

**TONY NEWMAN TELECONFERENCE WITH
DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE
FEBRUARY 11, 2009
AT 10:00 A.M. CENTRAL TIME**

OPERATOR: This is a recording of the Tony Newman teleconference with the Drug Policy Alliance on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at 11 A.M. Eastern Time.

Excuse me everyone, we now have our speakers in conference. Please be aware that each of your lines is in a listen-only mode. At the conclusion of the presentation we will open the floor for questions. At that time instructions will be given if you would like to ask a question.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Rubem Cesar Fernandes, Mr. Fernandes, you may begin.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Thank you. I will be the moderator for this teleconference. We are announcing the final statements about the Latin America Commission on drugs and democracy. I'll pass the floor to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, for his opening remarks. Please, Mr. Cardoso

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: Thank you very much. You know, the main reason why we have organized this Latin American commission on drugs is because the available evidence indicates that the war on drugs is a failed war. So we have to move from this approach to another one, to a different paradigm to see how it can be done. An effort to cope with the problem of drugs and the enormous influence in some parts of the continent that drug trafficking is having.

You know the power of organized crime is undermining the very foundations of democracy in some Latin American countries. Our starting point was to acknowledge the failure of the current policies and the disasters consequently. Then we have to face the next challenge, breaking the taboo that's prevented the base of a more humane and efficient strategy. If I can summarize what we did, I would say in four points.

First, we think it is possible to reduce the harms caused by drugs by treating, drug consumption as a matter of public health. Second, we have to evaluate the convenience of decriminalizing the consumption of marijuana for private use. Third, it is important to reduce consumption from information and prevention campaigns aimed primarily at youth, but at the largest contingent of drug users. I would say the youth is by far the largest contingent of drug users. Fourth, redirect repression because it's a critical point, fighting crime, violence and corruption associated with the drug trade.

Our approach does not imply any complacency towards drugs. We reaffirm that they are harmful for people and society. Our priority goal is to reduce this harm. The way to do this is to deal with drug consumption as a matter, as I said, of public health. This is a precondition for redirecting police to the drug lords and their control over people and territories. We are also calling for the establishment of a dialogue with the United States and European Union, to develop workable alternatives to the current policies.

Drugs are a global problem that cuts across frontiers and affects us. It must still be dealt with by all countries and societies. It's impossible just to focus drugs on the base of a national—a nation, a one and only single country. It requires a global effort. It is also clear that the consumption of drugs is basically in the USA and Europe. I'm not denying the fact that the consumption is also increasing in Latin America, but in terms of market value undoubtedly the USA markets and European markets are of higher importance for drug trafficking.

So we need to move from a purely repressive approach towards another one, which focuses on the reduction of consumption, this is feasible. We have experienced in Brazil for AIDS in dealing with the HIV problem. We reduced dramatically the spread of AIDS by providing information, by offering free treatment and by calling civil society to help the government to deal with the problem. So the same has to be done with relation to drugs in general.

We cannot believe that drugs are just a problem for government, they're a problem for each one and it's a problem for the society. So we believe that's important, this is a first step but I think we believe it's important from our point of view to mobilize people. Of course, this commission cannot be responsible for that but in any case. We believe that it's possible to start by opening up the questions and by trying to break the taboo which consists in a non-discussion and just to leave in the hands of the police, the control of drugs. The failure is already there.

So I'm ready to ask you if you have questions, as well as my colleagues around the table and I will say that Mr. Rubem Cesar Fernandes will moderate it and give the floor to each one of the members of the commission. Go ahead.

OPERATOR: At this time, we will open the floor for questions. If you would like to ask a question, please press the star key followed by the one key, star-one, on your touchtone phone now. Questions will be taken in the order which they are received. If at anytime, you would like to remove yourself from the questioning queue, press star-two.

RUBEM CESAR FERNANDES: Let's pass the floor to Cesar Gaviria, former President of Colombia. If you would, please sir.

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: Thank you; President Cardoso. President Cardoso has made a very good introduction to our paper. We are basically looking for three objectives.

The first is to create a Latin American policy in relation to drugs, particularly to the consumption of drugs, trying to take particularly from a group of European countries that are dealing with the problem in a different way than that of the United States.

