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

Denpasar, Indonesia, 6-9 October 2009

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Major regional drug trafficking trends and  
countermeasures****Regional and subregional cooperation in Asia and  
the Pacific\*\*****Note by the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. South Asia has been frequently used as a transit hub for the illicit trafficking of heroin originating in Afghanistan and heroin from that country has been detected in India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal. In recent years, the number of heroin seizures has risen significantly and the trafficking of Afghan origin heroin through new routes including via Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates is a matter of concern.

2. The Greater Mekong Subregion, where some of the largest single methamphetamine seizures in the world have occurred, continues to be central to methamphetamine manufacture, trafficking and use. A significant increase in trafficking of methamphetamine and illicit manufacture of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) was noted in countries in East and South-East Asia. Moreover, for the first time in recent years, the illicit manufacture of gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) was reported. The infrastructure corridors and the trade facilitation pilot sites now being developed will link known ATS production countries with major ATS markets in the Greater Mekong Subregion. This would arguably increase the volume of illicit trafficking and thus strain limited police and customs resources.

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3. In addition, the region has witnessed increase in ATS production and trafficking. Two significant clandestine methamphetamine laboratory seizures were reported by Indian agencies and one by Sri Lanka. In November 2008, the Indian Narcotics Control Bureau dismantled a clandestine manufacturing facility in West India, and seized a total of 8.5 kg of methamphetamine, 30 litres of liquid meth and 245 litres of other material, which tested positive for methamphetamine in the course of forensic analysis. In June 2009, nearly 31 kg of methamphetamine was seized in Mumbai, with the production facility traced to Chandigarh, where sizeable quantities of chemicals were seized. In May 2008, the Sri Lankan authorities seized large quantities of chemicals and equipment at a facility on the outskirts of Colombo.

4. India is considered to be one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of acetic anhydride and seizures of acetic anhydride have been reported by Indian law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, India and Nepal are the largest producers of cannabis and cannabis resin in South Asia. Although law enforcement authorities in India regularly eradicate large areas of illegally cultivated cannabis, some quantities find their way into the domestic market. In 2008, about 400 acres of cannabis were destroyed, and seizures of cannabis herb in India have averaged about 100 tons over the last two years. Since 2003, annual seizures of cannabis resin in India have amounted to about 4 tons.

5. In China and Viet Nam, seizures of new types of products containing mixtures of synthetic drugs were reported. In December 2008, tablets consisting of a mixture of methaqualone and ephedrine were seized in Northern China (Nei Mongol). In January 2009, GHB mixed with MDMA and ketamine concealed in bottles labelled "traditional cough medicine" were seized in Guangxi, China. In Viet Nam, the adulteration of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) with substances such as ketamine was reported in 2008.

6. In Nepal, cannabis resin is trafficked to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and seizures of cannabis resin amount to almost 50 percent of the total seizures in India. Seizures were also reported in Thailand, Japan, China and the Hong Kong SAR of China. The illicit cultivation of poppy is on the rise in Nepal and law enforcement agencies seized 105 kg in 2008 and 255 kg as of June 2009.

7. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) established a comprehensive drug control framework by enacting the Law on Drugs in January 2008. The Decree on the Implementation of the Law on Drugs was promulgated on 20 March 2009 and provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the law. A Comprehensive National Drug Control Master Plan was developed, with support from UNODC, and was officially approved by the Government in March 2009.

8. Moreover, the Government of the Lao PDR has strengthened its coordination capacity to counter illicit trafficking and related crimes through law enforcement and criminal justice. The Chairman of the National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision, who also chairs the National Illicit Drug Sector Working Group, proposed the establishment of two sub-working groups at the Sector Working Group's meeting on 3 June 2009. One of those groups, to be set up with UNODC's assistance, would discuss drug law enforcement and criminal justice's response to transnational organized crime.

9. In South-East Asia, poppy cultivation levels have stabilized in 2008 and cultivation has been concentrated in Myanmar (28,500 ha) and, to a lesser extent, in the Lao PDR (1,600 ha), in 2008. Trafficking in opiates continues to be concentrated along the major route from Myanmar and Laos to neighbouring countries of East and South-East Asia and Oceania. Alternative routes from South-West Asia to South-East Asia and Oceania have emerged. Thus, although the bulk of opiates in China still originates in Myanmar, there are reports of shipments of heroin from Afghanistan via Pakistan to China shipped directly to various destinations and indirectly via Dubai.

