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Comprehensive Prevention System: Advancing an Integrated, Community- anchored, and Development-oriented Framework in Drug Policy to Address Contemporary Public Security Challenges through Coordinated Efforts

Conference room paper submitted by Brazil

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Summary

Brazil's National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management (SENAD) has, since 2023, implemented integrated prevention strategies aimed at promoting well-being and social justice, expanding access to rights, and preventing crime and violence in communities and territories facing historically rooted vulnerabilities. Lessons learned through implementation have informed the emerging concept of a Comprehensive Prevention System, presented in this conference room paper as an integrated, evidence-based, people-centered, and human rights-based approach to prevention in drug policies rooted in community context.

The Comprehensive Prevention System aligns universal, selective, and indicated interventions across the life course, recognizing that individuals and communities negatively affected by drug use, illicit drug market dynamics, structural inequalities, and/or violent and stigmatizing responses to drug control often experience intergenerational and cumulative vulnerabilities, while also addressing structural challenges.

Additionally, it integrates measures to prevent problematic drug use, reduce drug-related harms, and prevent crime and violence with strategies that expand sustainable livelihood opportunities, strengthen local economies, and rebuild the relationship between the State, communities and territories historically affected by illicit markets. The recruitment and exploitation of children and adolescents by organized criminal groups constitute one of the main drivers of the reproduction of violence and crime at a transnational scale. In Brazil, although these dynamics present specific characteristics, the impacts are equally severe and shaped by historical inequalities. Similarly, structurally confronting crime, violence and promoting alternative development for communities affected by illicit drug-related activities is central to transforming and strengthening territories and enhancing prevention outcomes.



Prevention, in this framework, is not a parallel or secondary dimension of public policy. It is a structural pillar for sustainable public security and to ensure sustainable development for citizens. In contexts marked by organized crime and territorial disputes, enforcement and disruption strategies must be combined with comprehensive prevention efforts capable of reducing recruitment and exploitation of children and adolescents by criminal organizations, strengthening community protection, and rebuilding trust between the State, its citizens, and their territories.

Drawing from prevention science, public health, human rights, social justice and development frameworks, this approach targets the determinants of vulnerability, including, inter alia, structural racism, gender-based violence, discrimination, poverty, violence, and territorial marginalization. It aims at strengthening community participation, promoting the development of 'preventive territories,' and the well-being of individuals and communities.

One must note that it is precisely at this intersection — between structural determinants, recruitment dynamics, and territorial vulnerability — that the Comprehensive Prevention System converges with development-oriented approaches to drug policies, such as the concept of Alternative Development in drug policies.



Understood as territorial and rights-based, this approach dialogues with development-driven and community-based interventions, which seeks not only to reduce the economic incentives that sustain illicit markets but to transform the socio-economic contexts that allow organized crime to entrench itself into marginalized territories and communities in vulnerable situations. By expanding lawful livelihood opportunities, strengthening local economies, and restoring the relationship between communities and the State, the promotion of preventive measures contributes directly to public security goals. Brazil operationalizes this broader vision through an articulated set of policies that deliberately break the silos between drug prevention and crime and violence prevention, and between public security and social policies.

The objective is to deliver services while reorganizing State presence in territories historically affected by organized crime, rights deprivation, and institutional fragmentation. This approach reflects the current priority of the Brazilian Ministry of Justice and Public Security to combine crime prevention strategies with comprehensive prevention and community development — particularly in the Amazon region, in border areas, and in marginalized urban territories, which are marked by high levels of crime, violence and recruitment dynamics.

This is particularly important because in contexts such as the Brazilian Amazon, these dynamics intersect with illicit economies that also drive environmental degradation, deforestation, and territorial destabilization. As a globally critical ecosystem in the context of climate crisis, the region adds an additional layer of urgency to prevention efforts. In this regard, the Comprehensive Prevention system is aligned with the commitments reflected in CND Resolution 68/5, on drugs and the environment, recognizing that preventing illicit drugrelated activities and strengthening sustainable territorial development are intrinsically linked to socioenvironmental protection, climate resilience and the rights of indigenous and other traditional communities disproportionately affected by illicit markets.

