



World Federation Against Drugs

WFAD - a voice for a Drug Free Society

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World Federation Against Drugs

Number of past-year users in millions 2017



cannabis



opioids



**amphetamines and
prescription stimulants**



"ecstasy"



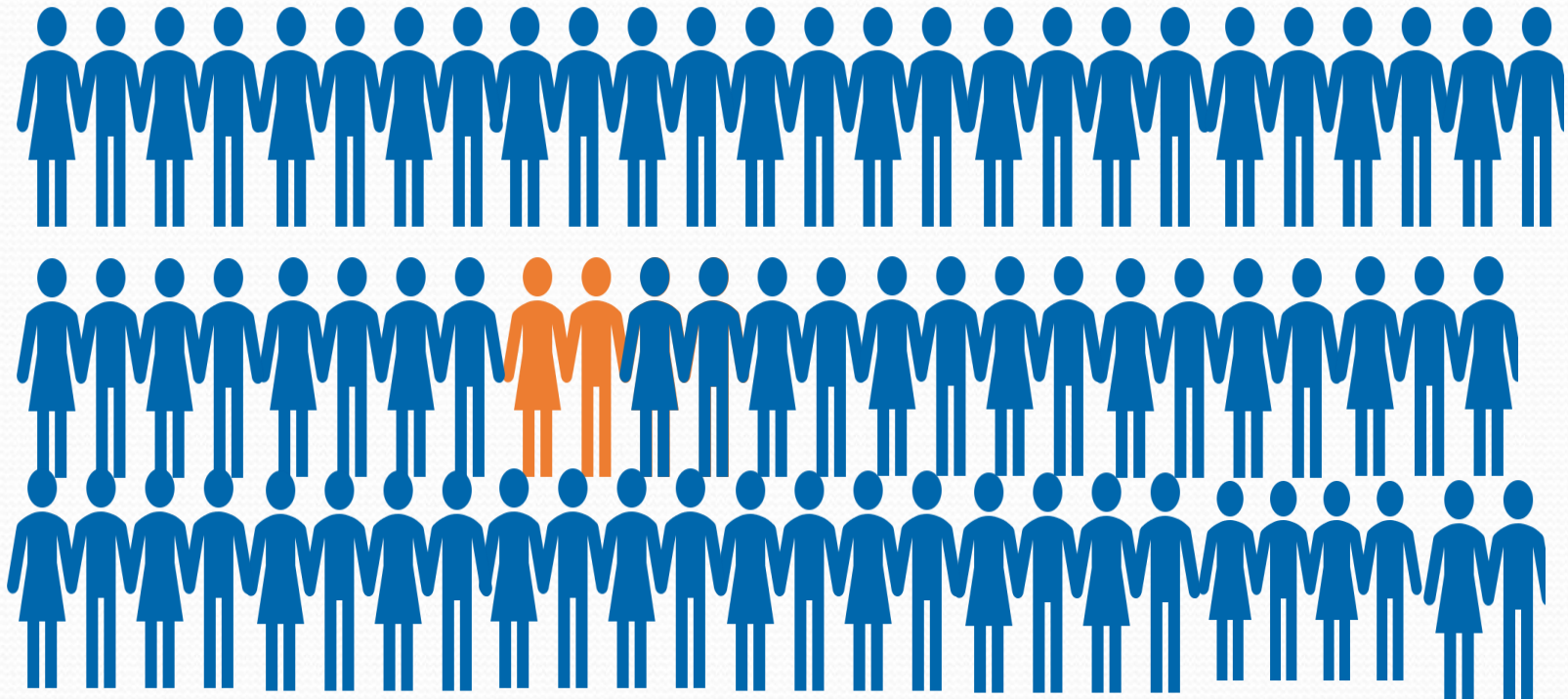
cocaine



4.6 billion



PREVALENCE





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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





