

# **Statement on behalf of the African Group at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

delivered by H.E. Vivian N. Okeke

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Vienna, 14 March 2019

H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet, Chair of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs.

H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Excellences, Colleagues, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this address on behalf of the Africa Group.

Allow me on behalf of the Group, once again, to express my warm congratulations to Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet of Sudan on his election as the Chair of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission, as well as to the other elected members of the Bureau. The Group thanks the Secretariat for the hard work in preparation for this session.

The Group reaffirms its full support to the Chair for the success of this High-Level Ministerial Segment as well as your work through the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CND.

The Group expresses its profound appreciation for the hard work and constructive contributions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in facilitating the negotiations of the Ministerial Declaration. In this regard, the Africa Group welcomes the adoption, by consensus, of the Ministerial Declaration and expresses its full support to this

outcome which will assist Member States in accelerating the implementation of all our commitments made since 2009

The Africa Group aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr Chair,

We reaffirm that the World Drug Problem is most effectively addressed in a multilateral setting and that the three international drug control conventions and other relevant instruments remain the cornerstone of the international drug control system and we emphasize that the universal adherence to the conventions and their full and effective implementation are key to the functioning of the international drug control system.

The Group underlines the importance of achieving the targets, provisions and goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem by reducing supply and demand and fostering international cooperation, as well as reaffirms its commitment to the 2014 Joint Ministerial Declaration and the 2016 UNGASS Outcome document. The Group recognizes that these documents are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Group welcomes the follow up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem, which provides the assessment of the implementation of the operational recommendations of the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document as an important step and milestone to tackle and address illicit drugs, protect people and actively promote a society free of drug abuse.

Mr. Chair,

While appreciating the progress made, at the international, regional and national levels, in countering the World Drug Problem, the African Group underscores that this problem

remains a major challenge for the international community that requires effective and increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.

The Group continues to express its grave concern over the global scourge of drug abuse, particularly among the youth. In Africa, the abuse of drugs continues to undermine efforts aimed at promoting sustainable social-economic development. In addition, drug abuse continues to contribute to the rise in diseases such as HIV/AIDS and psychological disorders among others.

The Group would like to reiterate its deep concern regarding the increasing use of the African Continent as destination and transit routes along the traditional and new trafficking routes via commercial aerial and maritime routes for illicitly trafficked drugs and psychotropic substances, which has created many security challenges, especially organized crime and increased drug dependence in transit countries.

The African Group stresses the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism and money-laundering, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, and to the significant challenges faced by law enforcement and judicial authorities in responding to the ever-changing means used by transnational criminal organizations to avoid detection and prosecution. In this regard, the Group underscores the ongoing efforts made by the UNODC and in close cooperation of concerned Member States in addressing and combating the drug trafficking situation in the Continent.

The Group stresses the importance of effective international and regional cooperation in the areas of exchange of information, mutual legal assistance and extradition to tackle drug trafficking based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.

The Group recognizes the efforts made by African countries in preventing, eliminating or reducing significantly and measurably the illicit cultivation of crops used for production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Despite those efforts, the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of controlled substances which are Cannabis, Cocaine, Heroin; and non-controlled substances such as Methamphetamine, Nyaope and Tramadol, as well as any possible adverse effects related to ketamine which remain a huge challenge across Africa, and require enhanced international and regional cooperation including technical assistance based on the needs of the requesting countries.

The Group highlights the report of the INCB for the year 2018, which mentioned that the available data suggest that the non-medical use of Tramadol is growing, as evidenced by seizures in Central, North and West Africa, and that increased abuse of Tramadol was observed in the Sahel Region. The Group urges the International Community to take steps towards addressing this problem, including, through urgently exploring the possibility of putting tramadol under international control, while assuring its availability and accessibility for medical purposes.

Mr. Chair,

The Group calls the Member States to continue to pursue a mutually reinforcing approach to supply and demand reduction, addressing drug abuse as a health and social issue, while upholding the law and its enforcement.

The Group reiterates its concern regarding health problems associated with the abuse of drugs and reaffirms its commitment to work towards the improvement of access to drug-abuse health-related prevention programmes, including awareness raising, treatment and rehabilitation. The Group reiterates its concern over the unavailability, inaccessibility and unaffordability of pain-relieving drugs for millions of people who need them most on the African continent. We look forward to this session to explore concrete measures to ensure adequate availability and

affordability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion, trafficking and abuse.

The Group would like to call for increased technical assistance and international cooperation to facilitate the transfer of know-how in manufacturing generic pharmaceutical preparations that are bioequivalent and cost effective.

The Group supports the collaboration of public health and justice authorities, in line with national legislation, to pursue alternative measures of conviction or punishment for appropriate drug-related offences of a minor non-violent nature, and in accordance with the international drug control conventions which establish, to varying degrees and in specific situations, that States may provide, either as an alternative to conviction or punishment or in addition to conviction or punishment, measures of treatment, education, aftercare, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Mr Chair,

The Africa Group would like to underline that different regions continue to experience different new challenges, threats and priorities which have an impact in strengthening the fight against the world drug problem. In Africa, new challenges of online sale of illicit drugs, especially on Darknet, increase trafficking in precursor chemicals have emerged and threaten the public health of millions of young people in Africa. In this regard, the Group believes that Member States should strengthen the implementation of the three international drug control conventions and the goals and objectives set forth in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action to effectively address new challenges and threats posed by the world drug problem.

