

PRESS RELEASE

THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON DRUG POLICY WELCOMES THE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS IN COLOMBIA CONCERNING LEGAL REGULATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Geneva, 15/06/2023)

The Global Commission on Drug Policy firmly supports the ongoing parliamentary discussions and pending decision of the Colombian Congress concerning a constitutional reform to regulate cannabis for adult use.

Drug regulation is a means to strengthen institutions, while drug prohibition has weakened them. The «war on drugs» has failed, as the Global Commission on Drug Policy has detailed in numerous reports.

Colombia is one of the countries most harmed by the punitive prohibitionist paradigm on drugs. For this reason, Colombia cannot continue down a path in which violence related to the current drug control regime is threatening the future of young people, actively violating human rights, threatening peace building, and undermining the economic potential of the country.

Noting its 2022 position paper, “Drug Policy in Colombia – The Road to a Just Regulation”, the Global Commission would like to reiterate the following recommendations which are specific to the legal regulation of drugs in Colombia:

- State authorities at the national, departmental, and local levels should design, legislate and implement policies to put in place legal regulation of all currently illegal drugs, beginning with cannabis, and continuing with coca leaf and cocaine, and poppy (the three primary crops grown in Colombia) as a means of ensuring guarantees for the enjoyment of cultural, economic, and social rights, increasing opportunities for cultivating communities and strengthening the rule of law in the country.
- The inclusion of communities systematically marginalized in the design and implementation of the reform process, particularly women, cultivating communities, indigenous communities, and Afro-Colombians, This is crucial as they have been especially disadvantaged by the current system, and have benefited the least from implementation of the Peace Agreement.
- State authorities should improve epidemiological and demographic data collection and analysis at a regional level to understand trends in drug use, production, and cultivation to inform and guide the regulatory process.
- Following the declarations of President Petro in August and September 2022 at his inauguration and at the United Nations General Assembly, the Government should hold meetings with like-minded countries to coordinate and lead strategies for global drug policy reform, and call on this group to play an active role in UN fora in Vienna, New York, and Geneva, promoting an international discussion regarding the need for systematic review, as well as proposing concrete policy alternatives to drug prohibition.
- Additionally, UN agencies have endorsed the UN’s Common Position Paper on Drugs (2018), which – inter alia – underlines the UN organisations’ commitment to supporting Member States to develop and implement balanced, comprehensive, evidence-based, human rights-based, and sustainable responses to the world drug problem, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Global Commission is comprised of 29 former world leaders and high profile actors, two of whom are former Presidents of Colombia: Juan Manuel Santos and César Gaviria. The Global Commission on Drug Policy stands fully and firmly with Colombia in the actions it is taking towards legal regulation of drugs.

About the Global Commission on Drug Policy

In 2011, with the aim of opening an honest debate on drugs and inspiring better drug policies globally - based on a commitment to human rights and respect for the findings of scientific endeavour - former Heads of State and Government from the Americas and Europe created the [Global Commission on Drug Policy](#) (hereinafter, the "Global Commission").

The Global Commission now has 29 Commissioners from around the world who - aware of the failure of the current international drug control regime - lend their voices and political and social influence, to raise drug policy issues across all levels.

At the international level, Commissioners act as global ambassadors for drug policy reform by cultivating strategic partnerships and reaching out to a diverse multi sectoral audience including community representatives and high-level decision makers. At regional, national and local levels, the Commissioners tailor their actions to the specific contexts and issues, capitalizing on their diverse geographic representation and knowledge.

In its first decade of life, the Global Commission built an important corpus of drug policy-related material, including eleven [reports](#):

- The War on Drugs, 2011
- The War on Drugs and HIV/AIDS, How the Criminalization of Drug Use fuels the Global Pandemic, 2012
- The Negative Impact of the War on Drugs on Public Health: The Hidden Hepatitis C Epidemic, 2013
- Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work, 2014
- The Negative Impact of Drug Control on Public Health: the Global Crisis of Avoidable Pain, 2015
- Advancing Drug Policy Reform: a new approach to decriminalization, 2016
- The World Drug [Perception] Problem: Countering prejudices about people who use drugs, 2017
- Regulation: the Responsible Control of Drugs, 2018
- Classification of Psychoactive Substances: When Science was Left Behind, 2019
- Enforcement of Drug Laws: Refocusing on Organized Crime Elites, 2020
- Time to End Prohibition, 2021

[Five thematic position papers:](#)

- The Opioid Crisis in North America, October 2017
- Drug Policy and the Sustainable Development Agenda, September 2018
- Drug Policy and Deprivation of Liberty, June 2019
- Drug Policy and City Government, 2021
- Drug Policy in Colombia - The Road to a Just Regulation, 2022

One feature-length documentary and one animated short film:

- Breaking the Taboo, Sundog Pictures, June 2011
- The History of the War on Drugs, Almap/BBDO, August 2014

The Global Commission is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organisation hosted by the [Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies \(IHEID\)](#) in Geneva, Switzerland.

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