

Excellences,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear colleagues,

My name is Brun Gonzalez and I am making this intervention on behalf of ICASO.

I would like to thank the Chair and the CND for the opportunity to raise up the voice of the community of people who use drugs in this space.

ICASO is an NGO that acts as a global policy voice on HIV issues that impact diverse communities around the world.

We have welcomed the operational recommendations on cross-cutting issues; drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities. We welcome member states commitment in paragraph 4 to work towards drug policies that respect human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the inherent dignity of all individuals, including people who use drugs. We are open and willing to cooperate with relevant UN agencies including those with mandates respectful of human rights and who are willing to collaborate with civil society to achieve these goals.

The operationalization of the recommendations of the UNGASS on drugs, human rights, women and communities is critical. A regression in human rights and drug policy is something that we should all avoid, we can work under the umbrella of the three drug control conventions but still move forward towards a more humane and empathic configuration for the international control system and regulations.

Right now, in many different countries around the planet, our communities are subject to:

- the scaling up of compulsory drug detention centers
- attempts to reinstate the death penalty for drug offences
- an epidemic of preventable drug overdose deaths, where globally over 200,000 people die each year
- Over 8,000 state sanctioned killings of people who use drugs since July 2016 in the Philippines
- More than 180,000 people killed and over 50,000 disappeared since 2006 under the war on drugs in Mexico.

INPUD has advocated on the above issues, including using the human rights mechanisms, and building public awareness.

To operationalize Paragraph 4 of the UNGASS Outcome Document effectively, we urge member states to:

- 1) Invest in Community Systems Strengthening, so that communities can build resistance and resources in order to protect our human rights. This strategy was recognized as best practice by the UNAIDS PCB in December 2016.
- 2) Invite community members – and regional or national networks of people who use drugs where they exist - to policy and programming decision making forums. People who use drugs bring many valuable resources to these processes. We can advise on what works; and what is acceptable, feasible and realistic for our communities.
- 3) Allow human rights observers access to monitor national programmes to ensure that they are aligned with the UDR, the International Covenants (ICCPR, ICESCR) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to report on human rights to the CND pursuant to operational recommendation 4(e).
- 4) We urge progressive national, bilateral and multilateral states and agencies to continue to pressure, and use economic and political means at their disposal to halt the continued human rights violations on people who use drugs.
- 5) We promote the incorporation of full spectrum harm reduction strategies and policies than acknowledge the realities surrounding psychoactive substances beyond HIV, opiates and injected drug use; a few examples could be substance analysis services, harm reduction for non-injected substances, stimulants or supply side harm reduction.

Attention to cross cutting issues of drugs, human rights, youth, women and communities is critical to our survival. Our rights as citizens are not revoked due to drug use. Psychoactive plants and substances have been part of our human history since the beginning, if we remember this and learn from the collective experience that has been gathered for thousands of years we might find collectively new ways to generate a peaceful and beneficial interaction with what we refer to as drugs and amongst ourselves.

Finally, we must move towards the decriminalization of drug use, as the most effective and surest way of realizing the human rights of people who use drugs and stopping the many different harms and negative impacts that we are experiencing as a direct consequence of prohibition and the war on drugs.

In closing I'd like to sincerely thank the Chair for giving ICASO and the International Network of People who use Drugs the floor. Thank you very much.