

**Statement by Dr. Illa Mainali, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Nepal at the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug problem**

Vienna, April 12-16, 2021

Madam Chair,

I wish to congratulate you **Madame** on your election as Chair of the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. My congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau for their respective elections.

I am confident that under your able leadership the session will be guided smoothly towards a successful conclusion.

Madam Chair,

Nepal aligns itself with the statements delivered by G-77 and China and the Asia-Pacific Group. I would like to add the following points in my national capacity:

We all know that drug problems are a common menace to the world community. Like in all other sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic has made a huge impact on the world drug problem. We thank the UNODC for the publication of World Drug Report 2020. As correctly stated in the Report, the COVID-19 crisis and economic downturn have threatened to compound drug dangers even more when our health and social systems have become vulnerable.

Nepal sincerely thanks the Secretary-General for convening the 31st Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in Response to the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic last year. The situation is very challenging. There is a need to redouble our efforts collectively with twin objectives - to reduce the impact of drug abuse as well as contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nepal is a State party to all three international drug control conventions. In line with these conventions, Nepal has introduced and enacted several domestic legislations, including the Narcotic Drugs Control Act 1976, which deals with Illicit Narcotic Drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursor chemicals. Similarly, Drug Act 1978 deals with Controlled medicinal drugs and Psychotropic substances.

Nepal is fully committed to the effective implementation of the goals set by the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, and the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document.

Madam Chair,

Nepal joins the international community in upholding the commitments in addressing and combating the world drug problem, with special emphasis on minimizing the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. To tackle this common challenge, collective efforts for enhancing international cooperation and timely actions for preparedness and response activities at the national and international level related to the impact of the pandemic on the drug situation and eventual new trends of drug abuse.

In the wake of a pandemic, the role of the Commission to take a lead to fight against the world drug problem has increased more than ever.

Let me conclude my statement by reiterating Nepal's commitment to working with the Commission and the Membership to address the world drug problem.

Thank you Chair.