

Human Rights Council – 33rd Regular Session

Item 8 - General Debate

Joint Oral Statement by Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Conectas Human Rights, and Corporación Humanas

Delivered by Mr. Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes

Mr. President,

This Council has debated throughout last year the effects of drug policies on human rights, which led to a resolution contributing to the UNGASS on Drug Policies, this year in New York, by requesting a landmark report from the High Commissioner and a Panel that gathered diverse views.

Distinguished Delegates,

Violence against women and disproportionate gender impact form the noxious of the noxious effects of the failed “war on drugs”. Besides these several effects highlighted by the High Commissioner’s¹ report, like high incarceration rates, this is especially serious when considering that most women who live in poverty have been subjected to physical, sexual and psychological violence through their lives. Most of them are involved in non-violent crimes, with small amounts of drugs and have no real responsibility within the criminal organization. This phenomenon has led to the label of feminization of drug trafficking, which is in turn, related to the feminization of poverty.

The impact of imprisonment of mothers and caregivers, in particular, can be devastating, not only for them, but also for their families and communities.

We call upon this Council to pay closer attention to the detrimental and disproportionate human rights impacts women sustain by the carrying out of the mistaken and failed drug policies worldwide. We also expect the involvement of several special procedures, treaty-bodies and other stakeholders. Human Rights and Women organizations will join efforts to hold a side event on this topic during the next sessions of CEDAW, we hope to continue working together there.

The High Commissioner and Council’s efforts to make visible specific and disproportionate violations against women in this context represent an important step to be further pursued by the international community. It represents as well the contribution of the HR mechanisms to the full implementation of the UNGASS outcome document.

Thank you.

¹ OHCHR: “Study on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights”, UN Doc, paras. 52-54.