Statement by Nigeria at the High Level Segment of the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) Vienna, Austria

Excellences,

Mr. Chairman,

Let me on behalf of the delegation of Nigeria, congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the affairs of this Session. I would like to assure you of our support towards a successful deliberation of the items listed in the agenda.

2. Nigerian delegation would like to thank the Secretariat for the preparation leading to this meeting, including the efforts made at ensuring timely provision of highly valuable documents for the session.

3. Let me point out that my delegation fully associates itself with the Statements of G-77 and China and the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The threat posed by the increasing prevalence of the illicit drug phenomenon, is an issue that cannot be wished away. Isolating it as discrete national problem will only make the control measures very complex and a win-win game for the traffickers.
What is required is a well-coordinated transnational and all-inclusive international strategy in line with the principle of common and shared responsibility.

5. My delegation would like to renew the support of Nigeria to the various consultations and negotiations leading to the review of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

6. No doubt, my delegation in the cause of the implementation of the 2009 declaration continue to see reasons why The Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) High-Level Review should be convened in 2016. For my delegation, the review will not only enhance but will also rejuvenate our collective efforts in the fight against illicit drugs and psychotropic substances.

7. My Delegation would therefore be looking forward to seeing enhanced collaborative efforts in the implementation of the existing Three International Drug Control Conventions, with leading roles assigned to the UNODC. The UNODC has proved to be reliable partners in assisting Member States in addressing challenges faced by them in the implementations of their obligations under the Conventions.
Mr. Chairman,

8. In line with the principle of balanced approach towards countering the World Drug Problem, Nigeria has adopted measures and programmes to ensure reduction in drug abuse through preventive education, counseling, treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependent persons and community mobilization.

9. Nigeria has strengthened her Preventive Drug Education (PDE) Strategies, to facilitate exposing children to early drug preventive measures starting from primary school age.

10. Following reports of abuse of Tramadol including the anecdotal health reports, and its linkage to Terrorism, Nigeria has scheduled Tramadol as a controlled medicine in order to rein the non-medical use. Nigeria has also made provisions for making available methadone for the treatment of opioid dependence in some selected model treatment centers.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The challenge in the field of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) remains the increasing trend in poly-substance use. The abuse includes the combination of controlled and non-controlled substances. In this regard, we look forward to working alongside with our international partners as well as the UNODC with a view to further strengthening our treatment programmes and facilities.
12. Nigeria, through sustained eradication of illicit crop cultivation, interdiction and prosecution of drug traffickers, made some progress in controlling illicit drug supply. Over 80% of the total drugs seized between 2009-2013 were Cannabis Sativa.

13. Apart from Cannabis, there were evidences of increased traffic in methamphetamine, precursors and other essential chemicals between 2009 and 2010. The identification of six clandestine laboratories in Nigeria between 2011-2013 was a major breakthrough, which proffer some explanations to the increase in the traffic of psychotropic substances. Also within the period under review, we also had to contend with the new transit dimension - problem of shipment of large consignment of heroin and cocaine through the sea.

14. Recognizing the importance of working with the private sector and relevant stakeholders, there were collaborations with pharmaceutical companies and other stakeholders in organizing sensitization meetings and workshops on effective control of scheduled substances to ensure availability for licit use only.

Mr. Chairman,

15. Cognizant of the need for effective control of precursors, Nigeria is now using pre-export notification online for monitoring of international movement of precursors and pharmaceutical preparations containing precursors.
16. In addition, there are regular joint inspections of manufacturing sites that utilize precursors for manufacturing purposes by regulatory and enforcement authorities to pre-empt diversion to unauthorized domestic channels.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The continued cultivation of cannabis in thick forest areas occupied by armed groups who protect the cultivation and promote the traffic in cannabis remains a great challenge to our counter narcotic illicit cultivation efforts.

18. You will note in the INCB report of the continued significant increase in the seizures of cannabis by our law enforcement agents. This is because of the political will of the government. However, in spite of the huge resources and efforts committed to discourage the cultivation of cannabis, its cultivation continues, because the farmers have no alternative means of livelihood. In order to discourage cultivation, the farmers must be encouraged and assisted to plant alternative crops or introduced to programmes that can equally provide for them, thereby given them economic legal viable alternative to growing cannabis.

19. In this respect, Nigeria welcomes the recommendations of the Berlin Expert Group Meeting on Alternative Development held from 11th-12th November 2013 in Germany. Nigeria is looking forward to the implementation of those recommendations.
20. The Nigerian government is determined to continue the fight against drug trafficking and to ensure that convicted drug traffickers are denied the proceeds of their crime. This is done through The Anti-Money Laundering Legislation and Assets Tracing and Forfeiture Strategies. It is worthy of note here that The Federal Government of Nigeria in 2011, further amended the Money Laundering Act to address some of the challenges noted in its implementation.

21. Furthermore, Nigeria entered into some Bilateral and Multilateral cooperation agreements that have facilitated the execution of Mutual legal Assistance (MLA) requests.

22. Even Though, Nigeria has a well-structured legal framework for combating the menace of illicit drug, however, some aspects of the law are being considered for review in the light of emerging challenges.

**Mr. Chairman,**

23. One of the new emerging challenges facing the government in the fight against drug trafficking and money laundering is the growing role played by cyber technologies. The loose networks diffused the identities of organized criminal players, thwarting law enforcement counter measures.

24. In the coming months, the review of our National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) will be concluded and a new NDCMP 2015-2019 that reinforces our integrated,
multidisciplinary and balanced approach to tackling the drug phenomena in the next 4 year will be in place.

25  As a country in the West African region, we share in the problem of being a transit route and its associated challenges for the movement of illicit drugs to other regions. The activities of these cartels pose serious threat to security and stability in the sub-region.

26. In line with CND resolution 52/4, 2009, we reiterate the call for international support for states in West Africa in their efforts to combat drug trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

27. We appreciate the support of EU to Nigeria through Project NGAV16: Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria. This project is to support the Nigeria Government in fighting drugs production, trafficking and use and in curbing related organized crime including counterfeit narcotics and psychotropic substance and it will also enhance narcotics availability for licit use.

28. In the same vein, we acknowledge with thanks, the support of our International partners. Their collaboration enhanced our supply reduction activities through exchange of information, control delivery, joint operations as well as technical assistance and professional capacity building.
29. Nigeria looks forward to seeing Member States taking more active role aimed at ensuring appropriate punishment in drug related offences in order to enhance international cooperation in countering the World Drug Problem.

Thank you.