

THE GLOBAL WAR ON DRUGS HAS FAILED

IT IS TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH

WE THE UNDERSIGNED call on Governments and Parliaments to recognise that:

Fifty years after the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was launched, the global war on drugs has failed, and has had many unintended and devastating consequences worldwide.

Use of the major controlled drugs has risen, and supply is cheaper, purer and more available than ever before. The UN conservatively estimates that there are now 250 million drug users worldwide.

Illicit drugs are now the third most valuable industry in the world, after food and oil, estimated to be worth over \$350 billion a year, all in the control of criminals.

Fighting the war on drugs costs the world's taxpayers incalculable billions each year. Millions of people are in prison worldwide for drug-related offences, mostly personal users and small-time dealers.

Corruption amongst law-enforcers and politicians, especially in producer and transit countries, has spread as never before, endangering democracy and civil society. Stability, security and development are threatened by the fallout from the war on drugs, as are human rights. Tens of thousands of people die in the drug war each year.

The drug-free world so confidently predicted by supporters of the war on drugs is further than ever from attainment. The policies of prohibition create more harms than they prevent. We must seriously consider shifting resources away from criminalising tens of millions of otherwise law abiding citizens, and move towards an approach based on health, harm-reduction, cost-effectiveness and respect for human rights. Evidence consistently shows that these health-based approaches deliver better results than criminalisation.

Improving our drug policies is one of the key policy challenges of our time. It is time for world leaders to fundamentally review their strategies in response to the drug phenomenon.

At the root of current policies lies the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. It is time to re-examine this treaty which imposes a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, in order to allow individual countries the freedom to explore drug policies that better suit their domestic needs.

As the production, demand and use of drugs cannot be eradicated, new ways must be found to minimise harms, and new policies, based on scientific evidence, must be explored.

Let us break the taboo on debate and reform. The time for action is now.

Yours faithfully,

President Otto Pérez Molina
President of the República of Guatemala

President Jimmy Carter
Former President of the United States, Nobel Prize winner

President Fernando H. Cardoso
Former President of Brazil

President César Gaviria
Former President of Colombia

President Vicente Fox
Former President of Mexico

President Ruth Dreifuss
Former President of Switzerland

President Lech Wałęsa
Former President of Poland, Nobel Prize winner

President Alexander Kwasniewski
Former President of Poland

Jaswant Singh
Former Minister of Defence, Minister of Finance, Minister for External Affairs (India)

Thorvald Stoltenberg
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs (Norway), UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Louise Arbour, CC, GOQ
Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

George P. Schultz
Former US Secretary of State

Mario Vargas Llosa
Writer, Nobel Prize winner

Dr. Kary Mullis
Chemist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Sir Harold Kroto
Chemist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor John Polanyi
Chemist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Kenneth Arrow
Economist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Thomas C. Schelling
Economist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Sir Peter Mansfield
Physicist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Sir Anthony Leggett
Physicist, Nobel Prize winner

Professor Martin L. Perl
Physicist, Nobel Prize winner

Wisława Szymborska
Poet, Nobel Prize winner

Dr. Jan Wiarda
Past President of European Police Chiefs

Carel Edwards
Former Head of the EU Commission's Drug Policy Unit

Javier Solana, KOGF, KCMG
Former EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

Professor Noam Chomsky
Professor of Linguistics & Philosophy, MIT

Bob Ainsworth, MP
Former Secretary of State for Defence

Peter Lilley, MP
Former Secretary of State for Social Security

Lord MacDonald, QC
Former Head, Crown Prosecution Service

Nicholas Green, QC
Former Chairman of the Bar Council

Sir Peregrine Worsthorne
Former editor, Sunday Telegraph

Professor Peter Singer
Professor of Bioethics, Princeton University

Professor David Nutt
Former Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, FRS, FBA
Professor of Economics, Cambridge University

Professor Niall Ferguson
Professor of History, Harvard University

Dr. Muhammed Abdul Bari, MBE
Former Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain

General Lord Ramsbotham
Former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Professor Lord Piot
Former UN Under Secretary-General

Sir Richard Branson
Entrepreneur, founder of Virgin Group

Sting
Musician and actor

Yoko Ono
Musician and artist

Bernardo Bertolucci
Film Director

Carlos Fuentes
Novelist and essayist

Gilberto Gil
Musician, former Minister of Culture, Brazil

Sean Parker
Founding President of Facebook, Director of Spotify

Maria Cattau
Former Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce

John Whitehead
Former Chairman of Goldman Sachs and US Deputy Secretary of State

Professor AC Grayling
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Professor Sir Ian Gilmore
Past President, Royal College of Physicians

Lord Rees, OM
Astronomer Royal and former President of the Royal Society

Amanda Feilding
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