

Thank you Chair. We appreciate your focus on improving availability of internationally controlled essential medicines. My name is Eve Namisango and I represent the African Palliative Care Association, which works on improving rational access to these medicines through appropriate training and regulations throughout the continent. Access and availability in Africa is the lowest in the world, as you see from this map, also used by the INCB. According to the 2021 World Drug Report “on a per capita basis, the availability of pharmaceutical opioids for medical consumption in Africa as a whole [...] was less than 1 per cent of the availability in North America.” While we are aware of the problem of non-medical use in North America, we endorse the recommendations of the Stanford Lancet Commission on the Northamerican Opioid Crisis and the Lancet Commission on Pain and Palliative Care calling for local manufacturing and public procurement of generic oral morphine in Low and Middle Income countries. Taking the profit motive out of the pain medicine market will remove black market incentives while improving access to medical opioids to relieve the serious suffering experienced by patients with cancer, traumatic injury, surgical pain, mental health disorders and HIV/AIDS. This requires training of health professionals as well as regulators. Africa as a continent has limited pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity even though locally reconstituted morphine is cheap to produce. We are blessed that the government of Uganda subsidizes morphine availability of hospice and palliative care patients. The danger is that the pharmaceutical industry markets expensive patented opioids that are unaffordable for most governments in Africa. We recommend that regional bodies such as the African Union working in partnership with UNODC, the INCB, academia and civil society to negotiate technology sharing and public procurement of opioids to remove the profit and ensure that countries comply with the drug control treaties to ensure access for all patients.