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Update for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is continuously and permanently involved in all aspects of the world drug problem and pursues its work in this field. The upcoming Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) to be held by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) from 19-21 April 2016 continues to play a central role in CND's daily work as it has been designated as the leading entity for this session's preparations.¹ During its reconvened session from 9-11 December 2015, CND mainly discussed organizational matters concerning the structure of the debates.²

During UNGASS, discussions will be organized around five interactive, multi-stakeholder roundtables.³ These tables will be inclusive of all Member States, Observers, UN entities, as well as a series of representatives from civil society (like non-governmental organizations, academic, and scientific communities), which are all invited to participate.⁴ Each table will consist of five panelists that will be nominated by the regional groups of the UN and may also include further interventions by representatives of UN entities; these panels will be followed by an interactive discussion.⁵

Besides organizational matters in preparation for the conference, a series of side events have discussed substantial issues concerning UNGASS.⁶ On 9 December, Colombia, Switzerland, and Norway organized an event to address human rights and public health aspects of the world drug problem.⁷ The purpose was to focus on people and emphasize their right to health.⁸ It has been argued that in the past, too much attention was given to substance control instead of placing human beings at the center of debate, and thus the upcoming UNGASS should also prioritize people.⁹ The next special event such as this takes place on 10 February 2016 at the UN headquarters in New York and is an opportunity to share experiences and best practices when addressing the world drug problem.¹⁰

The UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has also published a series of reports on drug production and consumption worldwide since last December 2014, such as the Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2015.¹¹ Among its findings, this report states that levels of production remain stable although relatively high in the region, particularly in Myanmar, the biggest producer of opium poppy in Southeast Asia.¹² It also stressed that one of the major challenges with the drug problem in this region is weak state structures and the absence of rule of law in certain areas such as the Shan state in Myanmar.¹³ In contrast, the Afghanistan Opium Survey 2015 highlighted a decrease by 19% of opium poppy cultivation.¹⁴ However, the main reasons for this appear to be linked to increasing production costs due to less favorable climatic conditions forcing producers to use irrigation pumps, a technique many cannot afford.¹⁵

Additionally, a series of programs have either been launched or expanded such as the Global Programme on Building Effective Networks Against Transnational Organized Crime (BENATOC) introduced on 15 December

¹ CND Blog, *CND Reconvened Session – 11 December 2015*, 2015.

² UN CND, *Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 (E/CN.7/2015/L.16)*, 2015.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ CND Blog, *Side event: UNGASS 2016 on the world drug problem: Focus on people, public health and human rights*, 2015.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UNGASS, *Preparatory Process*, 2016.

¹¹ UNODC, *Opium production in Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic stabilizes at high levels, says UNODC report*, 2015.

¹² UNODC, *Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2015*, 2015, p. 33.

¹³ UNODC, *Opium production in Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic stabilizes at high levels, says UNODC report*, 2015.

¹⁴ UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2015*, 2015, p. 6.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

2015.¹⁶ This program is meant to serve as an intelligence-sharing and law enforcement network among Member States in the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking.¹⁷ By enhancing communication between the various national and international law enforcement agencies, this program will focus on improving information sharing via collecting data more efficiently and strengthening capacities to address criminal flows.¹⁸

Since 2010, UNODC has hosted the Global eLearning Programme.¹⁹ This Member State-funded program aims to facilitate and enhance worldwide knowledge exchange in the field of transnational crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism.²⁰ The goal is to provide national law enforcement agencies online access to critical information as well as to a series of courses and modules on the aforementioned issues.²¹ Recently, Liberia has become the first African state to receive a mobile eLearning unit in order to enhance knowledge and skills in West Africa in the field of transnational crime and drug trafficking.²² In early December, 18 members of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) received a specialized course and 10 working stations were delivered to allow an ongoing learning process.²³

In the light of these recent developments, it has become clear that CND, together with its parent organization, UNODC, remains continuously active on a wide range of activities and the holistic nature of CND's work combining on-the-ground actions as well as intensive studies on trends and developments. Obviously, the upcoming UNGASS will continue to play an important role and stay at the center of attention in the following months.

