WORLD FEDERATION AGAINST DRUGS

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Swedish Minister Highly Commended for Drug Prevention Solution

(Minister Maria Larsson's speech on The Rights of Child at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs receives high acclaim)

The World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) has today, highly acclaimed the strong and positive leadership shown by Sweden's Minister for Children and the Elderly, Ms Maria Larsson at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna, Austria.

Minster Larsson spoke in a passionate and forthright manner to the assembly of world government leaders and representatives on the importance of adhering to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child when considering drug policy priorities.

Sven-Olov Carlsson WFAD's International President said today: "*We want to publicly and sincerely acknowledge the great initiative of Minister Larsson in her speech to world leaders, which has the potential to change drug policy across the globe".*

In reaffirming Sweden's full commitment to the international drug control conventions, Ms Larsson's speech highlighted the fact that one of the most important obligations for society is to protect its children and young people from harm to their physical and psychological development. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically states in Article 33 that children must be protected and prevented from drug use, production and from trafficking. Ms Larsson emphasized that this is NOT an option for Member States, it is an obligation. Her stance has given a clear indication to other world leaders that "preventing drug abuse before it begins is a cost effective and commonsense way to build safe and healthy communities".

WFAD Board member representing Africa, Mr Rogers Kasirye commended the Minister as a *"World Leader with vision to provide hope for the future generations. The children of Africa are over-represented in a range of disadvantaged areas, and many of them become victims of illicit drugs".*

Josephine Baxter, WFAD's Vice President (representing Oceania) also expressed great appreciation for Minister Larsson's stance: "*Most countries have ratified the CRC and so it is long overdue that they put its requirements into practice. There is also a high level of disadvantage in the Asia-Pacific region. Australian illicit drug use rates remain high. All of us need to take stock, and re-prioritise our drug polices to ensure they are child-centred. We thank Ms Larsson for her pro active leadership in putting this matter back on the UN's agenda*".

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