



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20 January 2016

Excellency,

In accordance with resolutions 67/193, 69/200 and 70/181, a Special Session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS) will be held from 19 to 21 April 2016.

In this regard, I intend to hold an Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation in support of the preparatory process for the UNGASS on 10 February, 2016 and I have the honour to invite your delegation to participate in this meeting.

The Consultation will provide all relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing preparatory process through interactive panel discussions that will include Member States, as well as representatives from civil society, non-governmental organizations, the academic and scientific community, youth groups and others. A copy of the Concept Note and Provisional Programme is attached for your information.

Also, as indicated in my letter of 11 December, 2015, the annual Inter-Parliamentary Union Hearing will take place at UN Headquarters on 8 and 9 February, 2016 with a focus on the theme of "The world drug problem: Taking stock and strengthening the global response." The updated Programme for that Hearing is also attached and additional information may be obtained from the Office of the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations at ny-office@ipu.org.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations,
New York

Concept Note

Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation in support of the preparatory process towards UNGASS 2016

10 February 2016

**Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Background

In accordance with Resolution 67/193, a Special Session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS) will be convened from 19 to 21 April, 2016 to review the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, tasked by the UN General Assembly to lead the preparatory process (resolution 69/200), is working closely with the Office of the President of the General Assembly to ensure an effective and coordinated approach leading to the UNGASS.

In order to support the inclusive, active and substantive engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the process, the President of the UN General Assembly will convene an informal interactive consultation on 10 February, 2016.

Objective

The consultation will provide all relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing preparatory process in a day of interactive panel discussions that will include Member States, as well as representatives from civil society, non-governmental organizations, the academic and scientific community and others. The consultation will focus on taking stock of the various aspects of drug policy and practice and participants will be encouraged to exchange views on key priorities for UNGASS, while underscoring best practices on the ground, and highlighting the special challenges faced by civil society organizations and other stakeholders working in the field.

The consultation will support Member States in the preparatory process for UNGASS, including in the negotiations of the outcome document, as well as in their preparations for the interactive multi-stakeholder round tables, by encouraging civil society to share practical experiences from their work on the ground.

Guiding questions for the consultation

1. What are the main challenges that exist for implementing a health approach to drugs?
2. Given the recent call for a health approach in drug policy, how should a health focus address the needs of the society as a whole, including the marginalized groups and communities, taking into account age and gender perspectives?
3. Acknowledging the links between the illicit drug trade, crime, and development policy, what synergies could be created between relevant stakeholders and Member States addressing alternative development, including within the framework of the SDG's?
4. How can Member States and other relevant stakeholders respond effectively to current and emerging threats to health, including hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, untreated pain, and new psychoactive substances (NPS)?
5. How should civil society best support Member States to envision and implement inclusive, people-centred and evidence based drug policies, and equal access to justice?

Format

The one-day consultation will be divided into an opening segment, two interactive roundtables and a closing segment. The provisional themes for the two panel discussions are: i) Drugs and Health: Perspectives from the experts at the grassroots level; and ii) Drugs, Human Rights, Community and Development: Creating synergies between Member States and civil society to empower communities.

Outcome

The outcome will be a President's summary which will be circulated to all Member States and other stakeholders.

**Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation
Trusteeship Council Chamber**

United Nations Headquarters, New York

10 February 2016

Provisional Programme

Morning Session 11:00-11:30	<u>Opening Segment</u> H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General of the United Nations (TBC) H.E. Mr. Khaled Shamaa, Chair of the Board, Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (TBC) Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, UNODC (TBC) Ms. Asia Ashraf, Director, Rehabilitation and Head, Psychology Department, Sunny Trust International Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, Islamabad
11:30-13:00	<u>Roundtable 1. Drugs and Health: Perspectives from the experts at the grassroots level</u> Moderator: Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (TBC) <u>Stakeholder Panellists</u> (3 minutes each) Ms. Rose Kiwanuka, Palliative Care Association of Uganda (TBC) Ms. Ma. Inez Feria, NoBox Transitions Foundation, Inc. Philippines (TBC) Mr. Zoran Jelić, Udruga Stijena, Croatia Mr. Shakya Nanayakkara, Foundation for Innovative Social Development / Healthy Lanka Alliance for Development, Nepal Mr. Julian Andres Quitero Lopez, Cooperación Acción Técnica Social, Colombia Interactive Q and A

