

A Guide to participating in the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2014

Why should civil society organisations engage in CND?

The engagement of civil society organisations (CSOs) at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is important because:

- It is the forum where international drug policies are negotiated and agreed upon
- Senior policy makers from the health and law enforcement sectors of drug policy attend, offering a unique opportunity to initiate or develop a relationship with them
- CSOs can contribute to the formal CND sessions by making statements in the plenary session (in accordance with the rules of the CND Secretariat)
- CSOs can monitor what delegates say and the positions they take on agenda issues, including whether they vote in favour of scheduling certain substances.

What, when and where?

The [2014 Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#) will take place from 13 to 21 March in Vienna, Austria. This year includes a **High Level Segment (HLS)** scheduled for 13 to 14 March. The HLS will review progress and challenges since the agreement of a [Political Declaration and Action Plan on drugs in 2009](#). Ministers, and maybe even some heads of state, will take part in the HLS to exchange views on the challenges and priorities relating to drugs and sign-off on a Joint Ministerial Statement, which is currently being negotiated in Vienna. The regular CND session will be held in the following week – 17 to 21 March – where new resolutions will be negotiated, among other activities.

How can I engage in the CND?

NGOs have had an increasingly strong engagement and presence at the CND sessions in recent years, and we hope this will be continued in 2014. Here are some ways you and your organisation can engage in policy making at CND, even if you cannot personally attend:

(1) Find out whether your government is sending a delegation to the HLS and CND, and if so who is joining the delegation, especially the head of delegation

- Find out who is leading the delegation on drug policy and HIV issues to identify the individuals with whom you could seek to establish contact
- Identify formal or informal ways of contacting delegation members
- **If you want to see who attended the CND in previous years, to get an idea of the likely composition** of this year's delegation, IDPC can send you the list. Email Marie at mnougier@idpc.net. A list of delegations from all the countries that attended the 2013 CND is available [here](#).
- **For your future CND and broader advocacy work, the list of delegation members can also be useful** for identifying the organisations and individuals with whom you could build relationships in your country or at other forums.

(2) Seek to initiate and build a constructive relationship, and raise your advocacy asks, with your country representatives attending the HLS and CND

- Meet with, call or write to representatives who will be part of the delegation to CND, before they leave for Vienna:
 - Find out to whom it is best to write this letter
 - Draft your letter, including clear advocacy asks (please contact us if you need help in defining your advocacy asks: jbridge@idpc.net)
 - Send the letter and make sure it has been received by following up with a call/email. Remember, it is always efficient to follow up a letter with more personal contact
 - Based on the outcomes and contacts made at CND, follow up on your letter with another letter or meeting. This is a great partnership-building tool with the stakeholders.
- Organise meetings for your delegation at CND (whether or not you attend CND), for example, in collaboration with other NGO representatives
- Take a look at the list of recommendations that IDPC has put together in relation to the likely issues on the agenda this year, which may be useful for influencing government positions, available on the [IDPC webpage on the High Level Segment](#).

(3) Stay updated on what is happening in the lead up to the HLS and CND because this information could provide you with leverage for your advocacy or create an obstacle for your work

- For regular updates on negotiations on the Joint Ministerial Statement, visit the [IDPC webpage on the High Level Segment](#)
- For regular updates on preparations for CND and schedules of the side events, visit the [IDPC webpage on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#)
- Also keep an eye out for updates on both processes by checking the [CND Blog](#) and the [IDPC Blog](#)
- This is a great professional development opportunity to boost your knowledge about drug policy.

(4) Keep an eye on what your government is saying at the HLS and CND

- From 13 to 21 March, keep checking the [CND Blog](#) where IDPC will report live on negotiations and statements made at the HLS and CND
- For Twitter users, the CND Blog also hosts a twitter feed capturing tweets about the HLS and CND. You can tweet about the CND and follow CND tweets using the hashtag: **#CND2014**.

(5) Communicate advocacy messages to government delegations at the HLS and CND

- If you are attending the CND, you will likely meet with many delegates including those from your country. To ensure a detailed discussion, you could seek to schedule a meeting with relevant delegates from your government, or even another government whose drug policies you are interested in learning more about. It is important to ensure that you are meeting with the delegate most relevant for the issues you wish to discuss
- If you are not attending the CND, you could consider approaching other NGO representatives, including IDPC representatives, to seek to meet with a government delegation and raise advocacy issues that you have identified.

(6) Raise awareness of the preparations for UNGASS 2016

- Given the growing discussions around preparations for the UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem in 2016 (UNGASS), you could seek to raise your interest in engaging with the process in your interactions with delegates.

(7) Become a member of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)

The VNGOC has a mandate for ensuring NGO involvement in CND processes and is an important mechanism for coordinating NGO input. It is therefore important that as many NGOs as possible become members of the VNGOC. For more information about the VNGOC, please [click here](#).

- **VNGOC membership** is open to all NGOs with expertise in drug policy, and all you need to do is submit an application form. Membership costs €50 per year, and you will need to register your organisational profile with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs before you apply. For more information, [click here](#), or contact Marie at mnougier@idpc.net
- The VNGOC will organise an **Informal Civil Society Hearing** on 12 March 2014 (15:00 to 18:00) to gather inputs from NGOs, and to present it to the HLS and CND. You can pass on your advocacy messages directly to the VNGOC, or ask NGO representatives (including IDPC) attending the hearing to try to speak out on your advocacy messages.

Next steps

If you or people you know are attending the HLS and/or CND this year, please inform IDPC by [sending your name, email address and phone number to Marie \(\[mnougier@idpc.net\]\(mailto:mnougier@idpc.net\)\) as soon as possible](#), and to Jamie (jbridge@idpc.net) if you need a pass for CND (or if you are not sure). IDPC is here to help you engage in the HLS and CND as much as possible, and to include you in our own activities in Vienna, such as the CND orientation and strategic meeting on Sunday 16th March.

The International Drug Policy Consortium is a global network of non-government organisations and professional networks that specialise in issues related to illegal drug production and use. The Consortium aims to promote objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. It produces briefing papers, disseminates the reports of its member organisations, and offers expert consultancy services to policy makers and officials around the world.

International Drug Policy Consortium
Fifth Floor, 124-128 City Road, London
EC1V 2NJ, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7324 2975
Email: contact@idpc.net
Web: www.idpc.net