



**NATIONAL STATEMENT
BY**

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OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

**AGENDA 3: GENERAL DEBATE
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**Chairperson,
Executive Director of the UNODC,
President of the International Narcotics Control Board,
Director General of the World Health Organization,
Distinguished Guest,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset let me extend my delegation's warm congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

To this end, I would like to assure you and your Bureau of my delegation's unequivocal support. I also express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for diligently preparing for this session.

While aligning my delegation to the statements by the African Group and the Group of 77 and China, I would like to take this opportunity to deliver my National Statement.

Chairperson,

South Africa maintains that the fight against the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility which requires enhanced international cooperation rather than confrontation.

Drug abuse negatively impacts on the health of the people; undermines socio-economic development; and destroys the moral fibre of societies. Therefore, it behoves our collective and shared responsibility to tackle it in all its forms and manifestations.

It is in this context that my Government reaffirms its commitment to the Implementation of the international drug control system as underscored by the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs taking into account its mid-term review in 2024.

Our annual gathering here in Vienna is, therefore, testament of the political will of our countries to give practical effect to the implementation of this policy, in the hope to fulfilling the desires and aspirations of our people in ridding the society of this scourge.

Chairperson,

My government noted the global trends that, drug use remains multifaceted in nature and characterised by concurrent use of several substances, including the use of conventional plant based drugs; synthetic stimulants; and opioids. In this regard, we call on the international community to adopt innovative approaches to address these challenges.

Like many countries, South Africa is not immune to the scourge of drugs. We are cognisant that vulnerable groups, particularly Children, Youth and Women are impacted significantly by substance abuse.

Chairperson,

In addressing this scourge, my government continues to accelerate the implementation of prevention and treatment programmes

targeted at the vulnerable groups. These initiatives include a comprehensive prevention campaign flagship, focusing largely on the Youth with the slogan *KeMoja - I am fine without drugs*. This programme was developed in collaboration with the UNODC.

Furthermore, my Government has significantly expanded treatment services by increasing State Owned Treatment Centres. I am pleased to share with you that treatment centres are now accessible throughout the nine Provinces in our country.

Chairperson,

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

We continue to increase 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.

Chairperson,

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation for your efforts in the handling of the process relating to the recommendations from the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence relating to cannabis and to commend member states for upholding the Vienna spirit of consensus on this matter.

While my Government has carefully considered and reviewed these recommendations and is already in a position to support the WHO ECDD recommendations as they related to cannabis, my delegation will continue to work with Member States in arriving at an amicable solution.

We are equally grateful to you Chair for guiding the process leading up to the streamlining of the annual report questionnaire that would assist Member States to share information accordingly.

Let me conclude Chair by encouraging the UNODC to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to Member States, particularly developing countries in the formulation of formulation and implementation of integrated, balanced, comprehensive and evidence based national policies and programmes in the fight against the world drug problem.

I thank you.