

65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

Opening Segment

14 March 2022, 10 am (Vienna time)

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the Economic and
Social Council
(5 minutes)

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

1. I am honored to take part in today's opening segment of the 65th Session of Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND) -- a very important functional Commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
2. The world drug problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic-related mobility restrictions, social distancing and hygiene measures have affected access to treatment services. It has also disproportionately affected vulnerable members of our societies, schools, families, communities, workplaces, drug treatment and rehabilitation facilities, social services and criminal justice systems. Organized criminals have adapted their *modus operandi* to continue their drug trafficking business during the pandemic.
3. These drug-related challenges are intertwined with all aspects of sustainable development. The efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and to effectively address the world drug problem, are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

4. In this regard, countering the world drug problem requires coordinated multidisciplinary efforts that go hand-in-hand with the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The principle of common but shared responsibility should therefore remain at the core of international cooperation on all aspects of the world drug problem.
5. We need to enhance cooperation between Member States and among UN agencies, at all levels to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. Such cooperation is also needed to counter the exploitation by drug traffickers of traditional and online trafficking methods and routes during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
6. Furthermore, the international community should promote the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to countries most affected by COVID-19 in addressing and countering the world drug problem. The CND, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization, as well as the International Narcotics Control Board can bolster these efforts.
7. All these elements were reflected in the joint statement of the Commission on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, adopted at its 64th Session.

Excellencies,

8. I should note that the CND, as the policy-making body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters, plays an important role in the ECOSOC family, and contributes in a significant way to the work of the Council.
9. The ECOSOC Coordination Segment, held last month, was an important opportunity to raise more awareness of the important work of the CND and how it fits in the broader purview of work of the Council. ECOSOC will endeavour to better integrate the work of the CND in its own agenda.

10. The Segment also explored ways to further enhance coordination and coherence among ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies. I thank Ambassador D'Hoop for actively participating in our discussions. I look forward to the important contribution of the CND to the ongoing review of the Council's subsidiary bodies, led by the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria as Vice-President of the Council.

11. In conclusion, let me note that I am encouraged by the discussions of the Commission on the theme of the Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which this year is: *“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”*.

12. I appreciate that the Commission has again submitted a substantive contribution to enrich our discussions at the 2022 HLPF.

- 13. I Thank you, and wish you successful deliberations.**