

April 2016

## UNGASS 2016 INPUD Statement



International Network of People who Use Drugs

### The UNGASS Outcome Document

In 2015, [INPUD's Drug User Peace Initiative](#)<sup>1</sup> stated that 2016's "UNGASS will not be like previous events: the topic of ending prohibition will be unavoidable." Now, the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) emphasise that there is a real danger that those who are most catastrophically impacted by the war on drugs, by global prohibition and criminalisation – people who use drugs themselves – are at considerable risk of being invisibilised by the UNGASS.

The final draft of the UNGASS Outcome Document, entitled *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*, quite simply fails to take into account the human rights of people who use drugs or to acknowledge or address the harms caused by prohibition. Though the document includes an ostensible "concern with the health and welfare of humankind", expressed and specific concern for the health, welfare, and rights of people who use drugs is conspicuous by its absence. Instead, drugs and therefore people who use them are cast, yet again, as the problem.

### People who Use Drugs are Part of the Solution

INPUD stresses that people who use drugs are not the problem – we are a fundamental part of the solution, a critical resource in engaging with drug-related issues. The so-called 'world drug problem' is driven by punitive prohibition, by criminalisation, and by the stigma, discrimination, and social exclusion that they drive. It is the misguided and moralising quest for a 'drug-free society' – a quest that is reaffirmed in the outcome document – that has wrought such harm upon the lives of people who use drugs and the communities in which they live.

**INPUD emphasises that member states of the United Nations have failed to concretely commit to the necessary reimagining of the drug control regulations that have been responsible for driving the majority of drug-related harms.** As we stress in our [Drug User Peace Initiative](#), not only is **decriminalisation** of people who use drugs imperative, but **legal and regulated drug production** is essential in order to avoid the harms that result from black market drug production. Furthermore, service and healthcare provision and **comprehensive and holistic harm reduction** interventions need to be rolled out, and need to take into account people's variable and nuanced realities. In addition, stigmatisation of people who use drugs, and the resulting discrimination and social exclusion, urgently needs to be challenged.

### It's Time to End the Drug War

People who use drugs are people, entitled to recognition and protection of their [human rights](#)<sup>2</sup> and prioritisation of their health. People who use drugs are a key stakeholder at the UNGASS. In the context of our rights not being protected in the outcome document, we reiterate our call that our rights must be at the forefront of the international drug control system. The harms associated with drug use stem from the so-called 'war on drugs' itself, a war that is in reality a war on people who use drugs, a war that is supported by the 'drug control organs' of the United Nations. **It is time to end the war on drugs. It is time for peace.**

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<sup>1</sup> INPUD's [Drug User Peace Initiative](http://www.inpud.net/en/news/drug-user-peace-initiative-relaunch-docs) is available at <http://www.inpud.net/en/news/drug-user-peace-initiative-relaunch-docs>

<sup>2</sup> The [Human Rights of and Demands from People who Use Drugs](#) are presented in INPUD's [Consensus Statement](#), available at <http://www.inpud.net/en/news/inpud-consensus-statement-drug-use-under-prohibition-human-rights-health-and-law>