



## OUT OF UNGASS: A NEW APPROACH

WE THE UNDERSIGNED call on Governments and Parliaments to recognise that:

- Fifty-five years after the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was launched, it is clearly evident that the global war on drugs has had many unintended and devastating consequences worldwide, and has failed to eliminate drug production or drug use;
- **Respect for human rights and national sovereignty are founding principles of the UN** and, in order to protect health and liberty worldwide these principles must underpin the reform of international drug policies;
- **Sovereign states have the right to form and implement domestic drug policies that their governments consider best for their own citizens**, in keeping with the principles of improving health, reducing harm and respecting human rights – including the freedom of conscience and religion, the free development of personality, the right to health and the rights of indigenous peoples;
- **Every individual's right to health includes the right to appropriate medication**, but currently billions of people, four-fifths of the world's population, lack access to opiates for the relief of pain;
- Current global drug policies, based on prohibition, have not only made it impossible for the majority of citizens of the world to access appropriate pain medication, but have also **resulted in the obstruction of scientific and medical research into the potential benefits of the prohibited plants and compounds, to the detriment of the health of the world's population**, and in contravention of the principle of scientific research being free from political intervention;
- Certain plants and substances are currently listed on Schedule I of the UN Single Convention, despite having medical potential and not being highly addictive, and despite having been used by indigenous people for millennia; **these plants and substances should be moved from Schedule 1 to Schedule II, thereby opening the doors to research, and allowing physicians to prescribe them where appropriate.**

Let us break the taboo on debate and embrace the clear need for reform. **The time for action is now.**

Yours faithfully,