In practice, at the community level, the Comprehensive Prevention System is operationalized within territories through the articulation of diverse preventive interventions across the life course. It builds on and strengthens local assets, capacities, and community actors, fostering coordinated people-centered, evidence-based, and in human rights grounded responses, developing sustainable local resources management, and ensuring inclusive and participatory outcomes in the development of preventive measures.

One key instrument is the **CAIS – Centers for Access to Rights and Social Inclusion**. The CAIS functions as a rights-enabling space. It serves as a trusted entry point for fostering coordinated, multi-sectoral pathways, including social services, mental health and psychosocial support, harm reduction as an integral component of the right to health, beyond promoting crime and violence prevention and responses, social protection, access to justice and legal assistance.

Complementing this model, Brazil implements **CRIA – Prevention and Citizenship program**, a national strategy that targets children, adolescents and young people, and aims to prevent the use and problematic use of alcohol and other drugs, as well as violence and crime, within the framework of drug policy.

CRIA is structured around three core axes: (i) prevention in childhood and adolescence, through evidence-based school, family, and community interventions aimed at strengthening life skills, bonds and protective environments; (ii) protection in contexts where adolescents and youth are exposed to higher risks of substance use, violent deaths, and recruitment by organized crime, including capacity-building of socio-educational professionals and child protection councils; and (iii) territories in action, dedicated to strengthening local prevention systems through participatory diagnostics, coordinated service networks, environmental prevention strategies, and evidence-informed territorial planning. The program also includes the CRIA Science Committee, an interdisciplinary committee that supports the production and dissemination of evidence to qualify national prevention policy.

These experiences are not necessarily unique to Brazil. Similar community-based and youth-led approaches exist, often at a small scale, in communities around the world. The implication for policy is that this type of approach is crucial for sustainable public security policies, particularly in the context of reclaiming territories and protecting communities from organized crime, including prevention of child recruitment. Thus, investments in prevention need to become smarter: shifting from fragmented, siloed spending toward strengthening the community assets and connectors that already exist and capitalizing on communities' expertise to build credible, locally owned prevention systems or 'preventive territories' at scale

I. Background and rationale

1. A Comprehensive Prevention System aims to help Member States implement and connect existing global commitments around health promotion, crime and violence prevention, early childhood development, sustainable development, and drug control. It is a system explicitly designed to respect, protect, and fulfil international human rights obligations and at the same time complement efforts to guarantee sustainability of public security goals.
2. Building on Commission Resolution 68/1 on promoting comprehensive, scientific evidence-based, and multisectoral national systems of drug use prevention for children and adolescents, Brazil underscores that prevention is a long-term social intervention that requires coordinated action across sectors and levels of governance. As such, a Comprehensive Prevention System translates these commitments into an implementable multi-sectoral framework anchored in territories, rights-based approaches, and community participation.
3. Additionally, it advances other multilateral drug policy commitments that emphasize comprehensive, evidence-based, and people-centered approaches. It supports implementation of the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document and the United Nations System Common Position on drug policy, which center health, development, and human rights within a coherent UN system-wide approach.
4. In this regard, it also aligns with development-oriented drug policy frameworks that address the structural drivers of vulnerability through territorial transformation, sustainable livelihoods, socio-economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability, consistent with the principles of Alternative Development and broader-territorial-based development strategies.



Another flagship Brazilian initiative is [PRONASCI Juventude \(PRONASCI Youth\)](#), operating as an urban modality of Alternative Development approaches. The program targets adolescents and young people aged 15 to 24, who are exposed to crime and violence, substance use, and recruitment by organized crime. This initiative articulates prevention, access to rights, education, community engagement, and pathways to economic inclusion. It offers multidisciplinary psychosocial support, technical qualification, and positions productive inclusion and prevention of recruitment as central pillars of public security and territorial transformation.

Also, Brazil was the first country to partner with UNODC to develop a national strategy inspired by the [UNODC-OSRSG Global Strategy to End Violence against Children \(2023 - 2030\)](#), as well as to pilot and implement the [CH.AM.P.S \(Child Amplified Services of Prevention\)](#). Both global initiatives inspired Brazil to pioneer an approach in prevention that breaks the silos between child protection from drugs, crime and violence, serving as a basis for the [Brazilian Ministry of Justice and Public Security National Strategy 'Growing Up in Peace'](#). Brazil's national strategy for the prevention of violence against children and adolescents in contexts affected by crime and drugs includes a total of forty-six actions from all National Justice and Public Security Secretariats. The strategy adopts an integrated and protective approach, centered on prevention, early identification of risks, coordinated institutional responses, and the promotion of children's and adolescents' rights, reinforcing the role of prevention as a core pillar of public policy.

