

63rd - CND 2020 – Vienna, AUSTRIA

**Opening statement by Mr C.BHOJOO, Deputy Commissioner of Police,
Head of Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit of the Mauritius Police, Republic
of Mauritius.**

Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is an honour to address this august assembly on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius.

Today, as ever before, the threats and challenges posed by the drug scourge worldwide require more concerted and coordinated efforts and measures through international platforms such as the CND. Some facts: The World Drug Report 2019 indicates increases in production and supply of drugs such as Cannabis, Heroin, Cocaine and Synthetic drugs across the globe. On the other hand, there have been some record seizures of these drugs in kgs and at times in tons, on practically all continents. This is indicative of the effectiveness of Law Enforcement to dismantle drug networks worldwide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

But the situation concerning drug abuse also requires the same attention and particularly a human-centered approach where the consumer should be considered more of a victim than an offender. More and more people are consuming a wide range of drugs and this has become a serious challenge to societies to the detriment of healthy population so important for social and economic advancements.

More importantly, the unprecedented proliferation of synthetic substances in this drug landscape is alarming. Their easy availability and accessibility is entrapping particularly youngsters and jeopardizing their future. It is therefore paramount that the world community reflects much more on this growing issue and advocates stronger and tougher solutions that can effectively counter the potentially grave consequences looming over the spread of synthetic drugs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now come to the drug situation in my own country.

Mauritius is no exception with regard to the prevalence of drugs such as Cannabis, Heroin and Synthetic Cannabinoids which are the three main drugs of concern. The entry of drugs into Mauritius is facilitated by active maritime and air routes from Island states of the Indian Ocean and the African Continent, save synthetic substances which originate from Asia.

For the past three years or so, Mauritius has witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of Synthetic Cannabinoid, targeting mostly the youth and to some extent the education sector. This serious state of affairs is of great concern to all segments of society.

I am glad to say that the Government of Mauritius has been proactive in addressing the drug issue holistically.

In 2019, my Government has set up a High Level Drugs and HIV Council chaired by the Honorable Prime Minister and constituted of key members.

The National Drugs Secretariat has been set up as an Apex body under the High level Drugs and HIV Council. It is responsible for the implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan, launched in September 2019. We are very thankful to the UNODC for its expert assistance in drafting this important Action Plan.

The National Drug Control Master Plan prescribes a balanced, integrated and comprehensive approach to the drug issue.

Striking the right balance between supply reduction measures on one hand, and demand reduction solutions (including harm reduction) on the other is the policy adopted by Mauritius.

On this score, together with Law Enforcement Action, a range of demand/harm reduction measures have been put in place. Recently, with UNODC Support, the “Get Connected” Programme adapted from the European Drug Use Prevention Programme “Unplugged” has been launched for 12 to 16 years old students.

The Government of Mauritius is very appreciative of the role of International institutions such as UNODC, INCB, WHO and other expert bodies in providing expertise, support and assistance in addressing the drugs scourge.

We also recognize the support of Drug Enforcement Agencies such as the DEA (USA), mainly in the field of International Co-operation.

To conclude we can all look forward to some meaningful outcomes during this 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

I thank you for your attention.

Thank you.