

## **Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs**

### **Statement to be delivered at the 'Consultation of the Committee on NGOs with NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC' 13th December 2022**

Delivered by Heather Haase in New York

Thank you for giving me the floor.

The Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs represents hundreds of NGOs from around the world – including groups with, without and applying for consultative status with ECOSOC – as do our sister committees: the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the New York NGO Committee on Drugs, and the UNCAC Coalition.

#### **ECOSOC Consultative Status**

As umbrella civil society networks, we have become increasingly concerned with the decisions and processes of the Committee on NGOs – not least the restrictions placed on participation at this consultation itself.

The number of NGOs having their applications for consultative status approved has dropped dramatically in recent years. This trend is disproportionately affecting NGOs whose work legitimately challenges the status quo domestically and internationally.

Applications from NGOs are being delayed or deferred in unprecedented numbers, and often because of politically motivated questions from certain member states on the Committee – clearly not relevant to the applicant's status, credibility or eligibility.

In some cases, NGOs have been deferred for five or more years – a process that has already been acknowledged by senior UN officials as “de facto rejection”. We welcome recent ECOSOC resolutions to over-ride these long-term blockages by the Committee.

Urgent action is needed to reverse these trend, and we offer three main recommendations:

First, ensure NGOs know the exact time and date of their review, and can directly engage, in person or online, for greater transparency.

Second, an independent review of the Committee's procedures, and a limit on the number of consecutive years in which questions can be posed.

Third, the Committee on NGOs should also consider including NGOs within its membership, in the spirit of “nothing about us, without us”, and in line with good practice models elsewhere in the UN system.

Thank you for your kind attention.