

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITIES AND COMPOUNDING VULNERABILITIES IN DRUG POLICY

To various stakeholders

1. HUMAN RIGHTS-CENTERED APPROACH

Develop policies that prioritize the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people who use drugs, acknowledging how the harm reduction approach is integral to human rights principles and must be placed at the core of drug policies.

2. INTERSECTIONAL POLICIES

Implement inclusive and intersectional policies and responses that address the compounding and overlapping vulnerabilities and barriers faced by women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs.

3. ACCESSIBILITY OF HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

Ensure that harm reduction services are designed to be accessible and acceptable to women and gender-diverse people who use drugs, and are tailored to their specific needs.

4. DECRIMINALIZATION & LEGAL REFORM

Decriminalize the use of drugs and possession for personal use, and reform discriminatory policies and other harmful punitive policies.

5. MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Design and adopt peer-led policies, strategies, and harm reduction services and responses with the meaningful involvement of women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs.

6. SENTENCING REFORM AND ADVANCING SERVICES DURING AND POST-INCARCERATION

Implement gender-responsive sentencing, and expand health-focused alternatives to incarceration for drug-related offenses. Ensure access to gender-responsive healthcare, mental health and social support interventions during incarceration and post-release.



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7. ELIMINATE STIGMA

Provide training and education to sensitize law enforcement authorities, healthcare professionals, social workers and prison staff to reduce stigma and discrimination against women and gender diverse individuals who use drugs.

8. ADDRESS SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Tackle the systemic barriers that negatively impact the lives, well-being and health of people who use drugs, such as economic inequality, discrimination, and lack of tailored support services.

9. SUSTAINABLE, FLEXIBLE & INCLUSIVE FUNDING

Increase and sustain funding for comprehensive and evidence-based harm reduction services that respond to the specific and intersectional needs of women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs, and fund organizations led by these populations enabling them to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of programs.

10. INTEGRATE HARM REDUCTION INTO GBV RESPONSES

Recognize the existing link between substance use and experiences of violence, ensuring that gender-based violence (GBV) programs integrate harm reduction services, and that GBV responses do not exclude people who use drugs. Enhance access and availability of trauma and survivor-informed and centered support that meets the needs of women and gender-diverse people who use drugs.

11. UN SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

Continue to strengthen UN systems collaboration on drug policies, including across different multilateral spaces, and across human rights and humanitarian entities.