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PUBLIC HEALTH





GLOBAL CONSENSUS



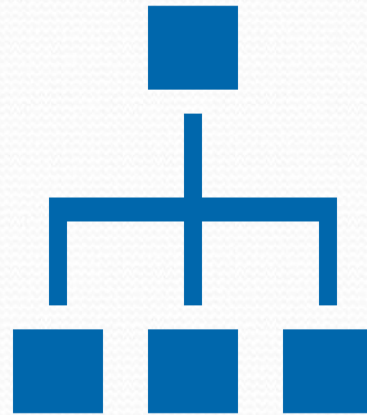


INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS





EXPANDING DRUG MARKETS





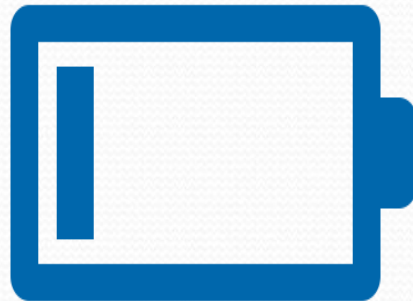
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ADDICTION EPIDEMIC



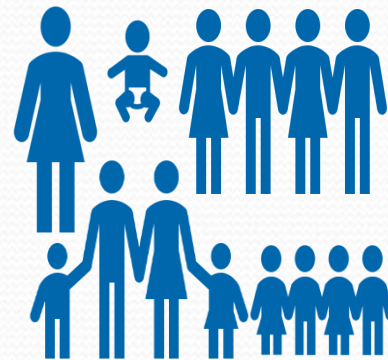


GAP IN TREATMENT





INDIVIDUAL VS PUBLIC HEALTH





ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES





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WAR ON DRUGS





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WAR FOR DRUGS





LESSONS IGNORED





ROOT CAUSES





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WESTERN AGENDA





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World Federation Against Drugs was founded in Sweden 2009.



WFAD is a multilateral community of non-governmental organizations and individuals.

The work is built on the principles of universal fellowship and basic human and democratic rights.

The aim of WFAD is to work for a **drug-free world**.

We have around 250 member organizations over the world, in all continents.





World Forum Against Drugs

- Prevention
- Recovery
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Special focus on Women



World Forum Against Drugs



Background

- Drug control continues to be a constant agenda in decades because trafficking and use of illicit drug deaths, globally notwithstanding its negative impact on economic development of the affected nations
- The new link between illicit drug trafficking and human trafficking, money laundering terrorism and other global issues

- Systematic Advocacy
- Harms to other
- The Industry



Regional Forums

- Supporting our Members
- India
- Singapore
- East Africa
- The Balkans





**Utopia lies at the horizon.
When I draw nearer by two steps,
it retreats two steps.
If I proceed ten steps forward,
It swiftly slips ten steps ahead.
No matter how far I go,
I can never reach it.
What, then, is the purpose of utopia?
It is to cause us to advance.**





World Federation Against Drugs

THANK YOU

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WFAD - a Voice for a Drug Free Society

1 Distinguished hosts and delegates, dear friends!

I feel honored to stand here in front of you and share with you my thoughts and 40 years long experience from working in and with civil society from around the world.

Let me start with a short overview of the World Drug Situation

2 In the UNODC World Drug Report 2019 there is estimation that 188 Million people are using Cannabis

53 Million people are using Opioids

29 Million people are using Amphetamine Types

21 Million people are using Ecstasy

18 Million people are using Cocaine

3 But, UNODC also estimates that 4,6 billion adults around the globe are choosing a drug free life. That is more than 94 % of the world's population in the age between 15 and 64 who did not use drugs the last 12 months.

4 Despite such a strikingly low prevalence, out of 43 risk factors, drug use was **nineteenth** in the ranking of the top global killers (tobacco was second, and alcohol was third).

The costs of harm in terms of human lives, health, public safety, environment and GDP are disproportionate and already far too high for us to stand idly by and watch. Inaction may result in much higher levels of drug-related harm in the future.

There is no reason to wait or hesitate. Governments and civil society have effective and evidence-based measures at hand.

Growing scientific evidence provides insight into causes and consequences of drug use. We know the risk and protective factors leading to or discouraging people from drug use. We have sufficient knowledge about drug addiction, better understanding about what works in prevention and treatment as well as insights gained from the real-life experiments of cannabis legalization.

5 Given the harm drug use causes, tackling the world drug problem has been recognized as a priority of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Governments have committed to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” by strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol in target 3.5.

