



Open Letter

Date: 18 March 2026

From: Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC), co-signed by 125 CSOs

To: H.E. Chair and Members, ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, H.E. Secretary-General of the UN; President of ECOSOC; Permanent Missions of ECOSOC Member States

Subject: Ensuring fair, timely, and transparent access to ECOSOC consultative status for NGOs

Excellencies,

We write as the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC), together with co-signing civil society organizations from multiple regions and thematic fields, to express our serious concern about persistent delays and repeated deferrals in the process for obtaining ECOSOC consultative status.

We recognize and appreciate the workload carried by the Committee and the Secretariat. At the same time, current patterns are creating prolonged uncertainty and, in practice, exclusion for many organizations that seek to engage constructively with the United Nations system.

At its 2026 regular session, the Committee is considering **237 new applications** and **381 deferred applications** from previous sessions, alongside a substantial volume of quadrennial reports. These figures underscore both the high demand for participation and the need for procedural efficiency, predictability, and fairness.

Among deferred applications are multiple organizations working in drug related fields such as inter alia prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and cross-cutting issues, including VNGOC members and partner organizations. As communicated to us by affected NGOs, several applications have remained pending over multiple years despite repeated responses to successive questions. In some cases, additional questions have revisited issues already addressed in prior submissions, resulting in cumulative delays that are difficult to reconcile with meaningful access to UN processes.

This concern is not limited to one thematic area or one region. The broader pattern affects civil society diversity, weakens trust in the process, and limits the UN's ability to benefit from field-based expertise—especially from NGOs serving vulnerable communities and low-resource settings.

We respectfully emphasize that consultative status is not a privilege detached from UN outcomes; it is a practical channel through which community-based evidence, implementation experience, and accountable partnerships can inform intergovernmental deliberations. A



system that allows indefinite or near-indefinite deferral risks becoming a de facto denial mechanism, even where no formal rejection is issued.

We therefore respectfully call on the Committee and Member States to pursue constructive improvements that preserve rigor while restoring confidence in fairness:

1. **Set clearer time-bound pathways** for application review, including indicative maximum cycles of deferral before a final recommendation is required.
2. **Improve transparency and consistency** in questions posed to applicants, with concise rationale linked to specific criteria under applicable ECOSOC rules and practice.
3. **Avoid repetitive questioning** where applicants have already provided substantive responses, unless genuinely new concerns arise.
4. **Use proportionate and focused information requests**, particularly for small and medium-sized NGOs with limited administrative capacity.
5. **Strengthen procedural safeguards** so that prolonged pending status does not become a structural barrier to participation.
6. **Enhance communication with applicants** through predictable timelines and clear status updates.

We also respectfully invite ECOSOC Member States to consider practical institutional options—consistent with UN rules and precedents—to address long-deferred applications where the ordinary process has demonstrably stalled.

Our objective is constructive: to support a fair, credible, and efficient accreditation system that allows the Committee to uphold standards while enabling genuine civil society participation across all regions and viewpoints.

VNGOC and co-signing organizations remain ready to engage in good faith, provide documented case examples, and contribute to dialogue on workable reforms.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Matej Košir

Chair, Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)

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On behalf of co-signing organizations (in alphabetic order):

1. A HAND TO HUMANITY NGO, Cameroon
2. A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing), USA
3. A New Thing International foundation, Nigeria
4. Action Jeunesse pour le Développement, Congo
5. Advanced Institute of counselling and Human Relations (AICHR), India
6. Africa Network of People Who Use Drugs [AfricaNPUD], Kenya
7. African Youths Initiative on Crime Prevention, Nigeria
8. Aid Organization, Bangladesh
9. AID Society, Bangladesh
10. AIVL, Australia
11. Alcohol policy Alliance Gambia, The Gambia
12. APPUI SOLIDAIRE POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DE L'AIDE AU DEVELOPPEMENT, MALI
13. ARTM - Associacao Reabilitação Toxicodependentes de Macau, Macau SAR China
14. ASSISTANCE SECOURS ET DEVELOPPEMENT, CÔTE D'IVOIRE
15. Association de Développement Agricole Éducatif et Sanitaire de Manono, DR Congo
16. ASSOCIATION JEUNES AGRICULTEURS (AJA), CÔTE D'IVOIRE
17. BARNALY, Bangladesh
18. Bicosito Bangladesh Foundation (BBF), Bangladesh
19. Bring Light Save Life, Cameroon
20. Burundi Association of People who Use Drugs (BAPUD), Burundi
21. Center for Innovative and Pragmatic Development Initiative CIPDI, United States of America
22. Colonie des Pionniers du Développement (CPD), Canada
23. Comité/Club UNESCO Universitaire pour la Lutte Contre la Drogue et autres pandémies (CLUCOD), Côte d'Ivoire
24. Community Alliances for Drug Free Youth, United States of America
25. Community And Family Aid Foundation-Ghana, Ghana
26. Community Peace Practitioners Association, Nigeria
27. Conectados pela Vida, Brazil
28. Conseil des Organisations de lutte Contre l'Abus de Drogues (CONAD-CI), Côte d'Ivoire
29. Corporacion Viso Mutop, Colombia
30. Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh
31. Doctors for Drug Policy Reform, USA
32. DRCNet Foundation, USA
33. Drug Free America Foundation, Inc., USA
34. Drug Policy Alliance, USA
35. Drug Policy Network South East Europe, Serbia
36. ENCOD Europäische Koalition für gerechte und effiziente Drogenpolitik, Austria
37. EURAD, Belgium
38. Eurasian harm reduction association (EHRA), Lithuania
39. Fédération Addiction, France
40. Fédération bruxelloise des institutions spécialisées en matière de drogues et addictions (féda bxl), Belgium



