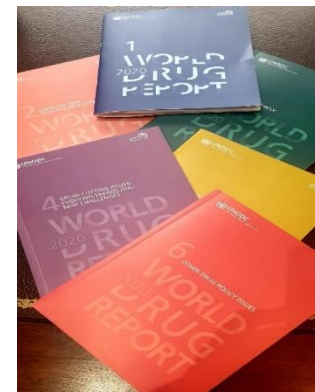


## South Africa commemorates the 2020 World Drug Day



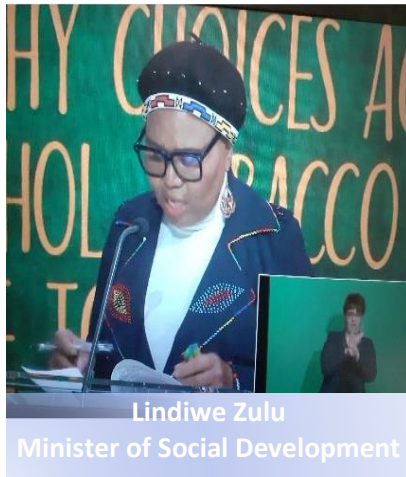
Pretoria, South Africa – On 26 June, the UNODC Regional Representative Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva, and South Africa Department of Social Development (DSD) led by Minister Lindiwe Zulu commemorated the 2020 World Drug Day (WDD) under international theme “Better Knowledge for Better Care” which highlights the need to better understand the dynamics and factors related to drug use and to propose solutions that are balanced, health-centred and based on scientific evidence. As part of WDD commemoration, the Minister of Social Development launched the new National Drug Master Plan (2019-2024).



Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva,  
Regional Representative in Southern Africa  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Addressing participants that included national authorities, youth leaders, CSOs and Academia on trends in illicit drug trafficking and abuse, UNODC Representative highlighted that the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 has the potential to worsen levels of drug production, trafficking and use. According to the World Drug Report, the crisis may exacerbate the socioeconomic situation of vulnerable groups, who in turn may increasingly resort to illicit activities as a coping mechanism to compensate for the loss of licit income and employment. Ms Akisheva also emphasized specific challenges faced by women who use drugs globally and in South Africa,

which has further escalated during the crisis. UNODC and South African Network of People Who Use Drugs conducted a needs assessment in four cities of South Africa (Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town), which revealed high levels of stigma, discrimination and sexual violence experienced by women. “People who use drugs are some of the first to be left behind in almost all circumstances, she said” so that the Government needs to put in place measures for the drugs users to have equal access to health, social and other essential services.



Lindiwe Zulu  
Minister of Social Development

In her address, under the national theme: **“Value yourself and make healthy choices against alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse to minimize the spread of COVID-19”**, Minister Zulu referred to gender-based violence that continues to plague the country. “As we commemorate this day, we recognize the connection between gender-based violence and the unacceptably high levels of alcohol and illicit drugs. But this is not a unique South African problem, it is a global problem that requires global cooperation. It is for this reason that we work jointly with UNODC to tackle these challenges”, she said.

In launching the new National Drug Masterplan (2019-2024), the Minister highlighted the 7 key priority areas that the National Drug Masterplan focuses on:

- Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention as well as other health related issues;
- Supply reduction and related measures, effective law enforcement; responses to drug related crime; countering money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation;
- Ensuring the availability of, and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion;
- Identification and control of new psychotropic/psychoactive substances;
- Promote governance, leadership, and accountability for a coordinated multi-sectoral effective response;
- Strengthen data collection, monitoring, evaluation, and research evidence to achieve the goals, and
- Stimulate robust and sustainable economic growth aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment and inequalities.





Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu  
Deputy Minister of Social Development

Minister acknowledged Deputy Minister of Social Development, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu whose leadership was instrumental in the development of this Plan and the hard work by the Central Drug Authority (CDA) and relevant stakeholders who developed the Plan. “The goal of the of the National Drug Master Plan is to contribute to safer and healthier communities through coordinated efforts to prevent and treat substance use

disorders. The National Drug Master Plan is key to the implementation of the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act (Act No. 70 of 2008), which mandates the DSD to support initiatives on prevention and treatment of substance abuse”, she said



As part of the government effort to prevent drug abuse, the Minister referred to the flagship prevention programme started jointly with UNODC, called ***"Ke Moja- I'm Fine without Drugs"*** which aims to prevent young people from using illicit drugs by enhancing awareness



and understanding of the harmful social and health effects of illicit drug use. Speaking at the event, representatives of Youth organizations called for a stronger engagement with them in designing national programmes addressing substance use, including skills development for the Youth. They also highlighted the importance of local municipalities playing a greater role in ensuring that such programmes are accessible to all including those in rural areas.

In her concluding remarks, Ms. Akisheva highlighted the importance of having a clear vision about the national goals to be achieved. A strong leadership is required to guide the implementation of the Drug Master plan. In this regard she encouraged to strengthen the mandate of the Central Drug Authority. She further reaffirmed that UNODC stands ready to assist the Government of South Africa in this process.

Press Release:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRpaCMxnddA>

<https://iono.fm/e/884982>

<https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/>

<https://trello.com/b/BivhbY4B/world-drug-day-2020>

**[International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking \(World Drug Day\) 26 June 2020](#)**