¹⁶ UNODC, *New UNODC programme builds greater connectivity among global partners to fight drugs and crime*, 2015.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UNODC, *Remarks at the launch of the UNODC Global Programme on Building Effective Networks Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2015.

¹⁹ UNODC, *UNODC delivers first mobile eLearning unit in Africa to tackle illicit drugs*, 2015.

²⁰ UNODC, *Inside the Global eLearning Programme*, 2015.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UNODC, *UNODC delivers first mobile eLearning unit in Africa to tackle illicit drugs*, 2015.

²³ Ibid.

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CND Blog. (2015, December 9). *Side event: UNGASS 2016 on the world drug problem: Focus on people, public health and human rights*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://cnblog.org/2015/12/side-event-ungass-2016-on-the-world-drug-problem-focus-on-people-public-health-and-human-rights/>

The CND Blog is hosted by the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), a network of 143 non-governmental organizations that share a common focus on issues related to drug production, trafficking, and use, and which advocates for an open debate on national and international drug related policies. In an attempt to ensure transparency, this site provides records of discussions that took place at CND as well as other useful information related to CND's work. As such, delegates will be able to retrieve the remarks made by the various speakers during the side event that took place on 9 December 2015 and focused on the human aspects of the world drug problem.

United Nations, General Assembly, Special Session on the World Drug Problem. (2016). *Preparatory Process* [Website]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: http://www.unodc.org/ungass2016/en/cnd_preparations.html

In the light of the upcoming UNGASS, a dedicated website has been created to gather all relevant information around this major event that will take place from 19-21 April 2016. This website provides a timeline gathering of all preparatory events organized around the Special Session with links to other pages as well. Delegates will find it a useful resource tool to obtain all the information they would like to find on the UNGASS 2016.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, December 15). *Opium production in Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic stabilizes at high levels, says UNODC report* [Press Release]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/December/opium-production-in-myanmar-and-lao-pdr-stabilizes-at-high-levels-unodc.html?ref=fs5>

Part of UNODC's work is also to produce a series of publications throughout the year. These cover a large variety of subjects and are mainly based on in-house data as well as information provided by other UN agencies, international organizations, and governments. As such, these publications are highly interesting for delegates as they provide many statistics and other first-hand information and analyses on issues related to drugs. The specific publication highlighted and linked to in this press release is an annual report on drug production in Southeast Asia. Myanmar is the second-largest opium producer in the world and the region is faces numerous problems related to such activities. The Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2015 offers an interesting overview of trends and developments of the last year as well as responses that have been developed to address the drug problem in this region, the summary of which can be found in this press release.

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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, December 15). *Opium production in Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic stabilizes at high levels, says UNODC report* [Press Release]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/December/opium-production-in-myanmar-and-lao-pdr-stabilizes-at-high-levels-unodc.html?ref=fs5>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, December 15). *Remarks at the launch of the UNODC Global Programme on Building Effective Networks Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/speeches/2015/benatoc-151215.html>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015). *Southeast Asia Opium Survey* [Report]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2015/Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2015_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2015/Southeast%20Asia%20Opium%20Survey%202015_web.pdf)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, December 21). *UNODC delivers first mobile eLearning unit in Africa to tackle illicit drugs* [Press Release]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/December/first-mobile-elearning-unit-delivered-in-africa.html?ref=fs2>

I. Addressing Drug Trafficking and the Financing of Terrorism

Recent Developments

The latter part of 2015 saw both successes and challenges for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the wider international community in their work to address drug financing and terrorism. In October 2015 the United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics announced that, for the first time since 2009, opium production in Afghanistan fell in 2014.²⁴ Approximately 183,000 hectares were used for poppy production compared to 224,000 hectares in 2014.²⁵ The opium trade in Afghanistan provides funds for the Taliban, thus this decrease in production could lead to increased financial pressure on the group.²⁶ However, the number of Afghan provinces regarded as “poppy-free” actually fell in 2015.²⁷ This means that while total opium production volumes may be falling, the practice of growing opium is becoming more geographically widespread.²⁸

