



“We must focus our vision on humans, but not on the substance. This is a complex phenomenon that must be addressed”
Milton Romani, during the UNASUR seminar in Quito.



The seminar “Drug Policies in Latin America in the discussion process towards UNGASS 2016: Possible Convergences” organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, held in July 2015 in Quito was undoubtedly another significant step in the international drug policy debate in the run-up to UNGASS 2016. This high level meeting revealed the level of commitment and interest in a drug policy reform agenda by most countries in the region. South American countries are seeking alternatives and are keen to build consensus and a common position to take to the UNGASS 2016 meetings.

“We share an agreement that a policy of absolute prohibition has not been effective...”
says Ernesto Samper, General Secretary of UNASUR.

The meeting considered recommendations by experts from governmental and civil society agencies. Ecuador, Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina support the creation of an expert advisory group as an outcome of UNGASS, that would address a series of existing contradictions and tensions with the international drug conventions. Countries are increasingly open to a debate on the reform of the conventions.

Drug law reform – Cannabis regulation – Latin America, Europe

Activities:

[Drug Policy in Catalonia: Local action into global change](#). *September 21st*. Martin Jelsma was invited by the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and spoke on the panel *Cannabis: normalisation, regulation and prohibition*.

[Forum Droghe Summer School](#) in Florence (Italy), Centro Studi Nazionale Cisl, 4 *September*. Tom Blickman attended the event which brought together more than 80 people, including Italian health officials and cannabis activists. Blickman made a presentation on the regulation of cannabis. The event received coverage in the local press (*see below*)

[Udine Societa della Regione](#), 10 *July*. Pien Metaal was invited to present on UNGASS at a meeting on Italy's current drug policy, *Un cambio di passo, per la politica sulle droghe in Italia e nel mondo*.

Publications:

[Latin America Informal Drug Policy Dialogue](#), Final Report of the Puerto Rico's Informal Dialogue which focused on policies and reforms in the Caribbean region. [Full Report \(PDF\)](#)

[Cannabis policy in the Czech Republic](#). The Czechs rank among the top cannabis users in Europe. Article by Tereza Filipkova. *September 2015*.



[Indonesia and the New War on Drugs.](#)

The Indonesian government has stepped up its anti-narcotics campaign slashing activists' hopes for progressive reforms. Article by Dania Putri, *September 2015*

El cannabis medicinal en la República Checa. Las inconveniencias de un sistema 'moderno y pragmático', Tereza Filipkova. *August 2015* (For *Cáñamo* magazine, Barcelona)

[Drug Law Reform in Costa Rica](#) – new country page on latest developments in drug policy reform, *July 2015*

In the media

[Summer School 2015 Forum Droghe - Canapa. Culture e pratiche di regolazione sociale e di limitazione dei rischi](#) (2^a giornata) – Radio Radicale Italia, *September 2015*.

[Cannabis legale, l'Europa a due velocità](#), Fuoriluogo, September 2015

The presentation made by Pien Metaal at the Universidad de Deusto (Bilbao), *June 2015*, on Latin America drug policy developments has been highlighted in the August issue of *Cáñamo* magazine (Barcelona)

Alternative Development – Drugs and Peace (Myanmar, Colombia)



Myanmar Opium Farmer's Forum, Upper Myanmar 10-12 September, Ernestien Jensema and Tom Kramer travelled to Myanmar to attend the Forum. This was the third opium poppy farmers' forum in the region bringing together farmers and community workers from several regions in Myanmar. The aim of these forums is to contribute to farmer rights, rural development and decriminalization. The forum produced a [Myanmar Farmers Forum Declaration](#).

In the media:

BBC article, [China's drug habit fuels return of the Golden Triangle](#), quotes Tom Kramer on poverty and opium cultivation in Myanmar. 17 September

The Nation op-ed, [Consequences of the Kokang crisis for peace, democracy in Myanmar](#) - literally reproduces the texts of our last briefing on Burma: "The Current State of Counternarcotics Policy and Drug Reform Debates in Myanmar". July 2015.

