

THE ROME CONSENSUS FOR A HUMANITARIAN DRUG POLICY
Declaration to the 51st Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), March 2008

The representatives of the Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies participating in the Third Congress on Humanitarian Drug Policy, held in Barcelona March, 5-7 2008, hosted by the Spanish Red Cross and the Italian Red Cross, appeal to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs to ground international drug policy in health-based humanitarian approaches, taking into account the human disaster created by drugs, considering the recommendations of the meeting:

Recognizing the need for a new humanitarian approach to international drug policy, based on realistic, public health and social measures which have the objective of responding to the challenges posed by the use, production and trafficking of drugs: especially as it links to poverty, security and human suffering,

Acknowledging the need of a comprehensive global approach within the current international framework to address the humanitarian and public health challenges arising from the increase in drug availability and use,

Encouraging the formulation and implementation of a humanitarian drug policy that saves lives and alleviates human suffering: a policy based on reason and compassion that generates action, free from ideology, force, stigmatization and discrimination,

Emphasizing that public health measures (including *inter alia* needle exchange programmes and opiate substitution treatment) and humanitarian approaches are key elements of effective drug policy, and can provide the optimal way of achieving the basic human rights of reducing human suffering and reaching-out to vulnerable people, including drug users and people living with HIV and AIDS,

Recognizing that diversity and cultural sensitivities are issues to be considered from country to country, and from region to region, demanding drug policy measures that are adapted to the needs of local communities,

Suggesting that CND recommendations on drug policy in relation to the spread of HIV and AIDS through drug use are in alignment with UNAIDS objectives and recommendations, with the Declaration of Commitment of the 2001 UNGASS on HIV and AIDS, and in accordance with Millennium Development Goals: to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV by 2015, and to reduce poverty, which is one of the driving factors behind drug use,

Encouraging CND Delegates to support their own Member State in the endorsement, development and implementation of activities and initiatives that will help to relieve suffering, reduce the HIV and AIDS and Hepatitis C risk and provide care and social and psychological support to drug users as part of their country's humanitarian portfolio and,

Inviting CND Delegates and their colleagues in relevant national Ministries to work closely with their own Red Cross/Red Crescent National Society for the development of a humanitarian drug policy, mobilizing the strength of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement provided by its auxiliary role to national governments, to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of a humanitarian drug policy.

The participants of the Third Congress on Humanitarian Drug Policy urge the CND to take into consideration the engagement of the 107 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies which are signatory to the Rome Consensus for a Humanitarian Drug Policy, for the creation of a framework for a new, humanitarian approach to the global drug crisis. Underlining that the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement can uniquely mobilise volunteers and communities to the service of a new humanitarian drug policy.