

Tania Ramírez

México Unido Contra la Delincuencia



Candidate for:

Secretary

Deputy Secretary

I am writing to express my interest to be considered as Secretary of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (hereinafter, VNGOC) Board. During my whole professional career, I have been working on drug policy issues. Personally, I consider that given my skills, experience and interests, I would be an energetic and committed Secretary.

First and foremost, during my whole professional career, I have been working on drug policy issues. I collaborated for several years with the Drug Policy Programme and the Right to Health Programme, both at CIDE, where I researched the tobacco industry, alcohol regulation, the consequences of Mexican War on Drugs and drug policy. I also have been legal adviser in these issues in the Mexican Congress working for a drug policy reform. Since 2014 I have focused my research and publications on the analysis of drug courts in Mexico and Latin America.

Currently I am the Director of the Drug Policy Program in México Unido contra la Delincuencia (Mexico United Against Crime, MUCD), which is a referent to both the national and international debate in drug policy reform for its successful experience in advocating and making the case for alternative policies, and materializing change through the legal defense of paradigmatic cases and the participation in decision-making processes resulting in legislative changes. Recently, we have started a strategic litigation project, which aims to consolidate legal precedents in regards to drug policy and human rights.

Second, I strongly believe in the relevance of building networks not only nationally but also beyond our borders. In 2015 I was awarded the Latin American and Caribbean Advocacy Fellowship on Drug Policy Reform, where I had the opportunity to know organizations as Release, IDPC and Transform Drug Policy Foundation. Also, I have collaborated in the elaboration of different publications with NGO's focused in gender. This year I will be participating in "Lawyering on the Margins" with an NGO based in Indonesia. All in all, during this time I have had the opportunity to work with different institutions, organizations

and people who works on behalf of a drug policy reform in my country and around the world.

Third, I have a thorough understanding of the UN System and the dynamic of these bodies. I have participated as speaker in the UNODC side events and I have been present in meetings of the VNGOC. From my particular point of view, the VNGOC is a key piece for the drug policy advocacy. It was created to communicate NGO's work and concerns to international bodies (the CND and the UNOCD) and governments. Nowadays, it represents an essential piece for civil society in its work with those agencies in order to improve communication, create partnerships and contribute to drug policies. The Committee has demonstrated its relevance and impact for the work developed by NGO's in at least two key moments: the review of the 1998-2008 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on illicit drugs and the UNGASS 2016. During both processes, the VNGOC functioned as a platform for the communications and incidence, facilitating NGO's participation.

From my perspective, the VNGOC faces big challenges as the drug policy world is moving forward in reforms and different models of regulation. It is unavoidable to rethink the role of civil society in this context as well as in the implementation of the UNGASS 2016. Also, it is necessary to continue with the preparation of the UNGASS 2019 and the reviewing of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Personally, I consider that I can contribute in this process, developing proposals, coordinating and engaging other members. But also, I can make important contributions in the Board Strategic Plan.

Also, it is important to mention that I have an interdisciplinary approach. Recently, I graduated from Georgetown University with a Global Health LL.M. and a certificate in International Human Rights Law. I received my law degree from the CIDE in Mexico and I have a bachelor's degree in political science.

Overall, these and other projects have sharpened my abilities. Personally, I consider that I encompass a set of skills that help a person to plan and prioritize activities. It makes me able to elaborate high quality documents and minutes and to manage membership application processes. As the Secretary position requires, I have strong organizational and communication skills, like collaboration, coordination, documentation, handling details, meeting goals and deadlines, scheduling and responsibility. I would be very devoted in order to strengthen this position and the work of the Board, but also in order to support the voice and participation of civil society.