

IDPC Alert - June 2008

The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) is a global network of NGOs and professional networks that specialise in issues related to illegal drug production and use. The Consortium aims to promote objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. It disseminates the reports of its member organisations about particular drug-related matters, and offers expert consultancy services to policymakers and officials around the world.

COMMUNICATIONS

The IDPC website has been updated, and a specific section created for materials related to the United Nations 10-year review of the global drug control system. This section, accessed through a link on the homepage at www.idpc.info, contains a selection of official documents, IDPC reports and updates, and related publications relevant to the review that will culminate in a high-level political meeting in Vienna in March 2009.

With effect from April 2008, IDPC is now administered and co-ordinated from the offices of Release, the London-based drugs and legal rights NGO. The Beckley Foundation remains a full member of the IDPC, and will continue to contribute reports and analysis, but the co-ordination of financial matters, administration and communications will from now on fall to Release. In this regard, you may receive future communications from either Geni Horwood (gh@internationaldrugpolicy.net), the IDPC Co-ordinator, or Christopher Hallam (ch@internationaldrugpolicy.net), the IDPC Research Assistant, who are both based at Release.

At the same time, we are in the process of expanding our network of consultants who work with governments around the world to promote the development of humane and effective drug policies, and specifically the agreed IDPC views and positions. As at June 1st, we have the following consultants working with us:

EUROPE – Mike Trace, Grazia Zuffa.

ASIA – Gabor Somogyi.

LATIN AMERICA – Coletta Youngers.

CARIBBEAN – Marcus Day.

We are hoping to add further consultants to this list in the coming months, and will keep you informed. If you wish to make contact with any of these individuals, you can get their contact details from Geni on the above email address.

PUBLICATIONS

IDPC ADVOCACY GUIDE, VERSION 4

This version has only minor changes from the previous version, distributed in April, and will be the final version of the advocacy guide. From now on, a series of IDPC updates on the UN Drug Policy Review will be produced, the first being scheduled for the end of July.

ENGLISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyGuide_June08_EN.pdf

SPANISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyGuide_June08_ES.pdf

IDPC ADVOCACY NOTES

To help our consultants, members and partners to focus their advocacy engagement with national governments and international agencies, we will be producing short summaries of IDPC positions in the form of advocacy notes. The first three of these are now available on the IDPC website:

The UN High-Level Meeting on AIDS - New York, June 2008.

ENGLISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_UNMeetingAIDS_EN.pdf

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_UNMeetingAIDS_EN.pdf

SPANISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_UNMeetingAIDS_ES.pdf

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_UNMeetingAIDS_ES.pdf

The Supply Reduction Working Group of the United Nations Drug Policy Review.

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_SupplyReduc_EN.pdf

The Demand Reduction Working Group of the United Nations Drug Policy Review.

ENGLISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_DRWG_EN.pdf

SPANISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/IDPC_AdvocacyNote_DRWG_ES.pdf

THE LATIN AMERICAN "BLUE RIBBON" COMMISSION

The Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy was launched by ex-presidents Cesar Gaviria (Colombia), Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil). Composed of eighteen eminent members from different countries in the region, its objective is to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of current drug policy and to contribute towards more efficient, safe and humane policies. It also aims to make Latin America's voice heard in the global debate concerning this transnational issue. The Commission intends to start wide-ranging debates about the issue, and in the course of its work will hear from experts, analyze alternatives and formulate suggestions. A final proposal will be presented in early 2009. For additional information, see: www.drogasydemocracia.org.

ENGLISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/LABlueRibbonCommission_EN.pdf

SPANISH http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/LABlueRibbonCommission_ES.pdf

THE GLOBAL STATE OF HARM REDUCTION (IHRA)

As part of its global work programme, the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) has gathered together the latest available data on injecting drug use, HIV infection amongst drug users, the development of government policies and responses, and the spread of harm reduction services across the world. This information is summarised and presented in this key publication.

<http://www.ihra.net/uploads/downloads/Projects/GlobalStateofHR/GSHRFullReport.pdf>

REPORT ON THE SECOND MEETING OF THE EU CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

The European Commission has established a standing mechanism for consultation with civil society on drugs issues. The forum consists of 27 members, drawn from a wide range of European NGOs and professional networks, and meets quarterly to discuss issues related to the EU drug strategy and action plans. This second meeting of the forum focused on the review of the first action plan of the current EU drug strategy. http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/Corr_BP_2ndMeetingCivilSoc_EN.pdf

WOLA / ANDEAN INFORMATION NETWORK BRIEFINGS ON COCA AND DRUG POLICY IN BOLIVIA

These two briefings focus on the current domestic and international debates regarding the Bolivian government's defence of the indigenous practice of coca chewing. The first memo reviews the March 2008 INCB report which calls for the elimination of all traditional uses of coca, and the response of the Bolivian and U.S. governments. Washington has both recognized the legitimacy of traditional uses of coca while backing the INCB's demand for its elimination. The memo calls on the U.S. government to formally clarify its position. The second memo reviews present coca reduction and cocaine interdiction efforts in Bolivia and the Bolivian government's cooperation with the United States and other international donors. It also points to the serious challenges it faces in carrying out its coca reduction strategy in the La Paz Yungas and in other areas of new coca planting.

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/AIN_WOLA_CocaDebate.pdf

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/AIN_WOLA_BalancingAct.pdf

BECKLEY BRIEFING PAPER 15 - DRUG POLICY IN GEORGIA

This paper examines some current issues surrounding drug policy in the Republic of Georgia. The authors argue that, despite endorsing a balanced approach to dealing with the consequences of an expanding illicit drug market, Georgian authorities remain overly reliant on enforcement oriented policies. This is particularly the case with regard to a recently introduced coercive drug testing regime. The brief examines the negative consequences of this programme, and argues that testing and incarceration do little to reduce drug use.

http://www.idpc.info/php-bin/documents/BFDPP_BP_15_DrgCntrlGeorgia_EN.pdf

MEETINGS / EVENTS

IDPC UN DRUG POLICY BRIEFING - VIENNA, JULY 2008.

The latest in the series of IDPC briefing meetings will be held in the margins of the 'Beyond 2008' NGO Forum scheduled for 7th to 9th July. The exact date and venue for the meeting is yet to be finalised, but if you wish to register to participate, contact Andreas Woreth at aw@internationaldrugpolicy.net, and details will be sent to you in due course.

Please feel free to pass this alert on to any contacts who may be interested in drug policy issues. If you have received this alert in error, or do not wish to continue receiving our alerts, you can unsubscribe yourself by emailing to gh@internationaldrugpolicy.net