

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

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

**Country:** Italy

**School:** Bal Bhavan Public School

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## I. Introduction and Context of the Subject

Youth substance abuse represents one of the most urgent public health and social issues of our time. Globally, millions of adolescents engage in the use of illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription medications without medical guidance—often resulting in long-term dependency, health complications, and societal disengagement. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), young people are increasingly vulnerable due to factors such as social pressure, mental health instability, online influence, and inadequate support systems.

This issue is especially critical because it undermines the very foundation of sustainable development, impairing education, employment prospects, and mental health, particularly in developing and transitioning economies. Youth, as future leaders and contributors to society, must be protected through targeted, innovative, and long-term policy actions.

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## II. Analysis of Past UN and International Actions

The international community has attempted to address this issue through frameworks like the **UNODC Youth Initiative**, the **International Standards on Drug Use Prevention**, and resolutions including **A/RES/74/178** and **E/RES/2021/7**, which emphasize the need for prevention and youth engagement.

While these actions show a commitment to curbing substance abuse, many have fallen short due to inconsistent implementation across Member States, lack of community-level support, and failure to adapt programs to local sociocultural contexts. Italy recognizes the value of these frameworks but also believes that greater emphasis must be placed on evaluating impact and integrating education, rehabilitation, and mental health support into prevention models.

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## III. State of the Nation: Italy's National and International Response

Italy has adopted a **comprehensive, health-based approach** to youth substance abuse. Domestically, the National Action Plan on Drugs focuses on prevention in schools, mental health counseling, and community rehabilitation centers. Italy also supports *non-punitive responses*, particularly for minors, shifting the emphasis from criminalization to reintegration.

Internationally, Italy actively contributes to the **Pompidou Group** and is a consistent supporter of UNODC initiatives. Italy promotes evidence-based strategies and the integration of digital outreach in intervention efforts. Italian civil society and NGOs play a critical role in on-the-ground prevention, emphasizing peer-to-peer education and trauma-informed care.

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#### IV. Proposed Solutions

Italy believes that the fight against global youth substance abuse must center around **three pillars: prevention, early intervention, and sustainable reintegration.**

1. **Prevention Through Education and Media Literacy**

Italy proposes a UN-led partnership to implement *universal prevention curriculums* in schools globally, with age-specific content addressing the risks of drug use, digital misinformation, and mental health support. Italy also suggests UN funding for local NGOs working on youth empowerment through sports, arts, and mentorship programs.

2. **Intervention Through Accessible and Non-Stigmatizing Services**

Italy recommends Member States expand access to *low-barrier health services*, including mobile clinics, peer support hotlines, and digital therapy platforms. Training youth-focused health professionals in early detection of abuse patterns should be a top priority.

3. **Long-Term Solutions Through Reintegration and Socioeconomic Support**

Italy proposes a resolution supporting *the Global Youth Reintegration Fund* under UNODC, aimed at helping former substance users access vocational training, education, and mental health services. The fund would prioritize communities with limited infrastructure and high youth unemployment.

Italy firmly believes these solutions align with the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**, particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 4 (Quality Education). With strong multilateral cooperation and community-driven implementation, we can protect our youth and secure a drug-resilient future.

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#### V. Conclusion

The Italian Republic reaffirms its commitment to addressing youth substance abuse not through punishment, but through protection, prevention, and empowerment. By strengthening global partnerships and reinforcing local action, we can ensure that the next generation not only survives — but thrives.