

62nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Agenda item 10 a)

19.03.19

Dear Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of IOGT International I want to thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Our analysis of progress during the last ten years shows **considerable achievements** as well as **serious shortcomings** in the response to the world drug problem. With regard to the progress made, we would like to **highlight three of the seven achievements**:

1. **Drug use has remained strikingly low and relatively stable.** Nearly 95% of the world's population lives **drug-free** which is an important achievement worth our attention.
2. Proven solutions for drug policy are at hand. The decade since 2009, has **brought about a stronger scientific evidence – base for interventions in drug demand reduction.**
3. **Clear global consensus exists for comprehensive action tackling the world drug problem as Human Rights and public health issue.** This is a positive shift in line with the UN Drug Conventions strengthening countries in their efforts to move from dealing with drug use exclusively as a criminal justice issue, to increasing involvement of the health and social services.

Clearly, **not all is bad. But, it's not all good either.** We would like to bring at least two issues to your attention.

1. A fundamentally flawed discourse excludes evidence-based, cost-effective, population-level measures and supports counterproductive interventions such as legalization of drugs. In relation to that, another concerning trend is the rising "War **for** drugs".

2. Despite a solid evidence base and serious political commitments made, the scale and extent of leadership for demand reduction has not yet become **the priority it should be** in countries around the world.

In the era of sustainable development, IOGT International calls for a **systematic shift to evidence-based prevention, including treatment.**

Preventing problems from occurring or expanding is by far the best and most humane approach to the world drug problem.

A transition to comprehensive, evidence-based prevention **benefits governments** in terms of cost-effectiveness as well as sustainability. It also helps to empower people and communities. **Prevention promotes Human Rights** and contributes significantly to **positive engagement** of children, youth and adults with their families, schools, workplaces and communities.

For these reasons, IOGT International urges governments **to adopt and scale-up comprehensive evidence-based drug prevention.** We know what works. So, let's go do it.

I thank you for your attention!

--- END