

3 December 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs Special Session**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,**

I am pleased to address you all today, although due to the exigencies of the work of the General Assembly, am unable to attend in person.

Today's discussion is a timely one, as the international community looks to formulate an ambitious and transformative post-2015 development agenda. Indeed, illicit drugs pose a serious threat to sustainable development. They undermine the rule of law and endanger individuals and communities.

The world drug problem is a critical transnational issue that demands a global response, with common and shared responsibilities. The voices of all stakeholders must be heard and taken into consideration.

The 2016 Special Session on the World Drug Problem, as well as preparations leading up to that session, represents an important opportunity to advance global action in this area. Together, we will explore how to best address the challenges posed by drug use, trafficking and production.

Within the framework of the three United Nations Drug Conventions, the international community has been working towards a balanced approach to the international drug issue. Special emphasis has been given to public health, prevention, treatment and care, and targeted law enforcement.

In these efforts, there have been challenges, but also notable positive results. We must remain steadfast in our endeavours, with the realization that we are doing more than fighting drugs and crime – we are planting the seeds for peace and development.

I look forward to working closely with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in the lead-up to 2016 Special Session and count on your efforts to advance discussions on these critical issues.

I assure you of the full support of the General Assembly in making the 2016 Special Session a success and wish you fruitful deliberations.