

Proposal for the United Nations Deputy Secretary General Mr. Jan Eliasson regarding the participation of Civil Society in preparations for and at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on drugs in 2016

Background:

Deputy Secretary General Eliasson hosted an informal meeting with Civil Society (CS) representatives (list attached) on the margins of the 2014 High Level Review and asked this group to provide recommendations concerning the participation of CS at the 2016 UNGASS on Drugs. Following the meeting, participants exchanged views and offer the following recommendations for consideration.

Overarching Objective:

To ensure comprehensive, structured and meaningful participation of CS in the lead up to and at the UNGASS 2016 as encouraged and permitted by the procedural rules of the United Nations.

- *Comprehensive* defined as representing the entire continuum of relevant policy and practice areas to the scope of UNGASS 2016 matters;
- *Structured* defined as systematically including CS participation at relevant Vienna and New York based UNGASS related meetings; and
- *Meaningful* defined as creating space and involvement of CS to substantively contribute to the discussions leading to positions and declarations adopted by the CND and GA.

Authority

The General Assembly and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs have indicated their directions with regard to the preparations for UNGASS 2016. Note 2013 General Assembly resolution A/RES/68/197

International cooperation against the world drug problem

39. Emphasizes the important role played by civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in addressing the world drug problem, notes with appreciation their important contribution to the review process, and also notes that representatives of affected populations and civil society entities, where appropriate, should be enabled to play a participatory role in the formulation and implementation of drug demand and supply reduction policy;

40. Encourages Member States to ensure that civil society plays a participatory role, where appropriate, through consultation in the development and implementation of drug control programmes and policies, in particular with regard to aspects of demand reduction;

And further CND resolution E/CN.7/2014/L.10/Rev.1 makes specific recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the participation of Civil Society and forms the basis for this proposal which is, pending approval of the recommendations by the General Assembly in the fall, therefore consistent with how the UN itself is preparing for UNGASS 2016.

Relevant excerpts:

5. Decides that the special session will be convened following the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, scheduled to be held in March 2016;

6. Also decides that the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016 will have an inclusive preparatory process that includes extensive substantive consultations, allowing organs, entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to fully contribute to the process, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure and established practice;

7. Further decides that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the central policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, shall lead this process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner and, in this regard, invites the President of the General Assembly to support, guide and stay involved in the process;

11. Also recognizes the important role played by civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in the preparations for and during the fifty-second and the fifty-seventh sessions of the Commission and their high-level segments and recognizes further the need for their active involvement in the preparations for the special session, as well as the need for their effective, substantive and active involvement during the special session, in accordance with the rules of procedure and practice developed for other special sessions of the General Assembly, and requests the Chair of the Commission to consider undertaking consultations and other appropriate actions in this regard with relevant stakeholders;

Organization:

It is recommended that the participation of CS as defined by the overarching objective, be organized and directed by a time limited **Civil Society Task Force** (CSTF) reporting to Chair of CND and the President of the General Assembly to support, guide and stay involved in the process as consistent with decisions taken by the UN on preparatory matters for the UNGASS 2016 (E/CN.7/2014/L.10/Rev.1).

Structure and role of the CSTF:

The CSTF will act as the official liaison body between the UN and Civil Society representatives and will serve as best as possible, the range of civil society views, interests and contributions to this process. The CSTF is intended to be an organizational entity to efficiently and comprehensively engage with a broad representation of civil society actors. Further, the CSTF will direct and draw on the collaborative resources of the Vienna NGO Committee (VNGOC) and the New York NGO Committee (NYNGOC) as appropriate to support the work of the CSTF.

The President of the General Assembly will appoint the CSTF members, as recommended by Civil Society representatives through the Chairperson of the CND.

It is recommended that the CSTF's membership be composed of up to 26 persons who collectively reflect geographic diversity, affected populations and those with a demonstrated expertise in relevant drug policy and/or service delivery.

