



TIME TO REVISIT DRUG POLICIES - TOWARDS THE UNGA SPECIAL SESSION ON DRUGS

Organised by the Global Health Programme, The Graduate Institute

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SAVE THE DATE

PUBLIC EVENT

Monday, 17 November 2014, 10:00 – 13:00
Maison de la paix, The Graduate Institute, Geneva

Early May 2016, eighteen months from now, a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) will deal with substance abuse and illicit drug policy. Increasing voices urge political leaders and citizens to rethink the approach to illicit drugs and to rebalance the international response to drug use. The global health community has an important role to play in this. An early engagement of the Geneva-based global health actors is critical for the direction the debates will take in the preparation of UNGASS 2016. Of particular relevance from a health perspective is a re-assessment of the role of harm reduction in illicit drug policy. Never before have the health benefits of harm reduction approaches — which aim to prevent deaths from overdose and from transmission of HIV or hepatitis — been clearer.

Switzerland has since long been a pioneer in illicit drug policy. It is based on four pillars — prevention, treatment, harm reduction and law enforcement. For many countries, the Swiss policy has served as example for own reforms. Former Federal Counselor, Ruth Dreifuss, remains an active member of the Global Commission on Drug Policy to promote new and innovative approaches to drug policy.

The preparatory work for this summit will begin well in advance and, hence, the Global Health Program organizes this half-day public event in the lead-up to the UNGASS 2016. The health dimensions of the UNGASS 2016 should be explored in this meeting and the event aims at helping the diplomatic community in Geneva to define their positions in the preparatory process.

The half-day public event will address these issues by keynote addresses and a panel discussion including engaged academics, policy makers and international organizations. Mme Ruth Dreifuss, Ambassador Tania Dussey-Cavassini, Prof Michel Kazatchkine, and Mr Mike Trace are confirmed speakers. Prof Thomas Zeltner will moderate this policy dialogue.

The event is sponsored by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health.

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