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Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Drug demand reduction: World situation with regard to
drug abuse, in particular among children and youth**

Statement submitted by SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL a non- governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

Nicotine as a gateway drug among children and youth**

- Welcoming the results of the 11th World Conference on Tobacco and Health in Chicago 2001
- Paying special attention to the resolution 43/4 adopted at the 43rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and both the Political Declaration and the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 20th Special Session
- Focussing on the recommendations on Youths and Drugs at the 2nd session of the UN World Youth Forum, Vienna 1996
- Giving high importance to the preparation of the framework for a UN/WHO Convention on Tobacco Control – a new legal instrument with the participation of UN ODCCP
- Recognising the publication “The Soroptimist Position, 2000” in which Soroptimist International, a world wide organisation for women in management and professions defines its standpoint on current topics of concern including tobacco problems.

* E/CN.7/2001/1/Rev.1.

** This document has not been edited.

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social resolution 1966/31 of 25 July 1996.

- Gravely alarmed by the increasing use of tobacco among children and youths particularly in insecure milieus for example the rave scene
- Bringing special attention to the fact that smoking is not a habit but an addiction
- Taking note that children acquire first hand experience in smoking cigarettes and thus inhale a substance in order to adjust emotional mood.
- Reminding that the experience of smoking cigarettes is the basic skill for further use of hard drugs
- Emphasising the worrying role of the starter drug as a **GATEWAY DRUG** for children which leads to illicit hard drug abuse for example cannabis and cocaine
- Being aware that almost all drug addicts smoke, children usually starting at an average age of 12 years or less

For the above mentioned reasons Governments, the specialised agencies of the UN system and other NGOs are invited to

1. Explore further prevention programmes by eliminating the use of Gateway Drugs and to consider that nicotine is the most frequent Gateway Drug followed by alcohol and cannabis
2. Promote programmes aiming at tobacco prevention and thereby also preventing other forms of drug abuse
3. Support all efforts to prevent the use of nicotine in its own right as a health endangering risk and as a Gateway Drug
4. Include the issue “Gateway Drug” in the prevention programme of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
5. Pay particular attention to the support of interactive teaching methods that involve young people in drug education programmes
6. Promote recruiting and training of youth PEER GROUPS which then work on counselling school mates in their own schools or other educational establishments.
7. Organise anti drug Peer Groups whose role is to depict drug consumption as not only dangerous but “out” and “not trendy” and arrange drug and tobacco free parties.
8. Reinforce all conventional prevention strategies and consider the possibilities of passing efficient tobacco control legislation
9. Assist and protect children and youths who are victims of the drug dealing world

10. Ban tobacco advertisements in the mass media

