

Valedictory A

M.K. Singh,
Director General,
Narcotics Control Bureau

Mr. President Hon'ble Justice Mr. Ashok Desai, distinguished guests, officials of UNODC, ladies and gentlemen. It is a matter of proud privilege for me to be here this afternoon with you all at the end of the day to speak a few words.

In the inaugural Session, Honorable Justice Mr. Desai, in his address gave us the very crux of all the issues involved in today's workshop on Indian precursor laws. He said that laws in our country were majestic but they appeared modest when they ultimately come down for enforcement. In that context he also mentioned about the extra legal, not illegal, resorts by various agencies evolved in our holistic efforts of drug law enforcement in the country. I am certain the participants have taken this in view while deliberating on inadequacies and procedural lapses and other practical difficulties in investigation of cases resulting in acquittals. When I look back through my short experience in NCB, I am also forced to look upon some facts to which I fail to find a rational answer. During the past two years all the charge sheeted drug related cases in Tamil Nadu have ended in conviction while the rate of acquittal in the courts in the states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have been very high.

In order to fight the scourge of drugs, which is now truly a global problem, the importance of precursor control need not be over emphasized. We all are aware that a variety of chemicals are used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. The U.N. convention against illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 refers to "substances frequently used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances" and twenty-three such substances are listed in Table I and II of the 1988 convention. Accordingly, the government of India incorporated a new provision in Section 9A of the NDPS Act and empowered the government to regulate or prohibit the production, manufacture, supply and distribution of the controlled substances. Again, under an amended Section 25A of the NDPS Act the punishment of precursor control related offences was also sanctioned. Thus an elaborate regime for precursor control has been established in the country under NDPS Act and some other laws of the land.

The inadequacies and shortcomings perhaps lie in the field of enforcement of precursor control laws. There may be some procedural lapses in conducting the search and seizures or perhaps there are some unexplainable difficulty in the

enforcement of these control orders and rules which are resulting in undesired results.

I would also like to mention here that it is not only the drug law enforcement agencies all over the country which are called upon to handle the problem. There are other important participants in the overall drug scenario. They are –the law enforcement agencies, the traffickers and criminals, the addicts, the magistracy and the judiciary, the legal fraternity of the country, the manufacturers of the precursors including the distributors and transporters. other industries who are the bonafide consumers of precursors, the media and the public opinion, not all, but those who are aware of the scourge of drugs and precursors. All have to join hands and make positive endeavour in a concerted manner to handle this problem, which has assumed global proportions.

I had the opportunity to listen to the presentation of reports of Groups I and II though I could not attend the deliberations in the workshop. I must say that some of the points in the reports are positive and will certainly lead us all towards some definite improvement in our performance in future. I am sure this workshop will also act as a 'precursor' in determining our overall strategy and tactics for better and effective precursor control in the country and will lead us all towards some practical solutions in different areas of our combined efforts.

With these words I thank Mr. Devendra Dutt and his officials for organizing a successful and purposeful workshop and for giving me opportunity to be here. I would also like to assure on my personal behalf and on behalf of Narcotics Control Bureau of all help and cooperation and assistance in this future efforts in this direction.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen for giving me a patient hearing.