

Intervention on Chapter Five (NPS) – Oct Intersessional Day II

Thank you Ma'am for giving me the floor.

2 The proliferation of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) continue to pose a formidable challenge for many countries. Despite our best efforts, supply and abuse of the substances remain pervasive.

3 The global NPS market continue to be characterized by the emergence of a large number of new substances belonging to diverse chemical groups. NPS is a rapidly evolving threat, with the UNODC receiving reports of over 800 NPS in the period between 2009 to 2017.

4 Novel variants of NPS are constantly introduced to the growing market. Coupled with the challenges of developing drug testing protocols and reference standards for NPS, monitoring and detecting NPS remains a continuing challenge, and it is difficult to determine the real extent of NPS abuse and supply.

5 In addition, little is known about the adverse health effects and long term harms of NPS and this considerably hinders prevention and treatment of NPS abuse.

6 To deal with the challenges, it is crucial for us to develop effective legislations, build capabilities and enhance national, regional and international cooperation against the proliferation of NPS.

Singapore's Approach

7 I would like to briefly share on how Singapore deals with NPS. Singapore is constantly enhancing our strategy to counter the evolving NPS problem through legislative amendments and targeted enforcement.

Legislation

8 In 2013, Singapore amended the Misuse of Drug Act (MDA) to introduce the generic listing approach in dealing with NPS. Under this approach, the parent molecular structure and specific substitution patterns to that molecule were listed, and any substance which shares similar chemical structures were classified as controlled drugs.

9 The MDA was also amended to allow for the temporary listing of certain NPS for a period of 12 months or more. This allows for Singapore's lead drug enforcement agency, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) to seize temporarily listed NPS, so that circulation of such substances can be restricted.

10 Research and industry consultations are concurrently undertaken to determine if there are any legitimate uses for the substances that have been temporarily listed. Once it is determined that there are no licit uses for the substance, it will be scheduled as controlled drug.

11 The Misuse of Drugs Act currently controls 12 generic groups of NPS and 105 NPS as Class A controlled drugs while 5 NPS are placed on temporary schedule. This list of scheduled NPS is constantly reviewed and expanded.

Enforcement

12 Singapore has also developed supply strategies to counter NPS. We subscribe to specialised drug information systems developed by countries worldwide in response to the growth in demand and supply of NPS. The information shared through these platforms guide our strategy to deal with new forms of NPS.

13 One other strategy is to improve the tracking of NPS trafficking. CNB regularly conducts targeted operations to swiftly eradicate syndicates involved in manufacture or distribution of NPS products.

14 In terms of detection capabilities, Singapore constantly looks to advance our capability to detect and test for NPS. Singapore's national forensics laboratory, the Health Science Authority (HSA) uses high-resolution mass spectrometry to differentiate and identify multiple NPS and close drug analogues in seized drug exhibits and urine specimen.

15 Singapore will continue to ensure that there is effective coordination between all our relevant government agencies and industry partners, in our effort to curb the proliferation of NPS.

Regional and International Cooperation

16 The 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document calls for Member States to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies to detect and identify NPS and promote cross-border operation and information-sharing to inhibit the proliferation of NPS.

17 Singapore welcomes UNODC's efforts in the regular sharing of information on new forms of NPS reported by countries and for providing timely recommendations to schedule these NPS.

18 Sharing of cross-border information and exchange of best practices is important in dealing with NPS. Singapore strives to learn from best practices of countries with strong NPS legislation and enforcement. Our national forensics laboratory also regularly communicates with forensic lab counterparts from around the world to exchange information on NPS.

19 Besides sharing of information, it is also pertinent for countries to work with each other to provide for capacity-building in NPS detection.

20 In September 2017, Singapore partnered with UNODC to conduct a joint training programme on NPS. With participants from 11 ASEAN and Pacific Island countries, the programme focused on the global NPS situation and sharing of best practices in establishing effective national coordination mechanisms on NPS detection capabilities between law enforcement and forensic laboratory authorities.

21 To foster capacity-building regionally, CNB together with the Australian Federal Police hosted the 17th run of the Integrated Narcotics Enforcement Programme (INEP) for ASEAN law enforcement agencies in June 2018. This annual programme provides training on supply reduction-related issues, including NPS.

22 Singapore will continue to support such capacity-building programmes at the regional level to address the challenges posed not just by NPS but also by synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine which is a growing concern in the region. We commit to work closely with

UNODC and international counterparts to enhance our collective efforts in the fight against drugs.

Conclusion

23 I would like to conclude by reiterating the need to stay vigilant and proactive in tackling emerging threats posed by NPS. The international community should work together to continuously develop targeted response to counter the proliferation of NPS.

24 Thank you.