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Monday 19 May 2025

Subject: Your leadership role to ensure that the independent review of the UN drug control system delivers bold recommendations to align the drug control regime with human rights, development, peace and security, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Dear Secretary-General Guterres,

The [International Drug Policy Consortium](https://www.idpc.net) (IDPC),¹ alongside 182 civil society organisations from 59 countries, strongly encourage you to play a leading role in guiding the upcoming independent review of the UN drug control system to ensure a bold and successful outcome — one that brings long-overdue alignment of global drug policy with the UN pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development, and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On 14 March 2025, the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) agreed to establish a multidisciplinary panel of 19 independent experts, serving in their personal capacity, to develop clear, action-oriented recommendations aimed at reviewing the UN drug control ‘machinery’ and enhancing the implementation of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments (including human rights obligations), as well as the achievement of all international drug policy commitments (including those adopted at the [2016 UN General Assembly Special Session](#) (UNGASS) on drugs).²

Numerous studies by the UN human rights system, including the latest reports of the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) and the [UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health](#), as well as by [civil society](#), have highlighted the devastating impacts of the UN drug control regime on health, human rights, the environment, development and peace and security. As a result, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly [called](#) for ‘transformative change’ in global drug policy.

¹ IDPC is a global network of over 190 community-led networks, grassroots groups, advocacy NGOs and major international organisations coming together to promote drug policies grounded in social justice and human rights. For more information, visit: www.idpc.net

² See [Resolution L6](#), as [amended by L10](#)

This independent expert panel provides a historic, once-in-a-generation opportunity to propose reforms that will further the health and welfare of humankind, social inclusion and social justice, and help to achieve the SDGs.

However, this process is also likely to face political resistance. Your leadership will therefore be critical to ensure that the panel's work remains transparent and constructive, and that it delivers bold recommendations needed to bring the UN drug control system into alignment with the rest of the UN system.

The CND resolution tasks you with selecting five members of the independent panel, as well as one of the co-chairs for the panel. We urge you to ensure that these nominations are of the highest calibre – individuals with strong human rights and/or health expertise, and a clear commitment to an objective, comprehensive review and reform of the current system. The co-chair should also have the credibility and proven ability to encourage constructive dialogue, facilitate consultations with other stakeholders, maintain the independence of the panel and its work, ensure that the findings are adequately reflected in the conclusions of the panel, and guide the conversation to identify ambitious recommendations for improvement.

In addition to the five panellists you will be nominating, the five regional groups of the CND will select two panellists each, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) will select three, and the World Health Organization (WHO) one. However, other relevant parts of the UN system cannot select panellists. Enhancing UN system-wide coherence in the review process, as reflected in the Chief Executives Board's [UN System Common Position on drugs](#), will therefore primarily rely on your selection, especially with regard to human rights and development. Therefore, to ensure the appropriate balance on the panel, we recommend that your panellist selections be made after those made by the CND, INCB and WHO, in an effort to respond to any identified gaps from that process.

We also urge you to ensure that the panel includes representatives of the communities most affected by the so-called 'war on drugs', including people who use drugs, people involved in the cultivation of crops, Indigenous peoples, and people from ethnic and racial minorities.

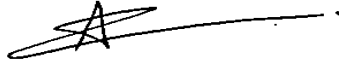
Furthermore, to ensure a successful outcome for this critical initiative, we urge you to encourage Member States to provide adequate funding and political support for the expert panel, including its consultations with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, young people and other affected groups.

Last but not least, we call on you to express public support for the panel, encourage its members to deliver bold and actionable recommendations, and ensure the meaningful discussion and implementation of the panel's eventual recommendations. This could, for instance, be done via your public statement annually released at the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June.

We have attached to this letter a copy of IDPC's latest [advocacy note](#) in which we provide detailed recommendations on the review panel, and we also encourage you to read this [joint statement](#) delivered at the occasion of the International Harm Reduction Conference that took place in Bogota, Colombia in April 2025.

As ever, we remain available to support you in these endeavours.

