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## **Identifying Common Ground on Public Health for UNGASS 2016:**

### ***What does a ‘public health approach’ to global drug policy mean in practice?***

A panel discussion convened by United Nations University

21 April 2014, 10.00am – 12.45pm

United Nations Headquarters

Conference Room 11, Conference Building

As momentum builds towards the General Assembly’s Special Session on the World Drug Problem, scheduled for early 2016 (UNGASS 2016) in New York, there are increasing calls for it to “reaffirm the original spirit of the conventions, focusing on health”. But what does a ‘public health approach’ to global drugs policy mean in practice? Member States, civil society actors, and increasingly also other actors in the global drug control regime’s governance structures — the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the World Health Organization — seem to have quite different answers to this question. This panel discussion will consider where common ground might be found on public health issues and what ‘operational recommendations’ could usefully be developed ahead of UNGASS 2016 as a result of a public health emphasis. The panel will consider questions of public health priorities, how to measure and assess the impacts of drug policy on public health, and in what ways UN departments, funds, programs and agencies might ensure public health considerations contribute to system-wide coherence in the implementation of global drug policy.

### **Speakers**

**Mr Olivier Zehnder**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN

**Mr Werner Obermeyer**, Deputy Executive Director, WHO Office to the UN

**Mr Ninan Varughese**, Senior Adviser, UNAIDS New York Office

**Ms Charity Kagwi**, Programme Management Officer, UNODC New York Office

**Mr Sandeep Chawla PhD**, former Deputy Executive and Division Director for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, UNODC

**Ms Joanne Csete PhD**, Associate Professor, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health

**Mr Diederik Lohman**, Associate Director, Health and Human Rights, Human Rights Watch

**Moderator: Mr James Cockayne**, Head of Office at the UN, UN University

*Followed by a Question and Answer Session*

### **Upcoming meetings in the ‘Identifying Common Ground for UNGASS 2016’ series**

**6 May 2015** Identifying Common Ground on Development for UNGASS 2016

**9 June 2015** Identifying Common Ground on Criminal Justice for UNGASS 2016

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