

Beat: Politics

## World Leaders meet at UN for Pragmatic Reform of Global Drug Policy in New York

To discuss drugs in a generation

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**USPA NEWS** - Leaders from around the world are gathering in New York today for a United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem, the first such gathering to discuss drugs in a generation. The timing is opportune. This meeting takes place as heroin and new psychoactive substances .

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This meeting takes place as heroin and new psychoactive substances are ravaging communities across the United States. At the same time, we are seeing tremendous advances in our understanding of drug dependency and our ability to address substance use disorders as a public health"rather than a strictly criminal justice"challenge. Relying on decades of scientific research and lessons learned in our country's own struggle with drugs, the United States proposes a pragmatic approach that better balances public health and law enforcement.-----

In my 40 years of public service, I have seen the drug problem from many perspectives. As a prosecutor, I witnessed firsthand how quickly drugs could ruin lives and devastate families. As a United States Senator, I worked closely with fellow legislators, including Vice President Biden, to close open-air drug markets that ravaged our cities in the 1990s and to fight the methamphetamine epidemic which hit the United States in the following decade.-----

Now as Secretary of State, I am proud that the renewed U.S. focus on a public health approach to drugs is gaining traction in other parts of the globe. In New York this week, the United States will seek international consensus on an approach that upholds the three UN drug conventions"which continue to provide a solid foundation for international cooperation on drugs"and that fully integrates public health priorities, recognizing drug abuse as a chronic disease. This means implementing alternatives to incarceration where appropriate, the use of drug courts, and sentencing reform to channel those who suffer from substance use disorder into recovery and treatment, not just prisons. Finally, it means strengthening international law enforcement cooperation to combat violent drug trafficking organizations who threaten all nations and all peoples.

President Obama said that successfully addressing the drug problem is a national priority critical to promoting the safety, health, and prosperity of the American people. These same aspirations are shared by people of all the nations that will take part in the UN session. We have an opportunity to take an important step towards meeting the challenge posed by drugs around the world, and with the resolute commitment of our nation and other nations working together in common cause, we will. Source : The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. "External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

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