



Women, drugs and the UN: Advocacy efforts and key resources

Marie Nougier, IDPC September 2017



Objectives

- Raise awareness of the severe impacts of repressive drug laws on women and prisons
- Provide a space for women to engage in drug policy debates
- Identify country leaders willing to bring the issue to the UN
- Identify/share practical recommendations on gendersensitive policy reforms







The Commission on Narcotic Drugs

- Key moment for advocacy during the UNGASS process
- Debate moved forward by key member states: Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Norway
- CND Resolution 59/5: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective in drug-related policies and programmes", 2016
- Side event a year later on the implementation of Resolution 59/5



The UNGASS on drugs



- Roundtable focused on human rights, women, children and youth
- 26 member states
 explicitly mentioning the
 need for gender-sensitive
 policies and programmes
 (a first!)
- But... the 'ticking the box' syndrome



The UNGASS Outcome Document

- Para 4.b: non-discriminatory access to health care and social services in the community and in prisons
- Para 4.d: identify and address the factors and conditions that make women vulnerable to exploitation and participation in drug trafficking
- Para 4.g: ensuring the involvement of women in all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug policies and programmes
- Para 4.n: the needs of women in prison



How to capitalise on progress made in the UNGASS **Outcome Document**

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Introduction

As the first forum of its kind since 1998, the impacts of the current regime.8 And secondly, United Nations General Assembly Special Session although the Outcome Document fell short of (UNGASS) on drugs3 was highly anticipated and expectations, it does signal an unprecedented there was a clear sense of urgency from reform- shift towards ensuring public health, development minded stakeholders. However, hopes for a major and human rights concerns are not peripheral, breakthrough seemed all but lost as the UNGASS but central to drug policy. The new seven-themed Outcome Document⁴ was approved, by consensus, structure⁹ of the Outcome Document has largely at the opening session of the Special Session.

been criticised for its opaque preparatory process and diluted outcomes. The 26-page-long Outcome concise and action-oriented document's it had fleshed out,10 this guide highlights some of the Geneva and New York since the UNGASS was governments, UN agencies and other relevant first called for in 2012.6 It has also been strongly stakeholders in their ongoing efforts to promote criticised for its failure to explicitly acknowledge drug policy reform. As such, the guide does the devastating consequences of an overly not seek to provide a thorough analysis of the punitive approach to drug control, its continued Outcome Document, but rather draws out some promotion of a world 'free of drug abuse', and the of the most progressive language included in fact that most progressive paragraphs are heavily the text, and explains how to use it for advocacy caveated with wording such as 'as appropriate' purposes. and 'in accordance with national legislation', among many other issues

contributed to this shift, departing from the traditional three-pillar structure which narrowly focused on demand reduction, supply reduction

As the implications of the UNGASS continue to be promised to be, and inadequately reflects the key paragraphs within the Outcome Document, wide-ranging debate that took place in Vienna, and explores how these could help civil society,

> We have split this guide into four key thematic areas to enable advocates to focus on those that



The CCPCJ

- Experts on criminal justice and prisons issues they get it!
- Side events on gender and drug policy
- Resolution 26/3, 2017: Mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime
 - Para 3: "contributions" from women on the development of drug policies
 - Para 13: prefer alternatives to incarceration, with custodial sentences only used when the offence is serious or violent



International Drug Policy Consortium

A global network promoting objective and open debate on drug policy

Women who inject drugs and HIV: Addressing specific needs









POLICY BRIEF

Women who inject drugs and HIV: Addressing specific needs



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Issue summary: the vulnerabilities of women who inject drugs

Throughout the world, people who inject drugs (PWID) are all too familiar with stigmatization, vulnerability, marginalization and high risk for HIV. The situation is even worse for women who inject drugs (WID), who are often ignored and invisible within the larger drug-using population. National and international research, services, guidelines, training programmes and surveillance concerning people who inject drugs remain overwhelmingly gender-neutral or male-focused. Partly as a result, limited data exist on the role women play among those who inject drugs, and their specific challenges and needs are rarely recognized or understood.

The health and human rights impacts of such invisibility can be very harmful. Women who inject drugs face a range of gender-specific

- 1. Needle and syringe programmes (NSPs)
- Opioid substitution therapy (OST) and other evidence-based drug dependence treatment
- 3. HIV testing and counselling (HTC)
- 4. Antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- Prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Condom programmes for people who inject drugs and their sexual partners
- Targeted information, education and communication (IEC) for people who inject drugs and their sexual partners
- Prevention, vaccination, diagnosis and treatment for viral hepatitis
- Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis (TB)

To date, inadequate attention has been given to rectifying gender inequalities in harm reduction programming. Strategies and poli-

- UNODC document published in 2014
- Drafted in collaboration with UN Women, WHO, but most importantly INPUD

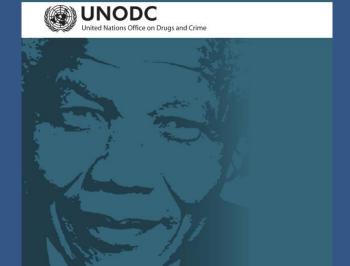








United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders with their Commentary



The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

(the Nelson Mandela Rules)









Reaching out to UN human rights bodies

- CEDAW (Committee on the Prevention of Discriminations Against Women)
- OHCHR Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice
- Drug policy is a low priority, few resources, but interest in the links between drug trafficking, exploitation, violence, incarceration...



Key reports from UN human rights bodies

- Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences: Pathways to, conditions and consequences of incarceration for women (2013)
 - Link between domestic violence and involvement in crime, links between incarceration and drug offences (paras 10-11)
 - Lack of access to adequate treatment for women in prison (para 49)
- Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (2016)
 - Use of prison/sanctions against pregnant women to prevent harm to the foetus is a manifestation of gender discrimination (para 39)



UN women?

- Little work done on drugs and women, in New York or in country
- But... UNGASS contribution: "A gender perspective on the impact of drug use, the drug trade and drug control regimes"
- Interest in engaging in the post-UNGASS debates in Vienna



The Sustainable Development Goals

- Target 5.1: ending discrimination against women
- Target 5.2: ending violence against women
- Target 5.5: active participation and equal opportunities for leadership in decision-making
- Target 5.6: access to sexual and reproductive health
- Target 5.A: equal rights for women to economic resources, access to land and property
- Target 5.C: sound policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls







The 2019 process

- 2009 Political Declaration on drugs expires
- Future of drug policy for the next decade opportunity for progress, but also negotiations fatigue…
- Build on the 'successes' of the UNGASS
- Better incorporate the SDGs and other key UN priorities (security, human rights, gender sensitivity) in global drug policy => better coherence within the UN system