SIXTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF DRUG CONTROL (CAMDC6)
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
6-10 OCTOBER 2014

THEME:- “DRUGS KILL BUT BAD POLICIES KILL MORE:
SCALING UP BALANCED AND INTEGRATED RESPONSES TOWARDS
DRUG CONTROL IN AFRICA”

CONCEPT NOTE
BACKGROUND

1. The Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), in its Articles 14 to 16, established Specialised Technical Committees (STCs) as important technical organs of the Union. The STCs were originally established under Article 25 of the African Economic Community Treaty (the Abuja Treaty) and with transformation of the OAU into the AU, STCs were carried over by the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The STCs are expected to work in close collaboration with various Departments of the Commission to facilitate well-informed inputs in their areas of specialisation to the work of the Executive Council. They should also be involved in monitoring programme development and implementation by the AU and RECs on behalf of the Executive Council.

2. The Assembly, through Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in February 2009, reconfigured the STCs. According to the reconfiguration, the Conference of Ministers of Drug Control will be part of the STC on Health, Population and Drug Control. Operationalization of the STCs were to commence in 2013 but the Executive Council in its Decision EX.CL/Dec.701 (XXI) deferred the commencement till January 2014.

3. Thus the upcoming 6th Session of the Conference African Union Ministers of Drug Control (CAMDC6) to be held in Addis Ababa, from 06 to 10 October 2014, will be the last sectoral meeting of Ministers of Drug Control. The Ministers of Drug Control will meet jointly with Ministers of Health and the 1st Session of the STC on Health, Population and Drug Control to be held in April 2015.

The Sixth Session of the Conference of AU Ministers of Drug Control (CAMSD6)

4. In 2007, Member States renewed their commitment to the fight against drug abuse, trafficking and related crimes through the adoption of the Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012). The primary goal of the Plan was to reverse current trends of drug abuse and trafficking, organised crime, corruption, terrorism and related challenges to socio-economic development and human security and to achieve tangible improvement in social and personal well-being of the people of Africa and their communities. At the 4th Session of the Conference of African Union Ministers of Drug Control (CAMDC4), commitments were made to move from policy to action in turning the tide of drug and crime in Africa. At the 5th Session (CAMDC5), Member States were determined to promote good practices in drug policy development and implementation through the adoption of the new AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017). In particular, the Ministers called for intensified efforts in drug demand reduction and treatment, monitoring and evaluation of drug abuse and
trafficking trends, as well as strengthening research on drug control and trafficking trends.

5. The rationale for the above-mentioned decisions is the daunting reality that Africa has become not just a major transit route in the global trade in narcotics, but also high consumption patterns of internationally controlled drugs and substances emerging all over the Continent, from Cape to Cairo. While Cannabis remains the most widely cultivated and used illicit substance, there is growing use of cocaine, opioids (mainly heroin), amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), and emerging new-psychoactive substances (NPS). Also, a growing concern is the emergence of illegal laboratories where ATS are being produced for consumption and for illicit trafficking. Moreover, there is the challenge of increasing vulnerability to instability and pervasion of democratic governance resulting from the nexus among drug trafficking, related organized crime, corruption, laundering of proceeds of crime and terrorism. Just as the continent is faced with the challenge of providing support for the large number of drug users who are the victims of the spill-over effect of drug trafficking through the continent.

