



**The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) supports the campaign:
"Support. Don't Punish"**

"Support. Don't Punish" is a global advocacy campaign to raise awareness of the harms caused by the criminalization of people who use drugs. The campaign was created in 2013, in acknowledgement to the need to change laws and policies which impede access to harm reduction interventions, and to promote respect for the human rights of people who use drugs.

The WFMH appreciates the attention that the OMS is bringing to issues related to mental health, but we cannot ignore that in most of the countries mental health services are not accessible as they should be by right for people who have problematic substance use.

The WFMH firmly considers that addictions should be included in public mental health policies without making differences with any other mental or organic illness or pain.

We agree with the OMS when they affirm that "treatment coverage for those with alcohol or drugs use disorders is inadequate".

We have noticed that in most of the countries mental health policies do not include in their programmes an appropriate approach and response to people with drugs use disorders so they are obliged to appeal to programmes offered by institutions that are outside the health system which in many cases do not have any therapeutic criteria or ethical principles.

Even though it is generally clear that addictions are a health disorder, in practice, these patients are systematically expelled from general hospitals, health centers, public or private, especially when they need to be hospitalized

These particular situations take place because social imaginary (members of the professional community, members of the government and society in general) firmly assumes that people with drugs use disorders are criminals, violent and marginal so they do not deserve to be treated as the other members of the society.

This is a consequence of the growing persecution and criminalization that these persons suffer because of laws that penalize drug users. These laws have not decrease the use of drugs and have contributed to stigmatization and to the expulsion of these persons from the health system.

In this context, we call on all governments across the world to modify laws that penalize drugs users and include within mental health public policies addictions among other mental health disorders. We call on all countries to consider the rights of drug users to be included in the health system, policies, offering different kind of approaches: community, territorial, ethical, rights based perspective, interdisciplinary and above all general hospitalization interventions. Institutions that have unnecessary confinement as their fundamental approach and have practices that have not been accepted by the international scientific community should be restructured to comply with international standards of drug use treatment.

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