**BRIEF REMARKS BY HON. JENISTA J. MHAGAMA (MP), MINISTER OF STATE AT THE PRIME MINISTER`S OFFICE ON THE OFFICAL OPENING OF EU-ACT OFFICE IN TANZANIA ON 9TH JUNE, 2018**

* Ambassador Roberto Mengoni, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here with you this Morning. I wish to first of all express my sincere gratitude to all of you who kindly participated in this Occasion.

This is a great moment in a our history of excellent cooperation between our Drugs Control and Enforcement Authority and European Union Action against Drugs and Organized Crime (EU-ACT) in the fights against illicit drugs and organized crimes. We believe that the formally establishment of this EU-ACT Office in Tanzania will contribute to further strengthen the already existing partnership between these two bodies.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Illegal drugs are a worldwide problem. Our Country, is party to the main international instruments to combat drug and organized crime.

As you may be aware that, Tanzania’s geographical location presents considerable challenges to supply reduction strategies. Its strategic location in the Eastern African coast makes it an attractive transit hub for transnational criminal organizations trafficking significant quantities of heroine and other drugs from South Asia to European destinations and other destinations.

Illicit drug use in Tanzania is a growing problem with significant threat to public health, social, political, environmental and economic wellbeing of its people. The most consumed illicit drug is cannabis followed by khat, heroin, cocaine and also inhalants such as petrol and paints. Cannabis and khat are commonly grown within the country while heroine and cocaine are imported from Far East and South America respectively. There is an increase trend in use of non-prescribed medications particularly tramadol and benzodiazepines.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Some few analysis shows that heroin and cocaine trafficking are rife in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and that the East African region is a key gateway for consumer and production markets in Asia, Europe and the United States. A review of drug seizures from 1998 to date indicates an increase in the trafficking of heroin to eastern African countries from Southwest Asian

So far the Tanzania has done significant progress in the fight against drugs and there is a lot of achievements. In September 2015, the parliament enacted a new Drug Control and Enforcement Act which led to the establishment of The Tanzanian Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) with main role of supply, demand and harm reduction. In December 2017, amendments were further made to the Act to accommodate people with drug use disorders as patients who need treatment.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Concerning Demand and Harm reduction, Tanzania has been implementing both community and facility based harm reduction approach for people with drug use disorders through local and international NGOs as well as various Government Agencies. The Drug Control and Enforcement Authority in collaboration with the other ministries and various stakeholders like EU-ACT have the mandate to coordinate all the demand and harm reduction activities in the country through several approaches addressed in drug interventions globally however the country has adopted the UNAIDS, WHO and UNODC scientifically recommend evidenced based interventions. Tanzania is the first country in the Sub Saharan Africa mainland to launch Medically Assisted Therapy for people with opioid use disorders in 2011 and by the end of 2017 a total six sites were established.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen’s,**

There is a huge potential for the EU-ACT Project to engage with Tanzania Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) as the main partner, since this is still a young organization that has ambitious plans, however, it needs strengthening in its resources, training and operational procedures. There have been several recent successes targeting illicit drug trafficking organizations operating in and through Tanzania.

**Conclusion**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen’s,**

In conclusion, I want to thank the Italian Embassy and European Union for all of the assistance that it has afforded EU-ACT in the opening of this wonderful EU-ACT Office. It is our hope that the inauguration of this Office in Tanzania will mark an important milestone in the fight against illicit drugs and other organized crime along East African Coast.

I can reassure you, our commitment to further strengthen the existing ties of cooperation between EU-ACT and the Tanzanian Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA).

I also want to thank all of our invited guests today and I appreciate the support all of you have given to assist EU-ACT official entry to Tanzania and East Africa.

Thank you for listening.

**Mungu Ibariki Tanzania**