The simultaneous territorialization of these programs — in partnership with local agents and leaderships — combine universal prevention measures with selective and indicated interventions, integrating prevention, access to rights, education, community engagement, and pathways to social inclusion, and are articulated with broader actions to strengthen citizen security, social cohesion, and institutional coordination at the territorial level. Depending on context and resources, these initiatives show promise to transform how to appreciate and tackle the root causes not only of drug use but of violence and social and economic exclusion and marginalization linked to drug policies across the life course without discrimination.

5. It is fully consistent with the normative evolution of development-oriented drug policy within the United Nations system, as reflected in the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic (article 14), the 1998 Political Declaration and Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2013 United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, the above-mentioned 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, and the 2019 Ministerial Declaration. It further reinforces and operationalizes the commitments contained in successive CND Resolutions on Alternative Development — including Resolutions 48/9, 52/6, 53/6, 54/4, 55/4, 55/8, 56/2, 56/15, 57/1, 58/4, 59/1, 61/6, 62/3, 63/5, 64/2, 65/1, 66/4, 67/3, and 68/3 — which progressively broadened the concept from crop substitution to a comprehensive, development-oriented, and territorially anchored approach addressing poverty, marginalization, governance gaps, and sustainable livelihoods.
6. In December 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/79/188 on preventing and countering violence against children by organized criminal groups and terrorist groups in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The resolution recognizes children recruited by armed and criminal groups as victims and reaffirms the crucial importance of comprehensive protection and the promotion of the rights of children and adolescents. It also underscores the need to prioritize prevention alongside measures for rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration.
7. By embedding prevention within sustainable territorial development strategies, socio-economic inclusion and strengthened access to rights, the Comprehensive Prevention System contributes to addressing the structural drivers of drug-related vulnerabilities, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.
8. As mentioned, a Comprehensive Prevention System operationalizes multilateral commitments beyond Vienna by embedding prevention within the broader frameworks that Member States have endorsed on health promotion, action on determinants, violence reduction, and sustainable development. It is consistent with the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, which frame health and well-being as outcomes shaped by social conditions and calls for intersectoral action to reduce inequalities. It aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1) by positioning prevention as an SDG accelerator, such as supporting commitments to ensure health and well-being (SDG3), reduce violence and inequalities (SDG 10 and 16), protect children, and ensure more just, peaceful, and inclusive communities (SDG 16).

9. Importantly, a Comprehensive Prevention System operationalizes global violence prevention guidance such as INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children (2016) and embeds a life-course foundation consistent with the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development (2018). The territorial focus also supports place-based commitments in the New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256) to promote safer, inclusive communities and public spaces.
10. International standards and normative guidance, including the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention (UNODC/WHO) and the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy (2019), highlight that effective prevention goes beyond information-only approaches. A Comprehensive Prevention System is designed to strengthen empirically identified protective factors and reduce vulnerability factors across the life course, while actively avoiding discrimination and social exclusion. Together, these standards reinforce that prevention is not just a technical, narrow undertaking but an ethical and political strategy that calls upon States to promote wellbeing, empowerment, and social justice, rejecting interventions that stigmatize, marginalize, or intensify vulnerability.
11. At the multilateral level, this orientation is also consistent with the adoption of Human Rights Council Resolution 60/26, which reaffirms that States must ensure that drug policies are fully compatible with international human rights obligations, including by addressing disproportionate impacts on groups in vulnerable situations. This resolution also reinforces the principles reflected in the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy (2019) and consolidates, at the international level, an understanding that Brazil has progressively internalized in the design and implementation of its national drug policy.
12. Exposure to drug-related violence has significant repercussions on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and young people, and prevention strategies must incorporate trauma-sensitive approaches, with community participation and longterm support, considering that trauma is not only individual, but also communal and territorial, and that addressing it involves strengthening identity, belonging, and collective care capacities.

