

## **VNGOC Statement for CND Intersessional**

24th June 2019

*Agenda Item 1: Follow-up to the 62nd session of the CND, including its Ministerial Declaration on “Strengthening our actions at the national, regional and international levels to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem”*

Mr. Chair, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for allowing me to speak today as the Chair of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, and on behalf of our network of around 200 organisations around the world. The VNGOC is dedicated to ensuring the strongest possible civil society engagement here at the CND and elsewhere across the UN system.

When we reflect back on the Ministerial Segment and the CND meeting in March – there is a lot to be proud of in terms of the civil society presence and the inputs that we made. Through the Civil Society Task Force, working with the New York Committee and UNODC, we were able to support NGOs to attend, speak and participate – whether they could physically be here in Vienna or not.

Now, as you are discussing how best to follow and build on this year’s Ministerial Declaration, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that – like the UNGASS document before it – the 2019 Declaration underscores the important role played by civil society and others in

implementing our joint commitments. The Declaration also commits the CND to fostering broad, transparent and inclusive discussions involving all relevant stakeholders – including civil society.

With this in mind, we welcome the proposed multi-year work plan for the CND, encompassing thematic autumn intersessionals over the coming years. The idea to use the ‘stock-taking’ section of the Ministerial Declaration to frame the coming discussions is a good one, as this is possibly the most honest and wide-reaching articulation of the problems that we have failed to fix over the last decade.

The CND thematic intersessionals last autumn were a positive model for civil society engagement. The work plan from last June invited the Civil Society Task Force to select panel speakers, and we were able to coordinate more than 50 presentations and video submissions from a wide range of different organisations, regions and perspectives. We made these selections through open calls, and received more than 200 applications – which demonstrates the commitment and the demand from NGOs to be a part of these discussions.

NGOs and affected populations have a crucial role to play as we collectively address the challenges identified in the Ministerial Declaration. So, for this coming autumn and beyond, we assume that the good practice model from 2018 will be maintained. The Vienna NGO Committee looks forward to continuing to work with the CND Chair and Secretariat, and we also commit to continuing to select speakers



through open calls, and to being inclusive of a broad range of views and organisations.

Working together, the challenges can be met, the problems can be fixed, and the harms can be mitigated. But not without civil society – whether here in the VIC, advocating and lobbying for change at the local level, or on the ground delivering services and saving lives.

Thank you for your kind attention and your continued support.