



Address by H.E. Mobarez Rashedi, Minister of Counter Narcotics
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
at the High-Level segment of the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 13 March 2014

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished heads of delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me and my delegation to attend this High-Level segment of the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs which provides a great opportunity to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of 2009. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for your election as the chair of the 57th CND session and thank you and the Secretariat for the efforts to convene this important session and for the excellent preparations.

Sadly, I have to start by recalling the passing away of the First Vice President of Afghanistan, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim who played a crucial role in the efforts during the war and resistance as well as in the post-Taliban period in taking Afghanistan towards peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin my short remarks by associating myself with the statements of the G-77 and China, and the Asian Group made this morning in highlighting the very established fact that the drug problem, as a global challenge, remains a common and shared responsibility.

On behalf of the Government of Afghanistan I would like to renew our commitment towards playing an active role in addressing the world drug problem. The Government of Afghanistan, supported by the international community, has made tremendous efforts and considerable achievements in countering narcotics over the past few years.

We have revised our National Drug Control Strategy and developed relevant policies in key areas of alternative livelihood, law enforcement, drug demand reduction, regional and international cooperation as well as public awareness, the implementation of which has resulted in considerable achievements. Over the past two years, the drug treatment capacity has increased from 1% to almost 6%; close to 14% of the total drug produced has been seized by our national security forces; and more than 3000 drug traffickers, including 500 mid-level and 6 high profile traffickers have been arrested.

Additionally, the implementation of various alternative livelihood programs in key provinces has led to increased legal income of subsistence farmers. The Ministry of Counter Narcotics is also drafting a Counter Narcotics Regional Strategy aiming at contributing to greater regional cooperation based on the principle of shared responsibility.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express our gratitude to our international partners who have provided us with financial support and technical assistance in fighting narcotics in Afghanistan in the past 12 years.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the efforts made by the government of Afghanistan, narcotics continues to threaten the social, political and economic stability as well as the public health in our country making Afghanistan as the prime victim of this menace.

We believe that in order to fight this menace, intensified efforts are needed at all national, regional and international levels within a holistic and integrated approach addressing the full chain of cultivation, trafficking of precursors, production, drug trafficking and consumption.

Poppy cultivation can be reduced and ultimately eliminated through combined efforts in both areas of alternative livelihood and eradication. Alternative livelihood remains at the heart of our counter narcotics efforts in Afghanistan, where most of our people rely on agriculture for their

livelihood. We need to expand the reach of our alternative livelihood programs and make sure that farmers directly benefit from these programs.

We also value poppy eradication as an important element of counter narcotics efforts. Despite major challenges arising from the transition process, a new poppy eradication campaign started in Afghanistan last week with a view to meet a higher target compared to previous years.

Additionally, continued and intensified cooperation between Afghanistan and neighboring and regional countries in arresting the drug traffickers and countering the trafficking of precursors into Afghanistan remains key in fighting narcotics. We believe that law enforcement capacity needs to be further strengthened both in Afghanistan and countries in the region.

Another key component of counter narcotics efforts is demand reduction which requires intensified and integrated efforts at both regional and international levels.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Government of Afghanistan is committed to keeping counter narcotics a top priority in the coming years including throughout the transition period and the decade of transformation. We expect more countries from the international community to be practically engaged in helping Afghanistan fight narcotics including through the existing bilateral, trilateral, regional and international cooperation frameworks particularly the UNODC and the Istanbul Process.

Thank you