10. An emerging trend is the increasing use by drug traffickers of social networking sites to recruit South-East Asian women to work as “drug mules”. The traffickers purportedly target single women between the age of 20 and 30, without criminal records, who are unemployed or working in clerical, sales and service jobs. In early 2009, the Thai Police arrested suspects for trading in illegal drugs through a popular Internet chat service and seized heroin and amphetamine tablets.

11. One of the main obstacles in the fight against illicit drug trafficking has been the degree of variance among drug law enforcement regimes in the region. There is also a need for a more coordinated and integrated approach among such agencies in the region.

12. While the Paris Pact initiative has strengthened the efforts of Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, existing gaps and needs in countries in South Asia should be taken into account. There is a need for drug law enforcement agencies in the region to better understand the drug problem, key trends and links to international organized crime, as well as to learn to interact effectively with regional and international partners.

13. In addition, there is insufficient capacity at the national and regional levels to effectively suppress the manufacture of illicit drugs and prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals from licit channels into illicit traffic. While the case for cooperation on countering drug trafficking is well established, priority attention needs also to be paid to control precursor chemicals used in the production of ATS as they move across and within borders.

## **II. International Cooperation**

### **A. Regional conferences and meetings on drug control**

14. The Standing Office on Drugs Control (SODC) of Viet Nam hosted the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drugs Control Meeting (ASOD) in June 2009 to discuss the draft ASEAN Anti-Drug Action Plan 2010-2015. Also, Viet Nam holds 2009 presidency of Association of National Police Forces of the ASEAN region (ASEANAPOL) and the annual conference of this police organization was held in May 2009 in Ha Noi on the theme “Building ASEAN countries’ Police Forces for a stable and developed ASEAN.” The conference discussed cooperation in fighting crime, drug and human trafficking, terrorism, and weapon smuggling, as well as financial, banking and hi-tech criminals. The conference also discussed the establishment of a secretarial board for ASEANAPOL and judicial support among

member countries. The next Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drugs Matter (ASOD) will be held from 29 to 30 September 2009 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

15. The Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the signatories of the MOU on Drug Control met on 17 July 2009 and was preceded by the Senior Officials Committee Meeting from 14-16 July in Thailand. The meeting adopted the rolling Subregional Action Plan (VII), which defines priority interventions on drug control in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The Action Plan covers five main thematic areas, including demand reduction, sustainable alternative development, law enforcement, international cooperation on judicial matters, and drugs and HIV/AIDS and the budget for the implementation of these activities amounts to US\$ 18,816,000.

16. The 9th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) was held from 1 to 2 July 2009 in Myanmar. Cooperation in the areas of illicit trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, terrorism and piracy and armed robbery was discussed. It was attended by over 100 participants from ASEAN countries, including observers from UNODC, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre, United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons (ARTIP) project.

17. The Eighth Meetings of the ACCORD Task Force I on Civic Awareness and Task Force II on Demand Reduction were convened on 5-8 August 2009 in Jakarta, Indonesia. For Task Force I, Delegates from Brunei Darussalam, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam presented the highlights of their Country Reports, detailing the national activities, directed campaigns, and best practices in their civic awareness campaigns against drug abuse. In relation to Task Force II, delegates made presentations reflecting best practices and implementation of respective national demand reduction programmes and activities in the frameworks of respective national anti-illicit drugs strategies and action plans. UNODC and the ASEAN Secretariat acted as Joint Secretariat.

## **B. Cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the governments of the region**

18. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) plays an important role in the area of drug control in the region. UNODC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SAARC, under which a proposal to upgrade the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) to a Regional Intelligence Centre for South Asia is under negotiation.

19. The UNODC Regional Office for South Asia is in the process of delivering two technical assistance projects in the region on (i) Prevention of transmission of HIV among drug users in SAARC countries and (ii) Prevention of spread of HIV amongst vulnerable groups in South Asia in prison settings. In the framework of the first project, UNODC provides assistance to (i) scale up cost effective comprehensive package of services for prevention of spread of HIV among drug users, especially injecting drug users; (ii) adopt oral substitution programmes in both community and prison settings; (iii) provide a platform for convergence of HIV, drug use and drug law enforcement interventions; (iv) build capacities of

service providers and civil society partners on drugs and HIV issues through training, building learning opportunities, exchange of experiences and sharing of expertise.

