

NIGERIA



STATEMENT BY LEADER OF NIGERIA'S DELEGATION

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HON. ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION AND MINISTER OF
JUSTICE**

AT

**THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 52ND SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS (CND) VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

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Madam Chair

On behalf of Nigeria's delegation, I extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election as the Chair of this all-important High-level Segment. This Segment is devoted to an assessment of the implementation of the commitments we undertook at the 20th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) in 1998. My delegation pledges its full support, as you provide leadership in the task ahead.

Madam Chair

2. Nigeria's strong political commitment in tackling the scourge of drug trafficking and abuse in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced manner is unshakeable. I am happy to report that we have made remarkable progress towards the attainment of the goals and targets set by the UNGASS in 1998. Our roadmap for implementation has been, and continued to be the National Drug Control Master Plan.

Madam Chair

3. The National Drug Control Master Plan was first developed and approved by Government in 1999, a year after UNGASS to facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders and the mobilisation of resources to address the problems of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking across Nigeria. In the course of implementation and evaluation of the measures adopted, it became obvious that the Plan needed to be reviewed in order to address important issues such as HIV/AIDS and other related-health matters in the context of drug use, alternative development for cannabis farmers, and prevention of precursor chemicals diversion, among others. This has resulted in a new 4-year National Drug Control Master Plan 2008-2011 covering control of illicit drug supply, adequacy and efficacy of legal framework, demand reduction and control of licit drug supply.

Madam Chair

4. Nigeria's National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has over the years recorded outstanding performances in the control of illicit drug supply through sustained interdiction, crop eradication and prosecution of drug traffickers. Similarly, convicted drug traffickers have been denied the proceeds of their crime through a robust anti-money laundering legislation and asset tracing and forfeiture regime. Let me add that Nigeria has broadened the scope of predicate crimes to include not just drug offences but all serious crimes related to money-laundering.

5. Nigeria has also implemented measures to promote judicial cooperation adopted at the 20th UNGASS, including extradition, mutual legal assistance (MLA), transfer of proceedings, controlled delivery, cooperation in law enforcement, targeting trafficking in drugs by sea, as well as measures to support the judicial process and other forms of cooperation.

6. Consequently, Nigeria has entered into bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements that have facilitated the execution of MLA requests involving the investigation of assets, taking of evidence, arrest, and extradition of suspects and drug offenders within our jurisdiction, as well as procuring witnesses to attend proceedings outside Nigeria.

Madam Chair

7. Although Nigeria has a well-structured legal framework for combating the menace of illicit drug, we are continually evaluating the adequacy and the efficacy of the framework in the light of new challenges. For instance, changes are being made in our drug control legislation to provide a clear distinction between drug traffickers and drug abusers, high-level and ordinary traffickers, and in the penal sanctions for different classes of drugs.

Madam Chair

8. To reduce the demand for illicit drugs, Nigeria has adopted measures and programmes to ensure primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of drug abuse. Our demand reduction strategies include preventive education, counseling, treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependent persons, community mobilization and provision of support to NGOs.

9. Since 2003, there has been intensified Drug Abuse Preventive Education Campaigns focusing on the linkages between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Similarly, in 2008, with strong political support from President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Nigeria embarked on an elaborate awareness campaign programme across the country, tagged "Total Commitment to a Drug Free Nigeria".

10. Nigeria requires more support and assistance from our development partners in meeting the challenges of combating illicit drug trafficking and treatment for drug users. Most of the assistance offered by our partners often ignore Nigeria's no.1 drug problem - cannabis. Nigeria, therefore, requires assistance and support in the area of eradication of cannabis and provision of sustainable alternative means of livelihood for cannabis farmers, and in demand reduction, particularly treatment of illicit drug abusers.

Madam Chair

11. Nigeria is concerned about the diversion of precursor chemicals and the increased cases of abuse and diversion of licit drugs, especially those containing internationally controlled psychotropic substances. Consequently, we are reviewing extant laws and regulations to facilitate effective control of production, sale and distribution of such drugs in Nigeria. In addition, all local production facilities are licensed and regularly inspected to ensure compliance with the law.

12. Our regulatory and control agency, National Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has been very effective and is being further strengthened to regularly conduct inspection and ensure

compliance with the conditions of licence and records of all imports, exports, production, distribution, sale and supply of narcotic drugs, as well as psychotropic substances and precursors chemicals.

Madam Chair

13. I wish to emphasize that drug trafficking, cultivation and abuse is a complex and multi-faceted problem that adversely affect all nations. Nigeria is concerned about the consequences of the illicit trade, cultivation and abuse and the linkage with other conventional and organized crimes such as, money laundering, corruption, terrorism, and human trafficking among others.

14. We are equally concerned that the West African sub-region is becoming very attractive for transnational organized criminal groups, especially drug cartels often based outside the region who are now targeting the sub-region as a major warehouse and transit route for the movement of illicit drugs to other regions. The activities of these drug cartels constitute serious impediment to socio-political and economic development in the sub-region.

Madam Chair

15. Before the problem becomes an emergency, we call on the international community to provide needed support to the Political Declaration and Response Action Plan adopted in Abuja at the 35th Ordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State in December 2008.

Madam Chair

16. Finally, Nigeria has demonstrated its commitment to the fight against illicit drug trafficking and demand within her borders as well as within the international community. Nigeria remains committed to its support for the efforts of the United Nations and the international community in the area of drug control.

I thank you.