The second is trying to promote the debate in the US. We are very concerned that the politics in relation to narcotraffic in the US has practically no public debate today. There is a consensus in Washington that these policies failed, but that is a not real debate.

And third, we want the European countries to take more responsibility on the reduction of the consumption of drugs. They are doing much better in dealing with their addicts and consumption, but they are not doing enough in reduction of the consumption of drugs.

RUBEM FERNANDES: I think we're ready, ask some questions.

OPERATOR: Okay, our first question comes from Ruben Barrera with Notimax.

RUBEN BARRERA: Yes, good morning. This is Ruben Barrera with the Mexican news agency, Notimax. I would like to touch on something that President Gaviria said regarding the lack of debate, of public debate in the US.

Would you say that the lack of political debate on drugs on the US is because, to put

it simple, the US is not the one who is putting to death, I mean we just have to see what's going on in Colombia, what's going on in Mexico, where thousands of people have been killed in the frame of this war against drugs

What would you say, I mean, why, how do you explain this lack of debate in the US regarding the policy on drugs?

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: Yes, well undoubtedly first, there is a recognition to the significance—to the many efforts Colombia has done to fight drugs and drug trafficking, and Colombia has done an extraordinary effort and Mexico is doing an extraordinary effort at this moment. The real problem is that the results are not positive or very significant.

Recently, a report was sent to Vice-President Biden because he asked for the report as President—as Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee and what is clear now is that Plan Colombia was very successful to improve security in Colombia, but had not been successful to reduce the flow of drugs through the US. So the results of the US policy are not good, consumption is not reduced—has not—is not reducing in a very significant way and for those reasons the US should look at this policy.

We cannot reproduce US policy on prohibitionism, taking consumers to jail is something that cannot be done in Latin America, we don't have the resources and I think we don't believe that it's a good policy. I think taking so many people to jail, particularly people who consume drugs, is not producing the results the US is expecting or we are expecting and the Europeans are doing much better because they treat—they deal with consumers as health problem, they help them a lot more, but they are not doing enough in trafficking and they are not doing enough in their efforts to reduce consumption.

We would really like to see a debate in the US, the problem is in the US to date narco-trafficking is a crime and so any politician is fearful of talking about narco-trafficking or

talking about changing policy because they believe that that may conclude that they will be called soft on crime.

But the US has to be able to go over that and to discuss the policies and to discuss the results and to see if the policies that have been in place for 30 years now, or almost 40 years now, are appropriate because the price of drugs has been reducing, the flow of drugs is increasing, the consumption is almost the same, so the policy is not producing results no matter how well the principles or the ideas behind, it's not producing results.

OPERATOR: Thanking you, our next question comes from Jose De Cordoba with Wall Street Journal.

JOSE DE CORDOBA: Yes, hi, what—you used the word, prohibitionist, all over the report, are you saying that the policy now is akin to prohibition in the '20s and therefore doomed to failure? And also, there's—you're saying that marijuana should be legalized but there is nothing said about cocaine which is as you all know a big part of the problem, what's your policy towards cocaine?

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: What is said is that if you compare the damage produced by different kinds of drugs, probably marijuana is not—has a little bad effect. But again, even marijuana is harmful as well as tobacco or alcohol so it's possible to consider to decriminalize the possession of a small portion of marijuana, in some countries even a small portion of cocaine, is being considered as non-crime.

So this is possible, our main idea was to start a debate. So for us it is important to start by saying "at least marijuana", and let's see what can be done with the rest. We are not endorsing the idea that it's possible just to liberalize, it doesn't solve the question. You

have experience in Europe, it's not that easy. What we are saying is that this concentration on police and repression is not reducing the consumption. So let's move the paradigm, let's move the focus from repression to the decreasing of consumption, and this requires a multiple effort. Of course, we know that's not easy if we are asking for decriminalization/depenalization of the possession of marijuana.

The next question would be, well and who—what about the markets? Who will sell marijuana? We are not saying any word about it because we believe it's necessary to debate more on that—in depth, about the question. But we think what is now preventing a fresher view on the matter is the normal concentration on prohibitionisms. To a large extent, this produces a kind of taboo. It's not possible to debate about drugs. And instead of opening up new frontiers to solve the problem, we are just , in secrecy stimulating you know the consumption of drugs.

