

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

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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 gender-sensitive 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

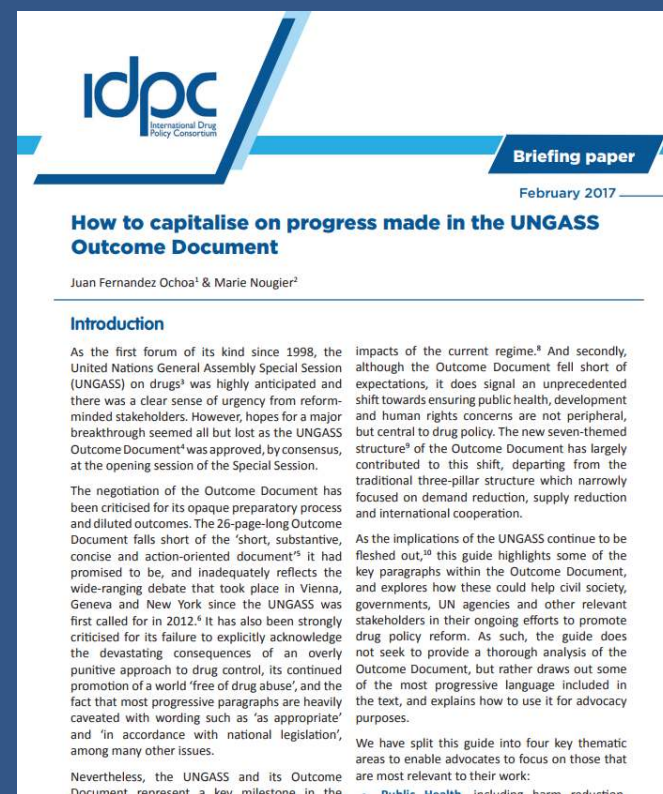
The UNGASS on drugs



- 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



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

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)
2. Opioid substitution therapy (OST) and other evidence-based drug dependence treatment
3. HIV testing and counselling (HTC)
4. Antiretroviral therapy (ART)
5. Prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
6. Condom programmes for people who inject drugs and their sexual partners
7. Targeted information, education and communication (IEC) for people who inject drugs and their sexual partners
8. Prevention, vaccination, diagnosis and treatment for viral hepatitis
9. 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

THE BANGKOK RULES



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)



INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD



Report

2016

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