



June 26, 2020

STATEMENT OF DR. ABIDAN CHANSA TO THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS ON THE OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE WORLD DRUG REPORT, JUNE 26, 2020

- Good afternoon, thank you Chair, honorable delegates. I am Dr. Abidan Chansa, the Executive Director of Kitwe Teaching Hospital and National Coordinator of Palliative Care for Zambia
- Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa with a population of around 17m people. The Government owns most of the Hospitals and healthcare facilities. For the last 5 years Zambia consumed around 9kg of morphine per year. This is very inadequate given our estimated need to relieve health related suffering.
- The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has adopted resolutions noting under-treatment of pain in more than 150 countries, which is more than 80% of the world's population
- The low amounts of morphine that are imported into our country have been a source of concern with health provision
- The COVID 19 pandemic has negatively affected the rational use of morphine and other strong opioids.
- I will tell you the story of my grandmother, who has been negatively affected by this pandemic. She is suffering from breast cancer and is in pain most of the time. Due to the non-availability of morphine and the stockouts, she rations how she uses this morphine. She drinks morphine in the night so that she will be pain free, and in the morning and the afternoon she does not take the medicine, so that she can prolong her supply. This is MY grandmother, and it makes me feel horrible seeing her suffering in pain. This could be the story of your grandmother, your relative your niece.
- We therefore call on the UNODC, International Narcotics Control Board and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance on medicines availability, and support for the training of healthcare workers in the use of opioid analgesics.
- I thank you.