

Youth Statement 2022

65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Excellencies and influential representatives!

We are youth, and we are here to speak up for our future and the upcoming generation.

We are 74 young people from 43 countries, here on a mission to deliver our message.

With the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the physical, emotional, and mental struggles of young people, how it isolated youth, and increased vulnerability to substance abuse, showing the need to intensify our efforts.

We have a specific goal: for all people to be healthy. In pursuing this goal, we must be committed to prevention now, for the success of future generations.

We call on Member States to encourage investments in prevention efforts, because even conservative estimates indicate a 10-time return on every dollar spent. We want to encourage the use of evidence-based and holistic approaches in recognition of the deficits of today's practices. Help us create a safe environment for everybody and build better futures. Scientifically, it saves lives.

Youth engagement is crucial to ensure we accomplish our global vision that prioritizes health, well-being, substance use prevention, and recognizes youths' needs. Please recognize the tremendous competency, capacity, and motivation of

youth by creating opportunities for involvement in policy and decision-making. Youth engagement inspires a sense of empowerment and responsibility in young people, and supports the development of skills that promote healthy decision-making. We ask you to engage younger generations not only as instruments but as the driving force of global implementation of evidence-based prevention programs for youth.

Creating a more socially advanced tomorrow starts with gathering communities in activities that inspire evidence-based prevention. We do not want to be treated as adults in becoming. We are aware of what the future needs and what we want in terms of effective prevention. It is of utmost importance that the message being sent is understood.

Especially in hard times, a global pandemic, when everything seems dark, we may find it hard to seek light; but we have a flame within us, which can only be kept alive with your help.

Change lies in your hands, so join forces with the youth for a future we can look forward to.