



YOUTH RISE



Students for  
Sensible  
Drug Policy



# YOUTH INFO SESSIONS ON THE CND DRUG POLICY EXPERT PANEL

MONDAY 19TH OCTOBER 6PM CEST - 10:00 AM CST  
TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2PM CEST - 5H30 PM IST



## GOALS OF THE SESSION

The United Nations has set up a group of 19 independent experts to review how the global drug control system works and recommend how to improve it. They are now asking for input, and the deadline for written contributions is 15 November 2026. This session aims to explain to youth audiences what the Expert Panel is and to support youth stakeholders submitting their contributions.

### SECTIONS OF THE SESSION:

1. THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL SYSTEM
2. WHAT IS THE EXPERT PANEL?
3. WHY SHOULD THIS MATTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND OUR MOVEMENT ON DRUG POLICY REFORM AND ACCESS TO HARM REDUCTION SERVICES?
4. THE PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PANEL
5. THE PANEL NEEDS YOUR INPUT!
6. KEY RESOURCES
7. Q&A

# THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL SYSTEM

Created more than 60 years ago and, according to much evidence, not working properly and causing a lot of harm.

**1909**



Shanghai Opium Commission: the first coordinated global effort

**1961**



Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (amended by the 1972 Protocol)

**1971**



Convention on Psychotropic Substances: synthetic drugs like amphetamines and LSD

**1988**



Convention against Illicit Traffic: international cooperation against trafficking

## Three main pillars:

### 1. SUPPLY REDUCTION

Efforts to limit the and distribution of illegal drproductionugs

### 2. DEMAND REDUCTION

Decrease the desire or need for drugs: prevention, education and treatment

### 3. MEASURES AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

Law enforcement and border controls to stop the illegal trade

# WHAT IS THE EXPERT PANEL?

19 independent experts asked by the UN to review the global drug control system and write clear, specific and actionable recommendations. Mandate: CND resolution 68/6 (March 2025), tabled by Colombia.

“Continuing the same approach will not lead anywhere fruitful... We want new and more effective ways to implement the global regime.”

Colombia’s ambassador to the CND

## THE “MACHINERY” UNDER REVIEW

The 3 conventions, the UN bodies that run them (CND, UNODC, INCB, WHO) and how they connect with human rights. The CND is the UN’s main drug policymaking body.

## FIRST TRULY INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Earlier expert groups (1990, 1998) were government representatives. None was created for UNGASS 2016. Members act in their personal capacity.

## A BROAD MANDATE: DEFEND IT

Conventions + other instruments (human rights, Rights of the Child) + all commitments (2009, 2016, 2019).  
Feeds into the 2029 review.

# WHAT IS THE EXPERT PANEL?

69th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

9 – 13 March 2026

## THE CND INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL

### DRUG CONTROL UNDER REVIEW

Resolution 68/6 establishes a 19-member multidisciplinary expert panel to deliver clear, actionable recommendations to improve the UN drug control system ahead of 2029, the next high-level review of international drug policy commitments at the CND.

#### 19 experts

Multidisciplinary  
Independent  
Regionally balanced

Review and address implementation gaps and shortcomings  
Produce concrete reform recommendations  
Inform the 2029 High-Level Review

#### Guided by 2 co-chairs

One appointed by the SG  
One selected by Member States

#### Key dates

March 2025  
Resolution 68/6 establishing the Panel  
passes with 30 votes in favour, 3 against

