

UNODC Civil Society Team inputs to the Human Rights Council report on civil society space pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 32/31

UNODC recognizes the need to promote strong partnerships with civil society organizations in dealing with the complex issues of drug abuse and crime which undermine the fabric of society and endanger human rights. The active involvement of civil society is essential to help UNODC carry out its global mandates, including achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which draws together the strands of peace, the rule of law, human rights, development and equality into a comprehensive and forward-looking framework.

Civil society plays an important role in the work of UNODC governing bodies, namely the Commissions on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), both of which contribute to the review of progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They also actively contribute the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice, the largest and most diverse gathering of policy-makers, practitioners and members of the academia in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice (held every five years). Furthermore, civil society contributes to the work of UNODC related to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), in accordance with and subject to existing rules of procedure and also in line with the relevant resolution of the COSP-UNCAC. UNODC implements its activities with civil society through its Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) umbrella partners, namely the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs ([VNGOC](#)), the [UNCAC Coalition](#) (Transparency International is the Secretariat), and the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ([NGO Alliance](#)).

Procedural practices and challenges of engaging civil society in the work of UNODC

Procedural practices

UNODC Civil Society Team facilitates the work of civil society with UNODC in accordance with the established rules of procedures described below.

NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC can organize side events on the margins of the CND and CCPCJ sessions, as well as ancillary meetings in the context of the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice.

A guideline developed by the Secretariat to the Governing Bodies (SGB) is sent to NGOs by the Civil Society Team to help them conform with the established procedures.

When it comes to activities related to UNTOC, rule 17 of the rules of procedures of its Conference of the Parties provides for NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and other relevant NGOs to apply for observer status.

In addition, rule 17 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC also provides for relevant NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and other relevant NGOs to apply for observer status.

Furthermore, article 13 of UNCAC encourages each State Party to the Convention to take appropriate measures, within its means and in accordance with fundamental principles of its domestic laws, to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, in the prevention of and the fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption. Within the context of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the UNCAC, and in accordance with decision 4/6 of the COSP-UNCAC, adopted at its fourth session in Marrakech (the so called “Marrakech model” on “Non-governmental organizations and the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption”, a day-long briefing for NGOs is held every year on the margins of the session of the Implementation Review Group (IRG).

Finally, UNODC involves civil society on UNCAC related work through the Strategic Framework 2016-2017 and the proposed strategy for 2018-2019, in particular with subprogramme 3 on countering corruption.

NGO contribution and best practices

Contribution

NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC can organize side events on the margins of the CND and the CCPCJ. A large number of side events are organized or co-sponsored by NGOs every year in the framework of both Commissions. During the sessions of the Commissions, NGO briefings and informal dialogues with UNODC senior management officials and the Chairs of the Commissions are organized to exchange ideas and enhance cooperation with NGOs. Over the years, significant successes have been achieved thanks to joint UNODC-civil society activities, including:

- Over 900 NGOs from 115 countries contributed to the 2009 High-Level Segment¹ of the fifty-second session of the CND which adopted a Political Declaration and Plan of Action². On this occasion some 300 NGO representatives adopted a consensus declaration³ and three resolutions with recommendations, many of which have been adopted by the CND, Member States, UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).
- Coordinated by the Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS (CSTF), NGOs provided inputs during the preparation process for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016⁴). What followed was the participation of more than 800 NGOs registered for UNGASS 2016, which adopted an outcome document that contained significant references to the contribution of NGOs.
- NGOs contributed successfully to the UNGASS 2016 process

¹ Fifty-second CND High-Level Segment:

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/session/52_Session_2009/CND-52-Session_HLS.html [Accessed on 31 March 2017]

² 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_52/Political-Declaration2009_V0984963_E.pdf [Accessed on 31 March 2017]

³ Beyond 2008 NGO declaration:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/B2008_Declaration_and_Resolutions_English.pdf [Accessed on 31 March 2017]

⁴ UNGASS 2016: <http://www.unodc.org/ungass2016/> [Accessed on 30 March 2017]

- NGOs participate in the intersessional meetings and the reconvened sessions of the Commissions . In a number of sessions NGO representatives have been added to the list of speakers among Member States.
- A representative of civil society was invited to speak at the opening of the 60th session of the CND.
- Although the UNCAC review mechanism is a peer review process, NGO contribution to the review process has been significant. For example, during the 1st cycle, almost 89% of the country visits had non-governmental stakeholder participation (including NGOs, business associations and academia).

Best practices

Through the GLOU68 programme “Looking Beyond: Towards a Strategic Engagement with Civil Society on Anti-Corruption, and Drugs and Crime Prevention”, UNODC has established best practices working with NGOs, mainly as follows:

- 1) NGOs successfully contributed to the UNGASS 2016 preparations. The UNGASS outcome document contains 11 references to civil society.
- 2) The UNODC-VNGOC project – NGO Marketplace – is an online platform which allows Member States and other stakeholders to find information about, and connect with, NGOs working on drug policy and providing drug related services to affected populations; increases communication and networking of NGOs globally; and helps all stakeholders in the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document and shows how the work of NGOs is making an impact on the ground.
- 3) Thanks to the joint UNODC-UNCAC Coalition multi-stakeholder workshops, civil society increased its knowledge and capacity to contribute to the UNCAC review process, and had the opportunity to interact with government representatives and the private sector. Since 2011, 12 workshops for NGOs on the UNCAC and the review mechanism have been organized across the globe, and a total of 286 NGOs have been trained.
- 4) Two Regional Anti-Corruption Platforms have been launched, enabling NGOs to share experiences and build partnerships as well as allowing Member States and other stakeholders to find information about the work of NGOs on anti-corruption issues in Africa and Southeast Europe.
- 5) UNDOC Civil Society Team manages an online database of some 3240 NGOs working on drugs and crime related issues.