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General debate

Statement submitted by the Turkish Green Crescent Society (Yesilay), 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.7/2023/1](#).

** Issued without formal editing.



Dear Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and colleagues,

As the Turkish Green Crescent Society (TGCS), our priority area of work is to tackle different kinds of addictions that devastate the physical and mental health of societies with a particular focus on vulnerable populations; namely tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. We conduct prevention, recovery, rehabilitation, social reintegration and advocacy work in our struggle against addictions and our core principles are to be based solely on evidence and science to be able to have a global vision.

Synthetic drugs are a major concern for the global as well as Turkish society, both in terms of their production and consumption. They account for major policy challenges and international concern that need to be addressed urgently because the market and use of these drugs are affected by various developmental issues such as conflicts and environmental degradation. Therefore, the production and market of these drugs continue to evolve and diversify in clandestine ways.

The UNODC World Drug Report 2022, states that seizures of amphetamine and methamphetamine have grown very quickly and that 34 million people used amphetamine including methamphetamine in 2020. These amphetamine-type stimulants equally constitute a threat for Türkiye as over the past few years, the country has seen a significant increase in the number of seizures of synthetic drugs, as well as in the use of synthetic drugs among the population. Such that, according to the 2022 National Drug Report of Türkiye, there has been a 32.8 per cent increase in methamphetamine seizures, compared to the previous year.

The socioeconomic drivers of synthetic drug use in Türkiye are complex and varied. One of the key drivers is linked to the fact that Türkiye has a large youth population. The global crises affecting the country, coupled with the stress and anxiety youth may already be experiencing in their transition into adulthood, risks leading youth to drug use as a means of coping with these issues. Furthermore, synthetic drug use in Türkiye has a range of negative impacts on both individuals and society as a whole. These negative impacts include leading to addiction and therefore to a range of physical and mental health problems as well as social and economic problems such as crime, reduced productivity, and increased health-care costs, therefore it would not be wrong to say the use of synthetic drugs leads to a vicious cycle that we need to break.

Another driver of synthetic drug use in Türkiye is the availability of these drugs. Türkiye is located in a region that is a major transit hub for drug trafficking, and this has made it easier for synthetic drugs to enter the country. The availability of these drugs has also been facilitated by the growth of the Internet and the dark web, which have made it easier for people to access and purchase drugs.

The use of synthetic drugs in Türkiye is not limited to any particular demographic group. Rather, it cuts across age, gender, and social class. However, the use of these drugs is more prevalent among certain groups, such as youth and marginalized populations. Therefore, to be able to form policies and programmes that effectively protect such populations, the global drug control community needs evidence-informed policies.

Therefore, as an NGO working for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals knowing that the Agenda 2030 cannot be reached without good health and well-being away from addictions for all, we are well aware that it is crucial to focus on prevention, recovery, and rehabilitation as well as advocacy. The role of civil society come at a critical point here. NGOs and other community-based organizations such as the Turkish Green Crescent Society conduct various activities to help raise awareness about the risks associated with drug use, as well as to provide support and resources for individuals and communities within the scope of prevention. NGOs are of vital importance also because of their ability to collect key information from the field, laying the foundation of evidence-informed policies. One such example of State-NGO partnership is the Wastewater Analysis Project jointly conducted by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior and the Turkish Green Crescent Society.

The Turkish Green Crescent Society's treatment and rehabilitation works are also of vital importance in addressing the issue of synthetic drug use in Türkiye. The Turkish Green Crescent Counseling Centers (YEDAM), which are present in 81 Turkish cities to help individuals overcome addiction and rebuild their lives in a sustainable way.

In addition to these efforts, joint international action is also needed to address the issue of synthetic drug use in Türkiye. The trafficking of synthetic drugs is a global issue that requires a coordinated international response. This response should include efforts to address the demand for synthetic drugs through prevention, recovery, and rehabilitation. It is also important to engage civil society and coordinate joint international action. By working together, we can help to reduce the harm caused by synthetic drugs in Türkiye and around the world.

Thank you!
