

IOGT International Official Statement

Commission on Narcotic Drugs 2018

16.03.18

Dear Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and privilege to address you today.

In light of the UNGASS outcome document and target 3.5 under the Sustainable Development Goals, allow me please to highlight three key actions, that IOGT International urges governments to adopt in the lead up to 2019 and eventually 2030.

Your commitment to a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing all aspects of the world drug problem is imperative.

The level and severity of social, economic and health harm, including loss of productivity, disease and accidents, as well as political and security threats correspond to the level of availability of illicit drugs in any given society. Clearly, drug use is neither exclusively a public health problem nor is it simply a criminal justice problem. Illicit drugs adversely affect at least 12 areas of the SDGs. Therefore, all affected sectors need to play a role in addressing the world drug problem.

In this context we encourage governments to adopt seven key actions, three of which I'd like to elaborate on briefly:

1) Make use of the full potential of the conventions

The current international drug control treaties establish an international framework to tackle drug-related harm by reducing both supply and demand. Obviously, more can and must be done to address the world drug problem and to reduce any unintended consequences of the current regulatory regime.

The conventions themselves provide ample space and hold considerable potential. The approach adopted by the Conventions is health-centered. The Conventions repeatedly call for social cohesion and the reintegration of drug users, and do not treat drug users and people with drug use disorders as criminals to be marginalized. One of the primary aims of the Conventions is to guarantee the availability of essential

drugs for medical interventions, as “indispensable” tools for the treatment of a variety of medical conditions, while preventing use that is not for medical or scientific purposes.

2) Implement public health oriented, population level measures

Clearly, drug use is not only a health issue that affects the individual user; it is a public health issue. The overall health benefits of population-based approaches far exceed those that are available only from clinical interventions on individual level.

Therefore governments should implement an evidence-based approach that highlights public health-oriented policies serving both to define and understand structural causes of drug use within a society and helping to determine interventions that can prevent and reduce drug-related harm at population as well as individual level.

3) In the era of SDGs, pivot to prevention and health promotion

Preventing problems from occurring or expanding represents by far the best and humane approach to reducing drug-related harm – especially in the era of sustainable development.

A pivot to evidence-based prevention and health promotion benefits governments with regard to cost-effectiveness as well as sustainability of interventions and outcomes. It also helps to empower people and communities and promotes Human Rights, contributing significantly to positive engagement of children, youth and adults with their families, schools, workplaces and communities.

Madame Chair, when our organization started more than 165 years ago, our members worked from the conviction that equal voting rights for women can be achieved, that all human beings are equal, and that a world of peace among nations is possible. Today, we commit to the 2030 Agenda in the same spirit, because we are convinced that a world free from poverty, gender-based violence and violence against children is possible. Likewise, we stand firm in supporting goals of drug free communities and society. A world where every human being is empowered and enabled to live up to their fullest potential is possible.



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In IOGT, we are aware that these are tall tasks. But we are undaunted because growing scientific evidence shows the potential of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the world drug problem in helping us achieve our common goals.

I thank you for your attention.

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