

**Human Rights Council 36<sup>th</sup> Regular Session**  
**Item 8 – General Debate**

Joint Statement by  
**Corporación Humanas – Chile**  
**Corporación Humanas - Colombia**  
**Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales – CELS**  
**Washington Office on Latin America - WOLA**

Delivered by Mr. Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes

Mr. President,

The so-called “war on drugs” has generated public health crises and mass incarceration with negative consequences related to prison overcrowding, corruption and illegal markets regulated through cartels and criminal organizations, whose main tool is violence. In this context, structural discrimination and violence against women is heightened. Cartels use women as the last link in the distribution line of drug sales, as “mules” and as sellers of small amounts of drugs. As in any war or armed conflict, women suffer disproportionately from the impact of the violence generated by the drug trade.

Women all over the world are being incarcerated for low-level drug offences at an alarming rate. In some countries in Latin America, 60% to 80% of the female prison population is incarcerated for drug related crimes. Most of them are involved in non-violent crimes, with small amounts of drugs and with no real involvement within a criminal organization. This phenomenon has led to the feminization of drug trafficking, which is in turn, related to the feminization of poverty.

We call on this Council to hold a debate on promoting gender-sensitive drug policies as part of its contributions to upcoming the High Level Meeting in Vienna.

Thank you.