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Report of the Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 10 to 13 February 2009

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* The present report is issued in English, the working language of the subsidiary body.



I. Matters calling for action by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or brought to its attention

Recommendations adopted by the Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

1. The Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Asia and the Pacific, made the recommendations set forth below, which were prepared by its working groups. The observations and conclusions of the working groups that led to the recommendations are presented in chapter V below.

Issue 1. Changing trends in trafficking in heroin

2. The following recommendations were made with regard to the issue entitled “Changing trends in trafficking in heroin”:

(a) Governments of countries in Asia and the Pacific should, through the exchange of information gathered on criminal groups and the development of coordinated enforcement strategies to target the organizers of such groups and to dismantle their networks, encourage their authorities to develop greater cooperation, both regionally and internationally, to address the diverse trafficking operations of West African criminal groups;

(b) It was proposed that the United Nations should widen the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force by investing it with the legal basis to interdict drug caravans, destroy illicit drug laboratories and support opium poppy eradication in Afghanistan;

(c) Governments of countries in Asia and the Pacific were encouraged to work towards harmonizing their legislation, regulations and penalties for the control of illicit drugs, in order to support closer operational cooperation both nationally and regionally and to reduce disparities in the sentencing of offenders;

(d) Support should be provided to law enforcement agencies to develop the professional skills of law enforcement personnel through exchange programmes, secondments and international technical assistance in order to increase the depth of their knowledge and extend their operational compatibility;

(e) Authorities responsible for drug law enforcement should become fully conversant with the use of special investigation techniques such as controlled deliveries, the use of undercover officers and formally structured informant programmes, in order to be operationally prepared to support one another to the fullest extent possible in the investigation and prosecution of drug trafficking groups.

Issue 2. Recovering the proceeds of crime

3. The following recommendations were made with regard to the issue entitled “Recovering the proceeds of crime”:

(a) Governments should act to ensure that their national legislation to counter money-laundering is fully implemented and adequately supports the needs

of the authorities responsible for the investigation and prosecution of suspected money-laundering offences;

(b) Where they have not already done so, Governments of countries in Asia and the Pacific should take steps to ensure that all sectors of the criminal justice system with the responsibility and powers to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate on money-laundering offences are well informed, trained and familiar with the application of legislation related to combating money-laundering and recovering the proceeds of crime;

(c) Governments should be encouraged to introduce comprehensive legislation on civil asset forfeiture in order to support authorities in the recovery of the proceeds of crime.

Issue 3. Precursor control and the impact on the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants

4. The following recommendations were made with regard to the issue entitled “Precursor control and the impact on the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants”:

(a) Governments should be encouraged to assess the national demand for, and use and sources of, amphetamine-type stimulants, in order to be able to better respond with effective strategies to prevent their manufacture and trafficking;

(b) Governments should take steps to ensure that they have the forensic capacity to support the relevant authorities in the successful investigation of the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, in identifying trafficking routes and in tracing manufacturing sites through the analysis of seized amphetamine-type stimulants;

(c) In order to more effectively deal with the illicit manufacture and abuse of, and trafficking in, amphetamine-type stimulants, Governments should encourage their drug control authorities to strengthen existing regional and international cooperation in the exchange of information, contribute to the international precursor control initiatives Operation Cohesion and Project Prism and develop partnerships with the chemical industries, in order to engage their support in combating the diversion of precursors.

II. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures

5. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 February 2009, the Meeting considered item 3 of its agenda, entitled “Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures”. For the consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it two papers prepared by the Secretariat, entitled “Statistics on drug trafficking trends in East, South-East and South Asia, Oceania and worldwide” (UNODC/HONLAP/32/2) and “Regional and subregional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific” (UNODC/HONLAP/32/CRP.1).

6. A representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) introduced the item and made an audio-visual presentation, providing an overview of trends in the illicit manufacture of drugs and their trafficking in the region and

worldwide. The presentation was based on information provided by Governments to UNODC. The representatives of Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United States of America made statements and audio-visual presentations. A representative of UNODC made an audio-visual presentation on the outcome of the regional forum on engaging police in the response to HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific.