The Group would like to reiterate the key role of AFRIPOL, as the main African Union Mechanism in combating transnational organized crime. In this regard, the African Group in Vienna welcomes the holding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in 15 and 16 October 2018 in Algiers, Headquarters of AFRIPOL, and the

creation of 3 working groups on Cybercrime, terrorism and organized crime.

We highlight other initiatives in the African continent aimed at countering illicit activities and transnational organized crime including terrorism, including inter alia, the work carried out by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) co-chaired by the Kingdom of Morocco in the field of counter-terrorism, the “Sharm Elsheikh Declaration” of the Ministerial Defense Council of CEN-SAD, which highlights the importance of strengthening border security between member countries. As well as the ongoing efforts of the Multinational Joint Task force and its regional intelligence fusion unit carried out by four countries in Lake Chad Basin, namely, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

The Group welcomes efforts made by several Member States to develop combined public education, law enforcement and health initiatives to address the rise of consumption of drugs and believes that such initiatives will bolster ongoing efforts to combat the illicit production, trafficking and abuse of drugs and also the balanced approach which Member States have committed to in the global fight against the World Drug Problem.

The Group encourages governments to strengthen their national drug policies, laws and strategies to ensure that the drug response strategies, covering both supply and demand reduction, taking into account the provisions of the three international drug control conventions including by ensuring that the law enforcement authorities have the requisite capacity to sufficiently address the trafficking of drugs and meet the challenges arising from the illicit manufacture of, trafficking of drugs in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants as well as new psychotropic substances.

The Group is of the view that there is a need for the adoption of appropriate measures such as laws and regulations to address the abuse of substances not under international control aimed at preventing the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and distribution

including reducing their illicit supply and demand by strengthening cooperation among law enforcement officials to tackle the trade in, distribution, and manufacture of these substances, as well as strengthening international cooperation in the collection, sharing and dissemination of data.

The Group is fully confident that efforts to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively counter the World Drug Problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Group would like to reiterate the high importance it attaches to integral and sustainable alternative development and preventive alternative development, as, *inter-alia*, a means to address and counter the world drug problem. In this respect, the Group would like to encourage UNODC to continue to use its advocacy role to encourage both multilateral development agencies as well as bilateral donors to give special attention to alternative development in the programs and projects related to countering drug problems.

The Group calls for technical assistance to be provided to Governments in order to promote, develop or review their sustainable alternative development initiatives and other crops as alternatives to narcotic plants in close cooperation with affected population, including farmers and rural and local communities, as well as cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders.

We strongly encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to continue role in encouraging multilateral development agencies as well as other donors to provide special attention to alternative development including in Africa in the programs and projects related to address and counter the world drug problem.

Mr. Chair,

The Group commits to accelerate, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, the full implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint

Ministerial Statement and the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, aimed at achieving all commitments, operational recommendations and aspirational goals set therein.

We reiterate the leading role of the CND as the main policy making body of the United Nations with primary responsibility for drug control matters and the UNODC as the leading entity in the UN system for addressing and countering the world drug problem.

Mr. Chair,

The Africa Group would like to acknowledge with appreciation the valuable support and contribution of donors and calls upon the UNODC to continue to mobilize resources to provide technical assistance including equipment, upon request, and to enhance the capacities in the fields of crime and drug prevention, law enforcement, forensic laboratories, training of personnel, and reorganization of institutions. Furthermore adequate assistance should be provided to improve the collection and analysis of reliable and comparable data and statistics in order to enable the African countries to address the drug problem and to join their efforts to promote international cooperation.

The Group underscores the importance of the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2017-2019), as a blueprint for Africa to address the challenges posed by illicit drugs. We believe that complementary efforts by the international community will further enhance the realization of the objectives encapsulated in this Plan as well as the achievement of a drugs-free continent within the framework of the Aspiration number 4 of the Agenda 2063 « A peaceful and secure Africa».

Furthermore, the Group welcomes the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) Africa held in Dar-Es-Salam, Tanzania, in September 2018 and looks forward to the implementation of HONLEA's recommendations with the purpose of strengthening regional cooperation to effectively counter the world drug problem. (Agreed)

Mr. Chair,

The Group reiterates its call for the Executive-Director to intensify his efforts to ensure that adequate, and proper geographical representation and gender balance are fully incorporated in the recruitment policy of UNODC, both at headquarters and Field Offices, particularly at the senior and policy-making levels and for professional posts requiring specific skills.

In conclusion, the Africa Group would like to also reiterate its full support and looks forward to the deliberations and successful conclusion of this 62<sup>nd</sup> session under your guidance and leadership.

I thank you.