

## Joint statement

### For a humane and balanced drug policy

Stockholm 20 May 2012

The year 2012 marks the centennial of the adoption of the first international drug control treaty, the International Opium Convention signed at The Hague in January 1912. The aim of limiting the use of narcotic drugs to medical and scientific purposes is still the shared foundation for our efforts to reduce the global drug problem, now enshrined in the U.N. Drug Conventions.

We, representatives of Italy, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, gathering in Stockholm on 20 May 2012, reiterate our commitment to these basic principles:

- to ensure the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for the relief of pain, treatment of illness, and research
- to prevent and reduce the use of these drugs for any other purpose and reduce the consequences their use cause

There are hundreds of drugs under international control. Some of them are indispensable for medical use, many of them addictive and most of them with serious and potentially fatal side effects.

Some claim that drug legalization would solve the problem of crime, violence and human suffering following in the wake of drug abuse and trafficking. Others still claim a law enforcement only "War on Drugs" approach will eliminate the drugs problem. Both of those policies would have devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world. Instead, we must pursue policies based on evidence and research, not ideology or dogma. Our approach must be a balanced one, combining effective enforcement to restrict the supply of drugs, with efforts to reduce demand and build recovery; supporting people to live a life free of addiction.

Every day new and dangerous drugs are marketed at our youth. We must protect the public from the harms that these new drugs may pose.

Our level of ambition is high. We recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest possible physical and mental health. This includes the right to be protected from drug abuse. Therefore we are determined to rise to the challenge. We are doing this by

- strengthening our efforts to protect children and young people from drugs in the first place and preventing those who use drugs from developing more serious problems,
- breaking the cycle of dependence on drugs through offering a variety of treatment and health services to those who suffer from substance use disorders, aiming at full recovery,
- disrupting drug trafficking and production, and
- fostering alternative livelihoods in illegal drug cultivation areas.

We, who gather here in Stockholm, share the view that the global drug problem requires a balanced approach and we take seriously our shared responsibility to address both the demand and the supply through public health and criminal justice interventions. We are committed to strengthening our international partnership to develop and implement strategies grounded in science and human rights in line with the U.N. Drug Conventions. This is our contribution to global efforts to reduce the supply and demand of illicit drugs for the protection of our children, young people and all of the communities we serve. It requires dedication, perseverance and partnership. No government can accomplish this on its own.

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Mr. Viktor P. Ivanov  
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