



During today's main launch of the INCB 2016 Annual Report in Berlin, INCB-President Werner Sipp called on Governments to do more to take women into account in their drug policies and programmes. The report shows that women are generally disadvantaged with regards to drug treatment. While women and girls comprise one third of global drug users, just one fifth of treatment recipients are women. According to the INCB, systemic, structural, social, cultural and personal barriers are responsible for women's lacking ability to access substance abuse treatment.

Highlighting the increase in the number of women arrested for drug-related crimes and the strong link between sex-work and drug use, Mr Sipp called on Member States to collect and share data to reach a better understanding of the specific needs of women affected by drug abuse. „We want to change perceptions and remind people, particularly policymakers, of the importance of protecting the rights of women who use drugs or who have committed drug-related offences“, Sipp said.

The Vienna-based INCB, created in 1961 to oversee Government's compliance with international drug control conventions, selected this year's focus in light of a disproportionate

increase in drug overdoses among women.

Mr. Sipp further reiterated his call for a balanced approach to drug policies. While punitive criminal justice has to be a part of a Government's response, alternative measures such as treatment, rehabilitation and social integration remain underutilized according to the Board's assessment. Consequently, the report recommends Governments to move away from imprisonment for minor drug-related offences and to recognize drug dependency as a public health concern requiring health-centred responses.



During the overview of the global drug control situation, Mr. Sipp highlighted in particular the current situation in the Philippines and Afghanistan. In its report, the INCB Board calls for an immediate stop to the extrajudicial targeting of people in the Philippines. Such actions are not only a human rights violation but are also a clear breach of the three international drug control conventions, Mr. Sipp stated. Due to the dire security situation in Afghanistan, the 2016 report urges other countries to step up their support for drug control efforts in Afghanistan. Mr. Sipp underlined that action against drugs is vital if sustainable development is to be achieved.

**More information at:** [www.incb.org](http://www.incb.org)