



BECKLEY FOUNDATION

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"We have to express our ideas very clearly. We do not want drugs, but we do not agree with the way the fight has been undertaken so far."

Summary: Senator Murillo Karam described some of the basic conditions needed for a successful and positive debate on drug policy and reform.

ESTABLISHING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE DEBATE

In order to prevent disputes on essential issues (as in the drug policy debate), it is important to clearly and correctly define terms and concepts.

First, the terms 'legalisation' and 'decriminalisation' are treated as if they were the same thing, but they are in fact different. Second, the current debate does not mean *opposing* the fight against drugs; it is another means of fighting drugs and their negative effects. No one here is in favour of an increase in drug addiction. We want to find different ways to fight the phenomenon. We do not want drugs, but we do not agree with the way the fight has been undertaken so far. Third, priorities vary from country to country and region to region.

The aim is not only to fight against the consequences of drug use, but it is vital to also think about causes. We need to find effective and successful ways to generate new conditions within countries to allow for better positioning in the fight against drugs. We should fight against criminals, not the victims of crime. Someone with a drug addiction is someone who needs help. We have to find ways of fighting the wholesale use of drugs. In this sense, it is crucial to find a way to eliminate the economic value of drugs. But it is not only economic profit that criminal organisations gain through drugs; they also buy independence and power.

In order to succeed, we need to fight using the law, our intelligence, and a clear understanding of where we are going, what we want to obtain, and the best way to achieve it.