

Resolution 63/4

Promoting the involvement of youth in drug prevention efforts

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Reaffirming its commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug control conventions, including concern about the health and welfare of humankind, as well as the individual and public health-related, social and safety problems resulting from the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, in particular among children and young people, and drug-related crime,

Affirming the importance of involving youth and youth-based organizations in the programmes of the United Nations and at the national, regional and international levels in matters of concern to them, in particular with respect to the misuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances,

Bearing in mind that the definition of the term “youth” varies in different countries around the world and has changed continuously in response to fluctuating political, economic and sociocultural circumstances, and noting that in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond,¹ the world youth population is defined as the age cohort 15–24, but that other definitions also exist,

Reaffirming the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem² of 2009, in which Member States are called upon to ensure that prevention programmes target and involve youth and children, with a view to increasing their reach and effectiveness and involving all stakeholders at the community level, including the target populations, their families, community members, employers and local organizations, in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of drug demand reduction measures,

Reaffirming also the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, held in 2016, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,³ in particular its operational recommendations to take effective and practical primary prevention measures that protect people, in particular children and youth, from drug use initiation by providing them with accurate information about the risks of drug abuse, by promoting skills and opportunities to choose healthy lifestyles and develop supportive parenting and healthy social environments and by ensuring equal access to education and vocational training, and to increase the availability, coverage and quality of scientific evidence-based prevention measures and tools that target relevant age and risk groups in multiple settings, reaching youth in school as well as out of school, among others, through drug abuse prevention programmes and public awareness-raising campaigns, including by using the Internet, social media and other online platforms, develop and implement prevention curricula and early intervention programmes for use in the education system at all levels, as well as in vocational training, including in the workplace,

¹ General Assembly resolution 50/81, annex, and resolution 62/126, annex.

² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

³ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

and enhance the capacity of teachers and other relevant professionals to provide or recommend counselling, prevention and care services,

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem,⁴ adopted at its sixty-second session, in 2019, in which Member States committed themselves to safeguarding our future and ensuring that no one affected by the world drug problem is left behind by enhancing efforts to bridge the gaps in addressing the persistent and emerging trends and challenges through the implementation of balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary and scientific evidence-based responses to the world drug problem, placing the safety, health and well-being of all members of society, in particular youth and children, at the centre of their efforts,

Recalling also Youth 2030: the United Nations Strategy on Youth, which informs the efforts of the United Nations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in stepping up support for the empowerment of young people while ensuring that these efforts fully benefit from their insights and ideas,

Recognizing the importance of appropriately mainstreaming gender and age perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes,

Recalling its resolution 60/7 of 17 March 2017, on promoting scientific evidence-based community, family and school programmes and strategies for the purpose of preventing drug use among children and adolescents, in which it invited Member States to involve, as appropriate, children and adolescents in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community, family and school drug prevention programmes and strategies,

Recalling also its resolution 61/7 of 16 March 2018, in which it encouraged Member States to promote, as appropriate, an effective participatory role for young people and the organizations that work with them when developing and implementing drug policies and programmes,

Recalling further its resolution 57/3 of 21 March 2014, in which it highlighted that prevention that is based on scientific evidence and on a process of adaptation to local culture and socioeconomic circumstances is the most cost-effective approach to preventing drug use and other risky behaviours and is therefore an investment in the well-being of children, adolescents, youth, families and communities,

Reiterating the commitment to promoting the health, welfare and well-being of all individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, and facilitating healthy lifestyles through effective, comprehensive, scientific evidence-based demand reduction initiatives at all levels, covering, in accordance with national legislation and the three international drug control conventions, prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures, as well as initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse,

Reaffirming its determination to give priority attention to the promotion of youth and their interests, and calling for increased participation of youth and youth-based organizations in the formulation of, as appropriate, local, national, regional and international development

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 8 (E/2019/28)*, chap. I, sect. B.

strategies and policies, which is particularly relevant to youth engagement in the prevention of non-medical use of drugs,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁵ in which it is highlighted that children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to lifelong learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society, while reiterating that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing,

Recalling also its resolution 58/2 of 17 March 2015, in which it is emphasized that children and young people are our most precious asset, and that they are the greatest source of hope for a better future,

Noting that the initiation of drug use among youth during developmental phases could lead to detrimental consequences later in life, such as increased risk of unemployment, physical health problems, dysfunctional social relationships, suicidal tendencies, mental illness and lower life expectancy,⁶

Noting also the importance of inclusive and unprejudiced involvement of youth in drug prevention efforts, while taking into consideration the special needs and perspectives of youth in vulnerable situations, and involving them in the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention programmes involving youth,

Taking note of the *International Standards on Drug Use Prevention* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and welcoming the second updated edition, in which it is noted that the general aim of substance use prevention is the healthy and safe development of children and youth, enabling them to realize their talents and potential and become contributing members of their community and society,

