

9 March 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the 58th session of the Commission on Narcotic
Drugs**

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address you today. I am convinced that the continued collaboration between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the General Assembly on this Special Session will lead to a successful UNGASS in 2016.

I welcome the preparatory work undertaken thus far by the Commission and the establishment of a dedicated Board, made up of representatives from all regional groups, to manage the UNGASS preparations.

The Special Session constitutes an important opportunity for a high-level and wide-ranging discussion among Member States leading up to 2019. Let us lay a strong foundation for the review of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Excellencies,

The international community must engage in an open discussion on how the challenges posed by drug use, production and trafficking can best be addressed, taking into account the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders.

The world drug problem is a transnational threat that presents common and shared responsibilities. It demands greater international cooperation and a global response, in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

The three United Nations Drug Conventions, being the cornerstone of an international drug control system, seek to promote and protect the health and welfare of humankind. These are important goals in shaping a new long-term vision for sustainable development.

Excellencies,

There are a number of steps we must take to reach our goals:

- First, there is need to invest more in prevention, while also helping people suffering from substance use disorders to get the treatment they need, including access to controlled medicines to relieve pain and suffering, while preventing diversion and abuse;
- Second, we need to make use of all tools at our disposal, including those contained in United Nations Conventions on drugs, corruption and transnational organized crime, to combat drug trafficking and money laundering, while promoting international cooperation in criminal matters;
- Third, we need to reduce the vulnerability of local communities to the illicit drugs economy by promoting alternative livelihoods, with particular attention to the special vulnerabilities of women, youth and children; and
- Fourth, we should have a balanced approach that takes into account different regional and national realities while ensuring a coherent and effective global response.

I count on you to advance discussions on these issues in the coming days. I also look forward to collaborating with the Commission over the coming months in organizing the High-level Thematic Debate on the World Drug Problem, which I will convene on 7th May.

I thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations.