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Statement submitted by the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

1. Since its formation in 1972, the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) has remained committed to keep Singapore drug free. SANA does this by organising preventive drug education to protect our young from abusing drugs; developing evidence-based programmes and services to reintegrate people in recovery; and providing assistance for all clients to prevent them from re-offending.
2. The recovery journey for people who abuse drugs is challenging. The stigma of drug addiction affects their social relationships and chances of employment, amongst many other adverse consequences. SANA has therefore been focusing its efforts to help people in recovery through intervention programmes for them and their families.
3. Firstly, SANA works closely with community partners from hospitals, schools and NGOs, and government agencies to provide holistic support system for people in recovery. We set up the Step-Up Centre in 2015 to provide counselling, social, financial and employment assistance for people in recovery and their families. One example would be our collaboration with Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) to provide employment training and opportunities for recovery persons. This ensures that clients have access to more than 5,000 potential employers and companies in the market. The Step-Up Centre extends an environment of acceptance and network of support to people in recovery as they embark on their first steps towards reintegration.
4. Secondly, SANA actively hires recovery persons in the organisation to provide them with employment opportunities. Our hiring process emphasises more on one's qualification and abilities, rather than the person's background. This will level the playing field for recovery persons. At the same time, we want to create a positive work environment that encourages one to stay focus in maintaining a drug-free lifestyle.
5. Thirdly, SANA empowers people in recovery by grooming them as Peer Leaders to become positive role models for others in their recovery journey. Peer Leaders mentor our clients and co-facilitate peer recovery support groups. During the sessions, they share on their recovery experiences to inspire their peers to remain drug-free. Peer Leaders also reach out to at-risk youths as part of our preventive education. They act as powerful influence for others, especially for people in recovery. SANA hopes that Peer Leaders are able to build their self-esteem as they realise their strengths and positive influence on others.
6. SANA agrees on the importance of building an inclusive environment for all. This is especially important for recovering drug users who face discrimination from the society. Positive social acceptance can help them to better cope with their recovery journey and prevent relapse. We will continue to help recovering persons in their journey by maintaining active collaboration with the community and providing assistance and support through our evidence-based programmes. This will put us in good stead towards our aspiration for a drug-free Singapore.