

# YOUTH CONSULTATION PRECEDING THE 12<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (COP12 UNTOC)

*“Youth as active agents of positive change to support crime prevention efforts against organized crime”*

*Date: Thursday, 10 October 2024*

## Synopsis

The growing emphasis on youth at the United Nations reflects both young people’s particular vulnerabilities to crime as well as the recognition that their contribution is required to effectively respond to current challenges. To support this wider effort, UNODC, guided by the [Youth Empowerment Accelerator \(YEA!\) Framework](#) and building on existing UNODC youth engagement mechanisms, such as the [Youth-Led Action to Prevent and Respond to Terrorism](#), [UNODC MENA Youth Network](#), [Generation Justice](#), will host a hybrid Youth Consultation prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the [Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#) (COP12 UNTOC, 14-18 October 2024) aiming to engage with young people on topics related to organized crime and more particularly reflected in the agenda of the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference. The Consultation will build on previous Youth Consultations, including the Consultation held in October 2022 prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (COP11 UNTOC).

The Consultation will involve diverse youth, having some knowledge of or familiarity with topics related to organized crime, including through their studies or academic background or through community-based exposure. The outcome of the consultation, including concrete recommendations from youth, will be presented as a joint plenary statement at COP12 UNTOC on behalf of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Selected participants will also have the opportunity to contribute to a side event in the margins of COP12 UNTOC.

## Background

UNTOC was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 15 November 2000, and entered into force on 29 September 2003. UNTOC stands as the sole global legally binding instrument against transnational organized crime. In the past 20 years, the international community has witnessed its important role in promoting cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime. Its universal adherence status with 192 States parties is evidence in this regard.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to UNTOC – established in accordance with UNTOC – is the policy-making body on the implementation of the convention, which facilitates the enhancing of the capacity of States parties to prevent and combat organized crime and further promotes and reviews the

implementation of UNTOC by States parties. The important role of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in addressing organized crime is well acknowledged by granting them observer status to the COP meetings as indicated in the Rules of procedure of the COP and by the organization of constructive dialogues involving non-State stakeholders in accordance with paragraph 53 of the Procedures and rules for the functioning of the UNTOC Review Mechanism.

UNODC, therefore, advocates for a multistakeholder approach to prevent and counter transnational organized crime, involving both states and non-governmental stakeholders such as specialized civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, private sector and youth. These stakeholders play an important role complementing governments' efforts in implementing comprehensive responses to tackle organized crime.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions bringing benefits to all people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized. Member States are encouraged to provide safety and security to all and to devote special attention to youth<sup>1</sup> as they are particularly vulnerable to drug use, violence, crime, including gang-related crime, and victimization, recruitment and exploitation by criminal groups.

To address the trends of a rising youth population, and the unique ways that young people are impacted by a changing world, the Secretary-General has continued to promote young people with the launch of a UN system-wide strategy on youth, "[Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy](#)", alongside the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office in 2022. The Secretary-General's Report, "Our Common Agenda" further emphasizes the need to work with future generations and young people to ensure a peaceful future, including through the Policy Brief on "[Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes](#)".

The "Kyoto Declaration", adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and endorsed by the General Assembly in its [resolution 76/181](#), encouraged Member States to empower youth to become active agents of positive change in their communities to support crime prevention efforts, including by organizing social, educational, cultural, recreational, sports-related youth programmes and youth forums, as well as by using social media platforms and applications and other digital tools to amplify their voice.

UNODC is engaged in efforts to support the meaningful engagement of youth through projects across thematic areas as outlined in the Youth Empowerment Accelerator (YEA!) Framework. These projects include the Youth-Led Action to Prevent and Respond to Terrorism, the Stakeholder Engagement for UNTOC (SE4U) project, the Youth Initiative on Drug Use Prevention (including the Youth Forum on the sidelines of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs), the Crime Prevention through Sport Initiative, the Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment (GRACE) Initiative, and University Teaching Modules hosted on SHERLOC knowledge management portal, among others.<sup>2</sup>

In October 2022, UNODC held a Youth Consultation prior to COP11 UNTOC. The consultation engaged a wide range of youth participants and explored opportunities through which UNODC, in partnership with youth participants, can more effectively engage with one another. Building on the outcomes and recommendations the upcoming consultation will focus on substantive topics related to organized crime including discussing input and recommendations from youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there are many age ranges and definitions for youth, for this consultation, youth participants will be persons between the ages of 18 and 29.

