
The role of civil society in the development and implementation of drug policies on prevention, treatment and social reintegration

1. INCB supports a health-centred approach to global drug policy and the international drug control framework that is fully inclusive of civil society and non-governmental organizations. They are essential partners in the design and implementation of drug abuse treatment and prevention programmes, in line with the requirements on States parties in Article 38 of the 1961 Convention, as amended. Effective, evidence-based drug policies need the knowledge and expertise of civil society organizations, as well as their dedication to providing community-level support to the social programmes and primary prevention strategies that help reduce drug demand and identify people most in need of treatment, assistance and social reintegration
2. In [May 2019](#), the INCB held its second meeting with the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Drugs (VNGOC), where representatives of civil society and the members of the Board exchanged views on the need to help governments and civil society work together - stepping up efforts to prevent and treat drug abuse among young people. In 2018, the INCB held a meeting with civil society representatives to discuss the “use of cannabis for medical and non-medical cannabis.” The Board also surveyed 30 civil society organizations on major impediments to the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes for a supplement to the 2018 annual report
3. Evident from these exchanges with the Board is that civil society organizations have diverse perspectives on the means and modalities for the implementation of the drug control conventions in their local communities. Nonetheless, without the assistance of dedicated organizations, the aims of the conventions to prevent substance abuse and provide treatment and rehabilitation will be hard to achieve.
4. The Board therefore wishes to reaffirm in this Alert the important role of civil society, as outlined in the outcome document of the [UN General Assembly Special Session \(UNGASS\)](#) in 2016 and the [2019 Ministerial Declaration](#). The INCB clarified at the time of UNGASS that the principle of a balanced approach to elaborating drug policy means facilitating greater participation and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including civil society groups. Through renewing a sense of shared responsibility and inclusiveness, drug-related prevention, treatment and social reintegration can be sustainably developed and implemented. Civil society involvement allows States to apply specific and innovative approaches that can comprehensively address the needs of special population groups.
5. The involvement of non-governmental organizations, especially women civil society leaders, can therefore improve access to more inclusive, better-designed, and efficient social, health, and educational programmes to make progress in the context of drug control policy. The Board believes that the participation of civil society requires enhancing, as appropriate within country legal contexts, the resources and training available to community organizations on drug-related health and social treatment services. Without the consistent and dedicated work of civil society, much of the illicit drug activity worldwide and its devastating consequences would remain in the dark, left unabated, and given inadequate attention by the international community.

INCB is the independent, quasi-judicial body charged with promoting and monitoring Government compliance with the three international drug control conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

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