



Asia Pacific Forum Against Drugs (APFAD) 2015



The first ever Asia Pacific Forum Against Drugs (APFAD), organised by the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA), took place on 27 August 2015 in its home country, Singapore. The theme of the forum was “A drug-free Society for our Children” as we are driven by the belief that we have to take a pro-active stand against the calls to legalise drugs to ensure that our children can live in a drug-free society. Hence, the Forum was organised to get like-minded NGOs to rally their home audiences and government agencies to present a clear and united stand against the legalisation of drugs at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drug Matters in 2016.

The forum featured wide-ranging presentations by experts from international and regional NGOs such as the European Cities Against Drugs and Colombo Plan. Ideas and best practices were shared, and the forum provided a platform for interactions between the various groups which served to foster greater understanding and encourage potential collaborations on the same cause.

A key outcome of the forum was the adoption of the APFAD Declaration, which epitomised the commitment of NGOs to work towards a drug-free society. The Declaration highlights the importance of like-minded NGOs to counter the pro-drug lobby which aims to decriminalise drug abuse and legalise drugs. It serves as a rallying point for NGOs who believe that a stand needs to be made to ensure a drug-free world for our children, families and communities.

The Declaration was successfully adopted by the participants present at APFAD and will be promoted thereafter in the respective home countries of the participants. This Declaration will go on to represent the voices of NGOs which firmly advocates a drug-free agenda at the UNGASS. Hence, we welcome all NGOs who share the same vision to sign the Declaration and stand united with us. For more information, please visit the NCADA website at www.ncada.org.sg.



Asia Pacific Forum Against Drugs APFAD 2015



APFAD DECLARATION

1. We envision a drug-free world for our children, and uphold Article 33 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect our children from drug abuse:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.”

2. Drug abuse is a global problem that harms millions of people, and destabilises families, which are the cornerstones of strong communities and nations. All peoples have the right to expect their governments and civil society to work together for a drug-free society. Our children have the right to grow up and develop in stable families, where they can achieve their potential, free from drugs.
3. We oppose the legalisation of drugs because such policies send the wrong message to our children that drugs are not harmful and addictive, which will inevitably lead to an increase in drug demand and abuse. There is an urgent need to counter the well-funded pro-drug lobby which aims to decriminalise drug abuse and legalise drugs.
4. Drug abuse should be addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner, involving both drug demand and supply reduction measures. These measures should include preventive education, rehabilitation, evidence-based research and enforcement efforts. Drug rehabilitation programmes should have the goal of helping drug abusers kick the habit. We must be firm with repeat abusers to strongly discourage relapse and prevent contamination of others.
5. All persons have the responsibility to speak up and make a stand for a drug-free world for our children. Such a vision is neither utopian nor impossible. We call on all governments, non-government organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups to come together to combat drug trafficking and drug abuse, for the sake of our children, our families, and our communities around the world.