



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 March 2024

English only

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Sixty-seventh session

Vienna, 14–22 March 2024

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

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 Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), 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.7/2024/1](#).

** Issued without formal editing.



Written statement submitted by Students for Sensible Drug Policy and on behalf of the Paradigma Coalition, a youth-led group of organizations working to promote human rights and harm reduction

For the first time, Member States have highlighted the importance of putting youth at the centre of drug policy discussions. Following the [CND Resolution 66/1](#), civil society organizations and youth groups were invited to participate in consultations to inform the preparatory process to this High-level segment, sharing their contributions to the challenges identified in the “[2019 Ministerial Declaration](#).” Considering this, the Paradigma Coalition has developed a Common Position on Drugs, (you can find copies of this document on the NGO table, and we will be distributing them throughout the CND should you be interested in reading the full Common Position), which seeks to capture young people’s concerns with the current drug policy regime and its unintended consequences on youth. It also lays out our commitments and actions for meaningful engagement of young people as we work towards the 2029 final review, forging a plan of action. Finally, we provide recommendations to Member States, relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as international and regional organizations to address the challenges in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

We, the Paradigma Coalition, acknowledge the efforts of the UNODC in addressing the world drug situation and working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, we also recognize that the current international drug control system lacks meaningful participation from affected groups, such as young people, people who use drugs, and indigenous peoples. We request a full review of the three international drug control conventions with the meaningful participation of these affected groups. This includes embracing an intersectional approach, and recognizing that experiences within these affected groups are highly diverse and intersect with other factors such as, but not limited to, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, nationality, region, socio-economic status, and disabilities. We emphasize the need to protect children from drug-related harm and highlight concerns regarding certain interpretations of Article 33 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We would also like to draw particular attention to the conflict between the control of coca under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the rights of indigenous peoples.

We express concern over the unintended consequences of drug control, such as the growth of illegal drug markets and the perception of people who use drugs as criminals. Acknowledging the need to shift the punitive drug policy paradigm, we welcome the 2023 Report on Drug Policy developed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, and the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy. In line with these documents, we urge Member States to use the flexibility allowed in the text of the international drug control conventions and adopt the decriminalization of drugs for personal use in their national drug strategies.

Rising trends that affect young people, such as youth bulges across the Global South, climate change, urbanization, and inequalities, as well as associated risks such as youth unemployment, and increasing levels of poverty, stress the need for prioritizing structural transformation for inclusive, intersectional, and youth-friendly drug policies. Such measures, we remind Member States, are imperative to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

We recommend prioritizing evidence-based public health and human rights approaches in drug policies, meaningful engagement of youth-led organizations in policy development, supporting youth capacity building on drug issues, reallocating resources to community-based organizations, collecting comprehensive data on the impacts of drug policies on young people, considering decriminalization, legal regulation, and alternatives to punitive law enforcement, addressing the link between

drug policy and climate justice, and promoting youth-friendly and evidence-based drug education and healthcare services.

Lastly, the Coalition commits to speaking with one voice and acting in solidarity to ensure that youth voices are fully integrated into drug policy discussions. We support the key role of the CND in formulating evidence-based policies and call for the development of intersectional youth-friendly policies and programmes. We stand ready to work with the UNODC and the Member States of the CND to monitor the adequate implementation of all human rights conventions for the well-being of youth from a compassionate and self-determining perspective. More importantly, we commit to supporting the CND in reviewing international policies that embrace evidence-based interventions to ensure improved outcomes for those most affected by drugs, especially those who live under punitive policies and are at risk of further criminalization. By doing so, we aim to protect the rights and ensure the coverage of all adolescents and young people, in all their diversity, hence leaving no one behind.