So we know, everyone knows that maybe around us, in college, in high schools, the faculties, all around, in factories, all around, there is drug consumption and we have—as if this was not a reality, as if the war is being successful, it has not been successful so our main goal was “let's open a debate” and by the fact that some former President and other influential people, former minister, mayor, intellectuals, and so on and so forth say it's possible to decriminalize, de-penalize marijuana, by itself it's a step ahead to open up a good discussion.

JOSE DE CORDOBA: And how about—do you have any ideas about what should be done about cocaine? I understand you want to open the discussion but, with marijuana, but it seems like it—you know that the cocaine might be more harmful but the trade in cocaine has the same terrible effects on the countries that produce it and that traffic it, I mean the violence and the corruption that we all know about.

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: Well I would like ask President Gaviria to answer. Go ahead.

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: Decriminalization is only part of the solution, it's not the solution. If you don't do what Europeans are doing now, that is taking the addict, putting them under—as a health problem, giving them drugs when it's necessary, prescribing drugs when it's necessary and helping them not to become criminals, I think you, you—decriminalization is only part of the solution.

You need to do what the Europeans are doing, of helping addicts, of helping them to deal with the problem, a health problem they have, that is the only way. That is what the US doesn't do. The US puts all people in jail, practically it's the only country in the world that is doing that. The US international conference has the support of Iran and Russia and Cuba but no one is taken to jail, consumers of drugs. The only—the half a million people that are in the US jail is because of the consumption of drugs, we need to ask if that is contributing really to the reduction of consumption. It doesn't seem by numbers that it is really producing the results.

Now what is the excuse in the US? The excuse is that people just commit crimes, they're looking for money for buying drugs, how to deal with that? You deal with that by helping those people, helping those addicts, putting them under a doctor and helping them to deal with the problem, that's what the US—we think that's what the US should do instead of putting so, so many people to jail, has tripled the population in jails in the US in the last 20 years because of the prohibitionism. What is prohibitionism, putting in jail all consumers, we think that policy—at least should be a debate about that.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Our next question, please.

OPERATOR: Thanking you, there are a number of other reporters with questions. Ruben, have all of our speakers presented, or would you like to continue with questions?

RUBEM FERNANDES: Please if we continue.

OPERATOR: Thanking you, our next question comes from Stewart Grudging with Reuters.

STEWART GRUDGING: Hello, my question is to what extent of the drug wars in Mexico at the moment, a result of US prohibitionist policies and what do you see as—what would you like to see change in US policy under the new President, Obama, in Mexico and do you think there's likely to be any change under Obama?

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: I think that's a very good question because we are looking to the Obama administration—to Obama's leadership, , harm reduction, human rights based on intervention, overcrowded prison issues, and thoughtful policy to our producing countries, as a whole. We are looking you know with concern let's see what the Mexicans will do. In Mexico, it's very dramatic because you know the arms are entering into Mexico from the United States, without any limitations. This is encouraging you know drug trafficking. On the other hand, it's obvious that the consumption in the USA is the main goal for the Mexican traffickers and producers.

And the Mexican state is starting an enormous effort to curb the increasing of traffic, so on and so forth. But the Mexican administration has not yet, you know, the knowledge as the Colombians had, how to deal with the problem. So the result is dramatic because everyday lots of people are being killed by the organized crime in Mexico. And the government is putting more and more effort and results up to now are minimal compared to

the efforts being utilized to stop the drug problem in Mexico.

So if you've been, and it's almost impossible to solve the Mexican problem, as all the other country's problems without a more ample, comprehensive set of policies from the US government. So this is absolutely necessary, I think these are important steps—not just create dialogue with America, but a specific dialogue because they have this problems at the borderline and they are looking at the problem as if it would be possible to stop it by using police, their armed forces, and by giving advice and money to the Mexican government. I know this is also necessary but it's not enough.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Could we ask for another question.

OPERATOR: Thanking you, our next question comes from Michael Reed with The Economist.

MICHAEL REED: Thank you and hello, I want to return to the issue of cocaine. The public harm generated by drug trafficking in Colombia and the threat to democracy that President Cardoso mentioned, come overwhelmingly from the trade in cocaine not from marijuana and I think you're slightly misrepresenting the position in Europe, because cocaine is of course prohibited in Europe. Consumption is rising in Europe and the financial returns to cocaine traffickers from Europe are going up.

