



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

2021 Kyoto Crime Congress: High-Level Side Event Concept Note

Title: *Youth and the Rule of Law: Effective agents of change*

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Background

Today, there are 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10-24, which is the largest generation of youth in history. Close to 90% of these youth live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population. This demographic is only expected to grow, with about 1.9 billion young people are projected to turn 15 years old between 2015 and 2030. Connected to each other like never before, young people want to and already contribute to the resilience of their communities, proposing innovative solutions, driving social progress and inspiring political change. They are also agents of change, mobilizing to advance the Sustainable Development Goals to improve the lives of people and the health of the planet. The Strategic Planning and Inter-Agency Affairs (SPIA) unit seeks to leverage the inputs of youth in order to improve the UNODC's mandate to reduce crime and violence through a high-level side event at the 2021 Kyoto Crime Congress.

Objectives

This multisectoral, inter-generational initiative would bring together youth participants – including youth policy makers – UN officials and high-level representatives to emphasize and discuss the role of youth in promoting and strengthening the rule of law. The goal of this high-level event is to identify some key ways in which youth influence could be strengthened in policy making processes at the global level and to showcase their role as agents of change to strengthen the rule of law.

Format

The panel would be composed of two youth parliamentarians (one from Africa and one from South America), a senior official from UNODC and a youth representative from the E4J initiative. There is also the possible participation of another high-level UN Official or Minister of Youth Affairs or Justice. The moderator for this session would be a UNODC representative, or a youth ambassador from another relevant UN-partner, who has knowledge and insight into youth-related issues. Emphasis will be placed on having a gender-balanced panel that also represents different global regions.

The event will start with introductions, followed by a more formal discussion surrounding youth and the rule of law. The event will also have a “fishbowl” portion, where youth from the Kyoto Congress Youth Forum or from other relevant Youth Networks will submit questions prior to the event for the panellists. The panellists will then pick questions to answer from the fishbowl to further the discussion.

Outcome

With the Secretary General's growing emphasis on youth engagement, it is critical that all parts of the UN system provide opportunities for meaningful participation by young people. An event like this would build on the momentum generated by the Youth Forum, hosted prior to the Congress and yield concrete suggestions on how young people can be heard more effectively and more consistently when it comes to making policy related to crime prevention and criminal justice at the international level.