6. In spite of the commitment undertaken to move from policy to action and to promote good practices in drug policy development and implementation, two recent studies – one conducted by the AUC and the other an independent study supported by the Commission have shown that a combination of flawed policies and poor implementation have had negative consequences for effective drug control on the continent. They have caused social devastation and aggravated political and economic instability. The studies concerned are: “Comprehensive Assessment of the Socio-Economic and Security Challenges of Drug Trafficking and Related Organised Crime in West and Central Africa” (a premier study by the AUC) and an independent study by the West Africa Commission on Drugs, “Not Just in Transit. Drugs: The State and society in West Africa”. Although the two reports are based on West and Central Africa, their findings and recommendations are applicable to the whole continent and inspired the theme for the 6th Session, “Drugs Kill but Bad Policies Kill More: Scaling Up Balanced and Integrated Responses Towards Drug Control in Africa”. The Conference will enable Ministers, their Experts and other participants to have frank discussions on the effectiveness and impact of their drug control policies; identify best practices and areas that require significant adjustments. The formal presentations of the two reports mentioned above would be used to galvanize deep reflection by the Ministers and participants. The Conference will also facilitate stock taking of progress in implementation of the AUPA (2013-2017), as we approach the mid-term review of the Plan. The fundamental goal of the Plan of Action is to improve health, security and the socio-economic well-being of the people of Africa by reducing illicit drug use, trafficking and associated crimes;
and it aims at guiding drug policy development in the continent, in terms of galvanizing national, regional and international cooperation to counter the drug problem.

A. OBJECTIVES

7. The overall objective of CAMDC6 is to continue advocacy for an evidence-driven, balanced and integrated approach to drug control and to encourage a shift from ineffective policies. Specifically, the Session will take stock of progress towards the implementation of the Plan of Action on the Continent. Implementation progress will be measured on the following four priority areas of AUPA:

   i. Continental, regional and national management, oversight, reporting and evaluation of the AUPA enhanced.

   ii. Evidence-based services scaled up to address health and social impact of drug use in Member States.

   iii. Countering drug trafficking and related challenges to human security through supporting Member States and RECs to reduce trends of illicit trafficking and supply reduction in accordance with fundamental human rights principles and the rule of law.

   iv. Capacity building in research and data collection enhanced through strengthening of institutions to respond effectively to challenges posed by illicit drugs, and to facilitate licit movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes.


B. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

9. The Conference is expected to:

   (a) Adopt decisions which will guide and provide leadership on cooperation, coordination and acceleration of the implementation of the four priority areas of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) for the remaining three years.
(b) Galvanise commitment and political will for scaling up responses to drug control challenges, transnational organized crime and related laundering of proceeds of crime.
(c) To inspire Member States to intensify their drug control efforts through the best practices and research outputs that will be shared by fellow Member States.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

10. The Conference will consider the following main items:
   • The AU Commission Report on Implementation of Recommendations of the 5th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control;
   • Progress, challenges and the way forward on implementation of the four key priority areas of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) as indicated above;
   • Implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.
   • Directions on future drug control meetings and Implementation of the Assembly Decision on Specialised Technical Committees (STCs);
   • Brief on AUC Agenda 2063.

D. FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE

11. The Conference will be organised in two phases:
   • The Experts Meeting on 6-8 October 2014 whereby experts from Member States will meet over three days to deliberate on the agenda items and make recommendations to the Ministers;
   • The Ministers' Meeting on 9-10 October 2014 which will consider the report of the Experts meeting and its recommendations.

E. DOCUMENTS

12. The concept note, agenda, work programmes and documents to be considered at the Conference will be posted and regularly updated on the AU Website (www.au.int) under “Upcoming events” while other relevant documentation will be circulated during the Conference.
F. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

13. The AUC will be responsible for invitations to Member States and the preparations of all related documents in consultation with Addis Ababa-based Representatives of the Bureau of the 5th Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control. Translation and interpretation services, and secretarial support, will be availed by the AUC.

G. PARTICIPANTS

14. Ministers and Experts responsible for Drug Control, (paying particular attention to drug use 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.

H. FURTHER INFORMATION

15. Contact persons for any further information on the Conference:

Amb. Olawale Maiyegun, PhD
Director of Social Affairs
Department of Social Affairs, AU Commission
Addis Ababa
Email: MaiyegunO@africa-union.org; CC StrijdomJ@africa-union.org;
Ongolojm@africa-union.org; BasutuA@africa-union.org