

63<sup>rd</sup> session of Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

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**Statement by Mr. A.K.Jha, Additional Secretary (Revenue),**

**Government of India**

Chair, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan

H.E. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC, President INCB

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of India let me first congratulate you Ambassador on your election as Chair of this session, as well as congratulate other members of the Bureau. You can count on our full support and cooperation for successful conclusion of this session.

2. The recent World Drug Report has brought again our focus to the ever mutating complex challenges, which need greater commitment and better resources for prevention and treatment networks.

3. In recent times, South Asian region has seen a surge in illicit opiate trafficking, in particular through maritime route, sourced from the South West Asian region. We have seized more than 2.4 tons of heroin in 2019 mostly along the “Southern route” in Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. Our survey has also revealed that the areas close to the international borders in the north-western and north-eastern parts of our country have far higher abuse prevalence than the national average. In a stellar example of international cooperation, in three

cases we passed on concrete information which resulted in seizures of heroin by neighbouring countries.

4. India has achieved some success in countering trafficking of substances and precursors through the surface net and the dark net, by partnering with B2B platforms on a voluntary basis. NCB India successfully caught a vendor of drugs on the darknet market recently. We have also amended law to bring sale of precursors through these platforms under monitoring. We shall talk about this in detail, in a side event which we co-host along with the INCB.

5. For strengthening law enforcement in our country; a 4-tier structure has been created right from the field level to the apex level for effective multi-agency national coordination and monitoring. We have also made legislative amendments to include more agencies and to make forensic laboratories more effective.

6. It is a matter of grave concern that illicit financial flows related to drug trade, are sometimes used to fund anti-national activities including terrorism; this needs to be countered effectively. Our sincere efforts in this regard have resulted in conviction, after judicial scrutiny, in a number of cases of money laundering related to illicit drug trafficking. We accord great importance to the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force and is dedicated to implement these standards effectively in order to further strengthen our financial system.

7. Considering the importance of international cooperation, Government of India hosted an Expert Working Group meeting on illicit financial flows related

to pillar II of Paris Pact Initiative in 2019, and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Conference on combating drug trafficking in February this year. On the specific issue of Tramadol, a trilateral meeting was hosted with Ghana and Nigeria last year, facilitated by the UNODC and INCB. We have also engaged extensively with member States at bilateral, regional or multilateral settings to forge even more meaningful alliances to address the new and emerging challenges.

8. India has a multi pronged National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction. During 2019-20 we have conducted more than 1,300 awareness programmes covering 1,50,000 young people and have enhanced capacities of more than 1500 committed and skilled workforce. School based interventions with primary role of teachers, peers and parents have also been designed and named as 'Navchetna'(New awakening). There are 480 government supported Integrated Rehabilitation Center for Addicts working for treatment and rehabilitation. India has also assisted UNODC and WHO in conducting the field testing of international standards for treatment of drug use disorders.

9. We strive to connect policies with scientific evidence; a comprehensive national survey on extent and pattern of substances use done last year, also acknowledged by the ED UNODC in her opening remarks today, has improved our capacity for data collection, analysis and interpretation for making policy on both supply and demand aspects.

10. In line with the 'principle of balance', steps initiated by India to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes have started yielding results, as morphine consumption for medicinal purpose has

doubled since the amendments in principal narcotics legislation were implemented.

11. India is fully aware of the sensitivity and potential for misuse of substances in the name of licit trade. Our CNA has adopted procedures of verifying genuineness of import certificate of Psychotropic Substances on the lines of PEN system of INCB. During 2019-20, seven export consignments including 20.8 million tablets of Tramadol (equivalent to 2980 kg of Tramadol base) in four consignments were stopped as on verification import certificates were found to have been forged.

12. In conclusion, I would reiterate India's strong commitment to curb the menace of drugs and to join hands with the international community in working towards addressing the complex and multi-faceted challenges related to the world drug problem. I am confident that this session and its outcome will give a new impetus to the national, bilateral, regional and international action towards realizing our shared objectives.

Thank You.