

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

Yours faithfully,

President Juan Manuel Santos
President of the Republic of Colombia

President Otto Pérez Molina
President of the Republic 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 Kwaśniewski
Former President of Poland

George P. Schultz
Former US Secretary of State

Desmond Tutu
Archbishop, Nobel Prize winner

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

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.

Sir Richard Branson
Entrepreneur, founder of Virgin Group

Sting
Musician and actor

Yoko Ono
Musician and artist

Carlos Fuentes
Novelist and essayist

Gilberto Gil
Former Minister of Culture, Brazil

Sean Parker
Founding President of Facebook, Spotify

Thorvald Stoltenberg
Former UN High Commissioner, Refugees

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

Javier Solana, KOGE, KCMG
Former Secretary General, EU Council

Professor Noam Chomsky
Professor of Linguistics & Philosophy, MIT

Amanda Feilding
Director, the Beckley Foundation



In November 2011, Amanda Feilding and the Beckley Foundation launched the *Global Initiative for Drug Policy Reform*. The Initiative created a pluridisciplinary forum to discuss learning from best practices in drug policy, to share new scientific evidence on psychoactive substances and to propose paths towards global drug policy reform. The *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Drug Policy Reform* was founded in parallel to our Initiative as a supporting voice from the Houses of Parliament.

To launch the Initiative, the Beckley Foundation and the *APPG for Drug Policy Reform* organised a meeting at the House of Lords, in London, which brought together government leaders, policy-makers and leading experts from 14 countries interested in reform.

Coinciding with the launch, Amanda Feilding and the Beckley Foundation produced this Public Letter, which calls for the reform of failed drug policies and encourages an open debate on alternative approaches. It was signed by nine Presidents, thirteen Nobel Laureates and a host of other international luminaries. The letter is considered one of the key milestones in the history of drug policy reform.

For a full list of signatories, go to www.beckleyfoundation.org/public-letter