

Statement by Rogers W. Siyanga, Office of the President of Tanzania

At the 59th session at the CND

Vienna, 14-22 March 2016

Respected Chair,

As it is the first time for the delegation to take the floor, we would like to congratulate you on your election as chair of the 59th CND Meeting

We would like also to congratulate all those that have been elected to constitute the secretariat of the 59th session. We look forward to a valuable and productive meeting.

Chair, Tanzania continues to look at the UNODC to play a critical and pivotal role in leveraging international support for counter Narcotics issues and We align ourselves with the AU Common Position on the drug problem.

Chair, Tanzania continues to look at the five (5) International Conventions as the corner stones of our fight against the drug problem

Namely, The 1961 Convention, 1971 Convention, 1988 Convention, TOC and the UNCLOS.

Chair, The Drug misuse is a problem for individuals and communities threatening the political, economic and social security of our countries.

To this effect Chair, Our country is battling with the problem of drug abuse in three pillars:

Supply Reduction

Tanzania has formed the National Task Force, comprising of different Law Enforcement Agencies- Namely The Police, Customs, Immigration, Anti-corruption, Intelligence, Military, Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority , Government Chemist and the Office of Directory of Public Prosecution.

To this effect, Tanzania disbanded the Drug Control Commission which was the coordinating Agency and formed the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority. This Agency will have the powers to Investigate, Arrest and Prosecute those involved in the drug trade.

We are also forming the Transnational Organised Crime Unit to deal with all serious crimes including Human Trafficking, Drug Trafficking, Ivory Smuggling, Money Laundering, Extortion, Charcoal Smuggling etc

Chair, we are proud to report to you that we have made Tanzania a hostile country for drug traffickers and Big Barons/Drug Kingpins are incarcerated.

Chair, in Tanzania with substantial epidemic among people who inject drugs, analysis has consistently shown that, investment in harm reduction is critical to minimizing new HIV infections and deaths.

Following this reality, Tanzania now provides Needles and Syringes, Opiate Substitution Therapy and Anti-Retroviral Therapy for people who use drugs. In fact we are providing a comprehensive health package to the people who use drugs

Chair, Tanzania's Harm Reduction Strategy aims in reducing social and health risks associated with drug use through a set of interventions such as Needle and Syringe exchange, HIV Counseling and Testing, Anti-Retroviral Therapy, Opioid Substitution Therapy, Prevention and Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections, Condom Programmes, Vaccination against Viral Hepatitis and Treatment of Tuberculosis.

Chair,

There is now abundant evidence that harm reduction is the key principle of sound drug policy and it is proven that this package reduces HIV transmission among the people who inject or use drugs.

Chair, Law enforcement Agencies alone cannot fight this scourge. We have seen the pivotal role being played by the Non-Governmental organizations and Community - Based Organizations in their effort to supplement the efforts of the Government.

We have seen that Community based outreach programmes and peer education as modalities for delivering specific services to key populations. In existing programmes, outreach workers and peer educators facilitate linkages of key populations to drop-in

centres, health facilities and other services that have been designed to respond to their needs.

Chair, allow me to mention a few NGOS, IDPC, De Justicia of Colombia and OSIEA that have contributed to our understanding of the drug problem through their sensitization and Literature Support, which helped us to change our perception of the Drug problem from a Law Enforcement Perspective to Harm Reduction perspective,

Chair. It suffices here to say the following:-

1. Tanzania is committed to see to it that all people who use drugs be it by injecting or in any other means , those in prisons and other closed settings have access to harm reduction services,
2. Tanzania is committed to ensuring adequate availability and access to opioids for medical use towards reducing pain and suffering,
3. In considering taking measures against their incarceration,
4. In reducing stigmatization in the general population and also in the health sectors,
5. Availability and access to Naloxone among health workers , Prison Staff, First respondents
6. To continue to empower civil societies/Non-Governmental Organizations in the fight against the drug problem,
7. Ensuring adequate investment in harm reduction programmes.

To conclude, UNGASS 2016 would provide us with the opportunity to look back, take stock of what we have done, how we have fared all these years in this war.

UNGASS will provide us with the opportunity to correct our ministries

Chair, we do not want to travel short distance alone. We want to go long distances with Partners both UNODC, WHO, INCB, CND, Governmental and Non-Governmental, This is why we traveled all this long to join partners in this fight.

THANK YOU!