

To Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the United Nations
Human Rights Council, Geneva

Re: Requesting support for the resolution on the “Contribution of the Human Rights Council to the implementation of the Joint Commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”

Your Excellencies,

The undersigned organizations are writing to request your delegation’s support for the resolution concerning the “Contribution of the Human Rights Council to the implementation of the Joint Commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem,” which is to be considered during the 37th session of the Human Rights Council.

The issue of the so-called “war on drugs” and drug-related policies have led to a range of human rights violations worldwide. Across the globe, drugs have been used as grounds to police women as well as poor, racial and ethnic minority communities in grossly discriminatory ways, with negative consequences for public safety and community well-being. It has also had serious implications on the situation of human rights defenders who face heightened risk of attacks, from both State and non-State actors, ranging from public defamation to life-threatening violence.

In April 2016, the UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem adopted an Outcome Document which reiterates the need for: the implementation of international drug control treaties in accordance with human rights obligations and the protection of and respect for human rights; as well as the importance of enhanced coherence within the UN system in addressing the world drug problem.

In March 2015, the Human Rights Council passed the first ever resolution (28/28) on this topic, requesting that the High Commissioner prepare a study on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights, which was presented at the 30th session of the Council in September 2015, and represented the first report of the High Commissioner on the impact of drug policies on human rights.

We now call on your delegation to support the updated resolution that is to be presented at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council. This resolution centers on a significant technical contribution that the Human Rights Council can make to the evaluation of the current drug control regime since a key issue that still needs to be addressed concerns how drug policies are measured, including their impact on human rights.

The resolution in question aims to build upon the High Commissioner’s 2015 study through the application of relevant OHCHR indicators. This will provide States and other stakeholders with improved understanding and data, in order to assess current policies

and assist in improving policy-making concerning human rights issues relating to drugs across the globe. It is an important opportunity to apply the expertise of the OHCHR, and the work developed specifically on indicators, and is also a great chance to increase the Human Rights Council's impact concerning such a pressing issue and operationalise human rights on the ground.

We thank you for your attention and support.

Sincerely,

1. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)
2. Asian Legal Resource Centre
3. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
4. CELS – Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales
5. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
6. Conectas Direitos Humanos
7. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
8. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
9. Human Rights Watch
10. International Service for Human Rights
11. Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network
12. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights