



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**



Building
Our Future
Together

**"Innovate, Unite and Transform:
Youth Shaping the Road to 2030"**

SIDE EVENT AT THE 2026 ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM

**"Youth engagement in early drug prevention systems as
accelerators of SDGs"**

**Organized by: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with
the support of Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, Egypt,
Greece, Italy and Norway**

16 April 2026, 13:15 – 14:30 (NY Time/EST)

1. Background

Despite their central role in building healthy, resilient, and peaceful societies, young people often remain under-represented in shaping drug prevention policies. Evidence shows that early, science-based prevention generates lasting benefits for health, education, and overall well-being, while many young people face vulnerabilities—such as social exclusion, mental health challenges, and limited access to services—that increase the risk of harmful substance use. Strengthening prevention systems therefore requires both institutional capacity and sustained, meaningful youth participation integrated into policy processes.

UNODC is supporting Member States in advancing a 2025 Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolution aimed at strengthening comprehensive, scientific, evidence-based, and multisectoral national systems for drug use prevention among children and adolescents. This work is grounded in UNODC's global initiative CHAMPS – CHildren Amplified Prevention Services, which assists countries in developing child-centred prevention systems aligned with the UNODC–WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. CHAMPS promotes large-scale implementation at municipal or state level and seeks to demonstrate the long-term effectiveness and return on investment of early prevention in supporting healthy child and adolescent development.

To date, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Cyprus, Egypt, Ecuador, Greece, Nigeria, Norway, and Uzbekistan have volunteered to establish CHAMPS systems. In parallel, Austria, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, and Slovenia provide global support to the initiative.

A core pillar of CHAMPS is the meaningful engagement of young people in the design, implementation, and monitoring of national prevention systems. With the support of Austria, youth representatives in CHAMPS countries will actively contribute to system development and oversight. UNODC will also convene an annual Youth CHAMPS Summit to review progress, strengthen youth leadership, and facilitate peer-to-peer exchange.

The ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026 provides a unique opportunity to elevate the role of youth in advancing evidence-based drug prevention and to highlight how their engagement directly supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Objectives of the side event, including relation with the SDGs identified in the Guidelines

The side event aims to strengthen global momentum for evidence-based, youth-centred drug use prevention systems by showcasing the CHAMPS initiative and highlighting its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will illustrate how early, science-based prevention supports healthy development and well-being (SDG 3), reinforces inclusive and quality learning environments (SDG 4), and reduces inequalities in access to services and opportunities (SDG 10). By emphasizing the importance of youth engagement in the design, implementation, and oversight of national prevention systems, the event will underscore how meaningful participation enhances transparent, responsive, and effective institutions (SDG 16) and strengthens partnerships among governments, youth, and UN entities (SDG 17).

Through presentations from CHAMPS countries and youth speakers, the event will highlight the experiences of youth engaged in CHAMPS countries, explore innovative approaches to strengthening prevention ecosystems, and promote partnerships between young people, governments, and UN entities. It will encourage Member States to integrate youth voices into prevention policymaking and demonstrate how early investments in evidence-based prevention yield long-term social benefits, contributing to more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

3. Programme and names of speakers/panelists

Draft Agenda

Moderator: Ms. Xiaohong Li, Representative, UNODC New York Liaison Office (NYLO)

Time	Agenda	Speaker
13:15 – 13:19	Opening remarks	Ms. Xiaohong Li, Representative UNODC NYLO

13:20 – 13:25	UNODC Setting the Scene Investing in Prevention Systems and in our Next Generation through CHAMPS	Mr. Wadih Maalouf, Coordinator Prevention Programme, UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section (online)
13:26 – 13:30	Ecuador	H.E. Mr. Andrés Montalvo Sosa, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the UN
13:31 – 13:40	Greece	Mr. Ioannis Stamatekos Chargé d'Affaires/Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN
	Lessons from Greece – UNODC CHAMPS	Ms. Katerina Kalaitzi Youth from Greece/ UNODC CHAMPS (online)
13:41 – 13:45	Algeria	H.E. Mr. Toufik Laid Koudri, Ambassador/ Deputy Permanent Representative of Algeria to the UN
13:46 – 13:51	Lessons from Brazil – UNODC CHAMPS	Mr. Cláudio Luís Damasceno Valente Júnior Youth from Brazil/UNODC CHAMPS (online)
13:52 – 13:57	Lessons from Egypt – UNODC CHAMPS	Ms. Habiba Raslan Youth from Egypt/UNODC CHAMPS (online)
13:58 – 14:02	Belgium	H.E. Mr. Bart De Wolf Ambassador/ Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN
14:03 – 14:07	Austria	Ms. Katharina Reisenbauer Youth Delegate/Austria
14:08 – 14:13	Central Asian Youth Network – UNODC Friends in Focus	Ms. Charos Abdugofurova Youth from Uzbekistan/UNODC Friends in Focus (online)
14:14 – 14:26	Q&A – Final reflections	
14:27 – 14:30	Closing remarks	Ms. Xiaohong Li, Representative UNODC NYLO

4. Guiding Questions for discussion

- How can early, evidence-based prevention contribute to healthier and more resilient communities, especially for children and adolescents?
- What does meaningful youth engagement look like in practice, and how can young people help shape prevention systems rather than simply participate in them?
- What practical steps can governments and institutions take to strengthen prevention systems, including better cross-sector cooperation?
- What joint actions or commitments should emerge from today's discussion to advance early prevention and youth participation at national and international levels?

5. Venue Address (if In-person) and/or Platform to be used for virtual side events including Registration link

This will be a **hybrid** event, conducted in English.

- In-person venue address: Conference Room 11, UN Headquarters, New York
- Virtual meeting link: [Youth engagement in early drug prevention systems as accelerators of SDGs \(Youth Forum Side Event\) | UN Web TV](#)