

CND Thematic Intersessional (21-22 September)

*The VNGOC Asia Ad Hoc Working Group was created to capture a **consensus among civil society organizations from across the Asia-Pacific region**, reflecting the need for placing human rights, health, and evidence at the centre of all drug policies*

A common position document was first drafted in late 2020, since then, the document has been through three rounds of consultation

The final version was formally launched and presented at a side event during the 65th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2022, with 84 organisations signing on.

Civil society organisations in the region play an important role in ensuring the health, human rights, and wellbeing of communities, including women, children, and young people, LGBTQI+ individuals and people in prison and other places of detention.

Despite the efforts of Member States in the region, we still observe drug policies that serve to criminalise and punish people who use drugs and continuously large amounts of drugs being produced and trafficked in Asia-Pacific

In relation to ensuring a human rights centred approach to drug policy we call to:

Recognise all the relevant rights, including to health and life, and those acknowledged by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to take all appropriate measures to protect children and all other affected populations within drug policies, respecting and ensuring their rights.

Implement women-specific responses in terms of drug prevention, treatment, and harm reduction, alongside responses to address gender-based violence and responses for pregnant women. Facilitate access to comprehensive drug policy responses for people impacted by social marginalisation, including LGBTQI+ individuals

Ensure the availability of voluntary and evidence-based, prevention, treatment, and harm reduction services for people with substance use disorders

Ensure access to essential medicines in every country and every healthcare system

Remove criminal sanctions and other forms of punishment for low-level, non-violent drug offences, as recommended the UN drug control conventions

End the use of the death penalty in accordance with international human rights obligations

We, the undersigned Asia-Pacific civil society organisations whose work relates to narcotic drugs, commit to working with ASEAN, Member States from the region, and multilateral bodies to ensure the voice of civil society is heard in the creation of evidenced-based laws, policies, and interventions in line with regional and international treaties and declarations. We will strive to continue to overcome challenges and continue to build on our achievements to place human rights, health, and evidence at the centre of all drug policies.