Capacity4dev.eu, the European Commission international cooperation and development website, [Voices & Views. The Lands Drugs Nexus](#), an interview with Tom Kramer published on, 10 July.

Publications:

Myanmar Policy Briefings Series No 16, [Ethnic Politics and the 2015 Elections in Myanmar. September 2015 – Full Briefing \(PDF\)](#)

[The Chemical War on Drugs in Colombia](#) (Interactive Timeline), Amira Armenta, *September 2015*. After 37 years, Colombian government has announced an end to controversial aerial sprayings with glyphosate.

Preparations for UNGASS 2016

[First session of Human Rights Council on the subject of drug control](#), 27-30 September. Geneva, Switzerland. Pien Metaal attended a Panel discussion on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights, including the rights of farmers and producers. The session was historic as it was the first time the Human Rights Council talked about the relation between Human Rights and Drug Control and also been involved in preparations for UNGASS. The meeting was attended by policymakers, and NGO representatives.



[Drug policy in Latin America. The discussion process towards UNGASS 2016: Possible Convergences](#), 28 and 29 July, Quito (Ecuador). Martin Jelsma and Tom Blickman participated in a seminar organized by the *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas UNASUR* and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung FES. The event took place at the headquarters of UNASUR in Quito, Ecuador. It was a closed meeting with the goal to examine [South American positions for UNGASS](#). The 40 participants included many high-level drug policy officials from South America. Uruguay, Ecuador and Argentina actively supported the proposal of an expert advisory group. We are pleased to that UNASUR governments are exploring the potential of the *inter-se* mechanism (an agreement between like-minded countries) and its possibilities to promote a reform of the conventions.



[Preparing for the United Nations](#)

[General Assembly Special Session \(UNGASS\) on the World Drug Problem 2016, 22 July, New York.](#) A policy forum organized by the International Peace Institute (IPI) titled, [Focus on Prevention, Not Repression, Needed in Response to Drug Problem](#). The forum focused on providing member states and UN staff with a thorough understanding of the UNGASS process. Martin Jelsma provided background to the UNGASS, in particular the rationale behind its convening and its possible outcomes. The policy forum made the connection between UNGASS and other issues of interest to the UN community, such as the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Also among the speakers was the Jamaica Minister of Justice, Mark Golding (on the picture). [The forum was live streamed](#).

UNODC put Martin Jelsma's paper written for Brookings Institution on the official website for NGO contributions to the UNGASS-2016. [See the page here](#).

Publication

Qué podemos esperar de la UNGASS 2016. Martin Jelsma – September 2015 (Cáñamo magazine, Barcelona)

[UNGASS 2016: Prospects for Treaty Reform and UN System-Wide Coherence on Drug Policy.](#) And, [Spanish version](#)

[International Law and Drug Policy Reform. Report of a GDPO/ICHRDP/TNI/WOLA Expert Seminar, 16 July 2015 – Full Report PDF](#)

La obsesión de Harry Anslinger, instigador de la prohibición. Amira Armenta – July 2015 (Cáñamo magazine, Barcelona)

Producers of Prohibited Plants



As a member of the UN Civil Society Task Force on drugs, Pien Metaal is currently involved in the preparations, from the NGO side, for UNGASS 2016. She has been elected to represent the interests of the farmers in the process. She is supported by a steering committee of farmers and representatives from around the globe. Together they have started preparations for the coming Global Farmers Forum that will take place in January 2016 in Slot Assumburg te Heemskerk (The Netherlands).

Coming up next quarter

Activities:

Martin Jelsma and Pien Metaal are working with the Colombian and Mexican government to prepare an international drug policy dialogue which will take place in Cartagena (Colombia), 22-24 November 2015.

Training on international drug policy. TNI will provide a group of four participants from Latin America and the Caribbean with training in the working of the global drug control system, and best practices in advocacy and communication.

Publications:

Drug law reform briefing on the criminalisation of *ayahuasca*

Drug law reform briefing: Paco (crack) routes under scrutiny

A Cannabis Prohibition and Decriminalisation Interactive Timeline

A (Q&A) Primer on the UN Drug Conventions

Drug policy briefing paper on the impact of drug laws in Myanmar