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**Follow-up to the implementation at the national,
regional and international levels of all
commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial
Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the
world drug problem**

Statement submitted by Proyecto Hombre Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* [E/CN.7/2023/1](#).

** Issued without formal editing.



The Impact of Drugs on Children and Youth: Effective Prevention

Introduction

While significant progress has been made, drugs continue to have an evident impact on children and youth.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for appropriate action to protect children from the illicit production, trafficking, and use of substances. The 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document urges taking effective, practical, and age-appropriate prevention measures tailored to the specific needs of children and youth. The 2019 WHO-UNAIDS-UNDP International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy state that children have the right to be heard in all matters concerning them, and their best interests shall be a primary consideration in drug laws, policies, and practices. In the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the resolution “Promoting Comprehensive and Scientific Evidence-based Early Prevention” was adopted, supporting prevention responses within families, schools, and communities.

Over the last decade, the Association Proyecto Hombre, a grass-roots non-governmental organization in Spain, has reached more than 1.5 million people in drugs and other addictive behaviours prevention programmes.

Recommendations

We would like to share the following nine recommendations to Member States in the margins of the 66th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs:

1. Reinforce the implementation of the UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention by extending the coverage and improving the quality of drug prevention policies at all levels: indicated, selective, universal, and environmental.
2. Strongly encourage investing in reliable, comparable, longitudinal research studies to promote scientific evidence-based prevention to reduce drug-related problems more effectively. At the same time, we stress avoiding drug policies based on beliefs and misperceptions not supported by scientific evidence.
3. Ensure that effective prevention interventions are available, accessible, and affordable for any individual from anywhere in the world, particularly in the most deprived populations. Accordingly, long-term funding strategies are required.
4. Pay special attention to providing adapted drug prevention in groups in situations of vulnerability, including ethnic minorities, those suffering from parental drug use, and those with other mental health disorders.
5. The earlier, the better. Evidence shows that earlier drug prevention leads to better outcomes in children and youth. Accordingly, drug prevention programmes should be implemented at all stages of life, including prenatal and early childhood.
6. Promote parental skills programmes in various settings such as schools, treatment centres, harm reduction services, and in the workplace.
7. Endorse coordinated prevention policies not only for illicit drugs but also for legal substances such as alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other addictions such as gambling.
8. Promote and provide healthy, alternative leisure activities among children and youth.

9. We call on Member States to further collaborate with civil society, community-based, and youth-led organizations to formulate and implement drug-demand reduction policies. Many NGOs have accumulated considerable expertise, are socially accepted, and are well-informed about the needs of people who use drugs.

Conclusion

To conclude, we encourage Member States, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime among other international agencies, to unequivocally promote evidence-based prevention as an integral part of the health system to address drug-related problems and other related addictive behaviours, alongside civil society organizations.