Today we live in a world of contrasts. In a world of abundance and scarcity, the world drug problem is no exception. On the one

hand, we are flooded by prescription drugs especially in high-income countries and on the other hand, there is a lack of access to essential medications in low- and middle-income countries.

Furthermore, in some cases young people use drugs in order to add excitement to their lives not knowing what else to do and in others, poverty fuels drug use among those living in extreme conditions who as well do not know what else to do.

It is obvious that in order to create a world where people can live in dignity, the root causes leading to drug use need to be addressed and so many civil society organizations are already selflessly addressing.

But what Civil Society Organizations are as well doing is, that they are demanding and supporting their governments to implement comprehensive solutions.

But solutions that do not include the introduction of social programs, education and health services, involvement of communities and investing in people's safety and well-being are insufficient and won't see the expected results benefiting all people. We cannot afford ineffective solutions.

We need to act and we need to hold each other accountable. We need to celebrate the victories and advancements we make

but we cannot stop making thorough analysis and closing our eyes from what is not working.

When we look back at the developments in Narcotic drugs field in the latest decade, we can say that not all is bad, but it is not good either.

7 The 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS 2016) was a landmark achievement in the response to the world drug problem for its success in establishing a clear global consensus on

- The key causes and consequences of the world drug problem,
- The importance of comprehensive and balanced policy interventions,
- The need to strengthen the socio-economic aspect of drug demand prevention and reduction,
- The reaffirmation of the commitment to the UN Drug Conventions,
- The importance of the public health perspective, and
- The urgent need for joint action.

Part of the UNGASS 2016 success is the consensus to align drug policies with public health objectives.

This is a positive shift in line with the UN Drug Conventions, that strengthens countries in their efforts to move from dealing with drug use exclusively as a criminal justice issue, to increasing involvement of the health and social services.

The inclusion of “narcotic drug abuse” under the Sustainable Development Goal 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” must be regarded as milestone achievement of the response to the world drug problem in the last decade.

This illustrates the global consensus to tackle illicit drugs as obstacles to development and as public health issues.

8 In the decade since 2009, more guidelines have been compiled and made available for governments and communities to implement evidence-based interventions in the fields of drug prevention as well as treatment.

But as I said, as much as all these developments sound promising we cannot be content and stop as not all is good.

Too few people receive the help they need and deserve. In countries like that, drug policies often serve as excuse for inhumane behavior and Human Rights violations on part of the government in question.

9 The 2019 World Drug Report shows that drug markets are expanding and diversifying at a scale never documented before.

This supply-driven expansion of drug markets has reached the highest levels ever recorded, with the production of opium and the manufacture of cocaine fueling this development.

10 Along with the rapidly changing drug markets, the addiction crisis is accelerating. Non-medical use of prescription drugs and new psychoactive substances are increasingly coexisting with heroin and cocaine that have been available for a long time.

More new psychoactive substances are being synthesized and more are available than ever, with increasing reports of associated harm and fatalities.

11 One of the most serious shortcomings in the response to the world drug problem over the past decade is the lack of adequate treatment and recovery services.

Drug treatment and health services continue to fall short of need. Just one in six people in the need of treatment actually receiving it.

The severity of the treatment gap differs between regions. In Africa only 1 in 18 people with drug use disorder receives treatment.

There are Civil Society Organizations that do the noble and very difficult job of filling the treatment gap but we all know that they

are stretched and that the need must be answered by their governments.

12 Addressing the world drug problem from a public health perspective is too often limited to the health of the individual instead of utilizing methods addressing causes and consequences in the broader population.

13 After so many years of discussion, WHO estimates that still 5.5 billion people (83% of the world's population) live in countries with low or non-existent access to controlled medicines for the treatment, for example, of moderate-to-severe pain.

14 Harsh law-enforcement, brutal police force, even violence and the militarization of the response to the world drug problem has not completely ceased and remains a serious problem in a number of countries.

15 Another concerning trend that is obviously on the rise is a “War **for** drugs”. We are witnessing a global, well-funded propaganda campaign to change peoples' perception of narcotic drugs.

