

**NIGERIA NATIONAL STATEMENT AT THE 66TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS (CND) IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA
FROM 13 TO 17 MARCH, 2023**

Mr Chair,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 66th Session and to commend the Secretariat for the excellent preparation for the session. I wish to assure you of the unalloyed and unwavering support of my delegation.

2. Nigeria aligns with the statements delivered on behalf of the G77 and China and the African Group.

Mr Chair

3. Despite the debilitating impact of COVID-19 to the efforts at combating drug related issues, Nigeria has continued to adapt her drug control policies and strategies to respond to emerging and evolving realities. Our policy is anchored on the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP), first introduced in 1999. The revised fourth plan, 2021 – 2025, is an integrated and balanced policy, which combines law enforcement and the promotion of public health, while employing inter-agency collaboration and global cooperation in countering the world drug problem.

4. The NDCMP rests on four (4) major strategic pillars namely Drug Supply Reduction, Drug Demand Reduction, Improved Access Control, as well as Governance and Coordination of drug control activities. The policy is consistent with our obligations under the three Drug Control Conventions, and the three Political documents adopted by Member States since 2009 to address and counter the world drug problem as well as the 2019 Ministerial declaration.

Mr. Chair

4. Nigeria has continued to introduce innovative measures to ensure reduction in drug demands by launching the NDLEA toll-free helpline for drug-dependent individuals, families and employers of people suffering from drug use disorder which allows them to seek help without compromising their anonymity, confidentiality and safety. The center takes calls in English and other local languages with a team of psychologists, counselors and mental health professionals. In this regard, Nigeria has counsel and rehabilitated 19,401 drug dependent individuals between January 2021 and December 2022.

5. We have continued to also introduced a robust advocacy campaign, War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) which was launched by Mr. President to create anti-drug abuse awareness at the grassroots by all state commands of NDLEA.

Mr. Chair

7. Despite the implementation of our framework and strategic action plan, trafficking and abuse of controlled substances persist. First, the cultivation and high traffic of Cannabis and its abuse has been on the increase. Our National Drug Use Survey, 2019 revealed that over 10 million persons abused cannabis in one year. In similar pattern, the 2019, 2020 and 2021 World Drug Reports identified cannabis as the most abused substance with its threat to security, health and wellbeing of the global population.

8. We reiterate that legalization of non-medical use of cannabis is a violation of the Drug Control Treaties. Secondly, the trafficking and non-medical use of synthetic opioids, pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substance and new psychoactive substances, especially Tramadol, remain a challenge. This is in spite of our domestic control efforts. Nigeria, therefore, wishes to re-echo its position on the urgent need for change in the control measures for Tramadol and other pharmaceuticals containing psychotropic substances, narcotic drugs and new psychoactive substances.

Mr Chair

9. Nigeria has decentralized the storage of finished narcotics drugs to ensure their access, availability and affordability for medical and scientific use. We are now able to optimize data collection and improve statutory submission of annual requirement to the INCB with the launch, in 2020, of our national quantification/estimation survey, conducted in 2017 and 2019 respectively. We are also on course to start local manufacturing of narcotic medicines from two WHO-prequalified Pharmaceutical manufacturers to ensure availability and to meet national needs.

10. In conclusion, Nigeria is willing to upgrade its approaches by entering into new cooperation as well as strengthening former partnerships. We therefore call for robust international cooperation to address the links between drug trafficking and terrorism, banditry, illicit financial flows, smuggling of migrants and other forms of organised crime. In addition, we wish to underscore the importance of technical assistance by UNODC, which has greatly assisted practitioners of beneficiary countries and positively impacted global efforts to counter and address the world drug problem and urge for the continuation of the partnership. At this juncture, it is my privilege to inform you that based on the decision taken during the 30th meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya, Nigeria is hosting the 31st meeting of HONLEA Africa in Abuja in September, 2023.

11. Thank you.