<sup>2</sup> More information on UNODC's work on empowering youth can be found: [Youth \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/youth).

## Objectives of Youth Consultation

To further facilitate meaningful youth engagement on matters related to organized crime, the Youth Consultation will be organized on Thursday, 10 October 2024, preceding COP12 UNTOC (14-18 October 2024). Participating youth will have the opportunity to share their recommendations with Member States in form of a plenary statement delivered on behalf of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Consultation will engage youth with community-based familiarity in the area of crime, particularly addressing criminal threats to youth from organized crime (see selection criteria below).

Building on ongoing youth-related work within UNODC, the Youth Consultation will provide a timely opportunity for UNODC, Member States and young people to engage in an exchange of views on organized crime related matters, including on crime prevention.

Prior to the Youth Consultation a preparatory meeting between UNODC colleagues will be held, to agree on the agenda of the Youth Consultation and establish commitments from and roles of respective teams for the Consultation. To ensure continuity with previously held Youth consultations, eligible youth that attended the consultation in 2022 will be invited to again contribute.

## Format of the Youth Consultation

The Youth Consultation will take place in hybrid format allowing in-person and virtual participation. Interpretation may be made available according to the language needs of participants. The agenda will include participative elements including presentations and small working groups.

The Consultation will build on the outcomes of the 2022 Youth consultation and focus on a set of pre-identified substantive topics related to COP12 UNTOC:

- Organized fraud
- Crimes that affect the environment and organized crime
- The dual nature of technology as means of and tool against organized crime

Following presentations from UNODC on the above topics, youth participants will share their views, experience and ideas in small working groups.

## Participation in the Youth Consultation

The Consultation will involve approximately 50 young people from around the world, cognisant of geographical and gender diversity. Priority will be given to young people with concrete, locally based engagement/experience and knowledge on UNODC topics related to organized crime.

Applicants for the Consultation would include but not limited to:

- Individual youth with engagement and knowledge about topics related to UNODC mandates;
- Representatives from youth-led organizations and other non-profit organizations with youth-focused activities;
- Representatives from educational institutions, schools and universities.

Member States may suggest individuals or organizations to be invited that also meet the above criteria. The application form is open until 3 September 2024 through the website here: [COP12 Youth Consultation New \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/cop12youthconsultation).

## Criteria for selection

The selection of participants will be based on the following criteria:

- Between 18-29 years of age at the time of Youth Consultation on 10 October 2024;
- Representatives will be from CSOs, academia or in an individual capacity. CSOs are defined as not-for-profit organizations including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community groups, trade unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations and foundations. For profit companies are not included in this category;
- Only one representative per organization can apply;
- Priority will be given to representatives that have previously engaged with UNODC including in the 2022 Youth Consultation, with experience in addressing crime issues, with an emphasis at the community level, analyzing crime trends, responding to criminal threats to youth, working on crime prevention, conducting advocacy, as well as the organization/individual's potential to make useful contributions to the consultation follow-up activities;
- Other factors such as geographical balance, diverse ideological and professional backgrounds; gender, ethnic and social diversity, including disability inclusion, will also be considered in the final selection of participants.

## Side Event at COP12 UNTOC

The event will draw attention to opportunities for youth engagement within UNODC. It will involve youth speakers, including participants of the Consultation, and speakers from UNODC and interested governments.

## Road to the Youth Consultation

Action	Description	Timeline
<b>Launch a call for participation</b>	Launch the process for applications through existing networks and through a message to the Permanent Missions.	12 August – 3 September
<b>Selection of Participants</b>	Based on the selection criteria select approx. 50 youth representatives from the applications received.	17 September
<b>Prepare participants for the consultation</b>	Share relevant background information with participants	
<b>COP12 UNTOC Youth Consultation</b>	Organize the Consultation in a hybrid format. Some youth participants may take part in the discussions in Vienna, whilst others will connect online.	10 October
<b>Side event at session of COP12 UNTOC</b>	Host a side event to introduce the Youth Consultation.	During COP12 (14-18 Oct)
<b>Youth Civil Society Statement</b>	Present a Youth statement on behalf of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice during a relevant agenda item in the plenary of COP12 UNTOC.	During COP12