



**GLOBAL  
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## PRESS RELEASE

New report from the Global Commission on Drug Policy

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# ADVANCING DRUG POLICY REFORM: A NEW APPROACH TO DECRIMINALIZATION

Washington, D.C., 21 November 2016

## **World leaders advocate ending all penalties for drug consumption and possession for personal use**

The Global Commission today releases its new yearly report, *Advancing Drug Policy Reform: a new approach to drug decriminalization*, which details the destructive and harmful consequences of punitive drug policies and the need to reconsider reviewing current decriminalization models. The report shows how their implementation has helped to achieve more effective drug policies, with a greater emphasis on justice, dignity and human rights. Building on these successes, the report advocates ending all penalties – both civil and criminal – on persons who use drugs, and issues a call for market regulation as the next logical step.

“After years of denouncing the dramatic effects of prohibition and the criminalization of people that do no harm but use drugs on the society as a whole, it is time to highlight the benefits of well-designed and well-implemented people centered drug policies,” said former Swiss President Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy. “These innovative policies cannot exist as long as we do not discuss, honestly, the major policy error made in the past, which is the criminalization of personal consumption or possession of illicit psychoactive substances in national laws.”

César Gaviria, former President of Columbia and member of the Global Commission, said: “At the global, regional or local levels, drug policies are evolving. However, in order to build solid and effective policies to mitigate the harms of the last 60 years of wrong policies, and to prepare for a better future where drugs are controlled more effectively, we need to implement the full and non-discretionary decriminalization of personal use and possession of drugs.”

### **The new report from the Global Commission on Drug Policy issues the following recommendations**

1. States must abolish the death penalty for all drug-related offenses.
2. States must end all penalties—both criminal and civil—for drug possession for personal use, and the cultivation of drugs for personal consumption.
3. States must implement alternatives to punishment for all low-level, non-violent actors in the drug trade.
4. UN member states must remove the penalization of drug possession as a treaty obligation under the international drug control system.
5. States must eventually explore regulatory models for all illicit drugs and acknowledge this to be the next logical step in drug policy reform following decriminalization.

“People who use drugs have paid a huge toll to the current drug control system; they faced alone and without any legal protection the ravages of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, as well as many non-communicable diseases,” said Professor Michel Kazatchkine, former Executive Director of the Global Fund on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. “Now we have the scientific and medical tools to provide all the services they need, but we mostly lack the political leadership to implement an enabling legal environment. This starts by the complete decriminalization of drugs.”

**For a copy of the report, please visit:**

[www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/reports/advancing-drug-policy-reform/](http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/reports/advancing-drug-policy-reform/)

**For photos and biographies of Commissioners and other materials, please visit:**

[www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/a-new-approach-to-decriminalization](http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/a-new-approach-to-decriminalization)



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### **Notes to Editors**

The Global Commission on Drug Policy was established in 2010 by political leaders, cultural figures, and globally influential personalities from the financial and business sectors. The Commission currently comprises twenty-three members, including nine former Heads of States and a former Secretary General of the United Nations. Our mission is to promote evidence-based drug policy reforms at international, national and regional levels. These reforms must also address issues of public health, social integration and security, with strict regard for human rights.

The Global Commission on Drug Policy has issued five previous yearly reports, beginning in 2011 with *War on Drugs*, which details the extent of the failure and damage of five decades of prohibition and punitive measures. In 2014, *Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work* emphasized public health approaches, alternatives to incarceration, and decriminalization, as well as calling for the legal regulation of psychoactive substances.

The three other reports by the Global Commission on Drug Policy are more technical in nature and highlight how prohibitive drug control negatively impacts public health issues: HIV/AIDS (*How the Criminalization of Drug Use Fuels the Global Pandemic*, 2012), Hepatitis C (*The Hidden Hepatitis C Epidemic*, 2013) and access to medicine (*The Global Crisis of Avoidable Pain*, 2015). This report, launched last year, highlights how the current international drug control system creates barriers for numerous countries around the world to access essential medicines for pain relief and palliative care.