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For Immediate Release
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Sweden, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, Italy and The United States Sign Joint Statement Reiterating a Commitment For a Humane and Balanced Drug Policy

(St. Petersburg, FL) On May 20th, 2012, at the World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) in Stockholm, Sweden, four countries and the United States signed a Joint statement (<http://www.worldfederationagainstdrugs.se/>) supporting these principles: to ensure the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for the relief of pain, treatment of illness, and research; and to prevent and reduce the use of these drugs for any other purpose and reduce the consequences their use cause.

The statement affirms that the ideal approach to drug policy must be a balanced one, combining effective enforcement to restrict the supply of drugs, with efforts to reduce demand and build recovery: supporting people to live a life free of addiction.

In his remarks at WFAD, Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy said, “I’ve seen the debate about drug control lurch between two extremes. On one hand are people who suggest that drug legalization is the ‘silver bullet’ solution to drug control. On the other hand are people who believe that a ‘War on Drugs’ law enforcement centric mentality still drives the U.S. approach to drug policy, and that success is measured by the number of arrests made or prisons built. The truth is, neither of these approaches is humane, effective, or grounded in evidence. That is why the Obama Administration supports a ‘third way’ approach to drug control—one that is based on the results of a huge investment in research from some of the world’s preeminent scholars on disease of substance abuse.”

“This statement is significant because it reaffirms the importance of upholding the United Nations Drug Conventions that are the foundation of our global anti-drug efforts and are, in their current form, effective,” said Calvina Fay, Executive Director of Drug Free America Foundation. “It rejects efforts to weaken the Conventions and confirms that drugs are illegal because they are dangerous to all of society. Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically obligates member countries of the UN to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs. This is a critical Human Rights issue and we are pleased that this statement embraces a commitment to uphold this obligation. We urge other nations to adopt this balanced approach towards drug policies that are grounded in science and human rights and reject illicit drug use,” concluded Fay.

This joint statement emphasizes the view that the global drug problem requires a balanced approach and that it is a shared responsibility to address both the demand and the supply through public health and criminal justice interventions. The joint statement was signed by Ms. Maria Larsson, Sweden, Mr. Viktor P. Ivanov, Russia, Mr. Gus Jaspert, United Kingdom, Mr. Gil Kerlikowske, United States and Mr. Giovanni Serpelloni, Italy.

DFAF is a national and international drug policy organization promoting effective sound drug policies, education, and prevention www.dfaf.org. WFAD is a multilateral community of non-governmental organisations and individuals advocating a drug-free world www.wfad.se.

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