In a landmark for development in regional cooperation, the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) opened its headquarters in Algiers, Algeria on 13 December 2015.²⁹ AFRIPOL, modelled loosely on the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and other international policing cooperation bodies, will promote inter-African police cooperation at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels.³⁰ The new agency, which aims to come into operation in 2016, will assist African countries in combating organized crime.³¹ Unlike other regional policing bodies, however, AFRIPOL represents less a “natural evolution of regional instruments and capabilities,” but is rather a response to a growing regional concern about terrorism and violent extremism.³² As yet, AFRIPOL lacks concrete policies to achieve its aims; the organization has not been officially approved by the African Union, and it may be some time before it is fully operational.³³

In Colombia, talks between the government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) rebels to reach a peace deal are progressing.³⁴ President Juan Santos claimed in December 2015 that the two sides had “never been so close to an agreement before.”³⁵ In January, the parties issued a joint request for the UN “to establish an international observer mission to monitor a disarmament process.”³⁶ The international monitors, comprised from Latin American and Caribbean countries, would also be responsible for verifying that FARC withdraws from the international drug trade.³⁷ Negotiators hope to reach a comprehensive deal by 23 March 2016 to end a long-standing conflict that began in 1964.³⁸ Peace between the Colombian state and FARC means that FARC would not have significant incentive to finance its military campaign through the trafficking of narcotics, although rival rebel group the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other right-wing paramilitary groups, are also involved in the trade.³⁹

Prompted by large scale terrorist atrocities in Paris, the UN Security Council approved new sanctions against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).⁴⁰ The resolution adopted noted that, alongside oil, ISIL financed itself

²⁴ UNODC, *After six years on the rise, Afghan opium crop cultivation declines: new UNODC survey*, 2015.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Makarenko, *The Crime—Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism*, 2004, p. 130.

²⁷ UNODC, *After six years on the rise, Afghan opium crop cultivation declines: new UNODC survey*, 2015.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *AFRIPOL headquarters inaugurated in Algiers*, Algeria Press Service, 2015.

³⁰ African Conference of Directors and Inspectors General of Police on Afripol, *Algiers Declaration on the Establishment of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation – AFRIPOL*, 2014.

³¹ *AFRIPOL headquarters inaugurated in Algiers*, Algeria Press Service, 2015.

³² Jespersen, *Is a pan-African police force the answer to rising militancy?* 2016.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Brodinsky, *Colombia's government and Farc rebels reach agreement in step to end civil war*, 2015.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Colombia negotiators agree UN observer mission to monitor end of civil war*, The Guardian, 2016.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Brodinsky, *Colombia's government and Farc rebels reach agreement in step to end civil war*, 2015.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ UN DPI, *Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2253 (2015), Security Council Expands Sanctions Framework to Include Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (SC/12168)*, 2016.

through the trafficking of illegal narcotics.⁴¹ The new sanctions included “asset freezes, travel bans, and an arms embargo”, and was jointly sponsored by the United States and Russia, highlighting the large degree of international consensus on this issue.⁴²

In the United States, the Drug Enforcement Agency’s (DEA) broader strategy of pursuing convictions for narco-terrorism is facing scrutiny; in December a judge overturned the conviction of an Afghan heroin dealer because they deemed the DEA to have “violated the defendant’s right to due process.”⁴³ An article in the *New Yorker* of the same month claimed that in a “disturbing” number of narco-terrorism cases, the only evidence linking the drugs to the terrorism was provided by the DEA, which used informants paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to stage fictional narco-terrorism conspiracies into which defendants would be lured.⁴⁴ Russell Hanks, a former senior US diplomat, said “[t]his wasn’t terrorism—this was the manipulation of weak-minded people, in weak countries, in order to pad arrest records.”⁴⁵ The article goes on to accuse the DEA of using narco-terrorism as an “expedient way to justify its existence.”⁴⁶ Evidenced by these events, pursuing prosecution of the financing of terrorism via narcotic drugs remains challenging and elusive yet critically important.

Despite encouraging news in Colombia, and progress – though limited – in Afghanistan, the attacks in Paris and the ongoing conflict in Syria demonstrate that global terrorism is still a major threat, and a well financed one. Working with other UN bodies and the international community, it is thus the responsibility of the CND to combat terrorism by eliminating the illicit narcotics profits that so often sustains it.

⁴¹ UN DPI, *Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2253 (2015), Security Council Expands Sanctions Framework to Include Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (SC/12168)*, 2016.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Judge in Another Narco-terror Case Questions Proof*, Biztweet, 2015.

⁴⁴ Thomson, *Trafficking in Terror: How closely entwined are the drug trade and global terrorism?* 2015.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

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African Conference of Directors and Inspectors General of Police on AFRIPOL. (2014). *Algiers Declaration on the Establishment of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation – AFRIPOL*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from:

<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/algiers-declaration-afripol-english.pdfh>

The Algiers Declaration, which established AFRIPOL under the guidance of the African Union, is not new. However, it is worthwhile revisiting the document, as AFRIPOL is due to come into operation in 2016. The Declaration recognizes that to better combat organized crime on the African continent, greater harmonization of methods and inter-agency cooperation is required. Almost all drug traffickers and terrorists operate across several territories – police cooperation between regional partners is imperative to confront them. This document could be regarded as a template for other regions with less policing cooperation.

Brodzinsky, S. (2015, December 15). Colombia's government and Farc rebels reach agreement in step to end civil war. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/15/colombia-government-farc-rebels-agreement-end-civil-war>

The civil war in Colombia between the government and FARC rebels is one of the longest-running civil conflicts in the world, and inexorably linked to the lucrative cocaine trade. Delegates should monitor the Colombian peace process closely in the run-up to the conference. It may be that valuable lessons for ending lengthy narco-conflicts are given by negotiators. Should Colombia and the FARC agree on a peace deal that deals with the legacy of narcotics trafficking and its violent consequences, it could serve as a template not only for other Latin American conflicts, but conflicts globally such as in Afghanistan.

Thomson, G. (2015, December 14). Trafficking in Terror: How closely entwined are the drug trade and global terrorism? *The New Yorker*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from:

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/12/14/trafficking-in-terror>

This New Yorker article challenges the ethics, tactics, and motives of the United States' Drug Enforcement Agency in pursuing narco-terrorism prosecutions. While not directly challenging the idea that terrorism can be funded by the trade in illegal narcotics, the article argues that few individuals are actually directly involved in both, and that convictions for this offence are often spurious, and achieved by the ethically and legally dubious method of using sting operations and highly paid informants. While this article is journalism, and thus not neutral, it serves as a reminder that just because drugs and terrorism are often linked, they are not always, and delegates must be wary of simplistic or overly broad solutions when discussing this topic.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, December 17). *Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2253 (2015), Security Council Expands Sanctions Framework to Include Islamic State in Iraq and Levant* [Press Release]. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12168.doc.htm>

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2253 by the Security Council reflects the international consensus regarding the contribution of drug trafficking to ISIL's finances. This resolution takes steps to impede ISIL's ability to continue its terrorist activities, including measures that aim to reduce ISIL's ability to participate in the illicit trade of narcotic drugs. Delegates can use this resolution as a current example of frameworks used by the international community to address drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, October 14). *After six years on the rise, Afghan opium crop cultivation declines: new UNODC survey* [Press Release]. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/October/after-six-years-on-the-rise--afghan-opium-crop-cultivation-declines-new-unodc-survey.html>

This announcement by the UNODC of an end to the six-year trend in rising opium production in Afghanistan is significant, and represents a real success for the agency, despite the fall in the number of "poppy free" provinces. The report also details the highest producing provinces, and begins to indicate the human cost of eradication efforts, with year on year casualty figures for Afghanistan's crop eradication program also detailed.

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Thomson, G. (2015, December 14). Trafficking in Terror: How closely entwined are the drug trade and global terrorism? *The New Yorker*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/12/14/trafficking-in-terror>

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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015, October 14). *After six years on the rise, Afghan opium crop cultivation declines: new UNODC survey* [News Article]. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/October/after-six-years-on-the-rise--afghan-opium-crop-cultivation-declines--new-unodc-survey.html>