The "Beyond 2008" project was jointly convened by the VNGOC, the NYNGOC and the UNODC Civil Society Team. It proved to be an effective and meaningful mechanism of Civil Society involvement in international drug policy. By following the successful example of this initiative, the detailed composition of the CSTF should be based on the nine regions used for the "Beyond 2008" process. Specifically, the CSTF should include representation for each of the following regions:

- Australia and New Zealand
- Eastern Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Northern Africa and the Middle East
- North America
- South Asia
- South-East and East Asia and the Pacific
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Western Europe

We also suggest that the broadest possible representation in terms of approaches to the drug problem would be reflected in the CSFT, so that drug prevention, treatment, recovery, harm reductions, social reintegration along with recovered users and affected population and their families would be included.

That group should consist of

- 18 regional representative, i.e. 2 per region
- 4 representatives of affected populations

To allow for efficient steering of the CSTF and in order to undertake its task more effectively, it is furthermore recommended, that the CSTF be chaired by a Steering Group. That group should consist of:

- 1 Chair
- 2 Vice-Chairs
- 1 Secretary

The nomination of the Chair and one Vice-Chair will lie with the VNGOC, while one Vice-Chair and the Secretary will be nominated by the NYNGOC.

The Steering Group will act as the main interface of the CSTF towards external actors. It will follow the directives agreed upon by all members of the CSTF.

Following the successful example of the “Beyond 2008” process, and its valuable experience with civil society engagement with the UN, the administrative secretariat of the CSTF should be provided by VNGOC in close cooperation with the Civil Society Team of UNODC in Vienna.

dActivities:

The Civil Society Task Force will:

- **Identify speakers and participants** for all relevant preparatory and UNGASS related events. This includes inter alia:
 - inter-sessional meetings of the CND
 - Roundtable CND discussions
 - Other relevant CND, GA meetings and or interactive consultations and meetings whether formal or not.

- **Lead regional consultations** (electronic or other) to solicit the views and input of CS organizations worldwide on *inter alia*,
 - CS priorities to be brought forward to CND,
 - Commentary/feedback on documents and positions developed by CND related to UNGASS and
 - Broad-based consensus positions, as well as information on additional topics as to which some members of CS agree but all do not, identified in the course of CS consultations to be shared with MS

- Support the **4th VNGOC Civil Society Hearing during CND 2015** on a theme consistent with conclusions tabled by the Vienna NGO Committee at the Briefing for High Level Review Participants and where the conclusions of the 2015 Hearing will be an officially recognized document of the Commission.

- **Co-host with the Chair of the CND and/or the President of the GA an Interactive Civil Society Hearing for GA Member States** three months prior to the UNGASS and where the conclusions of the Hearing will be an officially recognized document of the UNGASS preparatory process.

The Chair of the CND and/or President of the General Assembly as appropriate will:

- Encourage MS to consult with Civil Society in terms of developing their national positions.
- Encourage MS to include representatives of Civil Society on their delegations.
- Encourage MS to allow unaccredited NGO participation at UNGASS 2016 on a non-objection basis.
- Provide for representatives of the CSTF to participate, in accordance with UN rules of procedure in the opening sessions of CND 2015 and UNGASS 2016, as speakers in plenary and participants at roundtable / panel discussions.
- Call upon the CSTF as required to assist him/her discharge their duties for UNGASS including to contribute to discussions and preparations leading to the organization of relevant modalities for the UNGASS 2016.

Financial implications:

- CSTF members will:
 - o Identify possible external sources of financial support for the activities of the CSTF – where those funds have no direct or indirect expectation of policy influence
 - o Identify resources they are able to provide (in kind or otherwise) as well as the costs they are able to absorb in terms of their participation in a CSTF.
- The UN will assume CSTF costs as deemed acceptable by the President of the General Assembly, including the participation of a pre determined number of other CS participants to ensure geographic diversity, for:
 - o Travel to:
 - A first coordinating meeting of the CSTF in 2015 to be held in Vienna
 - Participation and attendance at 2015 CND and relevant inter-sessional or preparatory meetings of the CND
 - Participation and attendance at the Interactive Civil Society Hearing called for three months prior to UNGASS 2016
 - Participation and attendance at UNGASS 2016
 - o Participation at a fixed number of Regional Consultations
 - o Financial support for Communications and publication costs
 - o 2 administrative support persons, 1 from VNGOC and 1 from UNODC Civil Society Team

Financial administration of the CSTF

- o UNODC Civil Society Team will provide the financial administration of the CSFT, in cooperation with VNGOC.

Dissolution of the CSTF

- o The CSTF's mandate will end 3 months post UNGASS 2016.