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**IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY  
COMMITMENTS, FOLLOWING UP TO THE 2019 MINISTERIAL  
DECLARATION**

**“STRENGTHENING OUR ACTIONS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS TO ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR JOINT  
COMMITMENTS TO ADDRESS AND COUNTER THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM”**

**MULTI-YEAR WORKPLAN 2019-2023**

**CND THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS SESSION 2**

**Responses not in conformity with the three international drug control  
conventions nor in conformity with applicable international human rights  
obligations pose a challenge to the implementation of joint commitments  
based on the principle of common and shared responsibility**

**22 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Intervention Statement  
by  
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Thank you Chair, for giving us an opportunity to make this brief intervention which gives a quick overview of the African Union policy framework on drug control in relation to human rights obligations. And permit me to stand on protocol

The African Union is unequivocal in its commitment towards addressing the world drug challenge while conforming with the three international drug control conventions as well as agreed resolutions and applicable international human rights obligations.

Through its overarching framework that guides drug policy development on the continent – the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention - the AU continues to promote a multi-sectorial, balanced and integrated approach to drug control cognizant of global challenges relating to drugs including health, socio-economic wellbeing, and security in our Member States.

In 2019, the African Union adopted the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the period 2019-2023, based on the 2019 UN Ministerial Declaration while building on the foundation of the seven operational pillars of the Outcome Document of the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the world drug problem and indeed the Common Africa Position for UNGASS 2016.

That framework is also informed by the three international drug control conventions; and earlier declarations and decisions of various conferences of African Ministers in Charge of Drug Control and the African Union

Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control, taking into account the principle of shared and common responsibility.

Issues of human rights are embedded in the 9 pillars of the continental drug action plan. However, there is one pillar specifically dedicated to cross cutting issues focused on drugs and human rights pertaining to all vulnerable groups, especially youth, women, children where in member states are requested:

1. to enhance the knowledge of policy makers and law enforcement authorities regarding human rights to health, safety and well-being for all, including people who use drugs for society as a whole to be protected.
2. to promote quality of treatment services that respect the dignity and human rights of those in treatment, including those in correctional facilities due to drug related offences.
3. to ensure timely access to legal aid and the right to a fair trial, especially, for people in vulnerable situations such as women.
4. to adjust the approach towards people who use drugs from punitive to more supportive measures.
5. to address protective and risk factors that make girls and women vulnerable to drug use and being recruited as drug couriers.
6. to protect children from drug use and from being used in the production and trafficking of drugs as stipulated in article 28 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. A General Comment is being developed on this Article to assist State parties in implementation and reporting.
7. to protect persons with disabilities and older persons from drug use and from being used in the production and trafficking of drugs.

8. to strengthen national epidemiological surveillance on drug use, production and trafficking. Information is indeed a human right.  
and last but not least,
9. to strengthen national drug control coordinating mechanisms

While noting documents that advance the linkage between drug policies and human rights, the African Union encourages Member States to develop and implement comprehensive, integrated, evidence-informed, gender-sensitive, trauma-informed, ethical and human rights based drug use prevention, dependence treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services.

We further urge Member States to balance health and social well-being with effective evidence-based criminal justice responses including the implementation of alternatives to incarceration and harm reduction within a framework of continuum of care.

The continental drug control framework also bids Member States to ensure adequate measures for increased access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing diversion, with an emphasis on removing barriers that reduce access to medicines, including for pain relief, as well as reducing the availability of counterfeit medicines, and the non-medical use of medicines.

Lastly, in June 2022, African Ministers of Health, Population and Drug Control adopted the 2022 Cairo Declaration on Addressing Drug Use and Substance Use Disorders among Women, Youth and Children calling for a High Level Session to have a robust discussion on interventions needed.

The African Union Commission will continue to support Member States in the implementation of balanced drug policy to improve the health, security and socio-economic well-being of people in Africa towards an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent - the Africa we want.

I thank you.