

Statement by Dr. Illa Mainali, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Nepal at the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Vienna, March 14-18, 2022

Mr. Chair,

I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 65th 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. I assure you of my delegation's full support for successful conclusion of this Session

We thank the UNODC for the publication of the World Drug Report 2021 which provides an in-depth analysis of the global drug trends and captures a comprehensive picture of the potential impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the world drug problem.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal aligns itself with the statements delivered by G-77 and China and the Asia-Pacific Group and wishes to add the following points in its national capacity:

The ongoing health crisis and economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have threatened to compound drug dangers even more. As we work to recover from the devastating impacts of COVID on the lives and livelihood of people, we need strong commitments and solidarity to battle against this complex problem.

The pandemic has hampered the accessibility and availability of medicine and medical supplies by disrupting global supply chains. Similarly, it has exacerbated a range of injurious effects, including mental health disorders and illicit drug trafficking.

It is a daunting task to build back better from this pandemic while also advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To overcome these challenges, there is a need to intensify our efforts, collectively and globally.

Nepal reiterates its commitment to all three international drug control conventions. In line with these conventions, Nepal has enacted several domestic legislations, including the Narcotic Drugs Control Act 1976, which deals with Illicit Narcotic Drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursor chemicals. Similarly, the Drug Act 1978 deals with controlled medicinal drugs and Psychotropic substances. Nepal continues to develop effective drug control strategies that are tailored to the unique national realities and contexts.

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

Our commitment to a significant reduction in drug abuse and the implementation of a comprehensive and balanced national drug control strategy is aligned with our larger developmental aspirations, including the SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal remains committed to addressing and combating the world drug problem together with the international community, with special emphasis on mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We should also work collectively to achieve adequate access as well as availability and affordability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion into illicit channels.

In this challenging time, we request UNODC, other relevant UN entities and the international community to provide appropriate technical cooperation to developing countries, including the LDCs, to tackle drug issues while also ensuring the implementation of SDGs.

Finally, I assure Nepal's full support for the work of this Commission to ensure a "Drug-Free World."

Thank you Chair.