7. Several representatives reported an increase in drug trafficking in Asia and the Pacific over the past two years. The manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and methamphetamine had increased. It was noted that, in addition to the increase in opium production in Afghanistan, which was of continuing concern, the conversion of illicit drugs into a more compact form that facilitated their concealment and transfer and made drug law enforcement more complicated. The Meeting expressed its concern at the high level of heroin manufacture currently taking place in Afghanistan. Several representatives noted that there was evidence of increased cooperation between Colombian and African trafficking groups, and their activities in Asia and the Pacific appeared to be growing. In particular, several representatives noted the involvement of both East and West African groups in heroin and cocaine trafficking, and it was reported that Africa was emerging as a distribution area for cocaine coming into Asia and the Pacific.

8. Representatives reported that illicit drugs were smuggled by sea, air and postal services. Ketamine remained a concern and some representatives reported that steps were being taken in their countries to respond to the problem. New trends that were identified included attempts to divert pharmaceutical preparations containing psychotropic substances for trafficking through illicit Internet pharmacies. Furthermore, traffickers were smuggling heroin, cannabis resin and pharmaceutical preparations in small quantities using postal and courier services, in order to avoid detection.

9. A number of countries emphasized the importance of international cooperation, including the implementation of the international drug control treaties and other multilateral and bilateral treaties aimed at providing for mutual cooperation in combating drug trafficking. The benefits of sharing of intelligence through drug liaison officers and through close cooperation between law enforcement authorities undertaking joint operations and investigations and controlled deliveries were emphasized.

10. Several representatives emphasized that greater priority should be given to effective controls on the manufacture of precursor chemicals. Increased compliance with Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/3, entitled "Strengthening systems for the control of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs", could enhance efforts to control the manufacture of methamphetamine. Data published on the website of the International Narcotics Control Board served as a useful source of information for authorities in importing and exporting chemicals to check whether pending shipments required additional law enforcement scrutiny. Furthermore, the Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system was an important tool that member States should use to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals.

III. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, by States in the region

11. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 February 2009, the Meeting considered item 4 of its agenda, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, by States in the region". The Meeting had before it a report prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information provided by Governments in response to a questionnaire sent to all members of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific (UNODC/HONLAP/32/3). The report reflected the replies received from Afghanistan, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, China (including Hong Kong, China), Georgia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. Shortly before and during the Meeting, completed questionnaires were received from India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Thailand.

12. A representative of the Secretariat introduced the item. Statements were made by representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

IV. Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

13. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 February 2009, the Meeting considered item 5 of its agenda, entitled "Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly". The Secretariat introduced the item with a briefing on the decision made at the fifty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs concerning follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. The representatives of Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Japan made statements.

14. One representative noted his Government's commitment to continued implementation of the goals and targets set in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex) and in the related measures and plans of action. He stated that his Government had paid particular attention to implementing supply reduction and sustainable alternative development programmes and activities and that the sharing of best practices and successful measures in those areas among countries was important. He noted that UNODC could play a major role in assisting countries to strengthen their data collection and the analysis of problems related to drug abuse. Support was expressed for the Chairperson and Bureau of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in taking the lead in preparations for the high-level segment of its fifty-second session.

15. Another representative highlighted several new trends that should be taken into account in the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. For example, there was a trend towards greater specialization and decentralization of the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, in order to evade

detection, and more non-controlled substances were being used. In order to address that situation, an information-sharing system had been developed for precursor control, in which other member States could participate. Another trend causing concern was the appearance of new synthetic drugs in the region, for example piperazine-type synthetic drugs, as well as mixtures of methamphetamine, methylenedioxymethamphetamine and ketamine. It was important for member States to share up-to-date information on precursors and the new types of drugs. In addition, concerns were expressed about the widespread production and distribution, including through postal and courier services, of tetrahydrocannabinol-rich cannabis seeds. The importance of preventing the smuggling of such cannabis seeds was emphasized, and it was proposed that there should be global monitoring of cannabis seeds conducted through UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board.

16. One representative stated that his Government had made it a priority to improve cooperation with other countries in the region in the fight against the cultivation, manufacture and transit of, and trafficking in, illicit drugs, by exchanging information and experience. The Government was also cooperating with the International Narcotics Control Board on the implementation of the international drug control conventions and the provision of relevant information, including through the PEN Online system. Challenges for Asia and the Pacific included the change from opium poppy cultivation to cannabis cultivation by some Afghan farmers, since it was a lower-risk cash crop, particularly in opium-free provinces. While global wheat prices had persuaded some farmers to cultivate wheat rather than opium, that situation could be reversed if the respective income ratios changed in the future.

