

TOPIC NO. 9

OPERATION PURPLE

DURATION OF SESSION:	30 MINUTES
SUGGESTED METHOD:	LECTURE
TRAINING AIDS:	OHP, POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
AIM OF THE SESSION:	

The session will familiarise the participants with this international voluntary tracking programme in respect of Potassium Permanganate, its goals, achievements and results.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION:

At the end of the session, participants will be in a better position to appreciate the significance of international cooperation in preventing the precursor chemicals from falling into the hands of criminals.

POINTS TO BE COVERED:

- Operation Purple is a voluntary international law enforcement initiative aimed at preventing diversion of Potassium Permanganate, a chemical widely used and preferred by drug traffickers as an oxidising agent in the illicit production of cocaine.
- It is a voluntary international 'tracking' programme launched with the objective of identifying suspicious consignments of Potassium Permanganate so as to prevent diversion of the chemical from the international market, effect seizures, or suspend shipment as appropriate.
- Potassium permanganate was chosen as a suitable target chemical given the limited number of manufacturers worldwide and the fact that it is used almost entirely in one specific region - that being Latin America.
- At present 21 countries and three international organisations (INCB, WCO and Interpol) are participating in the operation. India is the only participating country from the SAARC region.
- In order to accomplish the goals of this initiative, a Steering Committee was formed to initiate and oversee detailed steps to be taken by all the participating countries. The Steering Committee was elected by the participating countries, and consists of representatives of the following countries and three international organisations:

1. China	5. India
2. Honking SAR of China	6. Spain
3. Colombia	7. Ukraine
4. Germany	8. United States of America

International organisations

1. INCB Secretariat
2. Interpol
3. World Customs Organisation

The Steering Committee is co-chaired by Germany and USA. It meets twice a year.

- Main goals of Operation Purple are to:
 - Identify and intercept diversion attempts.
 - Identify rogue companies and individuals.
 - Gather intelligence on diversion methods.
 - Gather intelligence on trafficking trends and shipping routes.
 - Take administrative, civil and/or criminal action as appropriate.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.
 - Gather intelligence on the licit and illicit use of Potassium Permanganate, particularly in South America
 - Disseminate information to the competent authorities for assessment of applications for import/export permits.
- For success of this operation, the Competent National Authorities should:
 - Exchange intelligence on movement of Potassium Permanganate with promptitude.
 - Refuse permission for import/export of Potassium Permanganate if the other Competent Authority expresses doubt.
 - Respond to intelligence or other requests with alacrity.
 - Stop or seize suspicious consignments.
 - Initiate criminal and administrative action.
- INCB is also acting as a focal point for flow of information.
- Operation Purple commenced on 15th April 1999 and was originally to terminate on 31.12.1999 but was extended till 30th of June 2000. It has now been extended indefinitely, subject to review in the next Steering Committee meeting.
- The results of the operation have far exceeded the initial expectations. The achievements displayed with the help of slides during presentation.
- The operation has also detected a number of attempts of drug traffickers to acquire and divert bulk quantities of Potassium Permanganate from new sources, which exposes vulnerability of the traffickers to such operations.
- It also appears Potassium Permanganate is less available for diversion from the licit sources.
- A study carried out in USA on seized samples of cocaine collected from various parts of the world also shows that the use of potassium permanganate, the oxidising agent in the particular process is lower than at any time before.
- Stricter watch over Potassium Permanganate transactions has caused the traffickers to:
 - Look for new shipping routes.
 - Adopt long circuitous routes to mislead enforcement agencies.
 - Request exporters to avoid the participating countries monitoring Potassium Permanganate shipments.