So, many people believe that the only way in which organized crime can be taken out of the picture and the only way in which the funds can be generated to other public health approach is to legalize cocaine in order to regulate and tax it and generate the funds for treatment and take the money away from repression and towards treatment and prevention. I would like to know whether the commission discussed this at all and if it did,

why you decided not to make any specific recommendation on cocaine?

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: Well I think, our decision was as I said and I will repeat not to go too far in proposing new policies, but anyhow I personally, I believe that the consequences of our initial steps are clear. We have to move from the prohibitionist proposal towards a much more clear view that is necessary to reach some degrees of legalization. But it's difficult to say that clearly and immediately because the next question will be, well how, so are you encouraging the market to deal with drugs, so are you in fact risking the health of society by saying that drugs could be used and it's also clear that drugs are harmful, that we can not say "just liberalize and that's it", it's much more complex than that.

And on the other hand, I think that the social consciousness has to be prepared, has to be convinced that, and myself I have to be—myself to be convinced that there are more audacious and positive steps to be done. So it's not as easy to maybe vaguely to say, and it would be difficulty if we have a responsibility and to have to take a decision and the decision to be implemented in your country, to say "Oh, let's liberalize" and that's it. I have some doubts up to now.

MICHAEL REED: Thank you, a quick follow-up if I may. President Gaviria talked about creating a Latin American policy; there is a ministerial meeting in Vienna next month which will fix world policy on drugs for years to come. There's not much time, do you see—I mean do you see it as practical that Latin American governments can adopt a common front in that meeting and if so, what might that common front involve?

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: Well, yes, that is a very important discussion. We hope that this time that the meeting in Vienna will not produce a result like the one in the other countries,

just moving ahead the dates in which the drugs will disappear, cocaine and heroine and that because that is not realistic anymore.

I think the main discussion in Vienna should be if the world should adopt European policies of harm reduction to which the US oppose. Most Latin American countries today are supporting that idea. I think all of them but Colombia are supporting the idea of harm reduction, of helping more addicts or dealing more with this problem as a health problem and not as a criminal problem.

I think that is the main discussion. We hope that the Obama administration at some point will be able at least to open that possibility, to lead countries toward more aggressively, because at this moment the US totally opposes the idea of the harm reduction as a good policy. The US has the policy of putting people in jail and I think that is not realistic because the world is not moving to there, it's impossible, there are no resources and there is not any conviction that is a good policy.

I think the US has to think that putting people in jail is really reducing—is really solving the problem, putting all people in jail. I do believe for example that President Calderón is right in fighting cartels. I mean they were becoming in Mexico too powerful, like it happened in Colombia, but that doesn't mean that the problem will be solved. The problem with drugs through the US will keep flowing, as it's flowing. At this point the price of drugs instead of increasing is reducing. I mean the last 20 years has, it's a fourth of what it was so many years ago. So we hope that the US will slowly start to change its policies.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Here is the moderator again. Unfortunately, President Cardoso must leave the room. So I will let a last question be addressed to him and I would like to remind you that you also have with us, other members of the commission, who can answer others as well. For now, a question to President Cardoso is live.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Mr. Rubem, may you please announce who is speaking. Our next question comes from David Adams with St. Petersburg Times.

DAVID ADAMS: Hello, thank you very much. My question is, perhaps you partially answered it in the last question, but where do you hope this debate will take place? You're calling for a debate but—a very noble thing to do, where do you think this debate appropriately should take place? Where would you like to see it happen?

Is your message really directed at the Vienna meeting and also have you had any indications at all from the Obama administration as to what their thinking might be on the drug issue? I'm not sure we've heard very much from them during the campaign or since then about drug policy.

PRESIDENT CARDOSO: Yes, of course we are also sending our report to the Vienna meeting but we think it's not enough to have debate inside the UN system. We believe it's important to have a national debate in each one of our countries, as well as debates in the United States.