V. Consideration of topics by working groups

17. At its 3rd to 6th meetings, on 11 and 12 February 2009, the Meeting established working groups to examine three issues under agenda item 6, entitled "Consideration of topics by working groups". The observations made by the working groups and the conclusions reached after consideration of the issues are presented below. The recommendations made by the participants of the working groups and adopted at the Meeting are included in chapter I above.

Issue 1. Changing trends in trafficking in heroin

18. The working group on issue 1 held a meeting on 11 February 2009. In its consideration of the issue, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Poor village farmers would only be successfully encouraged to abandon illicit opium poppy cultivation when alternatives had been introduced that improved their standard of living and that offered a future to their rural communities;

(b) Illicit opium production in the Golden Triangle had significantly declined and the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants had increased, although heroin manufactured in Afghanistan was still affecting the region;

(c) The effects of globalization throughout Asia and the Pacific, rapid change, better and faster communications, the developing Asian "highways", long-distance road connections, greater use of the Mekong and the expansion of air

routes from capitals to important commercial cities were all impacting upon and changing drug trafficking trends;

(d) West African criminal groups operated throughout Asia and the Pacific, their activities included trafficking in all forms of illicit drugs and their connections extended from the heroin manufacturing areas of the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle to Latin America;

(e) Inconsistencies between the drug control legislation of different countries highlighted anomalies in penalties and sentencing for drug offences and could make cooperation between countries difficult;

(f) Seizures of cocaine were reported to be on the increase throughout the region, while there were reports of trafficking groups bartering cocaine in exchange for heroin.

19. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) The creation of counternarcotic “security belts” and financial “security belts” around Afghanistan was one of the most effective instruments for combating trafficking in illicit drugs and precursors in the region;

(b) Alternative development programmes throughout Asia and the Pacific that provided clean water, built basic community infrastructure and offered education and health services had proved successful in supporting rural communities in their efforts to abandon the illicit cultivation of opium poppies in favour of the cultivation of legitimate crops;

(c) Reported seizures of heroin were still a matter of concern and authorities remained greatly concerned about the reported increased incidence of cocaine use and the worrying trend of the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and their use by young people;

(d) The well-organized West African criminal groups operating throughout Asia and the Pacific posed a serious challenge to drug law enforcement authorities.

Issue 2. Recovering the proceeds of crime

20. The working group on issue 2 held a meeting on 11 February 2009. In its consideration of the issue, the participants of the working group made the following observations:

(a) Effective action to dismantle drug trafficking groups should target the proceeds derived from their illegal activities. Comprehensive legislation addressing money-laundering offences was essential. Most countries of Asia and the Pacific had legislation in place empowering authorities to seize the cash, property and other assets of those convicted of dealing in illicit drugs;

(b) The UNODC computer-based training syllabus on combating money-laundering was an informative and instructive training programme for law enforcement staff and it was recommended that that programme be continued;

(c) Seizing their accumulated assets could close down criminal groups and severely affect the individuals heading them. Civil forfeiture procedure was a major asset for authorities in the recovery of the proceeds of crime;

(d) Cash-based economies and the hawala system of banking, transfers and payments could be a challenge to law enforcement agencies investigating the flow of suspect wealth.

21. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) All sectors of the justice system, including investigation, prosecution and the judiciary, needed to be informed, trained and familiar with the application of legislation related to combating money-laundering and recovering the proceeds of crime;

(b) Both the formal banking financial sector and the non-financial sector should be subject to the provisions of regulations against money-laundering, in order to prevent the laundering of assets such as investments, property and shares;

(c) Legislation enabling the forfeiture of civil assets provided authorities with a powerful tool to counteract the illicit proceeds of traffickers.

Issue 3. Precursor control and the impact on the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants

22. The working group on issue 3 held a meeting on 12 February 2009. In its consideration of the issue, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Owing to shifting patterns in abuse and in the mobility of production sites, making an accurate assessment of the situation with regard to the illicit manufacture and abuse of, and trafficking in, amphetamine-type stimulants presented unique challenges. In broad terms, over the previous 10 years developing countries had recorded a steady increase in the reported illicit manufacture and abuse of such stimulants;

(b) The illicit manufacture and abuse of methamphetamine were the primary challenges confronting Asia and the Pacific with regard to amphetamine-type stimulants. Throughout the region, a growing trend reported by authorities was the discovery and dismantling of large, commercial production sites, capable of illicitly manufacturing many hundreds of thousands of tablets per week;

(c) There needed to be improved, faster and coordinated sharing of information by States in the region about current trends in, experiences with and seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants and the operations of clandestine laboratories;

(d) The PEN Online system was generally an effective tool for use by authorities to verify the legitimacy of transactions involving controlled precursor chemicals and their cross-border movement.

23. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Forensic support to identify the type, chemical composition and chemical signature of drugs was an important element in the successful investigation of the illicit manufacture of seized amphetamine-type stimulants;

(b) Proactively sharing information around the region of details such as new seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants, identified attempts at the diversion of chemicals or pharmaceuticals and the whereabouts or travel of persons known to be

involved in trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants would better support authorities in implementing effective countermeasures;

(c) For the PEN Online system to remain effective, authorities must be prompt in their response to requests and the system should be available on the UNODC website;

(d) Establishing multi-agency specialized investigation response teams, for example including representatives of the police and customs agencies and of health and forensics departments, as well as prosecutors, was an effective strategy to focus multiple resources against the manufacturers of synthetic drugs.

VI. Organization of the Thirty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

24. At its 7th meeting, on 13 February 2009, the Meeting considered item 7 of its agenda, entitled "Organization of the Thirty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific". For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat (UNODC/HONLAP/32/4). During the consideration of the item, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Bhutan, China, Fiji, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Thailand.

25. It was proposed that the Meeting should consider several topics for discussion by future working groups: (a) increasing and changing patterns of trafficking in cocaine in Asia and the Pacific; (b) the increasing cannabis problem; (c) current trends in the diversion of precursors, including non-controlled chemicals, for the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and countermeasures, including the use of controlled delivery; (d) improving measures against money-laundering, including legislation and procedures; and (e) heroin trafficking groups active in Asia and the Pacific, including information about such groups and approaches to countering their activities. The Secretariat would consult further with interested member States concerning the final selection of topics for the working groups.

26. No offer to host the Thirty-third Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, was made at the Thirty-second Meeting. Representatives of several member States indicated that more time was needed to plan for the chairing and possible hosting of the Meeting. To that end, the Secretariat would be in contact with the Bureau and other interested member States.

27. The Meeting approved the following provisional agenda for the Thirty-third Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures.

4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, by States in the region.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups: [to be determined].
6. Organization of the Thirty-fourth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report.

VII. Adoption of the report

28. At its 7th meeting, on 13 February 2009, the Meeting considered item 9 of its agenda and adopted the report of the Thirty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific (UNODC/HONLAP/32/L.1 and Add.1-5), including the reports of the working groups and the recommendations contained therein. Statements were made by the representatives of India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

VIII. Organization of the Meeting

A. Opening and duration of the Meeting

29. The Thirty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, was held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok from 10 to 13 February 2009. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Thailand and the representative of the Executive Director of UNODC addressed the representatives at the opening meeting.

B. Attendance

30. The following States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific were represented: Australia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America and Viet Nam. Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China, were also represented.

31. Belgium, Canada, Germany and Italy were represented by observers.

32. The Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Customs Organization were represented by observers.

33. UNODC served as the secretariat of the Meeting.

C. Election of officers

34. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 February 2009, the Meeting elected the following officers by acclamation:

<i>Chairman:</i>	Chartchai Suthiklom (Thailand)
<i>First Vice-Chairman:</i>	Baltazar Balangauan (Philippines)
<i>Second Vice-Chairman:</i>	Karunadasa Gamage (Sri Lanka)
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Meinarwati Nawar (Indonesia)

D. Adoption of the agenda

35. At its 2nd meeting, the Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, by States in the region.
5. Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.
6. Consideration of topics by working groups:
 - (a) Changing trends in trafficking in heroin;
 - (b) Recovering the proceeds of crime;
 - (c) Precursor control and the impact on the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.
7. Organization of the Thirty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report of the Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.

E. Documentation

36. The documents before the Meeting are listed in the annex.

F. Closure of the Meeting

37. A closing statement was made by the representative of the Secretariat.

Annex

List of documents before the Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

<i>Document number</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
UNODC/HONLAP/32/1	2	Annotated provisional agenda and provisional timetable
UNODC/HONLAP/32/2	3	Statistics on drug trafficking trends in East, South-East and South Asia, Oceania and worldwide
UNODC/HONLAP/32/3	4	Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, by States in the region
UNDOC/HONLAP/32/4	7	Organization of the Thirty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific
UNODC/HONLAP/32/L.1 and Add.1-5	9	Draft report
UNODC/HONLAP/32/CRP.1	3	Regional and subregional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific
UNODC/HONLAP/32/CRP.2-CRP.16	3	Country reports