



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM COMMON POSITION

SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL
POLICY THROUGH EFFECTIVE
INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

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In response to the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination adopted a common position in 2018 to support collaboration within the United Nations system on implementing international drug control policy.

The common position features eight shared principles that support the outcome document of the special session and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SHARED PRINCIPLES

Reiterating our strong commitment to supporting Member States in developing and implementing truly balanced, comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based, human rights-based, development-oriented and sustainable responses to the world drug problem, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we, the members of the United Nations system, underlining the importance of the following common values:

↘ Commit to supporting the practical implementation of the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in April 2016, General Assembly resolution S-30/1, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, as a blueprint for action, charting a path that promotes more effective and humane drug control policies, supporting the commitment made in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind;

↘ Recognize that the world drug problem is complex and multifaceted and that challenges posed by drugs have wide-ranging adverse impacts on security, human rights and development;

↘ Underscore that the multifaceted nature of the problem requires a comprehensive approach that includes law enforcement efforts ensuring people’s security and efforts promoting health, human rights, including equality and non-discrimination, and sustainable development;

↘ Commit to promoting a truly evidence-based and balanced approach, whereby sufficient attention is given to measures that address the root causes of drug abuse and cultivation and other involvement in the drug trade;

↘ Acknowledge that we have a common and shared responsibility to work together, in particular through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to pursue a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach leading to evidence-based and sustainable solutions;

↘ Recognize that the concern for the health and welfare of humankind underpins the three international drug control conventions, which, together with other relevant international instruments, are the cornerstone of the international drug control system;

↘ Acknowledge that the conventions allow for sufficient flexibility for countries to design and implement national drug policies according to their priorities and needs, consistent with the principle of common and shared responsibility and applicable international law;

↘ Acknowledge that the international drug control conventions, international human rights treaties and other relevant instruments and the 2030 Agenda are complementary and mutually reinforcing. National drug control programmes, strategies and policies should be designed and implemented by States in accordance with their human rights obligations.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- To guide approaches across the United Nations system, stepping up efforts to ensure that no one is left behind;

- To inspire the planning and implementation of United Nations activities, including joint inter-agency activities;

- To speak with one voice and raise awareness of the multifaceted nature of the world drug problem.

DIRECTIONS FOR ACTION

In addition to ongoing efforts, we commit to harnessing synergies and strengthening inter-agency cooperation, making best use of the expertise within the United Nations system, to further enhance consistent sharing of information and lessons learned and the production of more comprehensive data on the impact of drug policies, including with a view to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We, therefore, commit to stepping up our joint efforts and supporting each other, *inter alia*:

- To support the development and implementation of policies that put people, health and human rights at the centre, by providing a scientific evidence-based, available, accessible and affordable recovery-oriented continuum of care based upon prevention, treatment and support, and to promote a rebalancing of drug policies and interventions towards public health approaches;
- To promote the increased investment in measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health consequences of drug abuse, sometimes referred to as harm reduction, which reduce new HIV infections, improve health outcomes and deliver broader social benefits by reducing pressure on health-care and criminal justice systems;

- To ensure the provision of drug prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and general support services, including health care and social protection in prison settings, ensuring that they are equivalent to and that they provide continuity of care with those in the community;
- To ensure the respect for the dignity and human rights of people who use drugs in all aspects of drug and social policies, including providing equal access for people who use drugs to public services, including housing, health care and education;
- To call for universal health coverage for people with drug use disorders and for the positioning of drug use disorders as with other health conditions that should be included in the overall universal health coverage framework in national health systems;
- To enhance access to controlled medicines for legitimate medical and scientific purposes, including the relief of pain and treatment of drug dependence;
- To enhance international support for effective capacity-building in developing countries to support the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation;
- To support the identification of prevalent, persistent and harmful psychoactive drugs, including new psychoactive substances, and their associated health risks, using global and regional agencies' early warning and alert systems;
- To provide guidance and technical assistance to strengthen cross-border law enforcement and judicial cooperation;

- To promote sustainable livelihoods through adequately sequenced, well-funded and long-term development-oriented drug policies in rural and urban areas affected by illicit drug activities, including cultivation, production and trafficking, bearing in mind environmental protection and sustainability;
- To promote alternatives to conviction and punishment in appropriate cases, including the decriminalization of drug possession for personal use, and to promote the principle of proportionality, to address prison overcrowding and overincarceration by people accused of drug crimes, to support implementation of effective criminal justice responses that ensure legal guarantees and due process safeguards pertaining to criminal justice proceedings and ensure timely access to legal aid and the right to a fair trial, and to support practical measures to prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and torture;
- To call for changes in laws, policies and practices that threaten the health and human rights of people;
- To promote measures aimed at reducing stigma and eliminating discrimination and achieving universal coverage of evidence-based prevention, treatment and rehabilitation;
- To cooperate to ensure human rights-based drug control and address impunity for serious human rights violations in the context of drug control efforts;
- To assist Member States in implementing non-discriminatory policies, including with regard to ethnicity, race, sex, language, religion or other status;

- To promote the active involvement and participation of civil society and local communities, including people who use drugs, as well as women and young people;
- To provide Member States with the evidence base necessary to make informed policy decisions and to better understand the risks and benefits of new approaches to drug control, including those relating to cannabis;
- To compile, analyse and produce data reflecting United Nations system-wide practices and lessons learned in drug-related matters, and to produce system-wide data and analysis, including in the light of the 2019 ministerial segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the advancement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OPERATIONALIZATION

We commit to supporting each other's activities, within our mandates, and to delivering balanced, comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based, human rights-based, development-oriented and sustainable support to Member States in implementing joint commitments, including the operational recommendations contained in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016.

With a view to ensuring coherent efforts to realize the commitments set out in this common position and, in particular, coordinated data collection to promote the scientific, evidence-based implementation of international commitments,¹ we hereby establish a United Nations system coordination task team, to be led by UNODC, and composed of interested United Nations system entities, including those with expertise in the collection of drug-related data, within the framework of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee.

¹ Working in line with the principles governing international statistical activities (E/CN.3/2006/13, annex), as endorsed by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.



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