I myself will go to Mexico and I will try to get in touch with President Calderon and the Foreign Minister to raise the question. Each one of the commission members will try to do the same in different countries, and we believe that it's very important to establish a clear dialogue within the United States. Although we have some connections in the United

States, we will ask what will be the institutions or the inter-American dialogue, or both of them or a third party, we don't know yet. One of the commission's members, Moisés Naím who is the Head of Foreign Policies, will be in touch with us to see which will be the best—or what is the best way to involve the USA into the debate and as soon as possible, we'll also add any contact with the Obama administration.

And even without knowing yet the newer composition inside the State Department, with regard to Latin American merchant's we'll try to contact with the State Department.

I have been before to a meeting in the State Department, in the lunch hour and then I made a—a speech at the State Department and I must say, I don't know, 100 people around and some of them if not most of them were well-convinced on the need of reviewing the current approach.

So I'm hopeful that this will be feasible, as well as taking into account the different universities, people in universities, I mean, the, professors there, and the Press. The Press has a very crucial role to play. The fact that some people, the New York Times, Washington Post are interested in spreading what we are asking for, I mean in terms of our review on the paradigm about drugs is very important. I think that you have to enlarge the consciousness about the question to our society, and not just government but we will try to deal at both levels society and government.

I have to say now, thank you very much because I have to leave now because I have to go to Sao Paulo and then take a plane to Mexico. Thank you very much again.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Thank you, President Cardoso, to treat our fellows to our Mexican friends and we are back in the conference, please next question. President Gaviria is still with us; Minister Diego Garcia-Sayan from Peru; the Mayor, Antanas Mockus from Columbia, Bogota; the General, Alberto Cardoso from Brazil, who is the Head of Institutional

Security years ago in Brazil and responsible for Drug Policy in Brazil for a while; and Judge Patricia Llerena is also with us from Argentina, so we'll have a good table here ready to answer your questions. Please next question.

OPERATOR: Thank you, again if you would like to ask a question, press star-one on your touchtone phone. Also, a transcription will be available through Tony Newman, his telephone number is (646) 335-5384. Thank you, our next question comes from Laura Carlson with the Center for International Policy.

LAURA CARLSON: Yes, thank you very much. I was wondering based on your findings on the failure of the drug war, do you believe that as part of the US debate it would be necessary to propose these modifications to both Plan Colombia and the American initiative which embodied this model?

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: I don't think I understood the question. I do really think that what we are asking at least in the US is a debate. We are not saying you have to change your policy, what we are saying is you should at least open a national debate on the policy on drugs, because the US policy has such a strong support and principles that even discussing in Vienna, is very difficult.

The US which considers this problem very important, they put so much pressure on European countries and Latin American countries and Asian countries, that the debate doesn't flow as it should and that is the reason why the US should open. I mean, nobody can say today that the war on drugs has been called. No one can say that, I mean they're all elements to say that the work has not been successful, that have failed, whatever the words you use.

So at least to have a debate, just to identify narco-trafficking with crime doesn't help to deal with this problem in the proper way. And that is something Colombia should demand and Mexico should demand and everyone, I mean at least to have a debate to open a debate in congress, in media in the US.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Would you please ask another question, next question?

OPERATOR: Thank you, our next question comes from Jose De Cordoba with Wall Street Journal.

JOSE DE CORDOBA: What are—can the rest of the world do you think proceed without the United States and why do you think the United States is so against, has been so against a debate? And what are the costs of proceeding without the United States on board?

RUBEM FERNANDES: I'll ask Minister Diego Garcia-Sayan. Sir, would you answer that question, please?

DIEGO GARCIA-SAYAN: Well, of course the world I have hope has many things to say regarding drug trafficking besides the United States. But watching the problem from Latin America and from our Latin American experience, the US is crucial in the debate and in the policy considering the market—the main market of illegal drugs coming from Latin America is precisely the United States.

And the policies that are taking place in our countries are, in most of them, the policies promoted and supported by the United States. So it is quite impossible to review the policies on drugs—against drug trafficking in Latin America without a deep and

consistent involvement of the United States. Maybe this will play a positive role so to renew what has been on the side in the last year is a debate between Latin American countries which of course is a step that should be strengthened in the following month.

RUBEM FERNANDES: President Gaviria is going to address the same question.

