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Implementation of the international drug control treaties: other matters arising from the international drug control treaties**Statement submitted by Fields of Green for All NPC, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council****

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* [E/CN.7/2025/1](#).

** Issued without formal editing.



2025 Centenary of Cannabis Prohibition

Global Cannabis History Year

CANNABIS or HEMP or MARIJUANA or OTHER

If the history of *Cannabis* and humankind was a clock, prohibition would only be its last 2 minutes.

From time immemorial *Cannabis* has grown, been grown, and used for countless purposes.

Worldwide, *Cannabis* provided clothing, food, feed and bedding for livestock, medicine, and a spiritual and social enhancer. But things changed brutally, only a hundred years ago.

The modern prohibition of *Cannabis sativa* L. plant (also known as hemp, marihuana, चिन्नी, dagga, конопля, ganja, 麻, pot, ntsangu, haschisch, canapa, riamba, قنب, siddhi, kif, cáñamo, bangui, 大麻, chanvre, konopí...) originated before 1925 at the local level in Africa and South America. The involvement of larger hegemonic countries came much, much later.

But it was only **in 1925** that *Cannabis* acquired a marked world character that continues to this day, as it entered international law for the first time.

1925: TWO TREATIES

In 1925, the Geneva Opium Convention included “Indian hemp,” upon request from an influential, newly-independent northern African country.^[1] For the first time, *Cannabis* had become an internationally-controlled drug. A few conservative African and South American governments had managed to extend to the entire planet their racist, colonially-biased, and intolerant views of an ancestral plant.^[2]

In 1925 also, the Brussels Pharmacopoeia Treaty included for the first time *Cannabis* (herb, extract, tincture) in the International Pharmacopoeia, alongside other important medicines.^[3]

The 1925 Opium Convention generated a descendance of treaties that **continue to be in force** worldwide today (like the **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961**).

On the other hand, the presence of *Cannabis* in the International Pharmacopoeia did not last long: all medicinal plants (including *Cannabis*) were deleted from it, just after the second World War (WWII), leaving only active compounds.^[4]

1935: BIASED ASSESSMENT

In 1935, *Cannabis* was subject to an international scientific review. It was found harmless, and its use in medicine was, at the time, quite widespread.^[5] But the scientists’ outcome was misdirected by political processes, and after WWII, misinformation about the review was used to reinforce anti-*Cannabis* sentiments. The world had to wait until 2018, when a new and unbiased international scientific review took place.^[6]

1939–1945

World War I had represented the consolidation of international drug control, as victory treaties included clauses which made more countries join the early drug control Conventions. It prepared the ground for the 1925 Opium Convention to happen.^[7] On the contrary, WWII represented a curious temporary bubble of *Cannabis* enthusiasm from all parts.

Driven by the need for its fibres in the ramped-up industrial production for the war effort, all sides (including European, Northern American and Asian belligerents) encouraged *Cannabis* cultivation to ramp up military production and supplies in various applications such as ropes, canvas, textiles...^[8]

In 1940, amidst WWII, some countries that did not immediately join the war used the opportunity to experiment with the legalisation of marihuana and all other drugs. Although this pioneering law was pressured to revert within months, it remains a pioneering public health approach, still inspirational today.^[9]

The COLD WAR... on DRUGS

Starting in 1937, some large northern hemisphere countries began a crusade against the plant within their borders. These efforts were paused during the war, but restarted right after, leading to the criminalisation of users and a significant decline in the production of *Cannabis* for industrial purposes – benefiting other industries. While repression was ramping up, it was still far from the aggressive chase of smokers and patients that came after the 1970s.

Large Asian countries, on their side, never banned the production of *Cannabis*... at least for industrial purposes. But during the Cold War, all countries involved had a similar approach in repressing the uses of psychoactive parts of *Cannabis*.

The post-war period was synonymous with ramping up prohibition in many countries, although there was not yet a global coordinated effort to eradicate *Cannabis* and its cultures.

The TAKEOVER of SEEDS

In the post-war era, the world also witnessed the appearance of novel plant varieties of *Cannabis* – mostly in Europe – tailored specifically to have the least possible amount of THC, amidst a rapid transition from traditional to industrialised agriculture. Various European countries aggressively promoted the adoption of the UPOV treaty,^[11] creating a form of patents on plant varieties, which favoured these novel, proprietary (and low-THC) hemp varieties, over traditional hemp landraces with varying amounts of THC (but never anywhere close to zero).

In the 18th century, without evidence to back it up, some European botanists had the novel idea to classify hemp into two distinct classes: the “good” sativa from Europe, and the “drug-type” indica from the Indies.^[12] With UPOV, questionable breeders and politicians succeeded in altering the unicity of *Cannabis* in the field, centuries after altering it in the mind of (European and Western) scientists and societies.

A CENTURY of PAIN...

The 1925 Opium Convention was not a prohibition treaty. It was a treaty controlling drugs.^[13] However, this control enabled authoritarian governments to apply exceptional measures to *Cannabis*, like bans. Which they happily did (although not all). The 1961 Convention is exactly the same: it does not impose prohibition, it just suggests it to governments... which then go on gladly to implement it.

The more recent part of global prohibition is better known: In the 1970s, the “War on Drugs” began, a new era of anti-drugs fight, scaling up drug control to unprecedented levels of destruction which continue to fuel massive environmental damage and human rights violations to this day.

Prohibition is global, and at the same time extremely local. *Cannabis* peoples and communities as well! **In a hundred years, they didn’t succeed in eradicating us. In a hundred years, they didn’t succeed in replacing our traditional *Cannabis* plant varieties with their proprietary strains.**

...vs MILLENIA of HEALING

“*Quisieron enterrarnos pero no sabían que éramos semillas*” – They wanted to bury us, not knowing that we were seeds.

The Cannabis Embassy has been proclaimed as an independent state without territory,^[14] to be the government that can protect, promote, and uphold your rights, the rights of *Cannabis* peoples worldwide, negated so far by their “classic”

government. The Cannabis Embassy aims to alleviate this. Starting with the necessary exercise of commemoration, memory and remembrance for 100 years of death and devastation, but also celebration and upholding of the hundreds of years before 1925, when *Cannabis* and humans enjoyed positive, mutually beneficial relationships.

In 2025, rather than marking a century of prohibition, we will honour a millennium of recorded *Cannabis*-human history. We will reflect on the positive contributions and aspects of societies and nature that our diverse Cannabis communities have safeguarded, nurtured, developed, and created throughout this period.^[15]

See the NOTES, RESEARCH *and* BIBLIOGRAPHY supporting this statement on cannabisembassy.org/news/2024/10/background-2025-centenary-of-cannabis-prohibition

Learn more about the CENTENARY *of* CANNABIS PROHIBITION on 2025.cannabisembassy.org

Co-sponsored by:

ENCOD (European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies) NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC.

Non-ECOSOC NGOs supporting the statement:

Cannabis Embassy – Legatio Cannabis – 大麻大使馆 – سفارة القنب

SACHIDA (South African Cannabis and Hemp Industry Development Association)

Her Many Voices (USA)