



**NATIONAL STATEMENT
BY**

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OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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AGENDA 3: GENERAL DEBATE

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Chairperson

Allow me to extend my delegation's warm congratulations on your election as Chair of the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for diligently preparing for this session amidst the ongoing corona-virus pandemic.

South Africa associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the African Group by Egypt and the Group of 77 and China by Morocco.

Chairperson,

The world is still recovering from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has destroyed both lives and livelihoods across the world. The massive socio-economic carnage it has caused is yet to be tallied. This Pandemic has brought to the fore new challenges especially for those who thrive in criminality but has also exposed vulnerabilities of health systems globally but more so in developing countries, resulting in a full-blown socio-economic crisis, which has exposed millions of people to the risk of crime, trafficking and exploitation by criminals, offering untested and dangerous fake solutions.

In line with the theme of this session "**Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) while Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**". South Africa and India introduced the discussions at the WTO on the TRIPS waiver aimed at vaccine equity and access to life saving treatment as well as other efforts aimed at the prevention, containment and treatment of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that we can get back on track with implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We appreciate the assistance that the UNODC has offered and continue to offer as we combat this scourge.

The South African Government reprioritized our public spending and allocated increased funds towards the health sector. I am pleased to inform the Commission that for the 2022/2023 financial year, the South African Government has increased

financial allocation to its provincial health sector by R15.6 billion to support their continued response to COVID-19. In addition, the Government has established a Fusion Centre whereby various law enforcement agencies sit together to mitigate against corruption and theft of the resources earmarked for the fight against COVID-19.

Chairperson,

South Africa like most the world has not yet seen the back of this pandemic but can report that we are gradually loosening up the harsh measures and restrictions we had imposed on our population at the onset of the pandemic. We are also happy to inform that the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have designated South Africa as a regional hub to produce vaccines, not only for COVID-19 but for other known and unknown pandemics. Yes, we are building back better.

Illicit drugs, and the transnational and domestic criminal organisations that traffic these substances continue to represent significant threats to public health, national security and the economic stimulus of countries. Illicit financial flows are a critical enabler of drug trafficking and has a detrimental impact on development. To this end, South Africa reaffirms the central role of the UNODC in supporting and coordinating Member States' efforts to decisively tackle the world drug problem, especially as our continent is vulnerable and is increasingly been used as a transit and destination point by criminal enterprises who aim to forge dependency among our population, especially the youth, taking advantage of our poor socio-economic condition and situation. It is for this reason that South Africa supports a comprehensive, scientific and evidence based human rights approach that addresses both the illicit supply and demand for controlled substances, taking into account the critical role played by the various stakeholders, both domestically and globally.

South Africa welcomes the recommendations of the 41st Session of the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence and invites member states to support the work of the Committee. It is also worth noting that South Africa continues to follow guidance from the 2016 Outcome Document of the Thirtieth (30th) Special Session of the General

Assembly on the world drug problem, the 2019 Ministerial Declaration and Resolutions 63/1 and 64/4 specifically on dealing with the most persistent, prevalent and harmful substances, including synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, precursors, chemical solvents while ensuring their availability for medical and scientific purposes including their rescheduling.

We welcome the continued attention and efforts the Office of the Executive Director continues to give to the HIV / AIDS pandemic, not to allow this pandemic to be forgotten or lost in the midst of COVID-19 and the inequality Apartheid vaccine posture by developed countries which is a continuation or repeat of their attitude towards life and profit.

Chairperson,

To decisively address the multifaceted challenges brought on by the evolving nature of the drug trade, South Africa reaffirms the importance of international cooperation and the provision of requisite technical and capacity building to enhance the abilities of member states to counter the global drug problem.

Chairperson,

The pandemic is not only a health emergency but has affected almost all facets of life and there is an impetus to work collaboratively towards a common goal of building back better. To this end, South Africa supports enhanced global solidarity, innovative and coordinated action, with requisite technical and financial assistance to accelerate efforts to combat the global drug problem.

Please be rest assured of South Africa's support and constructive engagement during the 65th session of the CND.

I thank you