

U.S. Questionnaire on Experiences in Implementing the
2016 Outcome Document from the
UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS)

(1) Has your country carried out efforts to disseminate the 2016 UNGASS commitments and recommendations? If so, provide details.

Yes – highlighted below are the United States’ priorities for implementing each thematic area within the UNGASS outcome document. Within each of these thematic areas, the United States affirms the primacy of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as the UN entity with prime responsibility for international drug control policy. The United States continues to encourage the CND, in this leading role, to coordinate efforts to implement the 2016 outcome document across relevant United Nations entities. The United States in particular is pushing increased coordination between the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to enhance international control of the most dangerous drugs wreaking havoc on the health and welfare of humankind.

United States Implementation of the 2016 Outcome Document’s Seven Thematic Areas:

- (1) **Demand Reduction:** The United States supports the balanced and comprehensive approach to drug policy, as agreed in the UNGASS outcome document. In our efforts to implement the 2016 outcome document’s operational recommendations related to demand reduction, the United States prioritizes evidence-based methodologies for treatment and prevention interventions, along the lines of the international treatment and prevention standards.
- (2) **Access and Availability of Controlled Substances:** The United States shares the view that the international community should work to assure the availability of narcotic drugs and other controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and international trafficking. No person should suffer unnecessarily from untreated pain or be denied needed medicines.
- (3) **Supply Reduction:** The United States remains committed to disrupting the illicit drug supply chain, and dismantling the transnational criminal organizations trafficking in drugs. The United States is prioritizing efforts

to work with key source countries to curb the illicit manufacture and cultivation of drugs, in particular the drugs and precursor chemicals used to produce opioids, such as fentanyl and its analogues. The United States is also doubling down its focus to curb the new paradigm in the drug supply chain, whereby synthetic drugs are sold online and trafficked through the international mail and express consignment shipments.

- (4) Cross-Cutting Issues: Drugs and Human Rights, Youth, Children, Women, and Communities:** U.S. efforts to address and counter the world drug problem are grounded in the principles of promoting and protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the inherent dignity of all individuals. Based on the principles, the United States includes gender and youth perspectives into its policies and programs, particular with regard to drug use treatment and prevention initiatives. Furthermore, the United States supports and advances alternatives to incarceration, where appropriate, for low-level, non-violent drug offenders with substance use disorders.
- (5) Cross-Cutting Issues: New Realities in the World Drug Problem:** The United States is acutely focused on curbing the new realities in the world drug problem, particularly the rapid proliferation of synthetic drugs – i.e. new psychoactive substances (NPS) – such as fentanyl and its analogues. The United States is working to enhance domestic and international control of these dangerous drugs, through the treaty-mandated international process, and increased voluntary controls from Member States. These new realities also include new trafficking patterns, with transnational criminal organizations selling these drugs over the open and dark nets, and shipping through the international mail or express consignment shipping. We are working domestically to get a better understanding of these challenges and are already taking steps to address them.
- (6) International Cooperation:** The United States places great value in the need for international cooperation across Member States to address and counter the world drug problem. These challenges are common and shared responsibilities and we must work together to advance of the commitments made in the 2016 Outcome Document. UNODC and the INCB offer valuable tools to support Member States in increasing information sharing and coordination among practitioners in the fields of forensics and law enforcement. The United States prioritizes efforts to work together, using

these existing mechanisms, to share valuable information on the existing trafficking and use trends related to illicit drugs.

(7) Alternative Development: The United States continues to support alternative development activities related to the illicit cultivation of crops. Alternative development is a fundamental pillar of our efforts to address and counter the world drug problem. Through alternative development programs, we want to identify alternative livelihoods for growers, while promoting rule of law, building trust in law enforcement, and advancing and the culture of legality.

(2) Which actions has your country carried out to specifically implement the 2016 UNGASS recommendations?

(1) Demand Reduction: For demand reduction, the United States advances programs in the following areas:

- **Prevention:** Strong prevention messages, especially for youth, are critical to reducing drug use. The United States is incorporating drug use prevention activities in its domestic policies and programs, including as part of its efforts to combat the opioid crisis. Domestically, we are (1) reducing exposure to opioids and preventing their misuse through prescription drug monitoring programs; new state-level laws on prescription drugs access; guidelines to the medical community on prescribing practices; (2) curbing youth substance abuse through tailored programming; and (3) increasing patient awareness of the threats posed by synthetic opioids. The United States is also advocating for increased use of the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention as evidenced-based best practices.
- **Treatment and Recovery:** U.S. programs related to drug treatment and recovery are based on the view that individuals with drug use disorders can be treated and recover from such disorders. To promote recovery, the United States incorporates into its programs and policies the evidenced-based treatment standards highlighted in the International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders. We encourage others to utilize these evidence-based practices in their domestic policies and programs as well. Domestically, the United States is prioritizing (1) treating cases presenting with opioid use disorders; (2) expanding state-level prevention, treatment, and

recovery support services for individuals with opioid use disorder, including increased access to and use of naloxone; and (3) facilitating access to substance abuse treatment services through primary care providers in underserved communities.