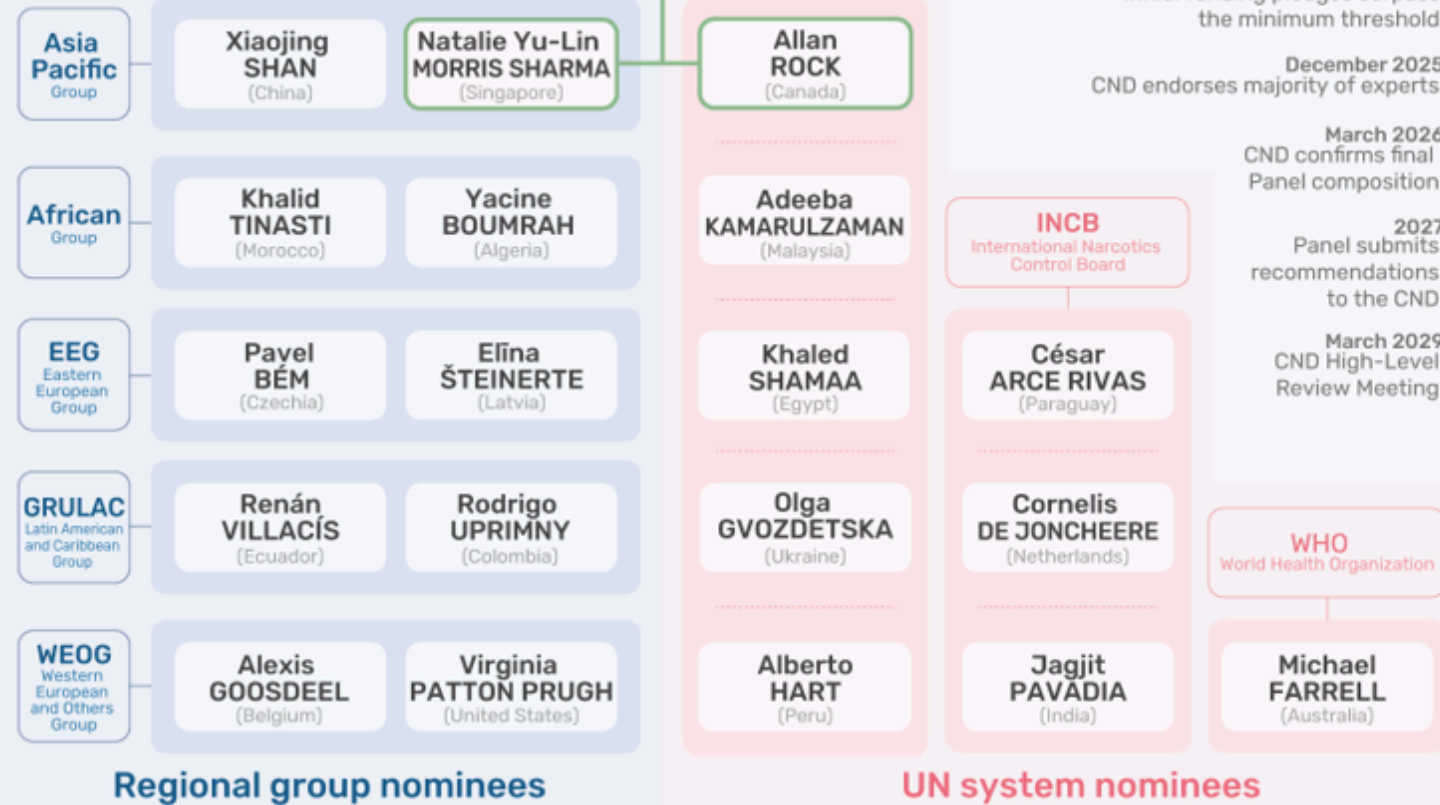
November 2025  
Initial funding pledges surpass  
the minimum threshold

December 2025  
CND endorses majority of experts

March 2026  
CND confirms final  
Panel composition

2027  
Panel submits  
recommendations  
to the CND

March 2029  
CND High-Level  
Review Meeting



The Independent Expert Panel represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to confront systemic failings. Member States have formally recognised the need to critically assess how the international drug control system operates in practice. Its recommendations could influence the direction of global drug policy ahead of 2029. IDPC expects the panel to confront the harms caused by punitive approaches, question outdated assumptions embedded in the treaties, and offer pathways to realign the system with health, human rights and lived realities.



### AGREEMENT MORE LIKELY

Harm reduction · access to  
controlled medicines ·  
proportionate criminal justice ·  
non-discrimination

### MUCH MORE CONTESTED

Decriminalisation · death  
penalty · legal regulation of  
markets

No seat for the UN Human Rights Office, young people or people with lived experience.

Our contributions can help fill that gap!

## WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR OUR MOVEMENT?

Resolution 68/6: the panel must consult “civil society, the scientific community, academia, youth groups...”

