

**Statement by Mr. Sherhon Salimzoda,  
Director of the Drug Control Agency under the President  
of the Republic of Tajikistan, Lieutenant General of Justice,  
at the Ministerial Meeting in the Segment of Regular  
Session 62 of the United Nations Commission on Drugs and  
Crime  
(Vienna, March 14-15, 2019)**

**Dear Mr. Chairman!  
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Қабл аз ҳама аз номи ҳайати намояндагии Тоҷикистон салому паёми гармро ба Шумо мерасонам.

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan I cordially and graciously welcome you - delegates of the Ministerial meeting.

The Republic of Tajikistan is a democratic, legal and secular state. We are proud to assert that we have been living in an independent, sovereign country for 28 years now.

Tajikistan is a sunshine and mountainous country with 93% of its territory covered by mountains. It's a fine and beautiful region of the developed tourism, in particular mountaineering, as the highest peak is at the altitude of 7,495 meters, and we invite you to visit our country.

**Distinguished delegates of the meeting!**

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this meeting for the opportunity to be part of the discussion of one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Indeed, drug-related problems have become one of the worst threats of the modern world. It spreads at a rapid pace and involves the whole globe, all peoples and countries. For instance, in Tajikistan until 1996 there was no heroin at all, and before 2006 we did not know either what pills are - new psychotropic synthetic substances.

It was 2006 when Tajikistan reported on the first seizure of one tablet of psychotropic substance vs. 10-15,000 tablets of psychotropic substances seized annually for the last five years.

At present the import and distribution of new psychotropic substances in the form of tablets to the local population, especially the youth, has become one of the gravest concerns of our society. To address this challenge we must act jointly as narcotic drugs come to us from Europe through our neighboring countries and for the last two years - partially from the southern countries through Afghanistan. In Tajikistan, narcotic drugs are not produced.

Given the current threats to the world community, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Emomali Rakhmon pays special attention to the drug control activities and for this purpose mobilizes all public bodies.

He believes that in the fight against organized transnational drug groups it is almost impossible to achieve significant results with the efforts of only one State, whatever powerful it might be. Therefore, one of the main conditions for the arrangement of an effective combat against this threat is to set up a multistage network of international cooperation.

**Distinguished delegates of the meeting!**

We are discussing at all levels and making decisions on taking measures aimed at development of an alternative economy and agriculture in Afghanistan in order to reduce and subsequently eliminate the opium poppy-crop cultivation and production of narcotic drugs on its territory.

But the facts show that we in the region and the world community as a whole have not taken effective and sufficient measures in this direction as continuously the production of drugs in Afghanistan is not reduced. For example, according to the UNODC and the competent authorities of Afghanistan, 2017 was a record-breaking year when opium production reached 9,000 tons although in 2018 it decreased by 29 % but still remained high at 6,400 tons.

The border of Tajikistan with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan of over 1,300 kilometers long is considered the first barrier to smuggling of narcotic drugs produced in Afghanistan. That's why the situation on narcotic drugs in Tajikistan is entirely linked with the drug situation in Afghanistan.

All this makes us take additional measures to place a sustainable and robust barrier to the smuggling of drugs and strengthen a border control on the territory of the republic. To accomplish these tasks, we have established an adequate legal framework in the republic. Tajikistan has joined the three major UN Conventions on drugs, adopted special national laws, and concluded 17 intergovernmental agreements and interagency agreements on cooperation in the combat against drugs.

In Tajikistan, we have adopted and implemented four Counter-Drug State Programs and Strategies.

According to our data, only 10% of the drugs produced in Afghanistan are smuggled through the Northern Route while the remaining 90% are transported via other routes.

UN experts and representatives of Afghan authorities allege that 20% of the drugs produced in Afghanistan are shipped via the Northern Route.

In this regard, upon the UNODC initiative and with a view of clarifying this issue, we propose to set up a special group comprising experts of the law enforcement authorities of the Northern Route countries.

Shipment of up to 10% (or 20%) of the drugs of Afghan production via the Northern Route and smuggling of the remaining 90% (or 80%) along other routes indicate that drug control in our country is substantially strengthened.

Most of drugs (60-65 %) smuggled into Tajikistan are seized at the border.

Our Agency is a law enforcement government body, and along with the fight against illicit drug trafficking, it also carries out information and analytical activities and coordinates the operations of all government agencies in this area. Thereupon we can responsibly state that drug control in Tajikistan is under the jurisdiction of the Government and all relevant public bodies of the country.

In Tajikistan we do not produce any types of narcotic drugs.

In addition to the above, the following facts can also testify to the strengthening of drug control in our country:

- Yearly, about 800-900 crimes associated with drugs and up to 1,200 minor drug-related offenses are detected and their perpetrators are brought to criminal liability;
- Around 3-7 tons of the opium family drugs and up to 15,000 tablets of new psychotropic substances are annually seized and destroyed;
- Over the last decade, drug abuse among the population has decreased by 30 %;
- For the last two years, not a single case of smuggling drugs through air and rail transport of Tajikistan has been detected abroad against 10-15 cases revealed annually 5 years ago;
- The activities of several organized criminal groups are annually identified and suppressed, and their leaders and active members are convicted to long terms of imprisonment;
- In recent years, the detention of our citizens in foreign countries has decreased by 33%;
- Over the last 3-4 years, the amount of opium family drugs of Afghan production seized in Central Asia and Russia has several times decreased (4-5 times), where the drugs also come via the Northern Route.

### **Dear friends!**

I want to draw your attention to another challenge - the smuggling of precursors into Afghanistan for the manufacture of hard drugs in the form of heroin. It is clear that precursors are not produced in Afghanistan. Of the overall amount of precursors seized in Afghanistan, not a single gram has been transported through Tajikistan. This raises the question: who and in what way supplies

precursors to Afghanistan? In our opinion, we should work together on this issue in a thoughtful way.

We have also intensified the fight against transnational organized criminal groups. In 2018, we together with our Russian colleagues and jointly with our Afghan counterparts identified and terminated the activities of 4 and 3 organized criminal groups, respectively, and in all 16 organized criminal groups were disclosed and dismantled.

*The groups were engaged in smuggling drugs on a large scale, and some of them were also involved in heroin retailing in Russia by setting up caches and collecting money through the Internet payment service Kiwi Wallet. In two years, one of these groups has received several million US dollars in this way and it's clear that most of cash goes to Afghanistan to terrorist groups.*

As part of the counter-drug strategy of the SCO member states for 2018-2023, an agreement was reached to consider the issue of setting up the SCO anti-drug structure.

Taking into account the geographical location of Tajikistan, as well as its extensive experience and contribution to countering the drug aggression from Afghanistan, we consider it expedient to establish the SCO Anti-Drug Center in Dushanbe city.

### **Dear participants of the meeting!**

In September 2018, Tajikistan joined the Global Call for Action and signed it to address the global drug challenge.

With a view of this appeal implementation, Tajikistan supports the US initiative in issuing the National Drug Control Strategy, which affects all aspects of the Global Call to Action.

We are confident that only together and in close cooperation we are able to counteract the drug threat. 7

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the partner states and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their continued support of our efforts in combating illicit drug trafficking.

**Thank you for attention!**

*Dear friends!*

*On March 19, at 1.00 pm in Hall M-7, there will be held the Presentation of the Situation on Narcotic Drugs in Tajikistan for 2018, and therefore, I have the honor to invite representatives of the SCO member states to take part in this event.*

**Thank you for attention!**