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Women, Drug Policy and Incarceration in the Americas

Thursday, 17th March 2016, 13:10 - 14:00

Conference Room M7

Vienna International Centre

For 50 years, drug control has focused on imposing criminal sanctions against all people involved in the drug market, hoping that harsh criminal sanctions would deter people from entering the illicit drug trade. This has led to massive prison overcrowding and an exacerbation of social and health harms. In Latin America, although women are incarcerated at a lower rate than that of men, they are the fastest growing prison population, and their incarceration is mainly driven by drug control efforts – with up to 80% of women in prison being drug offenders in some countries. Most of these women are incarcerated for micro-trafficking or personal use offences and lived in a situation of high vulnerability prior to their incarceration. They are generally single mothers of several children, and many are coerced into the drug trade by male partners or family members. Their incarceration has had devastating impacts on their lives and that of their children and other dependents. This side event will offer an overview of the situation and will include the presentation of a guide for policy reforms related to women, drug policy and incarceration in Latin America.

Speakers:

- **Andrea James**, Executive Director, Families for Justice as Healing.
- **Sergio Chaparro Hernández**, Research Coordinator on Drug Policy, Center for Studies on Law, Justice and Society – Dejusticia.
- **Daniela Quintanilla**, Coordinator of international systems of protection of human rights, Corporación Humanas.
- **Nischa Pieris**, Gender Specialist, Inter-American Commission of Women, Organisation of American States.

Moderator: Coletta Youngers, Consultant, International Drug Policy Consortium & Washington Office on Latin America