13. In conceptualizing ‘comprehensive prevention’, economic and social inequality, systematic violations of human rights, and exposure to violence, including racism and gender-based violence, should be understood as upstream, structural factors that intensify vulnerability and undermine access to safe, supportive conditions conducive to living a life in dignity (GC 14). Conversely, effective realization of human rights (nondiscrimination, freedom from violence, access to education, health, housing and social protection, participation, and access to justice) functions as upstream protective factors that enable individuals and communities to reach and remain connected to the services, relationships, opportunities, and safety that prevention requires. Because human rights are a critical architecture that shapes the distribution of vulnerability and protection across the life course, a Comprehensive Prevention System explicitly embeds international human rights law as a foundational design element. The International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy (2019) clarify how international human rights law should guide drug policy design and implementation, emphasizing human dignity, equality and non-discrimination, participation, and accountability, alongside the centrality of the right to health. These protections directly strengthen prevention effectiveness by building trust, enabling social inclusion, and expanding real access to protective environments.

II. Concept and core elements

14. A Comprehensive Prevention System in drug policy refers to an integrated set of rightsbased policies, programs, and services delivered across the life-course that collectively, (a) prevent or delay initiation of drug use; (b) reduce progression to harmful patterns of use; (c) reduce vulnerability by addressing upstream determinants that shape risk and protection for individuals and communities; (d) strengthen community engagement through developing preventive territories that promote well-being and social justice; (e) strengthen institutional responses — particularly integrated and preventive approaches guided by the principle of comprehensive protection — to keep pace with the complexity and rapid transformation of contemporary criminal networks associated with the recruitment of children and adolescents; and (f) design local tailored actions through an accountable system that adapts to local needs, lived realities, and emerging evidence. As these goals require differentiated approaches across populations and settings, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, a shared set of core elements can be distilled to underpin effective prevention systems, ensuring that evidence is embedded, human rights commitments are upheld, and local knowledge and lived experience meaningfully shape design and delivery through participation.



15. Core elements of a Comprehensive Prevention System include:

(a) Rights-based policies, grounded in gender and racial equity, that actively address structural racism, gender-based discrimination and other intersecting forms of inequality. Such policies, programs and services should actively prevent stigma, discrimination, promote substantive equality, and ensure meaningful participation of affected individuals and communities. This may include children, adolescents, and youth; women and girls; Black people and other racialized groups; Indigenous peoples and other traditional communities; people experiencing homelessness; and persons and communities living in marginalized or peripheral urban areas.

(b) Multisectoral governance and coordination mechanisms linking health, education, social protection, justice, human rights, and community actors, with clear roles and accountability.

(c) A balanced mix of universal, selective, and indicated prevention, tailored to age, context, and needs, and grounded in culturally appropriate, evidence-based interventions.

(d) A territorial approach that strengthens 'preventive territories' through community engagement, local coalitions, and the mobilization of existing assets and services. This may include fostering community development; supporting community strengthening and the protagonism of local actors; establishing welcoming pathways and collective strategies of care; preventing the breakdown of family and social ties; and promoting access to human rights.

(e) Workforce development, including quality standards and implementation fidelity, supported through training, supervision, monitoring, and continuous improvement mechanisms.

(f) Accountable, participatory monitoring and evaluation, grounded in scientific evidence and human-rights-based approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative data to measure outcomes and enable learning and adaptive management focusing on individuals, communities, and territories.

(g) Sustainable and alternative development strategies embedded within territorial prevention frameworks, promoting socio-economic inclusion, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion for communities.

(h) Strategic public-private partnerships that align private sector investment, innovation and responsible business practices with prevention, sustainable livelihoods, and territorial transformation objectives, ensuring compliance with human rights standards and contributing to inclusive socioeconomic development in territories affected by illicit markets.

(i) Public security as a core pillar of prevention, grounded in rights-based strategies to reduce violence, dismantle illicit drug markets, and rebuild the relationship between the State, thereby ensuring sustainable development for citizens and communities.



III. Operational framework

16. The approach may be operationalized through an iterative cycle of:

(a) Territorial needs assessment: This includes a territorial diagnosis of the infrastructure of services, needs, vulnerability determinants, and protective factors within a specific territory, utilizing both quantitative data and qualitative insights from stakeholders and beneficiaries. Diagnostics should draw on administrative data and participatory inputs, including from public authorities, service providers, community leaders, families, individuals, and communities affected by drug use, crime, and violence, and the illicit drug market dynamics. In territories where traditional communities, such as indigenous peoples, are present, the assessment should ensure culturally appropriate engagement and the conduct of prior, free, and informed consultation, in accordance with International Labor Organization Convention no. 169 and other applicable human rights standards, respecting their representative institutions, decision-making processes and sociocultural specificities.

