marginalized drug users such as youth, indigenous people, and women.<sup>165</sup> The UNDP also recognizes the need for CSO input in development issues as CSOs have a proven ability to mobilize and create bottom-up demand to encourage government responses to issues like illegal drug abuse and trafficking.<sup>166</sup>

### ***Civil Society's Growing Role within the United Nations***

Civil society organizations began to partner with the UN in more official capacities in 1983 with the establishment of the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Drugs (VNGOC).<sup>167</sup> The purpose of this committee is to act as a link between NGO's and intergovernmental and international agencies involved in drug policy, strategy, and control.<sup>168</sup> NGOs of all types are invited to apply for membership to the VNGOC, whose current membership

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<sup>154</sup> UNODC, *Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*, 2017.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> UNODC, *CND*, 2017.

<sup>158</sup> UN CND, *Improving the participatory role of civil society in addressing the world drug problem*, 2012.

<sup>159</sup> UN CND, *Strengthening international cooperation to assist the States most affected by the illicit transit of drugs, especially developing countries, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility*, 2017.

<sup>160</sup> UNODC, *About UNODC*, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> UNODC, *Our main civil society partners*, 2017.

<sup>162</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Consultative relationship with between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations* (E/RES/1996/31), 1996.

<sup>163</sup> UN WHO, *Management of Substance Abuse*, 2017.

<sup>164</sup> UN WHO, *Seventieth World Health Assembly opens in Geneva*, 2017.

<sup>165</sup> UNDP, *Addressing the Development Dimensions of Drug Policy*, 2015.

<sup>166</sup> UNDP, *UNDP Engagement with Civil Society*, 2017.

<sup>167</sup> VNGOC, *About Us*, 2016.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

count is around 250 organizations.<sup>169</sup> Membership provides NGOs with many benefits such as conveying a strong and unified message to UN bodies on behalf of all CSOs, sharing best practices, participating in UNODC projects, and co-hosting side events during CND.<sup>170</sup> Another groundbreaking organization is the New York Non-Governmental Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC), established in 1984.<sup>171</sup> Similar in scope and method to the VNGOC, but with a geographical focus on the Americas, the NYNGOC has also facilitated greater communication between the UN and CSOs and established regional consultations and task forces regarding drug policy.<sup>172</sup>

#### *Successes to Date*

The VNGOC and NYNGOC have aided international and intergovernmental agencies in the quest to address and eradicate the world drug problem.<sup>173</sup> “Beyond 2008” was an initiative that the VNGOC partnered with the UNODC on, which gave CSOs the ability to contribute to the review of the 1998 General Assembly Special Session on illicit drugs.<sup>174</sup> There was a high level of participation by NGOs with 444 completed responses during this experimental initiative.<sup>175</sup> NGOs who had little to no experience working with the UNODC felt that the process was an excellent way to learn how international policies affected their grassroots and more localized efforts.<sup>176</sup> This partnership acted as a useful learning tool moving forward in how to best engage civil society.<sup>177</sup> Building upon the successes of “Beyond 2008,” the VNGOC and the NYNGOC collaborated to create the Civil Society Task Force (CSTF) for UNGASS 2016.<sup>178</sup> This task force helped facilitate meaningful participation of CSOs during UNGASS, particularly giving voices to grassroots organizations.<sup>179</sup> The achievements of the CSTF were extensive and included more engagement between CSOs and UN organizations.<sup>180</sup> Member States received direct input from field workers on best practices to implement based on both regional and thematic consultations, and a global and unified voice of CSOs was presented in full at UNGASS 2016.<sup>181</sup> The CSTF’s Evaluation report ultimately highlighted that the integration of CSOs into policy and strategy discussions brought real people and their health back into focus.<sup>182</sup>

#### *Problems Identified and Next Steps*

“Beyond 2008” identified issue areas for CSOs and international and intergovernmental agencies to address.<sup>183</sup> One of the greatest problems was that NGOs were not sufficiently involved in developing strategies and that there was further room for consultation.<sup>184</sup> Others included an over-focus on supply at the expense of demand and a greater need to address the negative health and societal consequences of criminalization.<sup>185</sup> The CND needs to find new and innovative ways to incorporate CSOs into policy discussions and decisions in order to adequately address the issues above.<sup>186</sup> At the CND’s 55<sup>th</sup> Session in 2012 Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States recognized this need and specifically called for further CSO participation in CND sessions.<sup>187</sup> The UK, Germany, Finland, and New Zealand referenced existing models for CSO engagement, such as the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS Coordinating Board, and believe something similar should be implemented within the CND.<sup>188</sup> This board would include five permanent members of civil society (which would alternate to represent different regions of the world), and have consultative,

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<sup>169</sup> VNGOC, *About Us*, 2016.

<sup>170</sup> VNGOC, *Membership*, 2016.

<sup>171</sup> NYNGOC, *New York NGO Committee on Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> VNGOC, *About Us*, 2016; New York NGO Committee on Drugs, *New York NGO Committee on Drugs*, 2017.

<sup>174</sup> UNODC, *‘Beyond 2008’ Global Summary Report*, 2008.

<sup>175</sup> UNODC, *Independent Evaluation of Beyond 2008*, 2009, p. 17.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>178</sup> VNGOC, *About Us*, 2016.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> CSTF, *CSTF Achievements*, 2016.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> VNGOC, *Evaluation – Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS 2016*, 2016, p. 29.

