



# Moving towards a Drug-free Society

*Statement made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of World Federation Against Drugs – WFAD, Stockholm, Sweden on May 23, 2012.*

The Congress is:

*Aware* of the devastating effects of drugs to human beings, their families, their communities and their countries, recognizing that the drug problem is continuously spreading on a global basis, both in terms of numbers of people affected and on a geographical basis;

*Recognizing* that in some countries this problem has a destabilizing effect in terms of peace and human rights;

*Further recognizing* the cry of parents and children of the disastrous effects caused by drugs and the need to protect children from the harmful effects, as provided for in Article 33 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and other UN Conventions on narcotics and the need to prevent the onset of drugs and the human right to be safe within a family and community;

*Acknowledging* that efforts to restrict the access and use of drugs which drive people into treatment and medical substitution therapy are not punishments as commonly argued, and that gaps in drug enforcement do not constitute legalization but rather, gaps must be addressed including mandating people for treatment and recovery programmes;

*Recognizing* that there are already effective efforts in prevention, treatment and recovery, aiming to curb this phenomenon in a balanced way to limit the extent of the problem including supply, demand and recovery;

*Further recognizing* that these efforts have yielded good results in Sweden, USA, UK and other countries to break the cycle of addiction and, therefore, need to be supported;

*Acknowledging* that treatment, prevention work and Drug Courts are effective in leveraging treatment and in reducing crime, but we need to motivate more people to enter and complete treatment and lead drug-free lifestyles;

*Aware* that illicit drugs are harmful and giving them a legal status will not make them safe, claiming that the 100 year old system of international drug control has failed is misleading and inaccurate;

*Realizing* that advocates of legalization and decriminalization of drugs are driven by greed, disrespect of human rights and lack of understanding of the harms of drugs and of addiction, and that making drugs more legal to use, and thus more accessible, will escalate drug use and the chemical slavery of drug addiction;

*Recognizing* that the principles of “modern drug policy”, as recently advocated by USA, Sweden, Russia, United Kingdom, and Italy, necessitate a balanced, compassionate and humane drug policy that seeks to protect human rights, reduce drug use, reform the criminal justice system to support both public health and public safety, and disrupt drug trafficking;

*Further recognizing* that successfully achieving these changes will require addressing the drug problem as a shared responsibility, supporting the UN Conventions and protecting citizens from drugs.

The Congress of WFAD finds that states and all concerned individuals, groups and bodies need to support the international conventions on narcotics and to advocate for a balanced and restrictive policy that seeks to limit the harmful effects of drugs through prevention, law enforcement, treatment, and recovery programmes.

WFAD further finds that there is a great need to work with parents, children and communities to support prevention programmes and that civil society can play a leading role in supporting these efforts.

WFAD additionally finds that a drug-free society is possible and the promising interventions that have made significant progress need to be supported and expanded, monitored and evaluated.

WFAD, therefore, declares that drug legalization is not a silver bullet to solve the global drug problem but rather that research, advocacy, capacity building, information sharing, and dissemination and networking should be cornerstones in curbing drug abuse.

WFAD further declares and resolves that the protection of children from illicit drug use cannot be compromised and that the importance of the right to health and sobriety for people affected by drug addiction is paramount.