

Statement  
by H.E. Mr. Ashot HOVAKIMIAN,  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia  
at the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Distinguished Mr. Chair,

I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating H.E. Ambassador Khaled Shamaa of Egypt, upon his election as the Chair of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission of Narcotic Drugs, and to wish him success in this important endeavor.

Armenia attaches special importance to organising the combat against drug addiction and trafficking of narcotic drugs, aiming to guard the population of the country against the adverse influence and harmful consequences of narcotic drugs. Drug addiction, trafficking of narcotic drugs and related crimes have an adverse influence on moral and psychological atmosphere of the society, seriously harm the economy, politics and law order of the country. Having no national origin and not recognising the state borders, the trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors may fortify the financial base of organised crime, international terrorism, corruption and extremism, develop into a serious threat for human lives and health, as well as for the national security of the State.

In September 2009 the Government of Armenia adopted the “National Programme on Combating Drug Addiction and Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs in 2009-2012”. Since then effective measures have been carried out by the Armenian Government targeted at legislative reforms, improvement of the effectiveness of the fight against drug abuse, drug trafficking and other preventive measures.

A new “National Strategy on Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking” is close to its final approval by the relevant Interagency Commission that will define the main areas of activities in combating drug problem in Armenia for the coming ten years, i.e. 2014-2024. This Strategy is in line with Armenia’s commitments to different international instruments. It foresees implementation of a series of activities in the fields of prevention and public awareness raising, elimination of illicit drug trafficking, rehabilitation and integration of drug abusers and overall control of all layers of the society involved in the illegal “business”.

Mr. Chair,

In the implementation of Armenia’s ambitious plans on combating drug problem, the cooperation and assistance of UNODC is of utmost

importance. We welcome the new UNODC Strategic Outline for 2012-2015, which includes the countries of the Southern Caucasus. In this regard I would like to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of this respective organization, for his very constructive and efficient dialogue with Armenian authorities during his recent visit to Armenia. A number of preliminary agreements were reached and provisions made for realization of our common goals. We are expecting to receive the UNODC expert mission to Armenia in mid-April to meet the agencies concerned, to assess the situation and formulate the basic framework for the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. Meanwhile, one particular project – the Container Control Program, is already in its initial phase of implementation, and definitely the accomplishment of this program will further facilitate and strengthen control over illicit trafficking of drugs and other banned materials.

Further modernization and enhancing security of the border check points through the comprehensive and multi-dimensional Integrated Border Management program funded by European Union and implemented by UNDP, includes development of the border check points according to the international standards, improvement of legal and administrative codes targeted at the implementation of “single window” principle and regulation of migration processes on the border check points. Armenia is determined in taking further steps aimed at the improvement of drug control and interdiction.

Mr. Chair,

Armenia attaches great importance to the adoption in 2009 of the Joint Ministerial Declaration and the Action Plan for the enhancement of the International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The Political Declaration established 2019 as a target date to States to eliminate or reduce significantly the illicit cultivation, production, manufacture, marketing and distribution of narcotic drugs. We welcome the General Assembly’s resolution 67/193 for convening in early 2016 a special session on the World Drug Problem to review the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action in countering the World Drug Problem within the framework of international drug control conventions and other relevant UN instruments.

As a High Contracting Party to the United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by 1972 Protocol, Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, Convention against Transnational Crime, Convention against Corruption,

Armenia sends periodical reports and answers to questionnaires, which are incorporated into different publications, including the annual World Drug Report. We also cooperate with Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, the European Union Drug Monitoring Center.

Since the launch of the Paris Pact Initiative, Armenia has fully aligned itself with the priority goals set by the Paris Statement and Moscow Declaration. As a member of CSTO /Collective Security Treaty Organization/, Armenia actively participates the anti-drug operations aimed at revealing and eliminating drug transit routes from Afghanistan to CIS and Europe. The last annual exercise “Kanal Caucasus” took place in that framework in October 2013 in Armenia, with participation of law-enforcement agencies of all CSTO states and international observers.

According to the World Drug Report, INCSR and some other country reports, Armenia is neither a major producer, nor significant user or trafficker for drugs. Because Armenia is landlocked and exposed to the two decade-long blockade by its neighbors to the west and east resulting limited transport options make the country less attractive for drug trafficking. Nevertheless, there is a certain tendency for increase of the drug abuse in the country; different new attempts to use Armenian territory as a transit route for smuggling and trafficking become a cause of serious concern for authorities, who spare no effort to apply preventive measures to fight this internationally recognized global threat. An extraordinary case was revealed this January, when Armenian Customs officers, despite their limited resources, discover a significant amount of 928 kg of heroine hidden in a truck, on the Armenian-Iranian “Meghri” check point that was intended for further transit through Georgia, and supposedly to be delivered at a destination in Turkey.

The successful implementation of the adopted strategic decisions on combating drug trafficking cannot be insured without coordinated action. No one is guaranteed that its territory would not be used for illegal drug activities and transit. The law enforcement agencies should increase their cooperation not only at global, but at the regional and sub regional levels as well. Universality of the fight against this global threat means that the common sense, comprehensive and status neutral approach should prevail over narrow political interests of some participating states.

We all have a common vision of a world without drug abuse. Armenia reiterates once again its full support and reaffirms its determination for the closer and active cooperation with the international community.

Thank you.