Noting with appreciation the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Youth Initiative, including the annual Youth Forum, held since 2012 on the margins of the regular sessions of the Commission, which serves as an important informal platform for young people to share their visions and different perspectives on how to better protect the health and well-being of their peers and provides them with an opportunity to convey their joint message to the global-level policymakers in the fields of prevention of non-medical use of drugs, health promotion and youth empowerment,

Welcoming the “Listen first” initiative launched and developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, in partnership with Member States, to increase support for scientific evidence-based drug prevention efforts and for the protection of the well-being of children and youth, their families and communities,

Welcoming also the development by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime of scientific evidence-based programmes, available in the public domain, as useful tools to implement in practice the *International Standards on Drug Use Prevention* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, in particular tools and technical assistance programmes to support the skills of parents, caregivers and families to strengthen the resilience of children and youth to support their healthy and safe development,

⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

⁶ See *World Drug Report 2018*, booklet 4.

Welcoming further the publication in 2020 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime of the “Handbook on youth participation in drug prevention work”, which seeks to motivate Member States to provide opportunities for young people to become involved, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of appropriate scientific evidence-based drug use prevention programmes that affect youth, as part of a comprehensive substance use prevention system,

Recognizing the important role played by civil society in promoting the involvement of youth in drug prevention efforts,

Welcoming the Universal Prevention Curriculum, which provides Member States with comprehensive, evidence-based training materials on prevention science and best practices for use by drug use prevention programme personnel, including managers, developers and practitioners,

Welcoming also the thematic chapter of the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2019, entitled “Improving substance use prevention and treatment services for young people”,

1. *Acknowledges* the contribution of young people and youth-based associations and volunteer organizations in the prevention of non-medical use of drugs, and underlines the importance of taking their experience into consideration in the development, implementation and evaluation of relevant scientific and evidence-based national programmes and strategies;

2. *Recognizes* the importance of involving young people, their parents and families and of supporting youth-based organizations in appropriate scientific and evidence-based efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent the non-medical use of drugs among young people, and calls upon Member States to consider ways to increase the meaningful participation of and support youth in raising awareness of the risks and dangers associated with the non-medical use of drugs and in promoting healthy lifestyles among their peers, at educational institutions and within their communities, through community-based interventions led by, or targeted at, young people;

3. *Underlines* the valuable contribution made by the Youth Forum to the work of the Commission by bringing the voice of young people to the attention of policymakers and representatives of Governments for their consideration, and encourages Member States to select on a regular basis young leaders active in the areas of the prevention of non-medical use of drugs, health promotion and youth empowerment at the national level for nomination as participants in the Youth Forum on a voluntary basis;

4. *Welcomes* the participation of youth in the Youth Forum, takes note of statements delivered by representatives of the Youth Forum at the regular sessions of the Commission, and invites Member States to take into account youth-led solutions to addressing and countering the world drug problem;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to provide, as appropriate, opportunities for the meaningful involvement of young people in scientific and evidence-based efforts aimed at preventing the non-medical use of drugs, promoting health and empowering youth, including by promoting and supporting the Youth Forum and the Youth Initiative, as well as by disseminating the “Handbook on youth participation in drug prevention work”;

6. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant international and civil society organizations to

make the best use of the “Handbook on youth participation in drug prevention work” published in 2020 and to consider opportunities for the useful and meaningful involvement of young people in the development and implementation of prevention programmes and policies based on scientific evidence, for example, the Universal Prevention Curriculum and the “Handbook on youth participation in drug prevention work”;

7. *Encourages* Member States to consider a gender-sensitive approach when seeking the involvement of youth in the development, implementation and evaluation of drug prevention and health promotion efforts, as appropriate, in the framework of domestic drug policies;

8. *Also encourages* Member States to exchange, through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, best practices and information on effective national mechanisms that promote the meaningful involvement of young people, including through appropriate social media channels, in awareness-raising campaigns and the development and implementation of national programmes aimed at the prevention of non-medical drug use;

9. *Invites* Member States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to make the best use of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and International Youth Day to involve youth in prevention initiatives against the non-medical use of drugs among young people;

10. *Encourages* Member States to consider joining and supporting the implementation of the “Listen first” initiative, launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization;

11. *Also encourages* Member States to expand the coverage and quality of scientific evidence-based prevention programmes, bearing in mind the *International Standards on Drug Use Prevention* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, including those aimed at supporting the skills of parents, caregivers and families to strengthen the resilience of children and youth against non-medical use of drugs and to support their healthy and safe development;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the implementation of the present resolution, within existing reporting obligations, at its sixty-fourth session;

13. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for the purposes described above, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations.