

Statement by Shri Hasmukh Adhia, Revenue Secretary, Government of India

Mr. Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Vladimir Galuska,

H.E. Ambassador Khaled Shamaa, Chair of the UNGASS Board

H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UNODC

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to take the floor on behalf of India at this special segment. At the outset, let me congratulate you Ambassador on your election as Chair of this 59th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), as well as to the other members of the Bureau. India considers the Special Session as an invaluable opportunity for a high-level, meaningful discussion among Member States to review the progress made in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and evolve effective strategy to counter and address the world drug problem.

2. Mr. Chairman, let me begin by reiterating India's firm commitment to the three United Nation Conventions on drug matters. As supplier of licit opiate raw material to the world and traditional licit opium cultivator for centuries, India has been discharging its responsibilities under the Conventions with a great degree of success. We have continued streamlining our national policies, legislation and regulations to further align them to the principles laid out in the UN Conventions including the '*principle of balance*'. We firmly believe that that the Conventions provide ample scope to incorporate the '*human face*' of the drug problem.

3. Mr. Chairman, India remains concerned with the growing illicit poppy cultivation and illicit production of opium in the world as highlighted by the Word Drug Report 2015. India is geographically sandwiched between two of the major illicit opium and heroin producing regions of the world and faces challenges due to trafficking originating from these regions. The cultivation of cannabis in many countries, also remains a major concern.

4. Mr. Chairman, the entire world is facing the ominous challenge posed by the emergence of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and India is no exception. In order to

strengthen the enforcement measures and send out a strong signal against the manufacture of NPS in the country, the government of India has constituted a Committee on NPS to monitor the emergence of NPS in the country and for suggesting the mechanism and regulations to confront the challenge legally. 'Mephedrone' has been included as a controlled substance under the National Drug law recently and more such substances are being examined for similar action. We also strongly feel that there is need for extensive international cooperation on this issue, including strengthening forensic capabilities and legislations.

5. Another important issue of global priority is the need to further strengthen and coordinate the strategy on control of precursors diverted for illicit use. Globally, the Indian pharmaceuticals industry is the 3rd largest in terms of volume while the Indian Chemical industry is 6th largest in the world. India is, thus, a major manufacturer and trader of precursor chemicals. We have reviewed and modified the regulations for control of precursors in 2013 to confront the challenges in this area. 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.

6. Mr. Chairman, I would also like to reiterate India's commitment to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking. I am happy to inform, Mr. Chairman, that India took a major step in this direction in May, 2015 by notifying uniform and simplified rules leading to removal of the regulatory barriers that have been acting as hindrances to availability of drugs such as morphine and methadone for palliative care, pain relief and opioid substitution therapy. These rules were drafted with the active participation of civil society and the palliative care community. I am sure that this issue will receive due attention in the forthcoming Special session of the UN General Assembly next month and all the stakeholders will progressively work towards ensuring adequate access to controlled medicines for Medical and Scientific Purposes.

7. Money Laundering and illicit financial flows and proceeds of crime generated from drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime remain a major challenge. In order to effectively counter this challenge, India has recently amended its laws related to Money Laundering and Foreign Exchange Management Act. The recent changes provide for seizure

and confiscation of property of equivalent value within the country, if it is established that property held abroad is in violation of Foreign Exchange Management Act and Anti-money laundering legislation.

8. I would also like to emphasize the critical role of international cooperation in addressing the issues of illicit financial flows arising out of drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes. The criminal networks and drug syndicates can only be effectively busted by disrupting their financial flows. In line with this objective, India and UNODC hosted the “Networking the Networks” meeting in November, 2015. The aim was to connect the existing international and regional law enforcement cooperation centres to enable fast inter-regional cooperation and use the capacities of these networks to disrupt drug trafficking and other organized crimes and the illicit financial flows related to it through the exchange of intelligence and providing platform for coordination of joint operations. I am also happy to inform that India is in the advanced stages of setting up of regional coordination centre for South Asia, SARICC, with Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. Once operational, it will allow South Asia region to connect with other regional and global platforms and thus enable quick and secure information exchange to combat crimes related to drugs and money laundering.

9. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to stress that challenges faced in countering the world drug problem require responses based on the cooperation of all stake holders at the national, regional and international levels. Let me thank you Chair again for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on our priorities for the forthcoming special session of the UN General assembly, at this very important forum.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.