(b) Developing intersectoral responses: The strategic selection and planning of intersectoral responses should be grounded in evidence of effectiveness, cultural relevance, and the specific needs and structural determinants affecting individuals and communities impacted by drug use and the illicit drug market dynamics, ensuring that no one is left behind. This stage involves selecting and strengthening existing programs; prioritizing evidence-informed and evidence-based interventions; adapting proven models to local contexts; and/or, where necessary, developing innovative responses to address identified gaps in knowledge, policy, service provision, and territorial coverage.

The operationalization of the Comprehensive Prevention System requires coordinated, multi-component interventions implemented at the territorial level, through multisectoral mechanisms that articulate health, social protection, education, access to justice and the social participation and protagonism by community-based actors – as inclusion, partnerships with the private sector, social enterprises and local productive actors, aimed at expanding lawful livelihood opportunities, fostering economic inclusion and strengthening sustainable economies. Particular emphasis should be placed on empowering local coalitions, local public authorities, business, and community members to lead context-specific strategies aimed at transforming structurally vulnerable territories into preventive territories. Supportive public policies, regulatory frameworks, and financing mechanisms should be systematically assessed, aligned, and monitored to ensure coherence, sustainability, and effectiveness within the prevention system.

(c) Implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the interventions and the system: Implementing a comprehensive and coherent set of responses, utilizing researchbased policy making with continuous monitoring and impact evaluation of services. Prevention effectiveness critically depends on a competent delivery structure that ensures the quality of implementation, with attention to quality, sustainability, and adaptive learning.

IV. Recommended actions for consideration by the Commission

17. Brazil invites Member States, international organizations, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, as well as other stakeholders, to consider the following elements, as appropriate and in accordance with national priorities and circumstances:

(a) Recognize the value of comprehensive, scientific evidence-based, gender- and raceresponsive, human rights-based, and multisectoral prevention systems that integrate education, child and youth protection, public health, community development, territorial transformation and social justice, while addressing structural determinants of vulnerability, and positioning prevention as a structural pillar of public security and sustainable development.

(b) Encourage the development of prevention policies that address social, economic, and cultural determinants of vulnerability, including exposure to discrimination, crime, violence, and illicit drug-related activities in territories.

(c) Promote the adoption of quality standards and the systematic evaluation of prevention policies and programs, including culturally appropriate adaptation, while preserving core components of proven interventions.

(d) Invite United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and other relevant United Nations entities, subject to budgetary availability and within existing mandates, to collaboratively prepare a Comprehensive Prevention Systems Compact that can serve as a practical, guidance brief for countries and UN country teams. In addition to providing a set of critical elements for operationalizing the approach, the Compact could outline how agencies can align and reinforce their existing prevention-related work — across health promotion, violence reduction, early childhood development, education, social protection, and human rights — through existing coordination channels.

(e) Invites the UNODC and other relevant UN entities, as well as other relevant partners across health, education, child and youth protection, justice, development and human rights — within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources — to support Member States in strengthening evidence-based and human-rights-based Comprehensive Prevention Systems in drug policy, through coordinated support to policy development and guidance, institution and capacitybuilding, as well as technical assistance.

(f) Encourage the development of responsible public-private partnerships that support prevention, sustainable and alternative development, and inclusive economic opportunities in territories affected by illicit drug markets, in alignment with international human rights standards and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(g) Invite interested Member States and, with support from relevant UN entities and partners, to consider building and sharing regional, global, and/or South-South communities of practice for Comprehensive Prevention Systems, enabling peer exchange and innovation, including through partnerships with academia and relevant international and regional organizations.

(h) Encourage the United Nations Resident Coordinator system to use current UN Country Team coordination and the Cooperation Framework process to support Member States in implementing comprehensive prevention strategies and commitments by integrating UN assistance across health, education, child protection, violence prevention, social protection, development, justice, and human rights through a single, country-led Comprehensive Prevention System.

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