

UNITED NATIONS (UNGASS 2016)

The United Nations General Assembly held a Special Session (UNGASS) on the global drug problem, April 19th -21st 2016 in New York. This Special Session was an important milestone in achieving the goals set in the policy document of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug problem.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/181 of 17 December 2015, decided that representatives of non-governmental organizations should be invited to participate in the special session along with representatives of civil society and the scientific community, academia, youth groups and other relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the rules of procedure and established practice of the General Assembly. UNGASS featured a general debate and conducted five interactive and multi-stakeholder round tables in parallel with plenary sessions.

During this Special Session, The Bahamas be co-chaired a round table discussion on 'Alternative Development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy addressing socioeconomic issues.' This was a great achievement for The Bahamas because it was the first time a country from the Caribbean region had been awarded an opportunity to lead in a global discussion forum. The Bahamas used this opportunity to state the unique challenges experienced locally and regionally, particularly the challenge of location, drugs and crime and its impact on community development.



Above: UNGASS Delegation

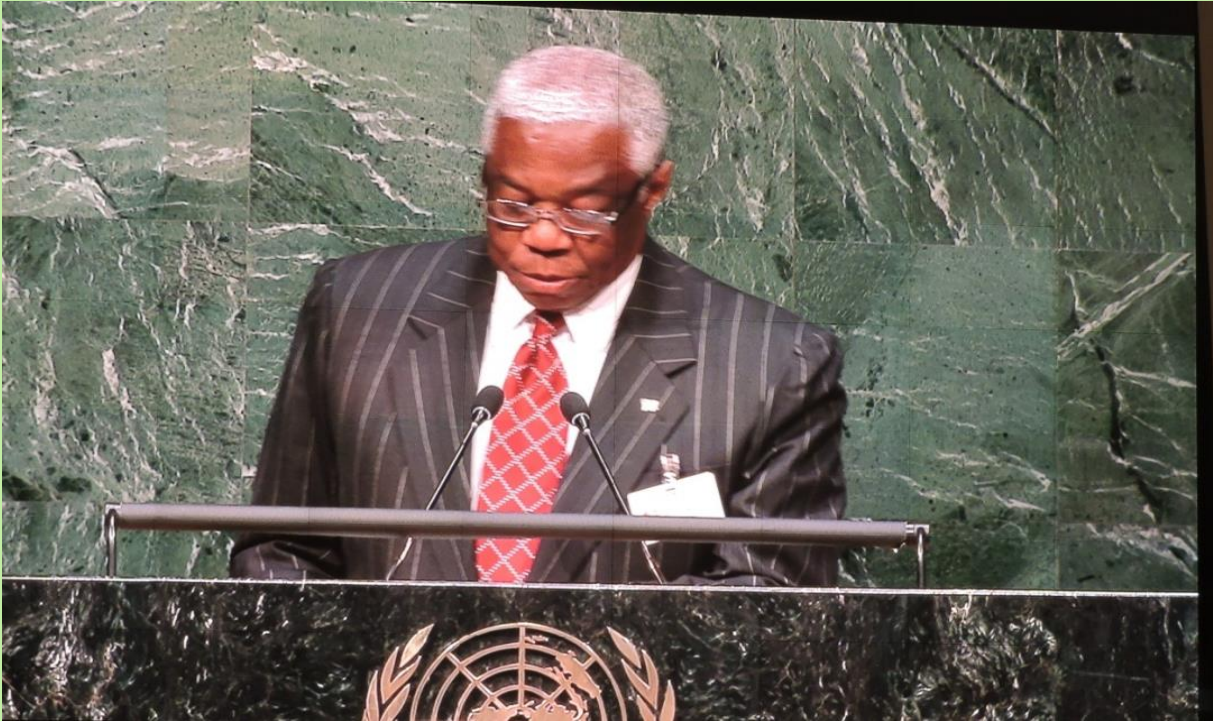
The United Nations Special Session of the world drug problem was held in New York, USA April 17th -21 2016.

Nine Delegates attended from the Bahamas. Delegates incorporated representatives from the Ministry of National Security and National Anti-Drug Secretariat Stakeholders. They include the following;

- Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage, Minister of National Security
- Mr. Carl Smith – Permanent Security Ministry of National Security
- Dr. Chaswell Hanna – Director, National Anti-Drug Secretariat(NADS)
- Ms. Greer McKinney, NADS
- Mrs. Rochelle Basden – Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre
- Dr. Bridgette Rolle – Bahamas National Drug Council
- Mr. Troy Clarke – the National Lead Institute
- Ms. Lowena West – BASH Bahamas
- Police W/Sergeant Jestina Rigby- Royal Bahamas Police Force
- Police Corporal C. Edgecombe

Monday 18th April 2016 Delegates attended various side events and workshops host by Civil Society organizations from North & South America, Europe and Asia.

Tuesday 19th April, 2016 the Opening Session was convened and the draft agenda was presented. The Minister of National Security Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage read country statement in the General Assembly Hall in the Opening Session.



Above: Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage delivers Country Statement

Roundtable One (1) discussion took place later that afternoon.

Roundtable (1) Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion (“drugs and health”).

The focus of this round table was to address the relationship that exist between drug abuse and health challenges. Member states were concerned with the health and welfare of people and the need to provide for protective measures from risks linked to drug use and drug use disorders through drug use prevention, as well as through treatment, care, rehabilitation and social

reintegration for people with drug use disorders or in need of services to prevent related health problems.

Wednesday 20th April 2016 Roundtables 2 and 3 was held.

Roundtable (2) Supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime")

Member states outlined that to successfully address supply reduction activities globally there needs to be a collaborative approach, particularly if gains made in this regard are to be sustained and new and emerging drug-related organized crime threats are to be successfully countered. Enhanced cooperation is crucial to disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking organizations. It was during this roundtable that Permanent Secretary Mr. Carl Smith delivered the Bahamas' statement on the issue.



Permanent Secretary Mr. Carl Smith

Roundtable (3) Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities.

The Member states reflected on the preamble of the Universal Declaration on Human rights, maintaining that drug control systems aimed at improving the health and welfare of humankind, should be in full compliance with human rights standards, based on the recognition that all members of the human family have equal and inherent dignity. For this to be achieved measures taken by States must not be discriminatory towards the most vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Thursday 21st April 2016 Roundtables 4 and 5 was held.

Roundtable (4) Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation.

The member states reflected on the impact and the unprecedented emergence of dangerous psychoactive substances, which are not under international control, has led to their increased drug abuse, hospital emergency admissions, and untimely deaths. These new psychoactive substances (NPS), while often marketed as legal alternatives to substances under international control, may pose public health and safety threats comparable to those of traditional illicit drug substances.

Roundtable (5) Alternative Development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues.

From illicit cultivation and production to trafficking and use, the world drug problem, with all its ramifications, is intertwined with a vast array of social and economic issues. This exerts great pressure on development issues, which in turn have an influence on the world drug problem.

Member states during this discussion examined the concept of sustainable development, and the engagement by the international community in this area, is reflected in the recently formulated 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. This new agenda recognizes that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security and that these factors will be at risk without sustainable development.



**Report submitted by
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