

Abstract: Regulating and Policing Different Drug approaches to World Drug Problems in accordance with sustainable development goals.

In 2015, the Commission took the position that drug control nationally has to be aligned with the sustainable development goals approved by the member states. The Commission listed 17 developmental goals which reflects the different dimensions of the 5 sustainable developments: (1) social development, (2) economic development, (3) environmental sustainability (4) peaceful, just inclusive society and (5) global partnerships. 2019 will sum up the 10 year global review of the Global Commission on Drug Policy's 2009 political declaration and plan of action to "counter the world drug problem."

In this context, the address will focus on three related issues. First, whether national drug approaches can be aligned in accordance with sustainable development goals. National drug policies are generally classified into two groups: the harm reduction or harm eradication with variances in both. The former arguably said to be more aligned with the Commission's developmental goals and sustainable development, whereas the latter has been criticized for failing to consider impact of drug use on health, society, family, marginalization, poverty, economic costs of drug use, rule of law, access to justice, illicit financial flows, role of the criminal justice system etc. Harm eradication national approaches are not always contrary to sustainable development. An evaluation of the harm eradication approach advocated in countries like Singapore, will demonstrate eradication drug policies coupled with increasing harm reduction fundamentals such as, rehabilitation, science and evidence based treatment interventions, reintegration of drug inmates into society. This drug approach is in tandem with the Commission's sustainable developmental goals. Besides, classic harm reduction and eradication categorization fails to take into account a country's jurisdictional, geographical and cultural differences which may necessitate a nuanced drug approach. Perhaps, evaluating the balance between prohibitionists' and harm reduction fundamentals within national drug policies may signal whether it is aligned in accordance with the sustainable developmental goals. Drug problems at times dictate a nuanced national approach which may not necessarily be inconsistent with the Commission's global drug policy. Prohibition and harm reduction measures can be balanced within national drug policy. They do not necessarily share a hydraulic relationship. A balance can be struck in national drug policies between maintaining access, availability to controlled drugs, evidence based treatment measures and strong measures to prevent misuse and trafficking. The issue often is how tilted the balance is in favor of prohibitionists' measures perhaps endangering sustainable development.

Second, how important are health outcomes in this balance calculus. Health outcomes impact the 5 dimensions of sustainable development at different levels. It can be a useful criterion in measuring success of national drug policies and sustainable development.

Last, Commission's sustainable approach requires fundamentally a change in mindset to drug use, control and prohibition. The paradigm has shifted for some. For others, to accept de-linking of drug policy from abstinence like in other behavior related policies concerning consumption of liquor, cigarettes etc, remains a difficult issue. Can that Rubicon be crossed?