II. The Role of Civil Society in Addressing the World Drug Problem

Recent Developments

Much of the recent work undertaken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has been in preparation for the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem, to be held in April 2016.⁴⁷ CND has worked with many civil society organizations (CSOs) on the preparatory process ahead of the upcoming session.⁴⁸ CND reconvened during its 58th session in December 2015, and established a timetable for preparations for the event.⁴⁹ It was decided that UNGASS 2016 would “focus on people, public health, and human rights.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, CND will include relevant CSOs in the preparation process, using their expertise and consultant status for a more thorough session.⁵¹ The 58th session of the CND produced a partial agenda for UNGASS 2016, with presentations and briefs provided by representatives from the World Health Organization, the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁵² The aim of UNGASS 2016 is to bring attention to the health aspects of the world drug problem and the violation of human rights of drug users in criminal justice systems.⁵³ Other presentations by representatives of Member States will include the Deputy Minister of Justice of Colombia, speaking on human rights and prosecution of drug related crimes, and an in-depth examination of Portugal and its handling of drug related issues.⁵⁴ The Portuguese case is included in the agenda as an example of a successful case study in the battle against drugs.⁵⁵ Prior to the UNGASS, CND will host five round tables to produce salient points that will be presented to the plenary during the Special Session.⁵⁶

Various CSOs have been active in assisting CND in preparing for UNGASS 2016. The New York Non-Governmental (NGO) Committee on Drugs continues to meet regularly and monitor the Civil Society Task Force (CSTF) that was launched in 2015 to gather relevant information for the Special Session on Drugs.⁵⁷ CSTF produced a “Zero Draft” of recommendations and top priorities, which will be discussed at UNGASS 2016; they includes health recommendations, an examination of drugs and their relation to crime, and new challenges in the fight against drugs.⁵⁸ The New York NGO Committee on Drugs focuses on human rights, public health, and drug courts, with a specific geographic focus on North America and Latin America and the Caribbean, since the region is home to a wide narco-traffic network.⁵⁹ Another of the organizations that is part of CSTF is the Harm Reduction Coalition.⁶⁰ The Harm Reduction Coalition, a CSO that addresses the harmful effects of drugs, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary since its establishment and proclaimed its full support and commitment to providing data, consultative, and research services for UNGASS 2016.⁶¹ Additionally, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society has recently reiterated the concern of some Member States for new and better approaches in tackling the world drug problem.⁶²

In October 2015, the 24th International Harm Reduction Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and was an important development for CSOs.⁶³ Launched by the International Harm Reduction Association, the conference

⁴⁷ UNGASS, *Preparatory Process*, 2016.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ UN CND, *Reconvened fifty-eighth session, including a special segment on the preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem to be held in 2016*, 2016.

⁵⁰ UN CND, *Report on the Reconvened Fifty-Eighth Session*, 2015, pp. 1-3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁵³ UNGASS, *Preparatory Process*, 2016.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Harm Reduction Coalition, *Drug Decriminalization in Portugal*, 2014.

⁵⁶ UN CND, *Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016*, 2015.

⁵⁷ New York NGO Committee on Drugs, *NYNGOC*, 2016; Civil Society Task Force on Drugs, *Civil Society Task Force Statement*, 2015.

⁵⁸ Civil Society Task Force on Drugs, *Civil Society Task Force Recommendations for the “Zero Draft” of the Outcome Document for UNGASS 2016*, 2015, pp. 1-15.

⁵⁹ New York NGO Committee on Drugs, *NYNGOC*, 2016.

⁶⁰ Harm Reduction Coalition, *International Advocacy and the 2016 UNGASS on Drugs*, 2015.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Statement to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 58th Session, Vienna*, 2015.

⁶³ International Harm Reduction Association, *24th International Harm Reduction Conference*, 2015.

spanned three days, covering many topics, including health and welfare for drug addicts, harm reduction services for young people, women drug users, ending the death penalty for drug related offenses, drug use among sex workers, employing people who use drugs, and alternatives to drugs.⁶⁴ Community-based treatment models, which approach addiction as a health issue and not as a criminal justice matter, are considered by many to be key to addressing the global drug problem.⁶⁵ The conference also discussed specific regions where drugs constitute significant danger to the wellbeing of its citizens, with examples including Ukraine, South Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America.⁶⁶ The International Harm Reduction Association covered the existing data related to drug usage, the numerous facets of the problem, and various alternatives to prevent or eliminate illicit drugs.⁶⁷ The Portuguese experience of decriminalization of drugs was also covered, thus bringing attention to a specific case that will be further examined in UNGASS 2016.⁶⁸

Overall, the 24th International Harm Reduction Conference brought forth much needed attention, examination, and dialogue to the problem of illicit drug use. It involved many CSOs in the discussion, providing a crucial opportunity to hear from voices that are not consistently heard on the world stage. This conference in addition to the ongoing preparations from CND are actively seeking to include CSOs and to help to set the stage for a successful and progressive UNGASS 2016.

