

My intervention is on behalf of Harm Reduction International and Human Rights Watch.

The human rights costs of current global drug policies have been enormous. In country after country, we have seen serious human rights abuses committed in the name of enforcing the UN drug conventions and the current global drug strategy. These abuses include enforced disappearances, torture, extrajudicial executions, lack of access to pain medicines, and more.

People who use drugs have been particularly affected. We've documented lack of life-saving needle and syringe programmes; lack or restriction of essential medicines such as opioid substitution therapy and HIV antiretroviral therapy; abusive law enforcement practices; mass detention; disproportionate criminal penalties; and abuse in the name of drug dependence treatment.

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs is 28 times higher than it is among the rest of the adult population. Thirteen percent of people who inject drugs worldwide, approximately 1.7 million, live with HIV. The world is going to miss – by a staggering 80% - the UN target of halving HIV among people who inject drugs by 2015. An estimated \$100 billion is spent each year on drug control; harm reduction investment amounts to a grossly inadequate \$160 million per year. If just ten cents of every dollar spent on drug enforcement were reinvested in health interventions thousands if not millions of lives could be saved.

The widespread domestic use of criminal law and penal sanctions for drug control create an environment of systemic human rights risk. Yet, these human rights abuses have long gone unnoticed. As Paul Hunt, a former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health, has observed the UN drug control and human rights regimes have developed in 'parallel universes'.

This must change. The UN drug control bodies need to use human rights as a guiding principle in their efforts. Likewise, the UN human rights bodies need to regularly review the human rights impacts of global drug control efforts. We welcome the attention of the Human Rights Council to this topic, and encourage it to continue to make drug control and human rights an ongoing area of work.