

**Taking Stock of the Implementation of the Commitments made to jointly address and counter the world d drug problem, in particular in light of the decision to establish 2019 as a target date for the goals set in paragraph 36 of the Political Declaration**

**A Panel Presentation at the Fifth Intersessional Meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 8 November 2018**

I thank you Madam Chair for giving me the Floor.

I also acknowledge other panellists for their contribution and fascinating thoughts on the topic of this thematic segment.

First, it is of importance to start by stating without equivocation that the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, remains a very useful document to guide and assist Member States in the implementation of the provisions of the three Drug Control Conventions.

Nigeria is of the view that the approach of every Member State in dealing with the challenges of drug abuse and crime is largely influenced by their peculiar domestic realities. While some States are mere transit routes, others are destination countries, and yet, others are producing and manufacturing enclaves. There is no nation that is totally free of these drug control challenges.

Keeping that in mind, it is the duty of every Member States to develop an Action Plan to deal with these challenges as well as

the emerging trends in the world drug problem. It is on this premise that Nigeria reiterates the importance of the targets set out in the Operative Paragraph 36 of the 2009 Political Declarations. We have taken these targets into accounts in our efforts to address our drug control challenges. Our situation is not helped by our geographical location and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free movement of citizens of Member States. As a country bordered by four countries, the issue of border control has remained a huge concern in fulfilling our obligations under the drug control treaties. Our journey so far, as we will share, has been a mixture of successes and challenges.

In Nigeria, Cannabis sativa still remains one of the international control drugs of great concern. Despite the call for its decriminalisation due to alleged usefulness for medical, scientific and industrial purposes, we still find cannabis abuse as a challenge to the health and wellbeing of our people. The Nigerian Epidemiological Network on Drug Use (NENDU) reports that Cannabis is the primary substance most frequently used by the entrants in treatment. In the year 2017 alone, the NENDU reports that 48% of those who assess treatment were for cannabis abuse.

With the support of the European Union, a National Survey on the extent of cannabis cultivation is being considered, as one of the key programmes highlighted in our National Drug Control Master Plan - 2015-2019. However, Nigeria identified and destroyed **317.118** hectares of cannabis farmland in 2017. Some State Governments in Nigeria, in partnership with the NDLEA, have supported Crop Substitution as a way of encouraging farmers. In the light of these challenges and the burden on our National Healthcare Programmes, Nigeria will continue to call for non-decriminalisation of Cannabis.

Nigeria is faced with the challenge of continues demand for illicit drugs. Among many measures employed to deal with this situation, sensitizing people on the inherent dangers of illicit drugs

has been a key strategy of the Government. We have observed that among most of the vulnerable groups, there are people who are aware of the danger posed by illicit drugs use, but are ignorant of the extent of its harm. Yet, there are still people who are totally unaware of the danger associated with illicit drugs. They are merely excited about the pleasure derived from the drugs. In line with the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) **2015 – 2019**, we have developed guidelines and tool kits on sensitization and prevention.

Furthermore, Nigeria has not relented in its efforts to encourage treatment of Drug-dependent persons. Hospital-based treatment facilities are been upgraded while community-based treatment facilities have been set up across the geo-political zones in the country. Also, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has not abandoned drug-dependants. In this regard, the NDLEA is working with the National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA) in the Ministry of Health, to sustain programmes for this category of people.

In recent times, Nigeria has observed with dismay, an increase in the diversion of precursors. Our records have shown that increasing out-bound seizures of methamphetamine and ephedrine indicate the likelihood of illegal production within the country. However, due to intense law enforcement activities and capacity support from our international partners, the clandestine laboratories were discovered and dismantled.

In our bid to eliminate the high network of the Drug traffickers who launder money to further their criminal activities, we are engaging with our international partners, in the area of information sharing, which have assisted in tracing and recovering laundered funds and assets. The establishment of the National Financial Intelligence Unit has enhanced intelligence sharing at both the national and regional levels, and this has led to several successful joint operations within and outside the country. We have also

improved our capacities to respond to requests for Mutual Legal Assistance on drug-related matters with our regional and global partners.

In another development, the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has continued to improve its collaboration and liaison with other government agencies such as the Nigeria Custom Service, the Nigeria Police and the NDLEA in the implementation of its international drug control treaties. By collaborating with the UNODC, Nigeria has developed a roadmap for Controlled Drugs—these include the National Policy for Controlled Medicine; National Guidelines for Quantification of Narcotic Medicines; and the National Guidelines for Estimation of Psychotropic Substances. All these are now being implemented by NAFDAC.

It is pertinent to add that efforts are being made to improve access to drugs required for medical purposes. From a recent survey, it was observed that only 0.1% of patients that need opioids in Nigeria have access to the narcotics. To this end, the country has developed Guidelines for Management of Pain, which will make access to drugs possible while ensuring control for medical use only. Nigeria has also placed some substances such as Tramadol, Chloramphenicol, Phenylephrine and Caffeine on national control, due to misuse and abuse.

As a Country, we believe that the targets of the OP 36 of the 2009 Political Declaration is still relevant in our current situation. The focus on elimination of narcotics, demand and supply reduction as well as international cooperation remains key in the implementation of the Drug Control Conventions. There is therefore, the need to identify the gaps in the implementation and increase efforts towards achieving the overall objective of the 2009 Political Declaration.

We recommend an extension of the deadline for the targets beyond 2019, maybe, for another 10 years, while a periodic mid-term review after 5years should be introduced. In this regard, concerted efforts should be made to further strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the drug Control treaties, while enhancing inter-agency collaboration as well as encourage new initiative and methods in addressing the world drug control challenges.

Furthermore, there is need for increased efforts in ensuring access and affordability of narcotics for millions of people who need them, while preventing diversion for illicit purposes.

In conclusion, Nigeria expresses her gratitude for the technical support received from the UNODC, the EU and all our development partners. We believe that in line with the principles of common and shared responsibility, the continuous strengthening of cooperation through information sharing and capacity building of law enforcement agencies will assist in addressing the world drug problem.

Thank you.