It is a war over politicians' minds, over media peoples' minds, over young peoples' minds, and over parents' minds.

Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the ultimate

goal of this propaganda war is to make narcotic drugs just as accepted worldwide, just as widely used, just as integrated in the culture as alcohol is today in Western societies

International and cross-border collaboration and coordination among governments and regions has been inadequate and has further contributed to stalled progress.

16 We have not learnt from the lessons in alcohol and tobacco regulation implementation. The implementation often fails due to the interference of the industries profiting from the freedom in trade of these substances.

Experiences from many decades with alcohol and tobacco control show that there is no good reason to legalize other harmful substances that have lower prevalence, availability and public acceptance.

Moreover, the new drug industries such as marijuana industry are bonding with alcohol and tobacco industry learning from the playbook of their successful “older brothers” in how to conduct lobby campaigns distorting effective narcotic drugs policies if they are in place.

Civil Society is playing crucial role in revealing practices of these harmful industries that show no respect to the well-being of people if their profit should suffer.

17 Large-scale interventions that address the lack of services, infrastructure needs, drug-related violence, xenophobia, racism, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, marginalization and social disintegration have largely been ignored in the response to drug problems.

Here we again have several spearheading examples of Civil Society efforts to approach the problem in a comprehensive manner.

18 Another danger that is important to highlight is that the international conversation about the world drug problem is dominated by a Western agenda where the national backdrop is more affluent populations, well-developed health systems, social security services and reasonably good government structures and practices.

In many countries in the global South conditions are very different from this. Weak health systems are already overstretched by the burden of the classical communicable diseases, and new non-communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases put additional burdens on health services.

With such a backdrop, already overstretched health systems do not provide the solutions necessary to tackle growing drug

problems in the foreseeable future. The needs of countries in the global South deserve more serious consideration. Prevention at the earliest possible stage is the only viable strategy.

Despite progress and a number of positive developments as presented in this report, the list of shortcomings, gaps and persistent problems in the response to the world drug problem remains too long.

However, for each of these remaining issues, effective and evidence-based responses are available. There is no need to invent the wheel.

But there is a great need to grab the steering wheel as the global community knows what to do. Science shows what works. Guidelines and political commitments exist – and have been considerable achievements of the work in the past decade.

What is critically missing is the political will to make good on promises, to mobilize political leadership to turn commitments into action and to implement evidence-based policies and programs.

If the countries themselves do not pay enough attention to these solutions, it is the Civil Society Organizations that back up the work and simultaneously demand governments to take care of the steering wheel.

19 I represent the World Federation Against Drugs, WFAD - A voice for a Drug Free World.

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Focus on the Women's situation

22 Systematic Advocacy, Harms to other and The Industry

23 Supporting our Members – Regional Forums, India, Singapore,
East Africa and The Balkans

24 Sometimes a utopian vision that can easily be dismissed in our world of fast solutions and pragmatism. That is why I would like to borrow few words from Eduardo Galeano who says the following:

Utopia lies at the horizon.
When I draw nearer by two steps,
it retreats two steps.
If I proceed ten steps forward,
It swiftly slips ten steps ahead.
No matter how far I go,
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What, then, is the purpose of utopia?
It is to cause us to advance.

And to advance we need. At the times like these, we all need to unite around our utopia of a world where people live free from the harm caused by drugs. We are the absolute majority but I am worried that our voices are not being heard.

Instead, we hear loud and clear voices of those who wish to make drugs more present in our lives. We are hearing those who have already earned their life fortune on selling drugs saying that everything will be fine while lives are lost, families broken, and hopes vanished. I am standing here and represent Civil Society, that speaks for the silent majority:

25 Children. Spouses. Parents. Grandparents. Colleagues. Friends.
Classmates. Teammates.

Innocent victims of violence. Innocent victims of neglect. Innocent victims of accidents.

Witnesses to suffering. Witnesses to loss.

The silent majority.

The majority that imagines a better world.

The majority that wishes to live free from drugs.

The majority that wishes to live free from problems caused by drugs.

And I hope, yes I know, that by this Regional Forum we can deliver the voice of the silent majority but also in an optimistic way show the people and society in whole what prevention and recovery can do.

Thank you