

Recommendations on the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting

A position statement by the Civil Society Forum on Drugs

November 2017

Introduction:

The EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD) is a broad platform for a structured dialogue between the European Commission and the European civil society which supports drug policy formulation and implementation through practical advice. For the period 2015-2017, the CSF is composed of 43 NGOs, networks, civil society organisations and grass-roots service providers from across Europe, representing a diversity of views on drug policy.

UN member states are currently deciding on the modalities and outcomes of the High Level Ministerial Segment to be held at the margins of the 62nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in March 2019. The CSFD welcomes the EU position on the 2019 process, which was delivered at the CND intersessional meeting on 17th November 2017.¹ Ahead of the joint CSFD/HDG meeting planned for 29th November 2017 in Brussels, the CSFD wishes to share our proposal and recommendations for 2019.

1. **Evaluate the 2009 goals and targets:** The CSFD calls for an evaluation of the goals and targets of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the world drug problem. Indeed, although we believe that the discussions should be focusing on the future of global drug control, an honest evaluation of progress made, ongoing challenges and the positive and negative social, health and human rights impacts of the current strategy are essential components to informing the strategy for the next decade. This evaluation is also fundamental to ensure that the goals set out for the next decade are relevant, realistic and reflect today's reality. We propose that the process for this evaluation be decided at the 61st Session of the CND in March 2018. The evaluation should result in a set of recommendations to be presented at the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting. These recommendations should not be adopted by consensus, but rather reflect the breadth of ideas and options for the future.
2. **Operationalise the UNGASS Outcome Document:** As many member states – and the EU – concluded at the 17th November CND intersessional, it is also the view of the CSFD that there is no need to negotiate a new Political Declaration. The UNGASS Outcome Document was adopted a year ago and constitutes a solid basis for discussions going forward. It should be noted that the Outcome Document still falls short on many points, where it fails to truly reflect the reality on the ground experienced by civil society organisations working with the most affected communities. However, it is the latest and most comprehensive and balanced document on global drug control, focusing on both demand and supply, but also giving prominence to many cross-cutting issues, such as human rights, public health, social inclusion, gender sensitivity and development.
3. **Integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The SDGs are mentioned several times in the UNGASS Outcome Document and the CND – as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council – has a mandate to report back on progress made towards the

¹ Available here: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016//follow-up/Special Events/6th Intersessional CND 2017/Chapter VI/EU Statement 17 Nov.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016//follow-up/Special%20Events/6th%20Intersessional%20CND%202017/Chapter%20VI/EU%20Statement%2017%20Nov.pdf)

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This should be duly reflected in the global drug control strategy for 2019 and beyond. The CSFD calls for the full integration of global drug control within the framework of the SDGs, and the elaboration of new metrics and indicators to measure progress in drug control which are in line with the SDGs.

4. **Ensure the participation of all relevant UN agencies:** To ensure systemwide coherence within the UN system, the CSFD calls for the systematic and meaningful participation of all relevant UN agencies in the 2019 process.² These UN agencies should be given the space and opportunity to send in contributions and to participate in the debates and roundtables in the lead up to and at the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting.
5. **Ensure the participation of civil society:** Civil society organisations are critical partners in the design and implementation of drug policies, having access to those most affected on the ground, and having a broad range of experience and expertise in many aspects of global drug control. Civil society should therefore be meaningfully engaged in the 2019 process. We particularly value the proposal, by the CND Chair, of a civil society hearing to be held one day prior to the High Level Ministerial Meeting.

The EU has a clear role to play in ensuring that the voice of civil society is included in decision making processes on global drug control, and the principle of civil society participation is incorporated in the EU Drug Strategy for 2013-2020 and the Action Plan for 2017-2020. We therefore call on the EU to:

- a) Continue to promote civil society participation at the UN in all relevant EU statements
- b) Support the meaningful participation of civil society in preparations for, and at the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting, including:
 - The organisation of a civil society hearing the day before the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting
 - The inclusion of civil society speakers in the panels of roundtables and plenary sessions of the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting, as well as the option for a number of civil society speakers to make interventions from the floor
 - The preparation of a civil society document (either via the VNGOC/NYNGOC or through a revived Civil Society Task Force) to be presented, and recognised, as an official document for the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting
- c) Ensure better engagement of the CSFD in the work of the EU, and of HDG in particular:

²The CSFD considers that the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, UN Women, the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS and UNICEF are instrumental in this process. However, this should not be interpreted as excluding the many other UN agencies which play a vital and relevant role and can contribute to the global drug policy debate. The focus should be on ensuring broad participation from UN agencies, as part of an inclusive process

- Share key information, milestones and deadlines with the CSFD to ensure we can feed more meaningfully on the EU positions around 2019
- Invite the CSFD regularly to HDG meetings where the EU position around 2019 will be discussed (at least once a year), and continue the good practice of holding a joint CSFD/HDG meeting at the annual CSFD meeting
- Integrate, whenever possible, the CSFD recommendations in the positions statements of the EU on 2019
- In line with Action 41. of the EU Action Plan on Drugs, involve civil society to create a ‘tailored human rights guidance and impact assessment tool’
- Work together with the CSFD to share the EU position and recommendations on 2019 with the CSFD members’ own government contacts in Vienna and in capitals.

6. **The format the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting:** The CSFD proposes that the 2019 High Level Ministerial meeting includes:

- a) An opening segment with high-level speakers from governments and relevant UN agencies
- b) An introductory session focusing on the evaluation of the 2009 targets: this would include discussing progress made and remaining challenges towards the eradication of the illicit drug market, but also an evaluation of the positive and negative consequences on human rights, public health, development, security, etc. that have resulted from this overarching goal. This discussion should be kicked off by a presentation of the independent evaluation, followed by interventions from the floor by government delegates, UN agencies and civil society representatives.
- c) Roundtable discussions on each of the seven thematic chapters of the UNGASS Outcome Document, with a focus on how to operationalize the recommendations of the Document. Each of the 7 thematic roundtables should start with a panel with representatives from each of the five regional groups, representatives from relevant UN agencies, and a civil society representative, followed by interventions from the floor.³

7. **The outcome of the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting:** The CSFD believes that the UNGASS Outcome Document is the most recent global consensus which constitutes a solid basis for discussions, and should therefore be the focus of the 2019 High Level Ministerial Meeting. As such, we do not believe that the negotiation of a new Political Declaration is necessary, and we are against proposals to extend the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, or the targets agreed in 2009. As such, the result of the 2019 meeting should be two-fold:

- a) Firstly, a ***detailed report of proceedings*** that reflects the discussions and recommendations proposed during the meeting, without seeking to achieve a consensus. This document would aim to record the discussions.

³ This suggested format is based on the good practice of the post-UNGASS discussions at the CND intersessional meetings led by the Post-UNGASS Facilitator over the past couple of years.

- b) Secondly, a **roadmap for 2019 to 2030**– in the form of a CND Resolution or Joint Ministerial Statement – to operationalise the UNGASS Outcome Document. This should include clear actions, the key stakeholders responsible for them, the establishment of new metrics and indicators aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (and incorporated in the revised Annual Reports Questionnaire), as well as defined timelines and monitoring mechanisms for a mid-term and final review of progress made.