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: I would say—I mean Latin America, what we are proposing is Latin America takes an independent way in relation to consumption, and try to learn a lot more from the European experience, from harm reduction and that is very clear, they decriminalize drugs.

To learn from the European experience is we have to adapt that to our conditions, we need to learn how to deal with the addicts, to have more prevention, to have—that is an independent way, that doesn't depend on the US but Latin America is still very important in fighting trafficking of drugs to the US. I will only give something that I think is important and it is in our information, half of the interdiction of cocaine is totally Latin American, it's not in the US or in Europe. So we are doing an extraordinary effort in the interdiction process, not only in the eradication of coca leaves but also in the trafficking.

Latin America is the key to US policy; there is no policy without the cooperation of Columbia; or Peru; or Mexico; there is no policy possible. So we have the right to discuss the US policy because the US would have no policy if we don't get full cooperation. So that is the reason our points of view should be taken into consideration and why—that is the reason why we have the right to demand a debate on these policies because we are putting a lot there. There is no policy without us and without the interdiction of Latin America there will be no policy against drugs in the US.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Thank you, would you ask another question.

OPERATOR: Thank you, our next question comes from Jerry Epstein with the Drug Policy Forum of Texas.

JERRY EPSTEIN: Yes, there's been a great deal of talk about the taboo on discussion. The biggest taboo of all prohibitionist policies is to not mention the one drug that is most important and that has not been mentioned yet today, in which very few people understand, which is alcohol; 85% of addiction in the United States is traceable to this one drug.

The only other drugs of consequence in the American statistics are pain pills, coca, cocaine and marijuana. The number of people according to the government statistics that have tried cocaine and are currently addicted is almost half the rate of the people who have tried alcohol and are currently addicted. The people who are addicted to cocaine, 90% of them or almost 90% of them, according to the government statistics are—had a co-morbid disorder with alcohol the same to a lesser extent is true of heroine, amphetamine and marijuana.

Until you introduce a better understanding of the role of alcohol in our society and an understanding of the statistics and the reporters in this room who never cover them, we are never going to understand that we are a country in which 90% of us have no interest in the drugs whatsoever, whether they are legal or illegal, where seven of us use alcohol, where one of us uses illegal drugs, where one of us uses both.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Would you please ask your question.

JERRY EPSTEIN: Yes, when will you introduce and ask for a full analysis?

OPERATOR: Thank you we're looking for more questions. Our next question comes from...

RUBEM FERNANDES: No, I'm going to ask the former Mayor of Bogota, Colombia, Antanas Mockus to answer this very interesting question.

ANTANAS MOCKUS: Yes, I think that working around alcohol can teach us a lot of things. Each drug is very different and users and addictions are very different. There is not a clear correlation between using one drug and using other drugs. Sociological and psychologically drugs are specific, if we can learn about addiction working on any of them.

As Mayor of Bogota, I made courses in high school last year called (unintelligible), "Knowing before Drinking". It was getting youngsters, 17 to 18 years, information about what changes when you get alcohol in your blood, what psychological changes, what situational problems can deliver from you as behavior, jealousy is not the same with alcohol and without alcohol. And this was a hypothetical exercise for nine sessions, nine hours and the tenth hour was inviting the youngsters to drink if they wanted to drink in a bar. Most of the colleges of the city did not accept the last session. It was just a hypothetical course but everybody understood that you have physiological, biochemical, psychological and behavioral changes with alcohol.

I believe a lot on the convergence of cultural regulation and moral regulation with law. One of the problems of the prohibitionism when it is taken in Latin America is that people do not interiorize the prohibition as a moral prohibition or as a culturally-acceptable prohibition, its just law. Just as a law's caprice. When you have guilt feelings, shame

feelings, as much as fear of jail, the three things together work very well, but if you have just fear of jail, you can play with the police, with the justice and you can even find some kind of pleasure of making something that is culturally-acceptable that's legally unacceptable.

That's particularly true for youngsters. It's a sort of game with the law. So creating big scenarios of divorce between law and morals and culture is making the opportunity of disobeying law without consequences and also creating big markets for illegal industries, like the drug industry. I think that we should not interpret the commission's statements as a liberalizing one, I can imagine a lot of prohibitionists, perhaps myself I am rather prohibitionist but I feel that the drugs that the law will function is in ingenuous, it's non-realistic.

