

The honourable Madame Chair

Distinguished Member States,
And dear friends and colleagues,

At present, NGOs' work in drug policy field remains left behind - at the periphery of decision making forum - that would ensure the voice of people who use drugs are heard, accomodated and reflected by policies at all levels.

The 2016 Outcome Document includes civil society organization on several points, but none that would certify the involvement of civil society in decision making process including guiding the development and implementation of policies policies that affect the community of people who use drugs both globally and at national level. This has been the common situation not only at Global but also at national levels and it needs to be rectified.

The process for a review of drug control should be based on transparent, evidence-based, inclusive and people-centered approaches to reflect progress - or lack thereof, to reflect the ongoing use of targets focusing on eliminating drug markets and the establishment of a society free of drugs, with much honesty and genuineness and consideration on public health based approaches along with established scientific basis.

It is clear that drug policies at the moment are not compatible with the public health crisis that is threatening the world such as HIV/AIDS and other co-morbidities such as Hepatitis C and TB. CSOs/NGOs with their plethora of experiences, understanding first hand the current and continuously shifting and changing drug situation and appropriate response to which people who use drugs are in the best position to provide guidance for drug policy development at global and national levels.

Yet, statements in each point are implying that CSOs and NGOs have not the capacity and ability to contribute in deciding the direction of drug policies.

The expection is to see CSOs and NGOs roles in decision making forum at global and national levels, with equal standing as other members from government and other relevant bodies. To see that communities have their voices represented, heard and followed up to save more lives than it is currently taking place.

I believe, the most appropriate and immediate affair is for the UN to facilitate discussion concerning CSOs and NGOs participating mechanism at all decision making forum. Participation should be meaningful and not mere as tokenism, with equal vote as any members of the forum.

One of the most important things is the development of Multilateral Agreement which asks the country members to ratificate such mechanisms in country and to remove the legal barriers that limit community-led responses.

In a country like where I come from, Indonesia, where war on drugs approach used as law enforcement, repression against people who use drugs, imprisonment and mandatory detention, have continuously put people away from getting access to life-saving services, including what is evident such as harm reduction. In fact, we have seen, in recent years, significant reduction and closure of harm reduction programs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Carribean.

This situation can only get worse as many donors are transitioning out and many countries are moving towards domestic funding scheme. With the current level of political willingness, and the continuous shrinking space of civil society, I believe we will come back in ten years time and talking of the same issue.

I urge the UN, through its agencies, and Member States to put people before politics. Putting faces on the numbers, recognising the importance of differentiated and people-centered approach, recognising the importance of civil society roles in decision making, and allowing evidence-based programming to take place.

Thank you, Madame Chair