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General debate

Statement submitted by Turkish Green Crescent Society, 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.7/2021/1](#).

** Issued without formal editing.



Statement

Dear Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

As Turkish Green Crescent Society (TGCS), our priority area is to tackle addictions such as tobacco, alcohol and drug use that devastate the physical and mental health of the youth and the public in general. We do these by conducting preventive as well as rehabilitating public health work and advocacy based on scientific evidence with a global vision.

In this regard, we are well aware that drug misuse, abuse and addiction in general are of the main causes of suffering with individual, community, as well as transnational-levels of impacts. TGCS considers necessities of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of people with drug use should be examined in their respective contexts with a public health perspective that leaves no one behind. TGCS acknowledges that every person with drug use has special conditions, hence deserves a tailored approach in counselling, treatment and rehabilitation services. On the other hand, these services should be carried out with a public health perspective that lies heavily on common good of the society.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the people who are living with drug addictions were put in a more vulnerable position than before with limited access to healthcare services; let alone access to counselling services. In order to work with them and for them in a non-discriminatory way that still takes cultural and regional differences into consideration, we believe that free counselling services that pay attention to each person's expectations, abilities, social situation and personal history need to be preserved and improved; with the engagement of a multi-sectoral approach of multiple stakeholders.

Such an approach is needed as during the lock-downs, we sadly saw a huge number of people struggling with getting the help that they need because free counselling services were not seen as essential healthcare services by the social security systems of some countries. This perception caused a temporary lack of funding for people who are in need of treatment.

Another barrier that people who use drugs were faced with was related to the physical access to treatments. Also, they could not access to emergency services during deprivation and craving crises. As a result of lock-down measures, people who use drugs could not reach to counselling and treatment services for a serious time period. Therefore, as we are aware of the importance of a strong support system in matters related to drug use, TGCS believes and invests in counselling services that are free for every person who use drugs and these services also offer help to families and friends affected from drug use.

In TGCS Counselling Centers (YEDAMs); we provide these services among 81 provinces in Turkey and working on implementation models in 80 countries worldwide. YEDAM call centers work 15 hours a day and also provides counselling services not just for addictions, but also anxiety issues during COVID-19.

We ask UNODC and the Chair of CND to call the governments for a united action to provide such facilities to public use free of charge to make these services available for everyone.
