

THE DECLARATION OF OVIEDO:  
2024 GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DRUG USE PREVENTION

# ASIA-PACIFIC PREVENTION HEARING

## REPORT

JUNE 2024

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# Report

**This report summarises the interventions of the speakers at the Asia-Pacific Hearing for Drug Use Prevention that took place virtually on 4 June 2024 in the framework of the 2024 Global Initiative on Drug Use Prevention "The Oviedo Declaration". The event was organised by the ARTM, the World Federation Against Drugs and the Association Proyecto Hombre.**

Most of the speakers stated that many countries in the Asia-Pacific region (APAC) are facing significant drug use problems, with large numbers of users, including among youth populations. APAC regions have gradually transformed from initially only being transit sites along drug trafficking routes to now being destination markets. Many speakers also mentioned that there is a lack of funding and resources for prevention programs, as prevention is less of a priority compared to anti-trafficking and rehabilitation policies.

Speakers expressed support for the principles of the Oviedo Declaration and a desire to incorporate them into their national drug policies. Numerous speakers highlighted a need to move beyond reactive, politically motivated strategies and instead invest in research, skilled resources, and evidence-based interventions that prioritize drug use prevention. The importance of civil society engagement and collaboration between government, NGOs, and the private sector was emphasized in formulating and implementing effective drug prevention strategies.

Some speakers highlighted the challenges of regulating the internet and online drug trafficking, which exploits youth. Other speakers discussed the stigma around drug use and lack of support for prevention, as well as the diversification of synthetic drugs represents a significant challenge.

Few speakers also noted that major care programs are needed to be implemented across the whole country to cater to the large and growing populations in the region, and pointing out there is a need for stronger coordination between government agencies as well as shortage of up-to-date data and systematic monitoring and evaluation and research in the drug demand reduction strategies.

Several suggestions were articulated including for the Oviedo taskforce to have a dedicated team to develop strategic advice and plan for addressing the evolving landscape of online drug trafficking involving youngsters and putting prevention as an online mandate for all of us. Additionally, it was recommended to create an informal international platform for discussion and collectively acting on drug use prevention, with civil society as a primary driving force.

Some speakers highlighted a need to have consistent messaging around preventing or cessation of the drug use, considering central for any effective drug prevention policy.

In conclusion, there was a common denominator that promoting political will, prioritizing funds, fostering collaboration, and building capacity to develop more science-based and inclusive drug prevention strategies should be unavoidably scaled up in drug policy at global and local level.

# Agenda

**Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 2.00-3.30 p.m. (Hong Kong time zone)**

*Organized by ARTM, WFAD, and Association Proyecto Hombre*

*Chairing and moderating.* **Augusto Nogueira**, president, ARTM / **Regina Mattsson**, secretary general, World Federation Against Drugs

*Introductory remarks.* **Giovanna Campello**, chief, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime / **Oriol Esculies**, global coordinator of the “Declaration of Oviedo”, Association Proyecto Hombre

INDIA: **Diana Vincent**, director, Fourth Wave Foundation

BANGLADESH: **Dr. Iqbal Masud**, director, Dhaka Ahsania Mission

JAPAN: **Akira Fujino**, president, Drug Abuse Prevention Centre

PAKISTAN: **Cristina von Sperling**, Founder/Chairperson, Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation

THE MALDIVES: **Ali Adyb**, global drug demand reduction trainer, Journey NGO

AUSTRALIA: **Shane Varcoe**, director, Dalgarno Institute

MALAYSIA: **Dr. Ahmad Fairuz Mohamed**, president, Green Crescent Malaysia

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More information on the 2024 Global Initiative on Drug Use Prevention is available at

[www.oviedodeclaration.org](http://www.oviedodeclaration.org)

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