20. With its project geared towards prison settings, UNODC is assisting Governments in the region to respond to HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users and in prison settings with a view to incorporate oral substitution treatment for drug dependants in prison settings. Since 2005, UNODC has trained 418 prison staff in 27 prisons in South Asia and has reached out to more than 27,000 persons from/working in prison settings including prison officials, inmates and civil society partners on the implementation of various components of the comprehensive package of services for HIV prevention in prisons. In India, UNODC, in partnership with the National Drugs Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), the All Indian Institute for Medical Science (AIIMS), rolled out the first Oral Substitution Treatment (OST) programme for drug dependents in Tihar prisons, New Delhi in November 2008. Since then, more than 128 clients have participated in the OST programme and some 50 clients are receiving OST at a time.

21. Under a project aimed at strengthening capacities on drug law enforcement in the region, UNODC has organized two Training of Trainers' (ToT's) programmes and two Regional training programmes in the course of which 97 core trainers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka were trained on drug law enforcement. UNODC has assisted countries of the region to conduct national training programmes in their countries, where 236 law enforcement personnel have been trained.

22. The UNODC Regional Office for South Asia is in the process of conducting seminars to assess the nature and extent of illicit pharmaceutical use (on the basis of expert opinion) in Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. To date, UNODC has identified the legal, regulatory and implementation gaps in these countries. Seminars on this topic are under way in India and Bangladesh.

23. The UNODC Country Office in Myanmar has established a close relationship with the Government and in particular, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) under Ministry of Home Affairs, which allowed UNODC to target more at-risk areas such as mining areas in Kachin State and provide technical support and training activities on topics such as HIV prevention and harm reduction to police forces and prisons settings. An important activity was the UNODC/CCDAC Joint Assessment concerning law enforcement, HIV and drug use, which analysed the involvement of the law enforcement sector in Myanmar's national response against HIV/AIDS. The assessment identified gaps and opportunities for further developing the response and recommended strategies and technical assistance.

24. UNODC has also established partnerships with various ministries of the Government of Myanmar in the fields of illicit crop monitoring, alternative development, drug treatment and rehabilitation, and drug-related harm reduction. The Myanmar Country Office actively participated in regular meetings conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Several projects have been carried out in cooperation with the Government, including a project on drug control and development in the Wa Region of the Shan State; on reducing injecting drug use and its harmful consequences in the Union of Myanmar; on HIV prevention for police

force in Myanmar; on reducing of injecting drug use, HIV/AIDS and related vulnerability in Myanmar; and on reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS among drug users through the HAARP Country Flexible Programme for Myanmar. In early 2009, sustainable livelihoods projects on drug control through alternative sustainable livelihoods in ten villages in Pinlaung Township, Southern Shan State and Mong Maw township, Wa Special region 2 Northern Shan State, were submitted to the Government for approval.

25. A Regional Programme Framework (RPF) for East Asia and the Pacific was developed in 2008 and consists of two main thematic areas namely “Rule of Law” and “Health and Development”. The RPF will aim to support member States to (a) reduce illicit trafficking of people, drugs (and their precursors) and natural resources/hazardous substances; (b) reduce weaknesses in governance, including corruption; (c) reduce serious transnational organized crimes, including terrorism, while protecting vulnerable groups; (d) reduce the incidence of drug abuse; (e) reduce HIV/AIDS transmission among injecting drug users, prisoners and victims of trafficking in persons; and (f) provide sustainable alternative livelihoods in current and former opium poppy growing areas. With respect to geographic coverage, particular focus will be given to the ASEAN countries (five of whom along with China, form the Greater Mekong Subregion – another focus area), as well as other countries in the region with significant emerging human security challenges (e.g., Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea). In the Pacific, any programming will be appropriately sequenced taking into account current needs and capacity to absorb further programmes.

26. The Government of six Greater Mekong Subregion and UNODC, who are signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Drug Control, organized a side event “15 years of Partnerships: Opportunities and challenges” from 11-12 March in Vienna, Austria, during the High Level Ministerial Segment at the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs. The purpose of the meeting was to (i) publicize the achievements of the joint activities undertaken regarding drug control within the framework of the MOU (ii) highlight the relevance and importance of the successful MOU mechanism, which promotes subregional cooperation and partnership (iii) mobilize sustainable resources from the donors. The Ministerial Consultative Meeting was attended by MOU signatories, as well as representatives from Australia, Germany, Japan, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States.

27. UNODC’s technical assistance in Viet Nam was extended to the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Justice, Supreme People’s Prosecution Office, Supreme People’s Court and State Bank of Viet Nam to build capacity to deal with money-laundering crime; and to the law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence; and to the Forest Protection Department to build the capacity of forest rangers to control forest crime. Further technical cooperation is planned with police, customs and border guards to strengthen border control on land, sea and at the airports to control migrant smuggling, and to enhance drug and crime information collection, analysis and sharing.