

# 20 PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE LEGAL REGULATION OF CANNABIS

## Health and human rights of people who use drugs

### 1. PROTECT RIGHTS

Regulated markets enable consumer protection and health regulations to uphold the rights of people who use drugs, while labor laws protect cannabis workers from exploitation and



### 2. PUBLIC HEALTH & HARM REDUCTION

Legal regulation can be a powerful harm reduction tool, reducing stigma against people who use drugs, enabling access to health services, and guaranteeing a safe supply of drugs.



### 3. AUTONOMY, LIBERTY & PRIVACY

Regulations should seek a fair balance between individual rights to autonomy and privacy, and the protection of public health. All restrictions must be based on evidence.



### 4. ACCESSIBLE & NEEDS-BASED

To become a viable alternative to the informal supply, regulated markets need to be accessible, and to respond to the needs of people who use drugs, including users of cannabis-based medical products.



## Social justice

### 5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Legal systems should be informed by the wealth of knowledge accumulated by people involved in currently illegal markets, from cultivators to people who transport, sell and use cannabis.



### 6. TRANSIT TO LEGALITY

Legal markets must support the participation of people and communities involved in informal drug economies by removing existing legal, financial, technical, and bureaucratic barriers.



### 7. SMALLER-SCALE GROWERS

To guarantee sustainable livelihoods for traditional cannabis farmers, legal regulations should prioritise their participation in supply, and ensure they are not displaced by new private actors.



### 8. REPARATION, SATISFACTION & NON-REPETITION

Legal frameworks must include reparations for people who suffered prohibition, redress rights violations, and allocate resources to those unjustly targeted.



### 9. TRADITIONAL USES

Legal regulations must recognise the value of cannabis' rich history of traditional, cultural, religious and medical uses, and ensure their preservation.



## Inclusive & equitable trade

### 10. INCLUSIVE BUSINESS MODELS

Legal markets should seek to distribute power and value across the supply chain by enabling alternative business models that empower communities.



### 11. WORKERS RIGHTS

In a legal system, workers are entitled to labour rights and protections, which can be enforced through formal oversight mechanisms.



### 12. MAXIMISE VALUE

Regulators should work with producers and users to develop innovative certification schemes that bolster the competitiveness of small and medium-sized producers.



### 13. CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Regulators should reflect on how to remove the legal barriers that impede the transnational trade of non-medical cannabis, while protecting traditional growers from the inflow of foreign capital.



### 14. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

To address potential environmental harms, legal frameworks must include strong regulations, as well as ecolabeling schemes, to promote sustainable practices throughout the supply chain.



## Responses to activities outside of the legal market

### 15. DECRIMINALISE ALL DRUG USE & ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

A socially just legal framework is not compatible with any form of criminal or administrative punishment for the personal use of any drug.



### 16. PROPORTIONALITY

Where retained, criminal justice responses to drug-related activities, such as drug trafficking, must be strictly proportionate, consider personal circumstances, and accompanied by support.



## A gender-sensitive approach

### 17. WOMEN & CULTIVATION

In addressing the history of discrimination and harassment of women growers, legal regulations should establish gender-sensitive protections against exploitation and abuse.



### 18. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Legal regulations must promote gender-sensitive drug treatment and harm reduction services that respond to the specific needs of women.



### 19. EQUALITY

Regulators must take immediate action to address structural gender inequalities and power imbalances in legal cannabis markets.



## Monitoring and learning

### 20. DATA COLLECTION & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Legal frameworks must be constantly reviewed in light of objective data, lessons learnt, the evolution of the market, and feedback provided by affected communities and civil society.

