

**High Level Segment of the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of Commission on  
Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

**Statement of Finance Secretary, Government of India,**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of India, I am honored to take the floor in the High Level Segment of the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of CND. Let me first of all, congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as the Chairman of the 57<sup>th</sup> CND. We are sure that your rich experience will be of immense value to the success of the Commission's meeting.

2. Mr. Chairman, the 'Political Declaration and Plan of Action', adopted in the year 2009, was a major milestone in addressing the world drug problem. Member States have strived hard to achieve the target of eliminating or significantly reducing the drug problem by the target date of 2019 set in the Political Declaration. Today, as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs undertakes its mid-term review, it is apparent through the statements of the distinguished delegates through yesterday, that while much has been done on the 'Plan of Action', new challenges have emerged which call for a concerted response from the international community.

3. Before I share the Indian experience of implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the Indian delegation would like to place on record its appreciation of the 'Contribution' of the Executive Director of the UNODC to this high level review. This document, in honestly bringing out the "unequal" progress that has been made since 2009, has set the tone for the general debate. The Government of India would like to express its agreement with and support to the suggested 'way forward' in international drug control policy.

4. In India, there have been some major **achievements** in our drug control policies since 2009 which I would like to place before this distinguished gathering.

5. I would begin with the latest in this series. The original spirit of the UN Drug control Conventions is about protecting the “health and welfare of mankind”. Public health is furthered not only by preventing the abuse of drugs, but also by making them adequately available for the purpose for which they are meant – alleviating the pain and suffering of those in need. With over 2 million cancer patients and an equal number of HIV – Aids patients in our country every year, of which over a million of each suffer from moderate to severe pain, there is no dearth of such needy people in India. Unfortunately, however, they have not had the desired level of access to opioids for pain relief. Ironically, this is so even as India is a licit and traditional producer and exporter of the ‘Opiate Raw Material’ – opium, which is the source of the drugs needed for pain relief. While interplay of several factors has led to this situation, one of them is the issue of complex regulations leading to requirement of multiple licenses for access to these drugs. I am happy to announce that the Indian Parliament has very recently passed amendments to the principal drug enactment in the country which will enable uniform and simplified rules to be notified by the Central Government, leading to removal of the regulatory barriers that have been acting as hindrances to availability of such drugs for pain relief. Such amendments were drafted with the active participation of the civil society, palliative care community. With such amendments, our drug enactment incorporates the ‘Principle of Balance’ espoused by the UN drug control Conventions.

6. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action calls for a comprehensive approach to solve the drug problem and covers aspects of demand reduction, supply reduction and countering of money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation. Another major achievement that India has made in the 5-years since its adoption, is to come up with a policy document – the ‘*National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*’ which covers all aspects pertaining to narcotic drugs,

psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals which find mention in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Given its sheer size and federal structure, drug control in India is a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency function. A comprehensive policy document therefore serves as a benchmark for all agencies and provides guidelines for their action. It is also an evidence of our country's commitment to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

7. Mr. Chairman, we have heard that a major setback in our pursuit of the 2019 deadline has been the expansion in the market of synthetic drugs. We have also heard that precursor control is the only major supply reduction strategy for synthetic drugs. As India is a major manufacturer and trader of precursor chemicals, we deemed it necessary to comprehensively revise our regulation in respect of precursors to confront the emerging challenges. A significant achievement in this direction is the new regulation that we notified in March last year. This has mandatory registration requirement for certain precursors, and different measures of control, including import and export controls, in respect of most of the chemicals figuring in the 1988 Convention.

8. Another major initiative that we have taken to strengthen our drug control system is the development of an online monitoring system for psychotropic substances. We are confident that with the establishment of this system, we would be in a far better position to monitor psychotropic substances, therefore reducing the chances of diversion into illicit channels, as also better fulfill our reporting obligations under the Conventions.

9. Regarding money laundering, last year we amended the principal legislation relating to money laundering in the country. There is now, no threshold of value for cases involving investigation of money laundering and there would also be many more reporting entities. In addition, in the most recent amendments of the narcotics regulation which I referred to earlier, provisions of forfeiture of illicitly acquired properties have been greatly strengthened, besides providing for adequate sanctions for the money laundering offences in the drug control legislation itself. These amendments

will also lead to curbing of money laundering activities relating to drug trafficking.

10. Mr. Chairman, geographically India stands sandwiched between two of the major illicit opium and heroin producing regions of the world and are affected from illicit opiate trafficking originating from these regions, as a transit country. We are thus greatly concerned about the unprecedented growth in illicit poppy cultivation and opium production as reported. Clearly, the efforts put in by the National Government, International Organizations and Member States have still not yielded the desired results. Conscious of its responsibility, India has always been supporting, the Paris Pact Initiative of the UNODC. In the area of regional cooperation, India has entered into Memorandums of Understanding with each of its neighbors, and is involved in taking several information sharing and capacity building initiatives, within the framework of such MoUs.

11. While the achievements have been significant, there have also been **challenges**, principally in the field of demand reduction. One of the major challenges that we are confronted with, given the size of the country and its population is to develop timely statistics of the extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse in the country. After a pilot survey in three cities of the country, we are presently engaged in an advanced pilot survey of 3 States, which shall lead to a nationwide survey. Another challenge is to develop proper standards for treatment of victims of drug abuse, especially when the treatment is imparted through privately run institutions.

12. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would reiterate India's strong support and commitment to the United Nations drug control system, the bulwark of which are three drug control Conventions. We believe that despite the challenges, the Conventions have provided the appropriate framework to address the world drug problem and therefore, need to be implemented in their proper spirit and not be diluted in any manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.