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**Statement submitted by Liberian United Youth for
Community Safety and Development (LUYCSD), 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.



We are pleased to present to you a written statement and recommendation by LUYCSD for intervention strategy.

The written statement came about due to the punishment and strong torture of accused drugs users in Liberia and their vulnerability at the correction centre that leads to many deaths without any account to victims' parents.

During our visit and support, we observed that there is need to establish this advocacy for victims at the correction centre across the country. The country still plays host to an unresolved past characterized by human rights violations for drugs and substance abuse victims under the age of 12 to 35 years youth and adolescent girls, legislative and judicial weakness for some areas of human activities remain backward in the judicial efforts to persecute perpetrator who are being caught importing drugs on a high volume into the country.

One of such areas is the rehabilitation of the country's youth who are in detention at the correction centre across the country for being accused of the uses of drugs under the age of 12 to 39 years. Those youth conditions continue to be deplorable, vulnerable at the centre for their long stay from 1 to 10 years that needs the attention of the United Nations UNOV/UNODC to assist Liberian United Youth for Community Safety and Development to carry out skill training, counselling and other meaningful and sustainable support to the youth as they are still under detention at the correction centre waiting for trial and those that had already been convicted of their crime they were accused.

However, due to the weakness of the national government especially the judiciary system weakness in the country of accused victims and the speedy trial of cases involving drugs and substance abuse victims recognizing their human rights and their welfare at the correction centre.

The country's geographic landmark and weak security system manned by poverty stricken under-paid personnel accounts for increasing penetration by heavily funded drug barons on a regular basis around the country producing more youth and adolescent girls as drugs user and overloading prisons facilities with victims. This has drawn the attention of other international solitary bodies to support the government to combat importation of drugs into the republic of Liberia. Drug lords have permeated the security system thus turning the country into a drug transit point.

Between 2005 and 2011 to 2022 Liberia has strongly been listed among West African states for the amount of drugs falling within the dragnets of state securities and some are reported and much more has not been accounted for in the counties by the states securities for persecution of drugs importer and leaving behind more victims of drugs users in the country.

In 2014, the president signed the Liberia Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the Act establishing the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency and in 2021 to 2022 the legislature passed a bill on the enforcement of the new drugs law for importer non-billable but it has not taken effect around the country due to the under-paid of securities and judiciary personnel.

Efforts by civil society, NGO, CBO, and development partners, prior to signing the acts, to advise government on areas where both acts contravene international conventions and current global trend in dealing with the world's drugs problem proved futile.

Consequently the acts are pushing more for criminalization and punitive measures against low quantity drug users long-term in detention, ignoring human rights, public health or harm reduction.

Currently it is unimaginable drugs and crime tends to put Liberia in an irreversible economic and political downward trend as the country going closely toward election in October 2023.

Proxy such as age range of people arrested daily by drug enforcement agency without providing them vocational training, increasing number of street adolescents who openly show abnormal attitude and high level crime tend to be pointing to high prevalence of drug abuse.

Limited mainstream drug prevention program which was established by the president George Weah in 2021 has not yet taken effect into the rural counties within the various sectors of the society over the years. However, the rehabilitation, counselling program to be carried out at the national correction centre and the awareness and sensitization will contribute to the reduction, eradication of importation of drugs into the country.

Substance entry into the facilities, provision of medical and counselling services and providing skills training over a period of time will make meaningful impact in addressing the problem within the sixteen county, these conclusions are intrinsically based on findings of the survey. That was conducted by Liberian United Youth for Community Safety and Development to understand and give report to the government and the United Nations especially the citizens of the republic of Liberia.

However regardless of their addiction brain disease condition, access to health services and training at the correction centre is their inalienable human rights that should not be denied them. Provision of health services is an essential component of rehabilitation of drug users at the correction centre, which needs to be blended with creation of host facilities and skills training program to reduce their vulnerability and high trauma they have been carrying over the years without any meaningful solution to their lives at the correction centre.

We strongly believe that the safety and protection of their human rights as well as their welfare is the concern of Liberian United Youth for Community Safety and Development to advocate continually for their voices to be heard by the international UNOV/UNODC to assist and provide release at the prison in Liberia for victims of drugs users. The drugs users at the correction centre in detention due to the weakness in persecuting the accused led to their death from 20 per cent up to 60 per cent around the country accuse victims from 1 person to 10 persons monthly. This death rate is increasing due to the increase of youth and adolescent girls who are living with poverty according to our survey report in 2022.

The burden of the law or its absence is on users than any group of drug actors.

The Liberia Controlled Drugs and Substances Law show unequal distribution of justice for drug offenses, with drug users bearing the blunt of punishment:

- We recommend to the United Nations UNOV/UNODC to join Liberian United Youth for Community Safety and Development recommending to the national government of the republic of Liberia in this advocacy. While the law is crafted from a criminalization perspective, there is punitive disparity that fewer traffickers over users. Setting the scale for gravity of the problem, traffickers commit higher latitude of the crime and deserve heavier gravity of punishment in enforcing the law.
- We recommend to United Nations UNOV/UNODC that the users caught with minimum quantity should be given minimum punishment after proper investigation. But not long-term keeping the users at the correction centre without skill training and their welfare and human rights being taken care of, for their reintegration into the society.
- We recommend to United Nations UNOV/UNODC to support LUYCSD project at the correction centre around Liberia with financial as the United Nation team will be discussing a budgeting issue in this conference. However, we strongly believe that partnership with United Nations UNOV/UNODC will create a meaningful and sustainable solution to the drugs problems affecting the nation and the youth and adolescent girls.

Liberia being one of the poorest country with a 0.1 GDP world bank report 2022, as a least developing country that the citizens live on \$1.00 a day especially the past

deadly COVID-19 and the Ebola crises that took away many lives and disorganized government national plan, leaving behind more poverty and hardship on the citizens.

LUYCD do not have a donor or international partners who can assist in this advocacy as we have been accredited by the National government of the republic of Liberia and the United Nations Economic and Social Council NGO Branch ECOSOC 2012; all of our projects has been supported with a membership due and individual contributions to our work which is slowing down many of our activities in the country especially creating awareness and skill training program for drugs and substance users under the age of 12 to 35.
