



**GLOBAL
COMMISSION ON
DRUG POLICY**

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PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

FORMER PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA AND NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE **JUAN MANUEL SANTOS** AND FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS **LOUISE ARBOUR** JOIN THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON DRUG POLICY



(Geneva, 15 January 2019)

The Global Commission on Drug Policy is honored and delighted to welcome a distinguished new member, **Juan Manuel Santos**, former President of Colombia and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. At the same time, the Global Commission warmly welcomes back as member **Louise Arbour** of Canada, former High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 for his negotiation of the Colombian Peace Agreement, ending over five decades of conflict. He was one of the few sitting presidents supporting courageous changes in the international drug control system to better accommodate regional challenges, and to find more effective responses to the harms resulting from the illegal drug trade.

Juan Manuel Santos states, "Colombia is among the countries that have suffered most from the failed war on drugs and my government enacted gradual reforms, including the decriminalization of drug use and possession and the most forward-looking crop substitution program to-date. I am therefore especially pleased to join the Global Commission, whose work in the past eight years has had a major impact on reform in my country and around the world. I look forward to sharing my own experiences and working towards better drug policies everywhere."

Ms Arbour initially joined the Commission in 2011, and temporarily suspended her activities upon her appointment by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as his Special Representative for International Migration in March 2017. That mandate has now ended with the adoption of the first-ever Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

"Drug policy is at the heart of human rights and dignity, poverty eradication, health and security" says Ms Arbour. "I am glad to be back among my fellow Global Commissioners, to fully support drug policy reform, call out the failure of drug prohibition and emphasize the need for responsible legal regulation to address the harms resulting not only from drugs but also from repressive policies."

Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, said: "The achievements of Juan Manuel Santos and Louise Arbour speak for themselves. Both address international drug policy and the challenges faced in the Americas with regard to drugs with intimate knowledge, respectively of development issues and the dramatic consequences of violence, and of justice and human rights. We are truly lucky to rely on their expertise in advancing drug policy reform around the world."

The Global Commission on Drug Policy now comprises 23 members, including 12 former Heads of State or Government from Brazil, Chile, Colombia (2), Greece, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, and Timor-Leste, and three Nobel Prize laureates.

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About the Global Commission on Drug Policy

[The Global Commission on Drug Policy](#) is an independent body comprising 23 members, including 12 former heads of state or government and three Nobel Prize laureates. Its purpose is to bring to the international level an informed, evidence-based discussion about humane and effective ways to reduce the harms caused by drugs and drug control policies to people and societies.

The Global Commission on Drug Policy has issued [eight reports](#) since its creation in 2011. These respectively detail the extent of the failure and damage of five decades of prohibition and punitive measures, reveal the impact of repressive policies on health epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, the lack of access globally to essential pain medication globally, biased perceptions surrounding drugs, the need to prioritize public health approaches, decriminalization of drug use and proportional sentencing and, ultimately, the responsible legal regulation of psychoactive substances.

The Commission has also published [two position papers](#), on the opioid-fueled overdose crisis in North America and on drug policy and the Sustainable Development Agenda.

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