

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone : 011-551 7700

Fax : 011-551 7844

website : www.africa-union.org

**5th SESSION OF THE AU CONFERENCE
OF MINISTERS OF DRUG CONTROL (CAMDC5)
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
08 - 12 OCTOBER 2012**

***THEME: PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICES IN DRUG POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION***

CONCEPT NOTE

A. BACKGROUND

1. Today, it is widely accepted that the war on drugs might not have been the perfect answer and that drug policies which simply criminalise drugs and its use failed to actually curtail drug use, production and trafficking; while in fact negatively influencing violence, public health challenges and human rights abuses. There exists many arguments for opening up the drug policy debate and including all options, including legalization and regulation. In the past, these arguments were articulated by activists and scholars, but now we are hearing leaders saying that drug laws, policies, strategies and programmes need to be reformed in order to align with basic human rights and evidence-based public health practices.

2. It is widely agreed that often drug users are not receiving suitable treatment, are sent to prison with hardened criminals, are denied health services, and harassed by law enforcers. While law and order approaches to drug control are expensive in terms of money, lives and communities; they have not proven to be more effective than drug prevention and treatment programmes. Punitive drug laws, restrictive policies, abusive policing, stigma and discrimination among many other factors all weigh heavily on risk and harm in relation to drug use.

3. The recent 55th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, took place amidst rapidly emerging global debate on the appropriateness of continuing drug prohibition and whether legalization and regulation as a potential alternative or even better way to control drugs. There were various calls for debate on alternatives to drug prohibition and it seems that delegates left the meeting still seeking clarity.

4. Africa is in the unique position of being able to learn from experiences in other parts of the world in order to ensure that Continental responses are relevant and in accordance to recent good practices. The African Union Commission sees the upcoming 5th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Drug Control (CAMDC5), as an opportunity as the ideal opportunity to bring this discussion into Africa in order to promote appropriate responses to illicit drugs in Africa.

B. OBJECTIVES

5. The main objective of the 5th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Drug Control (CAMDC5) will be to review and strengthen mechanisms for enhanced shared responsibility for illicit drugs in Africa, in order to continue the implementation of drug control targets while using this opportunity to join the current global debate surrounding illicit drugs.

6. In addition to hosting this very vibrant debate on how to proceed with drug control in Africa, the Conference will also:

- Review and agree on the proposed revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013 - 2018).

- Review and adopt minimum quality standards for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment.
- Agree on an African Common Position on Controlled Substances and Pain Management.

C. OUTCOME

7. Overall, CAMDC5 will facilitate debate regarding the review of mechanisms for enhanced shared responsibility for illicit drugs in Africa, in order to continue the implementation of drug control targets while also seeking Ministerial agreement on strengthening cooperation and shared responsibility in the setting of targets and modalities for the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2018).

D. AGENDA ITEMS

8. The Conference will consider the following main matters:
- i. The Report of the H.E. the AU Commission Chairperson on the implementation of the recommendations of the 4th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012);
 - ii. The draft minimum quality standards for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment in Africa; and
 - iii. The proposed African Common Position on Controlled Substances and Pain Management.

E. FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE

9. The Conference will be organised in two phases:
- i. AU Member States' Experts Meeting on 08 - 10 October 2012 whereby experts from Member States will meet over three days in preparation of the report for the Ministers.
 - ii. The AU Ministerial Meeting on 11 – 12 October 2012 which will consider the report of the Experts meeting and its recommendations.

F. DOCUMENTS

10. The concept note, agendas, work programmes and documents to be considered at the Conference will be posted on the AU Website (www.africa-union.int) and other relevant documentation will be circulated during the Conference.

G. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

11. The AUC will be responsible for the invitations to Member States and the preparations of all related documents in consultation with the Bureau of the 4th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (with the assistance of Bureau representatives based in Addis Ababa). Translation and interpretation services, and secretarial support, will be availed by the AUC.

H. PARTICIPANTS

12. Ministers and Experts responsible for Drug Control (specifically treatment and prevention) in AU Member States, AU Commission and other AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Specialised National Agencies, particularly those involved with research on drugs, and International Organisations and Agencies.

I. FURTHER INFORMATION

13. Contact person for any further information on the Conference:
Dr. Olawale I. Maiyegun (PhD)
Director for Social Affairs
Department of Social Affairs
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa
Tel. + 251-115517700 Extension 2606
Fax. + 251-115533616/ 115504985/ 115517844
Email: Ongolojm@africa-union.org
Chantelk@africa-union.org