

Memorandum of Understanding Between VNGOC and NYNGOC

To Jointly Manage the Affairs of the Civil Society Task Force

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a strategic partnership between the VNGOC and the NYNGOC.

I. MISSION

The Vienna Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) is composed of members representing international, national and local NGOs and represents a key mechanism for NGOs to substantively contribute to global drug policy.

Established in 1983, the VNGOC works with UN organisations to provide information on NGO activities, draw attention to areas of concern, build partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organisations and to involve a wide sector of civil society in contributing to the development of global drug policies. The VNGOC was awarded special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2015.

Established in 1984, the New York NGO Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC) provides a platform for discussion of drugs and drug-related subjects and interfaces with the United Nations (UN) to collaborate on solutions to global drug issues. It is a global committee that aims to support civil society organizations in engaging with the UN system on international drug policy and practice, facilitating the exchange of information between civil society organizations and UN agencies, member states, and other relevant UN bodies.

The VNGOC and NYNGOC provide a vital link between NGOs and the key intergovernmental and international agencies involved in drug policy, strategy and control: the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other UN bodies in Vienna, New York and Geneva.

Together with the NYNGOC and the UNODC Civil Society Team, VNGOC led the “Beyond 2008” process. The activities entailed a global process, which included over 900 NGOs from 115 countries, 13 regional consultation meetings and culminated in a three-day summit in Vienna, where 300 representative NGOs adopted a consensus declaration and three resolutions. Some of these recommendations have been included in the 2009 Political Declaration and its Plan of Action, which, together with the international drug control conventions, currently guides the international drug policy debate.

Building on the success of the Beyond 2008 initiative and after reviewing best practices of civil society involvement in other recent high-level United Nations General Assembly meetings, the [VNGOC](#) and the [NYNGOC](#) collaborated on setting up the Civil Society Task

Force (CSTF) for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the world drug problem in 2016.

Civil Society Task Force (CSTF)

The CSTF was a joint initiative of the VNGOC and the NYNGOC ensure a comprehensive, structured, meaningful and balanced participation of civil society in preparation of and during the UNGASS on the world drug problem in 2016.

A total of 27 members were appointed to the CSTF, 18 regional representatives (i.e. 2 per region), 6 representatives of affected populations and 3 representatives of global approaches, with the mission of serving as the official liaison between the United Nations and civil society in the preparatory process of, and at, UNGASS 2016.

The CSTF was chaired by a Steering Group, consisting of 1 Chair, 2 Vice-Chairs and 1 Secretary. The Chair and one Vice-Chair were nominated by the VNGOC, while one Vice-Chair and the Secretary were nominated by the NYNGOC.

As a follow-up to the above, the Parties (the VNGOC and the NYNGOC) enter this Memorandum of Understanding to mutually monitor, support, and promote the work of a joint Civil Society Task Force (CSTF) to serve as a liaison between the United Nations and civil society in the follow-up to UNGASS 2016. This CSTF would foster collaboration with and among civil society working on drug related issues worldwide and UN Member States in the efforts to implement the recommendations made in the UNGASS 2016 outcome document and leading up to the Ministerial Segment to be held during the 62nd session of the CND in 2019. The mission of the CSTF shall continue to be ensuring a comprehensive, structured, meaningful and balanced participation of civil society during these processes.

Accordingly, the VNGOC and the NYNGOC, operating under this MoU, agree as follows:

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The VNGOC and the NYNGOC will jointly monitor the activities of the Civil Society Task Force to ensure that the overall goal of securing a comprehensive and meaningful participation of civil society actors in the implementation of the recommendations made in the UNGASS outcome document and that evidenced-based approaches to the drug issues, methodologies, and ideologies will be comprehensive. A special effort will be made to ensure gender balance and geographical input and representation.

The VNGOC and the NYNGOC will ensure that the following areas of civil society expertise will be reflected in all aspects of the process leading up to the Ministerial Segment during the 62nd session of the CND in 2019.

- Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues
- Ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion
- Cross-cutting issues: Human rights, youth, children, women and communities

- Supply reduction and related measures; effective law enforcement; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation
- Evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, including new psychoactive substances
- Alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socio-economic issues
- Strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CSTF

The CSTF will:

- (i) Identify speakers and participants for all relevant preparatory events and other relevant UN meetings and fora, and for the 2019 HLM;
- (ii) Lead regional and/or thematic online consultations;
- (iii) Host Civil Society Hearings on the margins of Third Committee negotiations and during the 61st CND and 62nd CND; and other UN meetings where possible;
- (iv) Co-host with the Chair of the CND an Interactive Civil Society Hearing for all stakeholders, whose conclusions would be an officially recognized document of the preparatory process; and
- (v) Deliver further activities as determined by the CSTF and in response to other processes and opportunities that emerge.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COORDINATION GROUP

Each party will appoint two persons from its respective Board to serve as the official contact and coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MoU. The appointees of each organization may change over the life of this MOU to reflect Board elections held by both organizations. There will be three additional persons appointed onto the Coordination Group by the two Boards jointly, after recommendations from the Membership.

