



**NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**OF**

**THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**AT THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION**

**AGENDA 3: GENERAL DEBATE**

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Check against delivery

**Chairperson,  
Excellencies.  
Distinguished Guests**

I extend South Africa's warm congratulations on your election as Chair of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for diligently preparing these substantive documents to enhance our deliberations in the fight against the world drug problem as a common and shared responsibility of all UN member states.

At the onset, South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Africa Group and the Group of 77 and China.

**Chair,**

My delegation welcomes the timely discussion under the theme "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels", considering that equitable access to safe and effective medication was further eroded during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to invite all interested delegations to a Side-Event organised by the Republic of South Africa, the Africa Group and the International Narcotic Control Board entitled "No patient left behind - Availability, affordability and access to controlled substances scheduled for Tuesday, 14 March 2023 at Boardroom M7 from 13.00 until 13.50 p.m. We note with deep concern the extreme regional disparities on availability and accessing of life-saving drugs and vaccines visited upon developing countries due to developmental challenges and the issue of affordability. This is an affront to the 1961 Convention preamble that states that, "The Parties, Concerned with the health and welfare of mankind..." Availability and access challenges based on affordability have a negative cross-cutting effect to developing countries' achievement of all the SDG's. Global inequity on life saving drugs and vaccines due to affordability is a human right violation that can only be remedied through political will as well as sharing and solidarity based on the principle of a common and shared responsibility.

It is indeed opportune **Chairperson** that we take stock of the progress made ahead of the 2024 Mid-Term Review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration to accelerate our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem. We are indebted to the Chair for the outstanding work put in place for the review and assures the Commission of South Africa's

commitment to comply with her international obligations under the three international drug conventions. We commit to work towards a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, scientific, evidenced based, human rights, health, gender sensitive and law enforcement-based approach in the fight against the world drug problem.

Flowing from the above, South Africa welcomes the continued constructive engagements with the INCB. The INCB technical assistance and capacity building that is provided to developing countries in the fight against the world drug problem is particularly welcomed. My delegation values the work of the World Health Organisation's Experts Committee on Drug Dependence in ensuring scientific analysis of drugs and providing useful recommendations that assist in ensuring their proper scheduling and control. We are equally grateful to other UN agencies such as the Human Rights Commission that continues to support the work of the Commission and we encourage Member States to consider their recommendations favourably in the development of national policies and legislations to fight illicit drug use. This institutional framework remains complementary and mutually reinforcing as it respects each organization's role and mandate in the fight against the world drug problem.

**Chairperson,**

I am pleased to inform the Commission that considerable progress has been made by the Republic of South Africa in the implementation of its international drug control treaties obligations. This includes our intention to expediate the control and exploitation of cannabis for our socio-economic development with the guidance and collaboration with the INCB, in accordance with our drug conventions.

In this regard, considerable progress has been made by South Africa in the implementation of previous recommendations of the CND and HONLEA on inter alia: (i) enhancing legislation to allow for investigations and prosecutions relating to drug seizures made in international waters; (ii) strengthening the capacities of the relevant law enforcement bodies in identifying new trends in drug trafficking and in profiling and detecting high-risk consignments under various modi operandi; (iii) the integration of children's issues into health, rule of law and development agendas; and (iv) tightening illicit financial flows and ensuring successful investigations of drug-related money-laundering. We look forward to participating at the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, scheduled to be held in Abuja, Nigeria.

**Chairperson,**

We are grateful to our regional partners under the coordination of the UNODC Regional Office for Southern Africa in facilitating the provision of technical assistance and capacity building initiatives to member states to enable them to cope with the scourge of transnational organised crime, in particular the world drug problem.

In **conclusion**, my delegation calls on UN member states and international donors to avail unburdened extra-budgetary resources to the UNODC to enable the organisation to meet its obligations and deliver on its mandate.

**I thank you.**