### **PARADIGMA COALITION (2024) COMMON POSITION ON DRUGS**

- Conventions created “with no specific consideration for children or young people”
- Divert young people away from the justice system (Beijing and Havana Rules)
- Low-threshold, youth-friendly harm reduction services
- Peer-led, youth-tailored drug education, no “scare tactics”

### **GCDP POLICY BRIEF (2026) MAKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE VISIBLE IN DRUG POLICY**

- Punitive laws “exposed children to preventable harms”: criminalisation, detention, family separation, violence
- Fear of arrest keeps young people away from health care
  - Marginalised young people are hit hardest
- Built on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

# WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR OUR MOVEMENT? THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Global/UN



Regional



National

UN conventions shape regional strategies, which shape the national laws young people live with. Local evidence (peer-led services, drug checking) can travel back up.

## INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED AS INEFFECTIVE

After 60+ years of a mostly punitive approach, drug markets are bigger and more dangerous than ever. The resolution expresses “grave concern” about rising overdose deaths.

## THE HUMAN RIGHTS, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT TOLL

Mass incarceration, the death penalty, police violence, HIV and hepatitis, overdose deaths, forced crop eradication. For young people: criminal records and exclusion.

## AID CUTS DISRUPT LIFE- SAVING SERVICES

Since 2025, US and other donor cuts have closed or reduced HIV prevention and harm reduction programmes in many countries.

## RISE IN “NARCOTERRORISM” RHETORIC

“Terrorism” and “war” language justifies military responses. Avoid repeating it: prohibition helps create the conditions in which organised crime grows.

## WHAT IS ITS PROCESS?

March 2025: Resolution 68/6 creates the Panel

March 2026: Final composition confirmed

April 2026: Substantive work starts

October 2026: Virtual consultations with civil society (27th & 28th)

**15th Nov: Deadline for written submissions**

March 2027: Update at the 70th CND

Dec 2027: Final report at the reconvened 70th CND

March 2029: CND high-level review

**NOT  
BINDING.**

Countries will debate the recommendations  
2027-2029. Push governments.

## HOW IT WORKS:

- Monthly virtual meetings of the 19 members; 2 in-person meetings (June 2026, mid-2027 planned)
- The Panel works in English only
- Virtual consultations via VNGOC/NYNGOC (preliminary: 27–28 October). Follow the VNGOC ad-hoc youth working group
- Consultations with Member States: format still unclear

## WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

The easiest way to take part. No ECOSOC status needed.

# THE EXPERT PANEL NEEDS YOUR INPUT!

A public call to any stakeholders with knowledge or experience of drug policy: academics, practitioners, organisations, grass-roots groups, UN agencies...

**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LIVE THESE POLICIES  
EVERY DAY ARE EXPERTS TOO.**

## IMPORTANT:

Connect your local reality (using available evidence) to the international system: the conventions, the UN's commitments on health and human rights, and the roles of UNODC, INCB, WHO and CND.

## KEY DETAILS:

- DEADLINE: 15th NOVEMBER
- 1,500 WORDS MAX
- ENGLISH (OR WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION ATTACHED)
- ANYONE (ORGANISATIONS, ACADEMICS, INDIVIDUALS. NO ECOSOC STATUS NEEDED)

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION COUNT

## 1. Propose reforms, not only harms

- Treaties, interpretation or implementation? What should change and who should act?

## 2. Choose one or two issues

- Where you have distinctive expertise, evidence or lived experience

## 3. Anchor it in UNGASS 2016

- Its seven agreed chapters help defend the broad mandate

## 4. Nothing is already won

- Harm reduction, access to medicines, decriminalisation: make the strongest case

## 5. Make recommendations easy to find

- A dedicated section, clear headings, short points

## 6. Save words with links

- References may count towards the 1,500 words

## 7. Coordinate

- Track planned youth contributions: avoid duplication, spot gaps

## 8. Share the opportunity

- Anyone can submit: spread the call through your networks

## KEY RESOURCES

[Invitation for written submissions](#) (deadline 15 Nov)

[Call for speakers, civil society consultations](#) ([closes Tue 20 Oct, 23:59 CEST](#)).

[The UNODC page on the CND Expert Panel](#)

[The 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document](#).

[The Paradigma Coalition's Common Position on Drugs \(2024\)](#).

[The GCDP policy brief "Making Children and Young People Visible in Drug Policy"](#).

[The VNGOC, where the ad-hoc youth working group shares updates on the consultations](#)

[IDPC dedicated webpage](#)

## QUESTIONS?

**We'd love to hear from you. In the chat, write one drug policy issue affecting young people in your country that you think the panel should hear about.**