<sup>183</sup> UNODC, *‘Beyond 2008’ Global Summary Report*, 2008.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> UNODC, *‘Beyond 2008’ Global Summary Report*, 2008, p. 19.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> UN CND, *Note by the Secretariat*, 2012.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

non-voting status.<sup>189</sup> CSO participants would be welcomed in dialogue, guaranteed a right to speak, and provide room to offer proposals.<sup>190</sup>

At the conclusion of UNGASS 2016, the CSTF highlighted several problems regarding CSO engagement.<sup>191</sup> These included: CSO's lack of funding; the opinion of more liberal policy-makers that prevention and early intervention are less successful methods of drug reduction; and the lack of representation for specific groups affected by narcotics abuse, such as the spouses and children of abusers.<sup>192</sup> Recommendations to enhance CSO engagement with UN bodies, like the CND, include having pre-meeting dialogue, additional updates, preparatory calls and debriefs, and increased involvement and time-allotment in panel discussions.<sup>193</sup> There is also the call for a greater focus on improving drug policies at the national level with the help of CSOs and the guidance of international bodies, such as the CND.<sup>194</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Since 1998 and the 20<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly, the global community has seen a significant increase in responses to the world drug problem through policy documents, such as the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action* of 2009, and the landmark meeting of UNGASS 2016.<sup>195</sup> Critical international and regional frameworks have been implemented as Member States recognize the far-reaching effects of drug trafficking abuse - notably in the areas of security and development - wherein many of the SDGs are threatened.<sup>196</sup> Civil society has been acknowledged as an invaluable actor by many UN bodies because they bring practical experience and knowledge to international policy-makers.<sup>197</sup> However, in the CND, more progress must be made in order to engage CSOs in active participation in drug policy decisions and their implementation at every level.<sup>198</sup>

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*This report covers the CND's 55th session, in which the commission discussed the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, specifically looking at demand reduction and related matters. The report includes summaries from 32 Member States in which they outline experiences working with civil society as a part of the UN system as well as working with CSOs at the national level. The summarized findings in this report are extremely useful to see the positive impact civil society is having in Member States' fight against the world drug problem as well as highlighting a contingency of Member States calling for civil society to have a more structured, participatory role in global drug policy decisions.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2017). *International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem (A/RES/71/211)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 11 April 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/211>

*This document is one of the most current resolutions adopted by the General Assembly addressing the world drug problem. The resolution acknowledges the steps made with the 2009 Political Declaration and Action Plan, UNGASS 2016 and General Assembly resolution S-30/1 and looks forward at what else Member States can do to proactively implement past recommendations and*

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> VNGOC, *Evaluation – Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS 2016*, 2016.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, p. iii.

<sup>196</sup> UNODC, *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, 2009.

<sup>197</sup> UNODC, *UNODC Engagement with Civil Society on Drug and Crime Prevention*, 2017.

<sup>198</sup> VNGOC, *Evaluation – Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS 2016*, 2016.



*future innovations. Focusing on the issue of narcotics and the collaborative efforts among Member States, UN organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society are two main focuses of this resolution. The resolution reveals necessary strategies that should be implemented moving forward as a global society against illicit drug trafficking and abuse.*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2009). *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem* [Report]. Retrieved 1 April 2017 from: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND\\_Sessions/CND\\_52/Political-Declaration2009\\_V0984963\\_E.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_52/Political-Declaration2009_V0984963_E.pdf)

*This report is the product of the CND's 52nd session. Member States and observers convened in order to track the progress made from a previous session held in 1998 focused on the fight to counter the world drug problem. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Toward an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem was adopted by Member States as a renewed and innovative plan to address the international use of illegal narcotics. Specifically the declaration highlights the critical role civil society, non-governmental organizations in particular, plays in these efforts. It also acknowledges that under certain circumstances civil society can and should take a more active role in implementation efforts aimed at reducing the physical supply and demand of narcotics. The report also lays out three action steps for Member States to implement: demand reduction, supply reduction, and promoting judicial cooperation.*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2017). *UNGASS 2016: Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem* [Website]. Retrieved 2 April 2017 from: <http://www.unodc.org/ungass2016/en/index.html>

*The thirtieth special session of the UN General Assembly specifically addressed the world drug problem – a momentous occasion revealing the international community's commitment to a drug-free and healthy global society. The session took a comprehensive look at the steps taken toward achieving the goals laid out in the Political Declaration and Action Plan of 2009. Member States also discussed further actions needed as the 2019 deadline of the Action Plan approaches. The session highlighted the importance of viewing the world drug problem as an issue affecting the core health and wellness of humans today – putting the issue in the context of SDG 3. This website covers how this session came to fruition, the resolution that came from it, different roles Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and others played in the three-day gathering and more. Understanding the importance of this session and its outcomes is critical for delegates researching this topic as it will reveal to them both recent successes in this area while also elucidating on what more needs to be done to engage civil society in the world drug problem. .*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2017). *UNODC Engagement with Civil Society on Drug and Crime Prevention* [Website]. Retrieved 10 April 2017 from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos/DCN0-NGOs-and-civil-society.html>

*This webpage provides access to a large variety of articles, events, reports, and other information regarding the UNODC's commitment to working with civil society to combat the world drug problem. The page initially defines what types of civil society organizations are joining the fight against narcotics abuse and the page continues to highlight and describe what it means to engage and partner with civil society in addressing these issues. In addition, it provides various resources specifically for non-governmental organizations and civil society members looking to become involved.*

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