<p>Afternoon Session</p> <p>15:00 -17:45</p>	<p><u>Roundtable 2. Drugs, Human Rights, Community and Development: Creating synergies between Member States and civil society to empower communities</u></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (TBC)</p> <p><u>Stakeholder Panellists</u> (3 minutes each)</p> <p>Mr. Toure Lamine, SOPI JIKKO, Senegal Mr. Cesar Jerez, Zonas de Reservas Campesina ANZORC, Colombia (TBC) Mr. George Ochieng Odalo, Slum Child Foundation, Kenya Ms. Daria Mogucheva, Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs, Lithuania Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar, Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Center, Nepal Ms. Tripti Tandon, Lawyers Collective, India (TBC) Ms. Maria de los Angeles Lobos, Dianova, Chile (TBC) Ms. Vicki Hanson, St. Catherine Ganja Growers & Producers Association, Jamaica</p> <p>Interactive Q and A</p>
<p>17:45-18:00</p>	<p><u>Closing Segment</u></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly</p>



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

The world drug problem: Taking stock and strengthening the global response



Annual Parliamentary Hearing
United Nations Headquarters
Trusteeship Council Chamber, Secretariat Building
8-9 February 2016

Provisional Programme

Session I		Feb 8	9.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Official opening			9.30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
<i>Welcome remarks from the leadership: UN and IPU</i>	H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly		
	H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations		
	Hon. Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union		
	H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime		
The world drug problem in perspective: The evolution of drugs control			10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
<p>Background:</p> <p><i>Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (United Nations General Assembly, 2009)</i></p> <p><i>International Cooperation against the world drug problem (Resolution 69/201 of the General Assembly adopted on 18 December 2014)</i></p>	While drugs and drug addiction go back centuries, if not millennia, it is only in the last 50 years or so that the international community has developed a concerted approach to tackle the health, social, and economic costs of drug production, transaction and consumption.		
	Three United Nations Conventions on drugs have been adopted that place under international control narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The primary goal of the international drug control system is “the protection of the health and welfare of humankind.”		
	In international agreements such as the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (2009), Member States have further elaborated this international drug control system and recognized that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that requires effective and increased international cooperation and a balanced approach to supply and demand reduction strategies.		
	This session will review the world drug problem from its origins to today, as well as the rationale and scope of the international legal framework set up to counter this problem.		
	<p>Keynote: <i>Purpose of the UNGASS 2016 and update on preparations</i> Ambassador Khaled Shamaa, Chair UNGASS Board, UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs</p>		
	<i>Leading questions</i>		
	What is the rationale behind the approach of the three drug conventions? How did governments treat drugs before the current international system?		
How can the prime concern of the international drug control conventions, the health and welfare of humankind, best be addressed?			

	What obligations do the conventions and other international instruments place on states and what flexibilities do States have in implementing them?
	How do the conventions distinguish between production, trafficking and use?
Lunch break	1 p.m. to 2.45 p.m.