- **International Efforts:** Furthermore, we encourage and support international efforts to (1) build the prevention and treatment workforce worldwide, (2) professionalize services, (3) build global networks of prevention and treatment practitioners, academia, and policymakers, and (4) support populations with special clinical needs, such as women, children, and rural communities.

(2) Access and Availability of Controlled Substances: Data collection and research within the United States illustrated that the significant rise in prescribing of opioid pain medications is a key factor in the increase in opioid abuse, addiction, and overdose deaths. With this confirmation, the United States is taking action to ensure availability through safer and appropriate use, and to decrease abuse and diversion through inappropriate prescribing. We are undertaking the following efforts to ensure access and availability of controlled substances, while preventing their diversion:

- Educating clinicians and patients on ways to improve pain care, as well as the safe and appropriate prescribing of opioid medicines.
- Preventing the most significant consequences of opioid abuse, including overdose death through the distribution and safe administration of reversal drugs, such as naloxone.
- Intervening and providing treatment, in particular, medication assisted treatment to individuals with opioid addiction – who are at very high risk for an opioid overdose.

(3) Supply Reduction: The United States is acutely focused on curbing illicit supply of drugs, including by strengthening law enforcement capacity worldwide to better identify and detect the presence of dangerous synthetic drugs at key borders. The United States is working to disrupt the illicit supply chain in the follow ways:

- Targeting opioid manufacturers and distributors that are contributing to the opioid crisis.
- Disrupting the online sales of illicit drugs, particularly synthetic opioids.

- Curbing illicit shipments of drugs, including fentanyl and its analogues, through the international mail and express consignment shipments.
- Interdicting the supply of synthetic drugs that are being illegally imported.
- Coordinating efforts across federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. HIDTA supports state-level initiatives to investigate, interdict, and prosecute drug traffickers.
- Strengthening capacity of partner governments to develop effective tools to combat drug traffickers at the domestic, regional, and international levels.

(4) Cross-Cutting Issues: Drugs and Human Rights, Youth, Children, Women, and Communities: U.S. programs and policies are grounded in human rights principles and incorporate the unique experiences from youth, children, women and communities. For example, the United States supports drug treatment courts for specialized populations that enhance collaboration between the health and justice sectors. In our experience, these courts reduce drug use and crime by more effectively linking justice-involved individuals with drug abuse disorders to health and community services.

These drug treatment courts offer a treatment and recovery path for low-level, non-violent drug offenders, and combine evidence-based drug treatment with health and social services, as well as follow-on monitoring to promote recovery.

(5) Cross-Cutting Issues: New Realities in the World Drug Problem: The 2016 Outcome Document acknowledged the ever-evolving nature of the world drug problem, and Member States must be ready to quickly adapt and respond to the most pressing drug-control challenges. Today's most pressing drug-control challenges are fueled by the rapid proliferation of synthetic drugs, including synthetic opioids. These dangerous drugs are causing thousands of drug overdose deaths in many of our countries. To address these new challenges, the United States is advancing efforts to:

- Enhance international control of synthetic drugs by strengthening WHO's capacity to review more substances for international control on an annual basis.

- Increase voluntary cooperation among Member States through data collection and information sharing through the existing online portals supported by UNODC and INCB.
- Raising international awareness of the new paradigm in drug trafficking whereby these synthetic drugs are sold online and trafficked through the international mail and express consignment shipments.
- Strengthening partner country capacity to curb online sales of these substances, and intercept illicit shipments through the mail.

(6) International Cooperation: The United States supports international cooperation as an essential component in our collective efforts to address and counter the world drug problem. We encourage States Parties to the drug conventions to avail themselves of existing legal tools that can help to combat today's most pressing drug-control challenges. For example, the United States is:

- Encouraging Member States to utilize articles 12 (obligates a State Party to provide pre-export notifications on controlled chemicals to requesting countries) and 13 (increasing monitoring of equipment used in the illicit manufacture of substances) of the UN Convention against Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988 Convention).
- Collaborating and cooperating with Member States on ongoing drug trafficking investigations.
- Facilitating opportunities to engage in expert discussion on individual Member State experiences with today's drug-control challenges.
- Strengthening central authorities in their efforts to combat transnational organized criminals working in drug trafficking.

(7) Alternative Development: The United States continues to advance alternative development programming to reduce illicit crop cultivation. In this programming, the United States promotes, as appropriate, the Guiding Principles on Alternative Development as a reference tool for best practices. The United States applauds CICAD's regional efforts to develop a sustainable alternative development work plan that aims to advance the 2016 outcome document commitments on this thematic area. U.S. alternative development programming advances the view that alternative development should be implemented alongside eradication and includes:

- Helping Afghans who rely on domestic agriculture for income generation and sustenance find gainful economic alternatives to narcotics production.
- Incentivizing growers to cease illicit crop cultivation by supporting the community's other priority needs, including planting new licit crops, increasing access to local and international markets, and upgrading community infrastructure.

(3) Are there interagency dialogues with academia, civil society, or other sectors for the implementation of the 2016 UNGASS?

The United States regularly requests and receives diverse input from academia, civil society, and others in ongoing discussion on international drug policy. These diverse views encourage critical and strategic analysis of existing policies and programs. Non-governmental organizations have an important role to play as we look for additional ways to advance implementation of the 2016 Outcome Document.