We have to make a lot of changes in culture and in moral evaluation and information of the risks, before warranting that law will be accomplished. Well the thing is that a young person does not take drugs because his consciousness tells him to not do that; or because the social ambiances around him say to him not taking drugs; and only in third place, there is state and I would like to state first especially in education or in health system; and only in the fourth place, judges and police. Putting police and judges in first step—as the first regulator is a big mistake. We have to hold some legal prohibitions but mainly we have to put the force on the moral prohibition and on the cultural prohibition.

It's this very cultural, educational and health system measures that we can make law more efficient. For Latin America, this is very important because we have a lot of violence related with illegality. If it was only illegal markets, we'd accept them as a fatality but in Colombia or in Mexico, you have a lot of people that are killed because of the big payments of the drug industry and we have to prepare people as if there was a legalization without promoting the moral consequences—logical consequences as saying diminishing prohibitionism would be like cultural and moral toleration of drugs.

We have to build taboos we have not only destroy the taboo about speaking about drugs, but we have to say to risk your life or to risk to be an addict, you have to create a taboo. It's like "comer basura", eating garbage. You do not spend a lot of money in laws and in justice for making people embarrassed to eat garbage.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Thank you, the next question I would like to invite to the floor, Judge Patricia Llerena, she's a member of a commission in Argentina which is reprising the laws in Argentina. You will be aware that you have the occasion there to ask for a process that's very interesting in revising policies in one of our countries, and it's in Argentina, Judge Patricia is here. Our next question, please.

OPERATOR: Thank you everyone for participating in the call. Our final question comes from David Adams with St. Petersburg Times. After that we will turn the call over to Rubem for any final statements.

DAVID ADAMS: I would just like to ask, the thing is we're focusing very much on harm reduction which is obviously an important part of the equation. Does the report, and forgive me I haven't actually had a chance to look at it yet, does the report address the issue of poverty reduction? And just as an example, I was in Colombia recently and visited Buenaventura and that's a place where poverty and drugs you know sort of stare you in the face and if people had an opportunity there and jobs, they might stay well clear of drugs. So I wonder do you address poverty reduction and targeting social assistance programs to areas affected by drugs as part of the debate you would like to see.

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: That's a Colombian question.

PRESIDENT GAVIRIA: Well one of the things that the report does is to create the idea, which is if in fact that consumption in Latin America is increasing very significantly. While in the US and Europe, the consumption is relatively the same. In Latin America, it's increasing significantly and much of the problems and the violence and we are facing are because local markets, not only because of international markets that is a problem we have to deal with and we need to deal with that in several ways.

One is learn from harm reduction processes in Europe and because I'm saying learning because the type of consumer the Europeans have is very different than the ones we have. You have talked about children in Buenaventura or Medellin, Bogota, Cali, what you need for them is a lot more than taking them out of consumption. You need to take them out of crime because many of these children are not only consuming drugs but are in crime activities and you need more integral problems, Professor Mockus know about that.

I mean the problem of the gangs in the neighborhoods of Colombia or in the neighborhoods of Rio or Sao Paulo or Mexico City, is the main security threat we have in Latin America. But we need to deal with that, not only with repression, not only putting people in jail but having problems to bring those people back to society. So that is something we need to do and we need to learn a lot about prevention and education.

In many of our countries, police take that role and usually programs are ineffective. They are not useful, I mean it's much better to have testimonials and statements of people who are drug addicts and are getting out of drugs, than just having the police telling the children or the boys and girls that they should not consume drugs because they don't like authority and those programs are ineffective.

And even programs in the US, the evaluation of programs in the US is very negative, they are not effective. Great Britain and Holland have much better programs of prevention

than the US has, precisely because it's not authority. What young people should see in ads is not authorities, it's people like them is what they should see if we are going to have some prevention programs that are effective, and Latin America needs to do a lot about that.

RUBEM FERNANDES: We are coming to a close for our conference; perhaps there is a last question. Are we waiting for another question?

OPERATOR: Thanking you, that was all the questions for today. A transcript and a recording can be available through Tony Newman at (646) 335-5384 or you can visit their website at www.drugpolicy.org.

RUBEM FERNANDES: Thank you so much for your cooperation.