Yours sincerely,



Ann Fordham
Executive Director
International Drug Policy Consortium

SIGNATORY ORGANISATIONS:

1. Access Support Network (Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterrey County), USA
2. Acción Andina, Bolivia
3. Acción Técnica y Social, Colombia
4. Achievable Souls Community Support Initiative (ASCSI), Nigeria
5. ACURA - Associação de Apoio à Pesquisa e Pacientes de Cannabis Medicinal, Global
6. Africa Network of People Who Use Drugs (AfricaNPUD), Regional
7. African Law Foundation (AFRILAW), Nigeria
8. AINGA/AIDES, Antananarivo, Madagascar
9. AIVL, Australia
10. Alcohol and Drug Foundation (formerly Australian Drug Foundation), Australia
11. Alternative Georgia, Georgia
12. Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice, Russia
13. APDES, Portugal
14. Ares do Pinhal, Portugal
15. ARTM, Macau
16. Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas (ACEID), Costa Rica
17. Associação Brasileira de Redução de Danos (ABORDA) Brazil
18. Association "Elas Existem Mulheres Encarceradas", Brazil
19. Association BUS 31/32 Marseille, France
20. Association de Lutte Contre le Sida (ALCS), Morocco
21. Association for Humane Drug Policy (FHR), Norway
22. Association of Addiction Service Providers, Czechia
23. Association SAFE, France
24. Auto-Support des Usagers de Drogues (ASUD), France
25. Being Alive/People with AIDS Action Coalition, Los Angeles, USA
26. Brazilian Association of Mental Health (ABRASME), Brazil
27. Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, Canada
28. Cannabis Sans Frontières, France
29. Cannabis Sem Fronteiras, Brazil
30. CASO, Portugal
31. Center for Humane Policy, Bulgaria
32. Center for Peace and Sustainable Development, Nigeria
33. Centre for Research and Information on Substance Abuse (CRISA), Nigeria
34. Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation, Canada
35. Centro de convivência É de Lei (EDL), Brazil
36. Centro de Estudios de Derecho Justicia y Sociedad (Dejusticia), Colombia
37. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina
38. Centro de Investigación Drogas y Derechos Humanos, Peru
39. Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), Dominican Republic
40. Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign - National Network of Community Organisations, Ireland
41. Clean Start Africa, Kenya

42. Collectif d'Information et de Recherche Cannabique (CIRC), France
43. Community Health Project Los Angeles, USA
44. Conectas Direitos Humanos, Brazil
45. Corporación Acción Técnica Social, Colombia
46. Corporación Humanas, Colombia
47. Corporación Viso Mutop Colombia
48. Correlation-European Harm Reduction Network (C-EHRN), Netherlands
49. Cranstoun, United Kingdom
50. Deliberar, Colombia
51. Dianova International, Spain
52. Drug Policy Alliance, USA
53. Drug Policy Australia, Australia
54. Drug Science, United Kingdom
55. Društvo AREAL, Slovenia
56. East Africa Harm Reduction Network, Regional
57. Elementa DD.HH., Colombia and Mexico
58. Empower India, India
59. Equal Health and Rights Access Advocacy Initiative (EHRAAI), Nigeria
60. Escola Livre de Redução de Danos, Brazil
61. Estonian Association of People Who Use Psychoactive Substances (LUNEST), Estonia
62. Estonian Medical Cannabis Association (MTÜ Ravikanep), Estonia
63. Eurasian harm reduction association (EHRA), Lithuania
64. EURO TC, Regional
65. European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD), Ireland
66. European NGO Coalition for Just and effective Drug policies (ENCOD), Austria
67. Fédération Addiction, France
68. Fédération bruxelloise des institutions spécialisées en matière de drogues et addictions, Belgium
69. Fields of Green for ALL NPC, South Africa
70. Fondazione Villa Maraini, Italy
71. Forum Droghe, Italy
72. Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Colombia
73. Fundación Latinoamérica Reforma, Chile
74. Gadejuristen (The Street Lawyers), Denmark
75. Global Care For Health Support Initiative, Nigeria
76. Global Initiative for Health and Rights (GIHR), Nigeria
77. Global Initiative for Health and Rights (GIHR), Nigeria
78. Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association (GLEPHA), Global
79. Groupement Romand d'Études des Addictions (GRE), Switzerland
80. Harm Reduction Australia (HRA), Australia
81. Harm Reduction International, Global
82. Harm Reduction Nurses Association (HRNA), Canada
83. HAYAT, Malaysia
84. Health Action International (HAI), Netherlands
85. Health Action Support Initiative (HASI) Nigeria
86. Health Poverty Action, Global
87. Healthy options project Skopje (HOPS), North Macedonia
88. Heart That Cares For Better Health Organization (HCBH), Nigeria
89. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR), Poland
90. HIV Legal Network, Canada
91. House of Rainbow, HOR, United Kingdom
92. IDUCARE, Philippines
93. Indonesia Judicial Research Society (IIRS), Indonesia
94. Indonesian Harm Reduction network (JANGKAR), Indonesia
95. Institute for Rational Addiction Policies, Czechia
96. Instituto de Defesa da População Negra (IDPN), Brazil
97. Instituto de Defesa do Direito de Defesa (IDDD), Brazil
98. Instituto RIA, AC, Mexico
99. Instituto Satvia Medicinal, Brazil
100. Intercambios Civil Association, Argentina
101. Intercambios Puerto Rico (IPR), Puerto Rico
102. International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research and Service (ICEERS), Spain
103. International Centre on Human Rights and Drug Policy (HRDP), Global

