

Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its 65th session

(14 to 18 March 2022)

IFRC Plenary Intervention

Thank you, Chair,

last decades marked significant developments in drug policies. Overall approach and expressions such as “public health”, “scientific evidence” and “humanitarian policies” are more and more used by the international and national Institutions. The scientific evidence-based strategies are bearing fruit. Harm reduction works. National polices can no longer refuse the benefit of opioid substitution therapy, nor of other harm reduction activities.

However, there is still a long way to go. Drug use provokes enormous suffering for millions everywhere. Much of this suffering is not related to the effects of substances - it results, instead, from repressive and old-fashioned legislation and policies based on fear, discrimination and criminalisation.

We know that repression only exacerbates stigma of People Who Use Drugs; stigma will cause death, upon death, upon death, as was stated by Mr Ban Ki Moon.

For this reason we developed a global campaign, called the Rome Consensus 2.0, to build an international alliance that aims to develop humanitarian drug policies together with Civil Society Organizations and Members States. The Manifesto is designed to explore solutions that combine humanitarian attitudes in health, criminal justice, prevention and community responses to addiction problems. We invite you all to join it!

The IFRC, part of the International Movement of the RC/RC, brings the power of humanity, by bridging the gap among Governments and communities. We can reach the hardest to reach thanks to the millions volunteers. Our voice is well respected and heard all over the world, in peacetime and wartime.

In this regard, we want to draw your attention about the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine: among the dramatic health issues is facing the country, we are deeply concerned that the population with drug disorders pay a higher price, being left without any assistance or access to treatment.

The IFRC stands ready to help and share its health expertise to ensure drug reforms and policies are not only powerful on paper, but also in reality.

Thank you.

Massimo Barra

International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies