Position Paper: United Kingdom

Committee: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Topic: Addressing Global Youth Substance Abuse: Prevention, Intervention, and Long-Term Solutions

Country: United Kingdom

# I. Background of the Issue

Youth substance abuse remains a global health crisis that continues to impact individuals, families, and societies. Increasing access to illicit drugs—both physically and digitally—has made it easier for vulnerable youth to fall into patterns of addiction. Contributing factors such as poverty, peer pressure, mental illness, and a lack of education create a dangerous environment for drug dependency to grow.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNODC have taken steps to address the crisis, but gaps in prevention, early intervention, and post-recovery support persist. The United Kingdom recognizes that effective action requires a holistic, human-centered approach grounded in education, healthcare, and international collaboration.

# II. United Kingdom’s Position

The United Kingdom considers youth substance abuse a public health emergency, not a criminal justice problem. Our national drug strategy focuses on three core pillars:

1. Prevention through education – integrating drug awareness into school curricula.
2. Intervention through accessible mental health care – improving early support and rehabilitation.
3. Recovery through reintegration – offering pathways back into society with job training, therapy, and social support.

The UK has successfully implemented youth helplines, community outreach initiatives, and targeted school programs. However, we understand that substance abuse transcends borders and must be tackled globally.

# III. Proposed Solutions

To effectively combat global youth substance abuse, the UK proposes the following:

- Global Education Frameworks: Partner with UNESCO to create adaptable school drug education models for low- and middle-income countries.
- Mental Health Access Programs: Work with WHO and UNODC to establish mobile intervention teams and trauma-informed support systems.
- Reintegration Centers: Develop regionally supported recovery and reintegration hubs with vocational training and psychological services.
- Data Sharing and Research: Promote global databases for monitoring drug trends, treatment outcomes, and youth risk factors.
- Tech Regulation Cooperation: Engage with social media and tech platforms to limit online exposure to drug content and digital trafficking.

# IV. Call to Action

The United Kingdom calls upon all member states to recognize that protecting youth from substance abuse is a moral obligation and a strategic necessity. We urge cooperation, funding, and innovation in both policy and practice. The UK is committed to leading global efforts that prioritize prevention, compassion, and opportunity for every young person.