

What is UNGASS 2016?

It is a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) to be held in April 19-21st 2016 on the topic of “the world drug problem”. This comes at a time when the ineffectiveness of current drug policies often appears more damaging than the drugs themselves. Many countries have openly expressed a need for change.

The ‘General Assembly’ is the principle policy-making body of the United Nations (UN), and the only one in which all 193 UN member states have equal representation. At the request of member states, it convenes UN General Assembly Special Sessions (UNGASS) on specific issues. There was an UNGASS on drugs in 1998 at which member states agreed on a **Political Declaration on Global Drug Control**. Ten years later, member states met in Vienna to discuss progress made and to agree on a new **Political Declaration and Plan of Action** on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

The next UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) was due to be held in 2019 – the target date set out in the **2009 Political Declaration and Action Plan** for the achievement of a significant reduction in or the elimination of the demand and supply of drugs. However in September 2012, the presidents of Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico called on the UN to host an international conference on drug policy reform. Subsequently, a provision was included in an **annual omnibus resolution on drug policy** – sponsored by Mexico, and co-sponsored by 95 other countries – to bring forward this global drug policy summit meeting to 2016

IDHDP is a member of **New York NGO Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC)** and the **Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)** as it is likely that these committees will be the formal civil society mechanisms for engaging in the UNGASS.

1. Please get doctors of all specialties to join IDHDP - as this will strengthen our influence in the international community and at the UN. The doctor’s voice is very important to support future health-based drug policies.
2. Lobby your government to promote more progressive drug policies during international debates.
3. Educate public opinion on the structure of international drug policy politics and decision-making, options for reform.

For more information go to:

- 1) **[Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the world drug problem](#)**
- 2) **[What Is UNGASS 2016?](#)**
- 3) **[2016 UNGASS](#)**

And for further thoughts read [“What Comes After the War on Drugs – Flexibility, Fragmentation or Principled Pluralism?”](#)