

Statement to be delivered by
His Excellency Major General Aung Thu,
Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs of
the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
At the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
(Vienna, 2 – 6 March 2020)

His Excellency, Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Chair of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Madame Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,

Firstly, I would like to extend my best wishes to distinguished delegates, technical experts and all the members of the Commission here today. It is my great honor to participate in this meeting and represent the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, specifically our Central Body for Drug Abuse Control.

Mr. Chairman and the Distinguished delegates

1. Every nation in the world, which works to prevent and eliminate the production, demand and harmful impacts of illicit drugs, is faced with the consequences of drug-related problem. It is common knowledge that illicit drugs have a negative impact on society, public health, warps or shapes of the local economy and impedes the ability of the government administration to work effectively.

2. Recently, we have seen significant changes in the production of illicit drugs, with a shift from opium to synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs are of course made from man-made chemicals, rather than natural ingredients, and they can therefore be produced in all locations and in large quantities. The clandestine production and trade of such illicit drugs have resulted in significant hardship and work for law enforcement agencies.

3. Established in 1976, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC), now comprises of eleven working groups, and includes the participation of relevant ministries, government departments, experts and civil society organizations. Together the working groups and CCDAC at large is striving to control drugs as a national priority. The CCDAC has increased its efforts to curb drugs through the implementation of annual work plans under the 15-year strategic plan on drug control. In addition, Myanmar has signed 3 United Nations Conventions on the elimination of illicit drugs thus far.

4. As regards the seizure of narcotic drugs, more than 100 million tablets of Yaba and 2.8 tons of Crystalline Methamphetamine (ICE) were seized in 2018, and in 2019 more than 100 million tablets of Yaba were detected once again, but the number of seized ICE was three times larger than 2018. On February 3, 2020, 12 tons of Sodium Ethoxide were seized in Muse, the Myanmar-China border, which was the largest number on record. Poppy cultivation decreased by 9.1 percent in 2018 and 11 percent in 2019.

5. Myanmar and the CCDAC place significant emphasis on cooperating with international partners. In relation to relevant cooperation, Myanmar has signed

MoUs with 8 countries, including neighboring states and also cooperates with each ASEAN member state, BIMSTEC, GMS and other regional organizations or entities. Furthermore, information is exchanged with UNODC, INTERPOL and other police agencies in the region.

6. As we need a comprehensive, inclusive and balanced approach to resolving the drug related problems, a new Drug Control Policy was adopted in 2018. The policy is multifaceted. On one hand, effective steps are taken to minimize the harm created by drugs, including by administering medical treatment and working to improve the health of drug users, in accordance with the UNODC's theme, "**Health for Justice, Justice for Health**". On the other hand, legislative and judicial measures are also taken at the national level.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

7. We acknowledge the importance of tackling drug problems as a shared responsibility, because the international illicit drug trade makes it impossible for a single country to address it alone. Today, large drug syndicates tend to review the risks and benefits of their trade according to 4 main criteria, including production, transportation, distribution and market demands, and operate their business in creative and adaptive ways by exploiting advanced technology, contexts and cyber networks. In this regard, there continues to be a strong need for greater cooperation not only among countries, but also with international partners. In this case, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to collaborating with any nations or organizations in an attempt to prevent and eliminate the production, demand and harmful impacts of illicit drugs in accordance with the laws and regulations.

8. In conclusion, I would like to express my firm belief that the golden triangle area, the then epicenter of drugs production, which was notorious for its mass production in Asia and the conflict affected territories in Myanmar will be transformed into drug-free zones at a fast rate if we have unfettered access to modern technologies, technical expertise and necessary equipment to prevent, control and eliminate drug issues in the common interest.

9. Last but not least, in Myanmar, drugs are considered one of the largest security risks for the population at large and identified as such in the Drug Control Policy of Myanmar. I would therefore like to conclude by restating our commitment to control, prevent and eliminate the harmful impacts of illicit drugs, their production, use and trade, to the best of our ability.

Thank you.
