

**THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY  
AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING**

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AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND DELICIOUS TRAFFICKING

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES  
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA  
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL  
DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING  
IN ABUJA  
SATURDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 1999**

**Protocol**

I wish to specially commend the United Nations for setting aside this special day as the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. I also commend the efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency towards ridding our beloved country of the drug menace.

2. The problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking was alien to this country until about a decade and half ago. In fact, the very first incident of arrest on drug related offence in Nigeria was in 1983. However, the situation is totally different today as we are faced with the problem of drug abuse and its numerous fall-out effects. It is a known fact that people of different backgrounds, social classes, sexes and age range indulge in this condemnable acts of drug abuse/illicit trafficking.

3. Globally, the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking constitute a major threat to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. Human lives are daily lost through drug addiction and activities of drug addicts. Significant number of deaths from accidents and violent crimes have been traced to the activities of persons under the influence of drugs. Drug dependent youths are now being used as tools in the hands of criminals and undesirable elements in the community as thugs and paid assassins. In fact, the problem of drug abuse/trafficking are innumerable. The need to fight this social menace among the general populace, particularly among the youths, has become very imperative.

4. The global problem of drug abuse requires a global solution. The signals have been loud and clear. World conferences and summits that are replete with discussions on how best to tackle the seemingly intractable problem have now become fashionable.

5. The United Nations which is in the forefront of the drug war, through the UNDCP, has again done it by choosing music as the theme of this year's United Nations Anti-drug Day. It is a well-known fact that, youths erroneously associate music-making with drug usage. Several popular musicians have actively died from drug use but music-making cannot and should not be associated with drug

usage. According to the World Book Encyclopaedia "Music is sound arranged into pleasing or interesting patterns..... People use music to express feelings and ideas".

6. We therefore call on the musicians of this land to use music to express our collective rejection of the drug use/traffic culture.

7. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in line with various United Nations resolutions on global drug control, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to co-ordinate all activities relating to control of supply and reduction in the demand for narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. It is significant to note that Nigeria was the third country to ratify the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-tropic Substances. In fact, we are party to all United Nations Conventions on drug control and have put in place relevant administrative structures to facilitate their implementation. In the same vein, we have promulgated legislations that ensure the forfeiture of movable and immovable assets of persons convicted of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. By this singular act, we have ensured that drug traffickers receive penalty commensurate with their crime.

8. I feel delighted with the significant successes that have been recorded so far by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in controlling the aspect of drug supply as recorded in the reduction in number of people being arrested for drugs trafficking. In addition, in the area of demand reduction, the Agency has put in place several programmes geared towards preventive education and creation of awareness on dangers associated with drug abuse. Our joint efforts have yielded tremendous results as is evidenced in Nigeria's certification as a drug free Nation.

9. In our desire to achieve a balance between the control of illicit supply and demand, we will strengthen existing prevention structures on the ground. In this regard, I wish to direct all State and Local Governments to give adequate financial and material support to the State and Local Government Drug Abuse Control Committees (DACC) in their domains to enable them perform the functions effectively. Let me call on our traditional and community leaders to express deeper concern about the problem of drugs in their areas of influence in order to assist the Government to comb the problem.

10. My administration will leave no stone unturned in intensifying this drug war. We will ensure that the strategies stipulated in the recently launched National

Drug Control Master Plan are implemented to the letter. We are prepared to sign Memoranda of Understanding with interested countries that are willing and ready to put an end to the menace of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

11. At this juncture, I want to express Nigeria's sincere appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for its assistance to the NDLEA, NAFDAC and NGOs in the control of supply and reduction in the demand for illicit drugs.

12. I wish you all a drug-free year.

Thank you and God bless.

