Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour for me to deliver the statement of Nigeria at this High-Level Ministerial Segment of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Nigerian delegation wishes to join others in congratulating Ambassador Bakhet of Sudan for his excellent leadership since assuming office as the Chair of the 62nd Session of the CND in December 2018, and for the successful hosting of this Ministerial Segment. My delegation also extends our gratitude to the other members of the Bureau as well as the Secretariat for their dedication and dutiful efforts in preparing for this Meeting.
Nigeria welcomes the Ministerial Declaration adopted by consensus and signed by member states earlier in the morning, as a demonstration of the commitment and unity of purpose in our global efforts to address and counter the world drug problem. In this regard, Nigeria is proud to be associated with the tireless efforts involved in facilitating the negotiations that produced the document. My delegation is optimistic that the content of this recent international consensus will spur the global community to do more in accelerating the implementation of our commitments made in the last decade to address and counter the world drug problem.

Nigeria continues to observe her obligations under the three International Drug Control Conventions in the spirit of common and shared responsibility, and reaffirms her commitment to the implementation of the three Political documents adopted by member states since 2009 to address the world drug problem in an integrated and balanced approach. In our efforts to strengthen
and streamline national responses to drug related issues in order to contribute to enhanced health, security and well-being of our people, the Federal Government developed the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) 2015-2019. The NDCMP outlines strategies for addressing issues of drug demand and supply reduction, while ensuring access to controlled narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals for medical and scientific purposes. The strategy combines law enforcement anchored on respect for human rights and the promotion of public health of those affected by drug use. The strategy employs inter-agency collaboration and cooperation at the core of its activities.

Mr Chair

Our demand reduction efforts, which are in line with the goals of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, have recorded relative successes. There are still gaps and challenges as well as new and emerging dimensions of this aspect of the world drug problem to be addressed. We have
noted, in particular, that cultivation and high traffic of Cannabis and its abuse still persist. The data from the recently published Nigeria Drug Use Survey 2018 shows that Cannabis is the most commonly used drug in Nigeria with 10.8% or 10.6 million adult population reported to have used it in 2017. In addition, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Nigeria's foremost drug use Enforcement Agency has reported the identification, seizure and destruction of over 3,900.73 hectares of Cannabis farmlands in the past three years in Nigeria. The development will no doubt influence Nigeria's response to the recommendation of the World Health Organisation on Scheduling of Cannabis.

Beyond our domestic approach, Nigeria is also strengthening regional cooperation with other countries within and beyond Africa in countering illicit trade and trafficking in narcotics and other controlled substances. Besides our productive law enforcement collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria has successfully carried out joint operations
with neighbouring countries to counter the menace of illicit drugs through the strategy code named, “Operation Eagle”. Foreshadowing these increased activities, President Muhammadu Buhari has approved additional recruitment of 15000 new personnel for the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency which is the body tasked with counter narcotic duties.

**Mr Chair**

In our efforts to promote public health, Nigeria recognises that access to narcotic medicines and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes is important in the context of drug control approaches. In this connection, Nigeria initiated, in 2018, a programme for decentralization of the storage of finished narcotics drugs. Currently, six tertiary health facilities have been designated as zonal stores to reduce logistics challenges and improve access to controlled medicine for medical and scientific purposes. Furthermore, Nigeria wishes
to call on the international community to continue to work towards improved access and affordability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. On a domestic scale, Nigeria is working towards the local manufacturing of selected narcotic medicines, taking advantage of her thriving pharmaceutical manufacturing sector, a number of whom are pre-qualified by World Health Organisation.

Appreciating the usefulness of sensitization in addressing and countering the world drug problem, Nigeria, in collaboration with the UNODC developed the **UNPLUGGED programme** as one of the ways of raising awareness in schools to capture the minds of young people at impressionable age. Unplugged is an evidence-based school programme, aimed at enhancing the prevention of the use of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis among school children. The programme was piloted in all our Federal Government Colleges for children between the ages of 10 and 14, and the impact on
the targeted young population has been largely positive and laudable.

Mr Chair

May I also inform that in 2018, Nigeria empaneled the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Elimination of Drug Abuse (PACEDA), which is a high-level committee enjoined to interface with relevant Ministries, Department, and Agencies as well as the Civil Society Organisation involved in drug control issues with a view to provide sustainable recommendations in addressing the menace of drug abuse for the consideration of Mr. President. We are happy to note that the work of this high-level committee has given further impetus to our efforts to achieve a society free of drug abuse.

Nigeria is mindful of the threat posed by the world drug problem and the implications for the security, health, well-being and development of
our citizens if not effectively addressed, hence our Government is employing evidenced-based, and scientific approaches, in line with the three Drug Control Conventions, to tackle drug control challenges. It is against this backdrop that Nigeria has taken a firm position against the legalisation and decriminalization of cannabis for recreational purposes, and continues to enjoin the international community to respect their obligations under the drug control treaties. Relying on that, Nigeria calls for the scheduling of Tramadol which currently fuels an insurgency not to talk of increased dependency amongst our citizens.

Mr. Chair.

Nigeria wishes to request the UNODC and its relevant partners to streamline the Annual Review Questionnaire (ARQ) in order to adapt to local realities, and continue to provide technical assistance to member states to improve their capacity to collect relevant and credible data that would enhance evidence -based approach in addressing the world drug problem.
In conclusion, Nigeria appreciates the support of the EU, UNODC and our development partners, particularly in the area of technical assistance, and appeal for the continuation of the various programme.

I thank you for listening.