

THEMATIC SEGMENT DAY 1

STRENGTHENING COOPERATION EFFORTS AT THE BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS TO REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS FOR NON-MEDICAL USE AND TO COUNTER ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS

Let me first express my deep appreciation to **Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro Massieu**, Chair of the 61st Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and her hardworking team for the successful hosting of this Meeting. I also wish to extend my greetings to the other panelists for providing deep insights and sharing useful information on the topics for this segment.

I will preface my presentation by reiterating Nigeria's recognition of the three Drug Control Conventions as very key in our efforts to combat the world drugs problem. As the foremost Drug Law enforcement agency in Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), which I superintend, places high premium on the implementation of the **2009 Political Declaration** and Plan of Action on the world drug problem. This attitude is informed by the continuing relevance of the targets of the Op. 36 of the Political Declaration to our domestic realities. In addition, Nigeria considers as equally important the Joint Ministerial statement of the 2014 High-Level review and the Thirtieth Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) Outcome document. Our conviction that the three important documents are complementary and mutually reinforcing is unwavering.

States have continued to develop strategies to strengthen cooperation efforts at the bilateral, regional and global levels to reduce the demand for synthetic opioids for non-medical use, and to counter illicit trafficking in synthetic opioids. In this regard, a lot of progress has been made while a lot more need to be achieved. Yet, the relevance of the discussion on the demand and supply reduction on the one hand, and international cooperation on the other, cannot be overemphasized.

In Nigeria, Synthetic opioids especially Tramadol, is the second most commonly abused substance, after Cannabis sativa. However, what is more disturbing, and of great concern, is that most of these synthetic opioids are not manufactured in Nigeria. A good example is Tramadol, which is mostly imported from India. The increased trans-border traffic of these Tramadol in high dosages is worrisome. The trend is the import of **150mg, 200mg and 220mg**, which is beyond the therapeutic/clinically safe doses.

We are aware that responses to the challenges of synthetic opioid traffic and abuse are fundamental to effectively addressing the health, security and wellbeing of people at the national and global levels. Apart from our law enforcement activities that have resulted to the seizure of **96,136.67kg** Tramadol and **221.43kg** of other opioids in year 2017, a lot of advocacy tools, including public enlightenment programmes have been employed to address increase in consumption of Tramadol and other challenges posed by the synthetic drugs.

On supply reduction, Nigeria is presently active in joint operations with Ghana, a key stakeholder in the regional multilateral joint operations. The UNODC is facilitating these cooperation efforts. The French Government is equally coordinating a sub-regional multilateral forum for capacity building in interdiction and intelligence sharing. This arrangement which started in 2017 involves Nigeria, Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Nigeria received and executed several mutual legal assistance requests relating to drug traffickers and tracing proceeds of crime. Beyond the ratification of international treaties relating to international cooperation, Nigeria has just enacted a mutual legal assistance legislation to strengthen our drug control efforts. However, the dynamics in the traffic and abuse of synthetic opioids calls for more initiatives in line with the Political Declarations and Plan of Actions on the world drug Problem, joint Ministerial statement of 2014 and the UNGASS outcome document 2016.

Having platforms that will enhance dialogue and connectivity among countries in the synthetic opioid traffic chain - **the source, transit and consumer countries** will no doubt strengthen International cooperation especially enforcement operations to prevent traffic of synthetic opioids. Also the development of comprehensive database on trends

and misuse of synthetic opioids at national and international levels will facilitate information sharing and further strengthen drug control best practices.

We recognize the various roles played by UNODC, INCB, WHO and other International organizations in ensuring access to pain medications and their promotion of activities to prevent , traffic and diversion of substances including synthetic opioids.

Nigeria will continue to give priority attention to global cooperation in the combat of the drug problems, and we are open to more Bilateral, Multilateral, Regional and International initiatives towards drug control especially synthetic opioid which remains an issue of great concern.

Thank you.