41. Fields of Green for ALL NPC, South Africa
42. Fondacioni YESILAY, Albania
43. Fondazione San Patrignano, Italy
44. Fondazione Villa Maraini, Italy
45. Foreningen Tryggere Ruspolitikk, Norway
46. FORUT, Norway
47. Foundation for Rural and Urban Transformation (FoRUT), Sierra Leone
48. Fundación Latinoamérica Reforma, Chile
49. Fundacion Prever, COLOMBIA
50. Fundamental human Rights & Rural development Association FHRRDA, Pakistan
51. Green Crescent Health Development Initiative, Nigeria
52. Green Crescent Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan
53. Green Crescent of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo
54. Green Crescent Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
55. Green Cresnet Zuria Ghana, Ghana
56. Groupement Romand d'Études des Addictions (GREA), Switzerland
57. Health Action Support Initiative (HASI), Nigeria
58. Health Poverty Action, UK
59. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland
60. Hepatitis Foundation of Ghana, Ghana
61. Home de la Vierge des Pauvres de Makebuko (HVPMakebuko), Burundi
62. Humanity For The World (HFTW), France
63. Institute for Research and Development "Utrip", Slovenia
64. Institute of Leadership and Development (INSLA), Ghana
65. Instituto RIA, AC, Mexico
66. International Drug Policy Consortium, UK
67. International Federation of World Peace Organizations, Denmark
68. International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), UK (working globally)
69. International Veterans Leadership Committee, United States
70. Iraqi journalist rights Difanc associate, Iraq
71. Journey NGO, Maldives
72. JURWA (The Change) Drugs & Alcohol After -Care Centre., Bhutan
73. Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation KKAWF, Pakistan
74. Kuchlak Walfare Society Balochistan, Pakistan
75. Life Integrity Network, Kenya
76. Local Education and Economic Development Organization (LEEDO), Bangladesh
77. Madinaty (Tunisian Green Crescent), Tunisia
78. Mainline, Netherlands
79. Metzineres SCCL, Spain
80. Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHRRA), Lebanon
81. Movement Against Substance Abuse in Africa (MASAA), Kenya
82. My Brain My Choice Initiative, Germany
83. Narconon Nigeria initiative, Nigeria
84. National Coalition for Drug Legalization, USA



85. NGO Zeleni krst - Zeleni polumjesec, Serbia
86. NGOs computer literacy shelter welfare Rawalpind cantt, Pakistan
87. Nigeria network of people who use drugs (NNPUD), Nigeria
88. NORML France (National Organisation for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, France), France
89. Nusroto Al-Anashid Association, Lebanon
90. Organisation pour la Lutte Contre les Stupéfiants, Boissons Prohibées, Tabagisme et Alcoolisme (OLCOS), Burundi
91. Pakistan Youth Organisation, Pakistan
92. PAY-W Clinic, India
93. Planet Youth , Iceland, Mexico, USA, Spain, Uganda
94. PREKURSOR Foundation, Poland
95. Prevention Alliance of Tennessee, United States
96. Prévention Information Lutte Contre le SIDA (PILS), Mauritius
97. Public Association "Protection of the Rights of Users of Mental Health Services - Overcoming", Kazakhstan
98. Rights Reporter Foundation, Hungary
99. Riksförbundet Narkotikafritt Samhälle, Sweden
100. SAF-TESO, UGANDA
101. Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association, Singapore
102. Skoun, Lebanon
103. Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), USA
104. Social Linkages for Youth Development and Child Link, Sierra Leone
105. Stichting De Regenboog Groep/Correlation-European Harm Reduction Network, Netherlands
106. SUDANESE GREEN CRESCENT SOCIETY, Sudan
107. Support Through Mentoring, Advisory, Research and Training (SMART), Pakistan
108. Suriye Yeşilay Derneği, Suriye
109. Syndicat Chrétien des Travailleurs du Congo, République Démocratique du Congo
110. Tanzania Green Crescent Community, Tanzania
111. The Jordan Anti-Drugs Society, Jordan
112. The National LEAD Institute, The Commonwealth of the Bahamas and North Carolina, USA
113. The Welfare Organisation for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN), Afghanistan
114. Transform Drug Policy Foundation, United Kingdom
115. Venezuela Libre de Drogas, Venezuela
116. Verein zur Förderung der Völkerverständigung (VFV), Austria
117. Veterans Action Council, United States of America
118. Villa Maraini Foundation, Italy
119. Vision Mondiale de la Santé, France
120. Washington Office on Latin America, USA
121. Wilson Immanuel Juda International United Universal Foundation NGO, INDIA
122. World Federation Against Drugs, Sweden
123. Youth for Human Rights Pakistan, Pakistan
124. Youth RISE, Ireland (working globally)
125. Zonta International, USA