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STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COALITION FOR JUST AND EFFECTIVE DRUG POLICIES TO THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

14 MARCH 2014 - VIENNA

Thank you, Madame Chair and Distinguished Delegates:

This statement is presented by ENCOD, a European platform of organisations and individual citizens who are affected and concerned by current drug policies, and who aim to replace them with policies that are more just and more effective.

My name is Doug Fine. I'm a drug policy author, who as a father and a reporter has become convinced that the international drug war must change its focus. I should add also that I'm here today replacing Joep Ooman, a long time and respected drug policy activist whose credentials were stripped this morning. Please see ENCOD's press release about this – they've printed out copies and are distributing them.

Listening to the distinguished delegates statements during this session, I recognize that many well-intentioned policies continue, in an effort to protect public safety. Nonetheless, according to the UN's own figures, a realistic estimate of the global turnover for the total illicit drug industry amounts to approximately \$400 billion USD per year. This means that every second, 12,683 USD changes hands worldwide through the sale of what are today illegal drugs. Since production costs represent such a small percentage of this amount, it is obvious why the illicit drug trade is a key engine behind organized crime and widespread corruption

worldwide, and why the bulk of its revenues is not benefitting simply warlords or local drug barons in producing countries, but also otherwise legitimate Western world financial interests.

That, in a sentence, sums up the effects of international drug policy since the 1961 Convention went into effect. This is why member states like Uruguay, Portugal and more and more U.S. states are unilaterally changing drug policy. Individual states' legal regulation is the only way to increase public safety and reduce crime surrounding all drugs. I can tell you from years of field research that this is true.

Anyone who studies drug policy eventually wonders, "who 'organizes' organized drug crime?" Is it the small time criminal who benefits from the fact that commodities that millions of people want to use continue to be prohibited? Or is it those who, by insisting in the face of all evidence on the illegality of drugs, enable easy and large profits to be made by every manner of black market entity, who often use the banking system to launder money and thus attack the very democratic roots of our societies?

I'm speaking for 180 seconds. In that time, the international drug trade has generated 180 x 12.683 USD. That's 2 million 282 thousand USD. When this important UN Commission on Drugs session is over, that criminal profit will total 9 billion, 862 million, 300 thousand 800 USD.

The drug war is not working. Please, members of the Commission, be brave. Be truthful. Understand that we must change strategies now. The three Conventions on Narcotic Drugs must be updated to reflect reality and better policy, in order to end the deplorable situation that prohibition has itself created. The people of the world increasingly realize this.

The U.N. must proceed along the most effective route to end drug prohibition; namely by allowing regulation by member states. As I mentioned, as a father and as journalist who has studied drug policy from the field for five years, I can say without hesitation that this is the single most effective policy move we can take to immediately make the world a safer place. Thank you.

-Doug Fine, High Level Segment, UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna, March 14, 2014. <http://dougfine.com>