⁶⁴ International Harm Reduction Association, *24th International Harm Reduction Conference*, 2015.

⁶⁵ Harm Reduction International, *Community-based drug treatment models for people who use drugs*, 2015.

⁶⁶ International Harm Reduction Association, *24th International Harm Reduction Conference*, 2015.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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Civil Society Task Force on Drugs. (2015). *Civil Society Task Force Recommendations for the “Zero Draft” of the Outcome Document for UNGASS 2016*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <http://nyngoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Civil-Society-Task-Force-Recommendations-for-Zero-Draft.pdf>

This is the recommendations and top priorities from the Civil Society Task Force. It presents a sample of a “Zero Draft” for UNGASS 2016 of topics for discussion, bringing the attention of the international community to specific goals they wish to be achieved. It utilizes the information gathered by the Civil Society Task Force and presents a successful civil society initiative that works in tandem with the United Nations. Delegates can utilize the ideas listed in this source for potential solutions to concerns pertaining to civil society organizations and the world drug problem.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2015, March 13). *Statement to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 58th Session, Vienna*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/opinions-and-positions/speeches/2015/statement-to-the-commission-on-narcotic-drugs-58th-session-vienna/>

The statement by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to the 58th Session of CND outlines the goals and concerns of the organization. Some of the concerns listed are the harmful effects posed by drugs, the health aspect of illicit drug use, and the spread of narcotics in society. As one of the biggest civil society organizations, it will be very beneficial for delegates to become familiar with its stance on drugs leading up to UNGASS 2016. The data gathered and role of the organization will figure prominently in the Special Session.

International Harm Reduction Association. (2015). *24th International Harm Reduction Conference* [Website]. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <http://www.ihra.net/conference-2015>

This document presents the itinerary of the International Harm Reduction Conference, the topics that were discussed, and the organizations and individuals that took part in the discussion. Over the course of four days various topics pertaining to narcotics were discussed, including drug use, proliferation, its relation to crime, and some success stories. A very important aspect was the Portuguese case, which will also be examined at UNGASS 2016. It will be very helpful for delegates to note the civil society organizations present and how they worked within the international community.

United Nations, Commission on Narcotic Drugs. (2015) *Report on the Reconvened Fifty-Eighth Session*. Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: <https://undocs.org/E/2015/28/Add.1>

This report on the 58th session of CND includes the outline of the official preparations for UNGASS 2016. It discusses topics that will be covered, some of the participants in the sessions, and which parts of the drug problem will receive the most attention. It utilizes information provided by the International Harm Reduction Association along with other civil society organizations. Delegates will be able to read about the priorities of CND, some of the potential measures that will be discussed, and how the Special Session will proceed.

United Nations, General Assembly, Special Session on the World Drug Problem. (2016). *Preparatory Process*. [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: https://www.unodc.org/ungass2016/en/cnd_preparations.html

This website contains the outline of events and documents produced by the 58th session of CND, held in December 2015. It includes official transcripts of discussion topics, the official preparatory process for UNGASS 2016, and the topics discussed at the 58th session. It also serves to provide delegates with the most recent meeting of CND and the priorities and conclusions of the body leading up to the main event in 2016 – UNGASS.