Partnering organizations' obligations under this MOU:

- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the CSTF Steering Committee shall inform each other in advance and in a timely fashion about relevant meetings scheduled between them in their capacities as CSTF representatives and UNODC, the CND, other UN bodies, Member States and other relevant stakeholders, giving other Steering Committee members the option to attend. The Steering Committee member attending such meetings shall report back to the Steering Committee in a timely fashion on what transpired in those meetings. A comprehensive record shall be kept of all such meetings and shall be available to all VNGOC and NYNGOC Board members upon request.
- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the CSTF Steering Committee shall endeavour to inform each other about all relevant communications relating to

the CSTF with UNODC, the CND, other UN bodies, Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

- Invitations to CSTF Steering Committee members to speak on behalf of the CSTF at related events should be reported in a timely fashion to the other members of the CSTF Steering Committee, and the Steering Committee should decide which member should speak. As has been the practice in the past, the CSTF Steering Committee shall take a balanced approach in selecting speakers, ensuring both gender balance and geographical representation.

Tasks exclusive to each partnering organizations under this MoU:

- VNGOC acts as custodian of CSTF funds and administers such funds.
- VNGOC and NYNGOC Steering Committee representatives will provide regular reports concerning CSTF activities to their respective Executive Committees and General Assemblies.
- VNGOC shall serve as the CSTF focal point with UNODC and other UN agencies with respect to drug-related events or activities in Vienna, Geneva or other European venues, and NYNGOC will serve as CSTF focal point with UNODC and UN agencies with respect to drug-related events or activities in New York and the Americas.

Tasks shared by both organizations listed under this MoU:

- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the Steering Committee will share responsibility for organizing CSTF events. For meetings organized in Vienna, Geneva or other European venues, the main responsibility lies with the VNGOC. For meetings organized in New York and the Americas, the main responsibility lies with the NYNGOC.
- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the Steering Committee will share equal responsibility for coordinating the informal one-day interactive hearing in December 2018 for civil society and other stakeholders.
- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the Steering Committee will share equal responsibility for coordinating the drafting of CSTF output documents.
- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the Steering Committee will share equal responsibility for selecting civil society representative speakers at CND-related events. Each decision should be made by consensus of the Steering Committee; if they are unable to come to a decision, the selection should be made by a majority vote of the full CSTF (or plurality if there is more than one selection for any one particular speaking slot).
- VNGOC and NYNGOC representatives on the Steering Committee will share equal responsibility for selecting a list of civil society representative speakers at the Ministerial Meeting in 2019 itself, to recommend for approval by majority vote of the full CSTF (or plurality if there is more than one selection for any one particular speaker slot).

V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE CSTF

While the members of the CSTF commit to identifying in kind and other resources to support their membership in this body, the VNGOC and the NYNGOC are requested to

fundraise with Member States and other donors, to ensure geographical diversity and travel costs for civil society participation. In general, it is agreed that funding will be balanced between VNGOC and NYNGOC and resources will be provided equitably to both Committees to carry out their obligations under this MOU, regardless of the source of funds.

The receipt and management of CSTF funds will be led by the VNGOC Treasurer, in line with the VNGOC Statutes and Rules of Procedure (as revised and adopted in September 2017). The VNGOC Treasurer must be present or, if by email, cc'd, on any communications concerning the administration of CSTF funds. Funding decisions made by the Coordinating Group (see above) must be recorded and sent to the Treasurer in writing for action.

VI. TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

This MOU shall expire three months after the conclusion of the 62nd session of the CND in 2019. The mandate of the CSTF, and/or this MOU, may be extended by mutual agreement of the Boards of the VNGOC and the NYNGOC.

The VNGOC or the NYNGOC may terminate this MoU upon thirty (30) days written notice without penalties or liabilities.

VII. AUTHORIZATION

The signing of this MoU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MoU. On behalf of the organization I represent, I wish to sign this MoU and contribute to its further development.

On behalf of VNGOC:

On behalf of NYNGOC

Name
Date
Title

Name
Date
Title