

## SIR RICHARD BRANSON TO ACCEPT 2012 CANNABIS CULTURE AWARD IN SPAIN ON BEHALF OF THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON DRUG POLICY

**Barcelona, 25 April 2012.** Sir Richard Branson will receive the Cannabis Culture Award 2012 in Barcelona next month on behalf of the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Sir Richard serves on the Global Commission along with former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz along with fifteen other global leaders. In June 2011 the Commission published a groundbreaking report on the failures of the decades-long drug war. The Commission called on states to open a sensible debate on drug policy reform and to take steps to decriminalize drug use by individuals who do no harm to others. Sir Richard has been a passionate advocate for drug policies that focus on the dignity and humanity of all.

Other awards winners this year in Barcelona, Ms. Fernanda de la Figuera – renowned Spanish cannabis activist and Mr. Todd McCormick – renowned American author, photographer, cannabis activist. After the Awards ceremony, the Hemp Museum Gallery Barcelona, which is located in the beautifully refurbished Palau Mornau in Barcelona in Spain, will be officially opened by Mr. Bernat Pellisa, mayor of Rasquera.

This will be the second round of Awards for 2012, representing the growth and international character of the Cannabis Culture Awards. On April 26th, the Global Commission on Drug Policy will accept the award in Amsterdam represented by Thorvald Stoltenberg – Norway's Former Foreign Minister. Other awardees in Amsterdam will include Dr. Lester Grinspoon – Associate Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry of Harvard Medical School and Dr. Frederick Polak – renowned Dutch psychiatrist in the area of drug use.

### Recognising Achievements in Ending Cannabis Prohibition

Since 2004, the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum Amsterdam has conferred the Cannabis Culture Awards to individuals and organizations who have commendably advocated for the acceptance of cannabis in all its forms and for the reintroduction of marihuana and hemp in modern society. In previous years, the Cannabis Culture Awards have been presented to former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Dries van Agt, poet and author Simon Vinkenoog and the American political and cannabis activist Jack Herer.

### A moral obligation

In the year 2012, the importance of the Cannabis Culture Awards is greater than ever. Even though more and more countries decriminalize cannabis, in the majority of countries repression, stigmatization and imprisonment is still common. Fortunately there is a worldwide counter-movement, which argues that reason, justice and humanity must prevail over political objectives.

### Aiming to change the world

The Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum Amsterdam is a unique permanent exhibition which shows the past, present and future of the cannabis plant as a versatile source for industrial, nutritional, medicinal, sacramental and recreational purposes. The Museum's collection is composed of rare artefacts related to all aspects of cannabis history and culture, which founder Ben Dronkers has been gathering from around the world over the last 40 years. Due to overwhelming public interest in the subject of cannabis in Southern Europe, a sister-museum will be opened in Spain on 9 May 2012 – the Hemp Museum Gallery Barcelona. The Museums located both in Amsterdam and Barcelona are meant to counter misinformation in the media and to educate and entertain anyone who wishes to know more about this fascinating plant.

More information about the Cannabis Culture Awards 2012 can be found at:

<http://cannabiscultureawards.com>

There is also a press kit available through: <http://cannabiscultureawards/press>

If you wish to attend the ceremony in Barcelona on 9 May 2012, please send an email to:

[press@cannabiscultureawards.com](mailto:press@cannabiscultureawards.com), with details of the organisation you represent, the full names of each attendee and all relevant telephone numbers and email addresses.

Attendance numbers for the events are limited. Radio, internet and print media can reserve two tickets per organisation, televised media organisations can reserve up to three tickets. The ticket-issuing process is automated. After applying, you will receive an electronic invitation and after registration, tickets will be sent via email. Your tickets will also serve as a press pass.

To arrange one-on-one interviews with the participants and for any other questions, please contact us directly: +31 (0)20 6248926, during business hours (CET) [press@cannabiscultureawards.com](mailto:press@cannabiscultureawards.com)

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