

SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

**MINISTER SUSAN SHABANGU
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**AT THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

14 MARCH 2019

Vienna

Check against delivery

Chairperson,

Executive Director of the UNODC

President of the International Narcotics Control Board

Director General of the World Health Organization

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend my delegation's warm congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

I am particularly pleased to see one of our own from the African continent, Ambassador Bakhet of The Sudan presiding over this historic occasion. I assure you and your Bureau of my delegation's unequivocal support. In the same breath, I commend Nigeria for successfully facilitating informal consultations on the Ministerial Declaration.

I also express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for diligently preparing for this High Level Ministerial Segment.

In addition to the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China, I have the pleasure to present our National Statement.

The World Drug Problem poses a significant threat to the well-being of all our people across the world. The scourge of drugs and illicit substances impacts adversely on the health of our people; undermines socio-economic development and destroys the moral

fibre of our societies. It is therefore, our collective and shared responsibility to tackle the problem of drugs in all its forms and manifestations.

It is in this context that South Africa welcomes the timely holding of this Ministerial Segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Our gathering here in Vienna is a clear illustration of the political will of our Governments to give practical effect to the implementation of the Three Drug Conventions in order to fulfil the desire and aspirations of our people to rid society of the scourge of drugs.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the implementation of the political commitments of the past decade as articulated in the 2009 Political Declaration and its Plan of Action; the 2014 High Level Joint Ministerial Statement; as well as the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document.

Global trends indicate that drug use remains multifaceted in nature and is characterised by concurrent use of several substances, including the use of conventional plant based drugs; synthetic stimulants; and opioids. Therefore, innovative approaches need to be adopted by the international community to adapt to and address these trends.

My country, like many others, is not immune to the scourge of drugs. We are aware that vulnerable groups, particularly Children, Youth and Women are significantly impacted by drug abuse.

In addressing this challenge, my Government continues to accelerate the implementation of prevention and treatment programmes targeting the vulnerable groups. These initiatives include our flagship comprehensive prevention campaign focusing mainly on the Youth with the slogan *KeMoja - I am fine without drugs*. This programme was developed in partnership with the UNODC.

Similarly, we have also significantly expanded our treatment services by increasing State Owned Treatment Centres. I am pleased to announce that treatment centres are now available throughout my country.

Our efforts to address the World Drug problem will not achieve its desired outcomes until we have disrupted, dismantled and neutralised the national and transnational criminal networks behind the illicit drug trade. In this regard, our country is cooperating closely with law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities in our region in order to foster a collaborative approach.

In recent years, South Africa has increased the confiscation of illicit drug consignments in various ports of entry which are destined for other parts of the world. We are also making significant inroads in

detecting and dismantling clandestine drug laboratories to reduce the supply and availability of drugs.

Given the transnational and complex nature of the world drug problem, it is imperative to enhance international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building especially for developing countries.

As I conclude, my delegation welcomes the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration during this session as it paves the way in addressing and countering the World Drug problem beyond 2019. We are optimistic that this would go a long way in allowing Member States sufficient time to identify challenges, adopt best practices and implement effective drug control policies in their respective jurisdictions.

I thank you.

