

DECLARATION OF UNITY

DRUGS & HIV: The Twin Epidemic

A follow-up to the IDU Leadership Statement¹ released at the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand



CHRC
Caribbean Harm
Reduction Coalition

As leaders in the field we urge world leaders, policy makers, opinion leaders, and communities as well as their representatives at the International AIDS Conference 2006 to commit themselves to the speedy adoption and implementation of evidence-based policies to ensure:

- high coverage and low threshold access to sterile injection equipment, condoms, methadone and buprenorphine as essential components of comprehensive HIV prevention and care including in correctional settings;
- that drug users and all marginalized populations have equitable access to prevention, medical care, and highly active antiretroviral treatment through establishing country-level and global targets and monitoring;
- meaningful involvement of drug users at all levels of planning and policy, with funding for drug user networks and organizing;
- an end to mass imprisonment, disenfranchisement, and human rights violations of drug users including punitive and degrading drug treatment programs and the widespread use of withdrawal as a form of torture.

Further, UNAIDS cannot fight the HIV epidemic when it faces counterproductive efforts from other international bodies. We demand that:

- the United Nations Office of Drug Control, as the lead drug law enforcement agency in the world, provide bold and consistent leadership to ensure that protecting communities from HIV epidemics spreading from injecting drug users is regarded as more important than reducing the supply of drugs;
- the International Narcotics Control Board, as the lead agency charged with responsibility for monitoring implementation of the drug treaties, publicly and unambiguously endorse and promote harm reduction and monitor regularly the extent to which the nations of the world that committed themselves at United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS 2001 to providing HIV prevention for injecting drug users to scale by 2005 carry out this commitment;
- all major UN bodies involved in drug policy and the international community accept that drug use is primarily a health and social matter which also requires some law enforcement interventions rather than being primarily a matter for the criminal justice system.

¹ The IDU Leadership Statement can be viewed online at www.ahrn.net/library_upload/uploadfile/Leadership.pdf; the original Statement is based on a wide range of political declarations as identified in the endnotes. The current Declaration builds on recommendations published in a declaration prepared by the International Activists Who Use Drugs at the ICRDRH in Vancouver, Canada: *Why the world needs an international network of activists who use drugs* available online at www.brugertforeningen.dk/bfny.nsf/Pagesuk/DE15097B28F4D8CFC1257182007BE09A?OpenDocument&S=UK.