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III. Evaluating the Impact of Global Narcotics Drug Control

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) reconvened its 58th session from 9-11 December 2015.⁶⁹ The report published after this meeting is meant to prepare the body for the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on drugs in 2016.⁷⁰ Due to the varying sizes and populations, along with a series of other variables, each Member State possesses a different set of needs in addressing drug-related issues.⁷¹ As such, UNGASS 2016 will provide the platform to develop multiple approaches that satisfy the needs of all Member States towards the common goal of reducing supply and demand.⁷² The CND preparatory report reaffirms the commitment of CND to reducing the “supply and demand of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.”⁷³ In particular, the report stresses there is a need for services that aim to reduce demand through prevention, treatment, and recovery.⁷⁴ Although there has been a global push to decriminalize certain drugs, the CND report asserts that these efforts would harm the progress made toward addressing the world drug problem; it is against the spirit of the previous drug control conventions that CND is founded upon.⁷⁵

In September 2015, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) conducted an operation supported by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which was successful in tracking the drug trade from its origins in Latin America all the way through Africa and Europe.⁷⁶ The operation involved law enforcement from dozens of countries and nearly €10 million worth of contraband was seized.⁷⁷ The success of the operation is measured by the 41 arrests for possession, as well as the confirmation of supposed smuggling routes through Africa.⁷⁸

Following this, the UNODC published a report on 26 November 2015 on how individual European economies will be negatively impacted by the illicit drug trade.⁷⁹ The report characterizes South-Eastern Europe as the link between Afghanistan and Western Europe, where the trade of opiates becomes a profit center.⁸⁰ Europe remained a focus when in a declaration made on 4 December 2015 in Belgrade, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) called for a multilateral approach to addressing the world drug problem, not only among Member States, but also among intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations.⁸¹ The importance of regulating the supply and demand of the illicit drug trade was reiterated by the OSCE; recommendations included increasing awareness and education, while also working to reduce crime.⁸² OSCE also suggested that this can be achieved through educating young people about the threats and consequences of illicit drug use.⁸³ The President of the UN International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) released a statement on 9 December 2015 that contained suggestions for CND and the continued efforts to fight the war on drugs.⁸⁴ According to the INCB, multiple factors need to be addressed when fighting the war on drugs, such as regulating the supply and demand of

⁶⁹ UN CND, *Report on the reconvened fifty-eighth session (E/2015/28/Add.1)*, 2015.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ INTERPOL, *INTERPOL Contribution to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem*, 2015, p. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UNODC, *70 kg of drugs seized during a joint operation targeting drug trafficking from Latin America to Europe via Africa*, 2016.

⁷⁹ UNODC, *Drug Money: the illicit proceeds of opiates trafficked on the Balkan route*, 2015.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Declaration on the OSCE Activities in Support of Global Efforts in Tackling the World Drug Problem at the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Ministerial Council on 4 December 2015, in Belgrade*, 2015.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ UN INCB, *Statement of the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Mr. Werner Sipp, on the Reconvened fifty-eighth session of the CND Special segment: Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016, 9 December 2015, in Vienna*, 2015.

drugs and focusing on environmental factors that cause people to abuse drugs.⁸⁵ However, the president noted, it is up to the individual states to uphold the decisions within their own borders.⁸⁶ The INCB determines that it is possible for states to implement these policies, but they must be proportionate to the policies that are already in place domestically.⁸⁷ The INCB also hopes to take advantage of UNGASS 2016 as a platform on the world stage to achieve consensus on this issue.⁸⁸

Finally, CND Member States have recently taken steps to address the world drug problem within their own borders. In November 2015, Mexico legalized the growth and distribution of marijuana for personal use, which is an attempt to steer away from the country's current strict drug policy.⁸⁹ With the passing of this new law, it is hoped that infrequent users will be spared from committing a crime as a result of acquiring it.⁹⁰ Additionally, the intent is that the previous drug laws will no longer apply to current Mexican efforts to combat the world drug problem.⁹¹ In Europe, Italy recently legalized marijuana for medical use.⁹² It will be regulated throughout the country, in terms of prescriptions, and only one manufacturer will be used domestically.⁹³ Though it can be argued that legalizing marijuana is a step in the right direction domestically, few believe that it will have an effect on the world drug problem.⁹⁴ Such developments on the domestic and international levels make up the complex environment in which CND works to evaluate and address the impact of drugs around the world. Despite this complex web of local, national, and international regulatory regimes, CND remains a key, centralized actor offering assistance on this issue. Moving forward into 2016, UNGASS under the management of CND, remains the top priority and will offer key insights into the challenges and opportunities for action on these issues.

