



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth RISE will be LIVE at the UN 53rd Session of the
Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) 2010

The leading youth organization fighting against the harms associated with drug use will be broadcasting live via web releasing recommendations demanding that CND engage and support young people in national delegations.

LONDON, UK, March 8, 2010 - In efforts to raise awareness of the ineffectiveness of current international and national drug policy that impacts young people disproportionately, Youth RISE (Resources. Information. Support. Education. for reducing drug related harm) is calling for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to institutionalize the support and engagement of young people in the decision-making process to address punitive policies that will negatively affect them.

Last year, as the only youth-led organization to make an official statement during the High Level Segment on Drugs, we stated that the international community's message has been "kids should not do drugs". But, kids today are doing drugs. They use them for fun. They use them to fit in. They use them for survival and to deal with hunger. They use them to cope with and to alleviate pain. The ideal of a "drug free world" has no meaning for children, adolescents, and young people who are growing up and living in a world where drugs are more available to them than accessible education, information, health and social services are. The concept of prevention is lost to the millions who are already using drugs.

This is why today, specific recommendations from young people around the world are being gathered and developed by the Vienna YouthForce, an independent alliance of youth-led organizations that Youth RISE is a part of, working side-by-side with the International AIDS Society towards the XVIII International AIDS Conference, AIDS2010.

These recommendations, questions and messages will be sent to national delegates and UN officials at this year's CND. Through a full blown media blitz campaign through Facebook, Twitter, USTREAM and YouTube during CND processions, organized young people across the globe want to:

- Stipulate why young people needed to be involved at this meeting;
- Press for comprehensive, reality-based drug education, prevention and primary social and healthcare services for young people affected by drug use;
- Urge the UN and its country members to remove the stigma and age related barriers in young people getting access to drug treatment and other services like HIV testing without parental consent, and granting confidentiality, and

- Develop policies in the spirit of international human rights law and in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.

We part from the fact that in many regions of the world, the average age for injecting drug use has decreased and in some countries is as low as 15 years old according to UNICEF country data. Yet, services for young people are woefully inadequate with many countries providing no access to harm reduction services or comprehensive drug education. This seriously increases the health risks for young people who are using drugs. Youth RISE has explained why young people need to be active participants rather than passive recipients in their own health and well-being.

Now is the time to build upon how it will be done! During CND 2010 you can follow Youth RISE on Twitter @youthrise and Facebook, along with pieces on live transmissions through USTREAM at: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/cnd-2010>.

"A new generation of people using drugs...a new generation of policies to respond."

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