

Mr. Sven-Olov Carlsson, International President, World Federation Against Drugs Speech at the 4th World Forum Against Drugs and the 21st European Cities Against Drugs Annual Mayors' Conference, Opening Session, Monday, 19 May 2014, Stockholm

Your Majesty, Your Excellencies, Honored Guests, Prominent Speakers and Moderators, Distinguished Delegates and Friends,

Four years ago, 2008, the first World Forum Against Drugs took place here in Stockholm.

One of our major goals with the Forum was to reach out to non-governmental organizations on all continents and invite their members to a world conference where they could share experiences and talk about a vision of a drug free world.

The Forum was a success.

One of the outcomes of the first Forum was that The World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) was established 2009 as a global non-governmental organization.

In 2010 World Federation Against Drugs organized the 2nd World Forum Against Drugs and 2012 the 3rd World Forum Against Drugs.

I would like to thank Her Majesty Queen Silvia in particular for her willingness and support in being the patron for this 4th World Forum Against Drugs as well as the Forum's we organized in 2008, 2010 and 2012. Her Majesty's support has been very important and is highly valued.

The World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) is a global multilateral community of non-governmental organizations and individuals.

The aim of WFAD is to work for a drug-free world. The members of World Federation Against Drugs share a common concern that illicit drug use is undercutting traditional values and threatening the existence of stable families, communities, and government institutions throughout the world.

We have since 2009 built a global network of non-governmental organizations and individuals and today we have more than 120 non-governmental organizations as members.

The work of the World Federation Against Drugs is built on the principles of universal fellowship and basic human and democratic rights. We believe that working for a drug-free World will promote peace and human development and dignity, democracy, tolerance, equality, freedom and justice.

World Federation Against Drugs bases its work on the UN Conventions.

Experience tells us that a balanced and restrictive drug policy limits the problem of drug abuse.

The key to success is to prevent the problem, the success of treatment is rather limited although treatment must be a part of a balanced policy.

Misuse of illicit drugs is normally initiated in close friendship relations at a relatively early stage of the drug "career".

Therefore it must be a top priority to work with early intervention for a drug policy to be successful in order to limit the spread of misuse of illicit drugs.

The strength of the international drug control system is its universality.

But drug policies are too important to be left to drug experts and to governments alone. It is a society-wide responsibility that requires society-wide engagement.

- This means working with children, starting from parents and teachers, to ensure that they develop self-esteem.
- This means supporting family-based programmes because prevention begins at home.
- This means advocacy.

As non-governmental organizations we can play a crucial and a very important role in this matter.

The future of an improved drug policy is not to legalize intoxicating, abusable drugs, including marijuana.

It is in the development of a balanced, restrictive drug policy that prevents drug use, and that intervenes with drugs users to provide them with a path to life-long recovery.

Instead of legalizing drugs, an enlightened drug policy can harness the criminal justice system to thwart drug markets, facilitate entry into treatment and restrict incarceration to egregious offenders.

The criminal law against illegal drug use is a major public health strategy to reduce drug abuse and the many health, safety and productivity losses imposed by drug abuse.

These are the elements of a successful drug policy. This drug policy makes clear that drug use is unacceptable.

Thank you for your attention.