⁸⁵ UN INCB, *Statement of the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Mr. Werner Sipp, on the Reconvened fifty-eighth session of the CND Special segment: Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016, 9 December 2015, in Vienna, 2015.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Sipp, *Views and Priorities of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in the lead-up to UNGASS 2016, Briefing to Permanent Missions to the United Nations, 11 November 2015, in Vienna, 2015.*

⁸⁸ UN INCB, *Statement of the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Mr. Werner Sipp, on the Reconvened fifty-eighth session of the CND Special segment: Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016, 9 December 2015, in Vienna, 2015.*

⁸⁹ Malkin & Azam, *Ruling in Mexico Sets into Motion Legal Marijuana, 2015.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Lunghini, *Medical Marijuana Goes on Sale in Italy, 2015.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

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http://www.unodc.org/documents/ungass2016//Contributions/IGO/INTERPOL_Input_to_UNGASS_19NOV2015.pdf

This is an INTERPOL report regarding a law enforcement perspective of the world drug problem. It contains the plan of action that INTERPOL will use in the future towards drug control. Particularly of note, the plan includes the roles of regional law enforcement in countering the world drug problem. Examples include, but are not limited to, EUROPOL, AIRCOP, and WACI. As such, this is an optimal document for delegates aiming to focus on the law enforcement aspect of the topic.

International Narcotics Control Board. (2015, December 9). *Statement of the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Mr. Werner Sipp, on the Reconvened fifty-eighth session of the CND Special segment: Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016, 9 December 2015*, in Vienna. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from:

http://www.unodc.org/documents/ungass2016//Contributions/UN/INCB/INCB_statement_reconvened_CND_session.pdf

The INCB lists the ideas of an intergovernmental organization for the upcoming UNGASS 2016 in this statement by the president of the board. This document focuses on implementing a balanced approach to countering the world drug problem, specifically focusing on rehabilitation and improving the health of drug users, as opposed to solely criminal prosecution. Reviewing this resource will give delegates a perspective of the topic through the eyes of an intergovernmental organization and also offer a unique lens from a 'human-focused' approach.

Malkin, E. & A. Azam. (2015, November 4). *Ruling in Mexico Sets into Motion Legal Marijuana*. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/05/world/americas/mexico-supreme-court-marijuana-ruling.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Americas&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article&r=0>

This New York Times article by Malkin and Azam describes the legalization of recreational marijuana use in Mexico. It is imperative to understand the direction that Member States are heading in their own individual efforts to combat the world drug problem, and this particular case study is extremely relevant to the particularities of global drug control. Mexico is just one of many Member States that are working toward fixing issues domestically before tackling them globally. Delegates will be able to compare the ideas and successes of other Member States to try to interpret them and apply them to own Member States and to assist them in developing realistic and timely proposals at the conference.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (2015). *Declaration on the OSCE Activities in Support of Global Efforts in Tackling the World Drug Problem at the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Ministerial Council on 4 December 2015*, in Belgrade. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from:

http://www.unodc.org/documents/ungass2016//Contributions/IGO/OSCE/121015_Declaration_on_Drugs_208211.pdf

Calling for the cooperation between United Nations organizations, Member States, and civil society organizations in an effort to solve the world drug problem, the OSCE released this declaration in December 2015. It is stated that a key component to combatting the world drug problem is curbing trafficking. However, the OSCE reiterates the idea of promoting a health-based approach as well as diffusing organized crime. Delegates will be able to use this document to gather the information that is important to these organization, which can then be debated at the conference.

United Nations, Commission on Narcotics Drugs. (2015). *Report on the reconvened fifty-eighth session (E/2015/28/Add.1)*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2015/28/Add.1>

This document is the outcome of the reconvened session of CND leading up to UNGASS 2016. Within it can be found a reiteration of the 58th session of CND. Additionally, there are many ideas and topics relevant to the world drug problem to be discussed at UNGASS 2016. Delegates will find that this document helpful in shape their research around the perspectives and realities of CND as well as root their proposals in facts of the debate within CND discussions.

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