Dear friends.

The challenge of drug misuse and/or abuse of alcohol, substance and drugs is in context very difficult to prevent in the TESO and Karamoja sub regions Eastern Uganda because here is taken as a culture.

I horn my work as CEO SAF-TESO, Human Rights Defender, Rotarian, Social Development Worker and Environment and Climate Justice Activist on the Organized Crime as main source of Problem and Challenge.

Drug misuse in the TESO and Karamoja sub regions Eastern Uganda is a form of ORGANISED CRIME: Organized crime is in five (05) dimensions namely

* High burden of MDR TB, and high prevalence of HIV and Malaria.
* Child abuse and neglect
* Climate change which has resulted acute food insecurity and land conflicts
* Drug abuse/misuse among teenage children and adolescent youth and
* Environmental Pollution/ Waste/Plastic and /or Kaveeras.

Uganda has highest record of children and youth abuse in the World, and it is in the main form of organized crime.

Children’s rights in multiple contexts have been abused in the TESO and Karamoja regions in the following ways:

**Problem 1. Drug Misuse/abuse:**

Drug abuse/misuse among teenage children of 7-13 years of age and Adolescent youth both female (girls) and Male of 14-21 years of age involved in drug misuse/abuse which has resulted into many children into the streets, some killed, and 78% adolescent youth (girls and boys) are in the prison cells, and many have been killed as a result of illicit drug misuse/abuse.

The teenage children even pocket tobacco, alcohol, and illicit substance while in class and this has led to high school dropout rates and high crime rate in Uganda.

Parents have abrogated their roles and responsibilities children in the classrooms consume illicit drugs, alcohol, and Tobacco, these has led to influx of children in the streets and slums, here locally they are called Okaadibong-meaning rejected and anti-social group/mischiefs.

This has resulted into high incidences of MDR TB reported as result of drug, alcohol, and substance misuse.

**Problem 3. School Dropout**

Because of severe forms of poverty experienced in the two sub regions, Children are in to Exploitative and Hazardous Labour, children consume illicit drugs.

68% of teenage and adolescent girls of 10-17 years of age start transaction sex/commercial sex as result of incomes from businessmen who use their income from mining of gold as a hub for commercial sex in the region.

Early child pregnancies and early marriages, commercial transactional sex by businessmen in the mining sites, problem is widespread in all TESO and Karamoja sub regions as result of poverty, high literacy rates, broken families as result of domestic violence, gender-based violence and child abuse and neglect.

Nearly 97% of households in the TESO and Karamoja sub regions are in the deprivation state of poverty.

**Problem 4. Girls and Women Trafficking:**

Severe Poverty and increased illegal mining of gold using toxic mercury has contributed significantly to high rates of girls and women trafficking into the neighbouring countries to East Africa and Asian Continent.

The girls of 7-30 years of age are trafficked and marriage women of 30-45years of age end up in Asian Continent in search of jobs and many end up into commercial sex exploitation and abuse.

Teenage Children**.**

Type of Services offered to these categories: These categories of children are of 7-14 years of age. Many are into drug abuse, substance, and alcohol misuse.

Through SAF-TESO, there rights are promoted through health and Education Services, we do child counselling, conduct family visits, home drug prevention campaigns, extend outreach activities like making positive health choices, family dialogues and health talks and fellowships for praying, singing, dancing, and playing with these children to change their attitude and mind set

**Problem 5. Environmental Pollution:**

This has complicated the drug prevention in the TESO and Karamoja sub regions Eastern Uganda.

With gratitude from Michael Anguria CEO SAF-TESO