Session II	Feb 8	3 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.	
The global response to drugs: Can it work more effectively?			
<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>World Drug Report 2015 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna)</i></p>	<p>The world drug problem undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions. Notwithstanding the ever-increasing efforts and progress made by States, relevant international organizations and civil society, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity.</p> <p>In some instances, the drug problem has had a number of consequences, including the creation of black markets, a reorientation of investments away from public health and toward law enforcement, displacement of drug production and trade to other countries, and marginalization of drug users.</p> <p>The United Nations Conventions on drugs, corruption and transnational organized crime provide the tools to combat drug trafficking and money laundering, while promoting international cooperation in criminal matters. Efforts are being made at the international, regional and national level to prevent drug-related crime, drug-related violence, and manufacture, supply and trafficking of drugs, consistent with international human rights norms, and also to integrate measures with law enforcement efforts. Alternatives to criminal sanctions for possession of illicit drugs for personal consumption are being discussed.</p> <p>This session will discuss the various responses to the world drug problem and evaluate what has worked and what has not.</p>		
	<i>Leading questions</i>		
	How can efforts be strengthened to prevent drug-related crime and violence?		
	What are the elements of a balanced approach to drugs control and how can this balance be reached?		
	What approaches to demand and supply reduction have been tried and to what effect? Are there best practices?		
	What can be done to increase efforts on treatment for drug addiction?		
	How are drug trafficking, corruption and organized crime connected and how can those networks be disrupted?		
	How can countries cooperate to address this problem more effectively?		
	Reception for MPs and Ambassadors		5.45 p.m. – 7.30 p.m.
	IPU Office, Uganda House, 336 East 45th Street (10th floor)		

Session III	Feb 9	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Drug prevention and treatment from the standpoint of sustainable development and human rights: What is required?		
<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development</i></p>	<p>In adopting new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a people-centred agenda for sustainable development in September 2015, governments reaffirmed their commitments to “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination.”</p>	

<p>(UN Summit Declaration, September 2015)</p> <p><i>Study on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights</i> (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, September 2015)</p>	<p>While several SDGs are important to this debate, a specific target under Goal 3 on health and well-being commits governments “to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.”</p> <p>A recent report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights argues for the rights of drug users to treatment and non-discrimination. According to this report, the criminalization of drugs keeps users away from the health care system and makes them prone to discrimination and stigmatization. Indigenous peoples who consume drugs as part of their traditional lifestyle are particularly vulnerable. The imposition of the death penalty for drug-related offences is contrary to the international human rights framework.</p> <p>The international community has recognized the need to reduce the vulnerability of local communities to the illicit drugs economy by promoting alternative livelihoods. Particular attention should be paid to agricultural communities and the special vulnerabilities of women, youth and indigenous peoples.</p> <p>This session will look at the way in which human rights and development considerations may inform the response to the world drugs problem in countries around the world.</p> <p><i>Leading questions</i></p> <p>The Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a new people-centered framework for development predicated on the affirmation of fundamental human rights. What are the links between drug policy and the Goals?</p> <p>How can the rule of law, justice and the promotion and protection of all human rights, and public health best be addressed in the implementation of drug policies?</p> <p>What does a “human rights approach to the drug problem” require?</p>
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Session IV	Feb 9	2.45 p.m. – 5.45 p.m.
Parliamentary motions		2.45 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.
<p>This wrap-up segment will be in the format of the Doha Debates popularized by the BBC.</p> <p>Assisted by a moderator, two debaters will argue for a “motion” and two debaters will argue against it. Each debater will have up to three minutes to present his/her argument. This will be followed by direct questions from participants until closing arguments and a final Yes or No vote on the motion by a simple show of hands.</p> <p>Two motions will be considered for about 70 minutes each. Given the informal nature of the hearing, the motions will not be binding. Their main purpose is to help flesh out the various aspects of the matter with the contribution of as many participants as possible.</p> <p>First motion:</p> <p><i>Implementing the international legal framework will address the world drug problem.</i></p>		

	<p>Second motion:</p> <p><i>States should seek alternatives to incarceration when addressing possession of drugs for personal use.</i></p> <p>The discussion around these motions and the outcome of the votes will provide a sense of the politics of the drug issue within the world's parliamentary community.</p>
Closing session: the way forward	5.30 p.m. – 5.45 p.m.
<p><i>An evaluation form will be distributed during this session. Participants will be invited to fill out the form and leave it on their desk for IPU staff to collect.</i></p>	<p>This session will present some of the preliminary conclusions of the meeting which will be further elaborated in its final report.</p> <p>Speakers</p> <p>IPU Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong President of the General Assembly</p>