104. International Coalition on Drug Policy Reform and Environmental Justice, International, Global
105. International Drug Law Advocacy and Resource Center (IDLARC), USA
106. International Network for Transparency, Accountability and Care in Treatment (INTACT), Global
107. International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), Global
108. ITTC - Instituto Terra, Trabalho e Cidadania, Brazil
109. Japan Advocacy Network for Drug Policy (NYAN), Japan
110. John Mordaunt Trust England, United Kingdom
111. Justice Project Pakistan, Pakistan
112. KUZA TRUST- East Africa, Regional
113. Kykeon Analytics, Spain
114. La Società della Ragione, Italy
115. Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat, Indonesia
116. Life Quality Improvement Organisation FLIGHT, Croatia
117. Mainline, Netherlands
118. Manas Safer Space, Lisbon, Portugal
119. Médecins du Monde, France
120. Médicos do Mundo, Portugal
121. Metzineres, Spain
122. My Brain My Choice Initiative, Germany
123. NC Survivors Union (NCSU), USA
124. Network of Asian People who Use Drugs (NAPUD), Regional
125. New Zealand Drug Foundation, New Zealand
126. Nigeria Network of People Who Use Drugs (NNPUD), Nigeria
127. NoBox Philippines
128. Normal Norge (NORML Norway), Norway
129. NORML France, France
130. Nouvelle Aube, Marseille, France
131. Odysseus civic association, Slovakia
132. Penal Reform International, Global
133. Penington Institute, Australia
134. Plataforma Brasileira de Política de Drogas (PBPD), Brazil
135. Plataforma JUSTA, Brazil
136. Popular Democracy, USA
137. POS Foundation, Ghana
138. Prekursor, Poland
139. Premiere ligne, Switzerland
140. Psynapse, Norway
141. Recovering Nepal, Federation of PUD and Drug Service Organizations in Nepal
142. Rede Brasileira de Redução de Danos e Direitos Humanos (Reduc), Brazil
143. Rede Jurídica pela Reforma da Política de Drogas (Rede Reforma), Brazil
144. Releaf Malta NGO (v/o 1872), Malta
145. Release, United Kingdom
146. Remedy Alliance For the People, USA
147. Reprieve, United Kingdom
148. RESET - Drug Policy and Human Rights, Argentina
149. Responsabilité Espoir Vie Solidarité (REVS PLUS), Burkina Faso
150. Romanian Association Against AIDS (ARAS), Romania
151. Safer Drug Policies/ Foreningen Tryggere Ruspolitikk, Norway
152. Santo Amor – World Movement for Cannabis Freedom, Brazil
153. Schildower Kreis, expert network for drug policy reform, Germany
154. Skoun, Lebanese Addictions Center, Lebanon
155. SMART on Drugs, Belgium
156. South African Cannabis & Hemp Industry Development Association (SACHIDA), South Africa
157. South African Network of People who Use Drugs, South Africa
158. Southeast Asia Harm Reduction Association (AHRA), Regional
159. Stichting Legalize! Netherlands
160. StoptheDrugWar.org, USA
161. Students for Sensible Drug Policy International, Global
162. Suar Perempuan Lingkar Napza Nusantara Foundation (SPINN), Indonesia
163. TB HIV Care, South Africa
164. Temblores ONG, Colombia
165. The Finnish Association for Humane Drug Policy (HPP), Finland

166. Transform Drug Policy Foundation, United Kingdom
167. Transnational Institute (TNI), Netherlands
168. TRUST EST, Estonia
169. Tryggere Ungdom (Safer Youth), Norway
170. Tsohang Youth Project, South Africa
171. Uganda Harm Reduction Network (UHRN), Uganda
172. Ukrainian Network of People who Use Drugs, Ukraine
173. Uniting NSW.ACT, Australia
174. Vers Marseille Sans Sida et Sans Hépatites, France
175. Vital Strategies, USA
176. VOCAL-US, USA
177. Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), USA
178. West African Drug Policy Network (WADPN), Nigeria Chapter
179. Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN), Global
180. Yayasan Orbit Surabaya, Indonesia
181. Youth RISE, Global
182. Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network, Zimbabwe