



**AMBASSADOR KHOJESTA FANA EBRAHIMKHEL STATEMENT FOR CND
SPECIAL EVENT COMMEMORATING THE UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING**

Agenda Item. Launch of the World Drug Report 2020

Friday, 26 June 2020, starting at 2:00 p.m., Vienna Time (CEST), VIRTUAL MEETING

**Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of UNODC,
H.E. Alexander Schallenberg, Austrian Federal Minister for European and Int. Affairs
H.E. Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad KHAN, Chair, Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to attend this special CND event on the launch of the World Drug Report 2020, during the commemoration of the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The World Drug Report is today the most important and fundamental report in the field addressing the world drug problem. We encourage all Member States to cooperate and enhance their contribution in sharing valid, reliable and transparent data with UNODC, to keep it that way.

On behalf of the Government of Afghanistan, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to UNODC, particularly to Ms. Angela Me and her team, for their tremendous and continuous efforts in preparing for it.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan has been decreasing for two consecutive years, especially last year we saw a substantial decrease in the area under poppy cultivation.

While poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is decreasing, methamphetamine production is increasing in the country, a new phenomenon that has been of great concern for Afghanistan for the last few years. In the past, methamphetamine used to be smuggled into Afghanistan from neighboring and European countries, but now it is being produced in the country.

2018 and 2019 have been successful in terms of law enforcement operations and opiate seizures. The situation worsened in 2020 with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and with the Taliban expanding their drug trafficking networks in Afghanistan and in the region.

As highlighted in the Side Event organized by the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the margins of the Regular Segment of the 62nd Session of the CND, not incorporating the drug component in peace talks will be a mistake. Rule of law, development and health issues relating to illicit narcotics are issues that will need to be considered when a peace process is initiated in Afghanistan. At the same time, the regional dimensions need to be considered as well. Neighboring countries will have a significant role to play as Afghanistan moves forward in the peace process.

Ladies and Gentleman,

2020 has seen a decrease of opiate seizures due to insecurity in the country. The current political and security situation coupled with the dire consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic leaves little hope for higher number of seizures for this year.

On the other hand, we think the virus might have not decreased or affected the level of smuggling of precursors and Acetic Anhydride into the country. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on precursors, especially Acetic Anhydride, remains unclear.

Intelligence information indicates, due to several reasons, including high price of Acetic Anhydride within Afghanistan, heroine and morphine production has mainly shifted from Afghanistan to other countries beyond our borders through trafficking routes. More data is needed in the future for further clarification of this issue.

Furthermore, we have noticed in the World Drug Report that many countries tend to refer to Afghanistan as a Country of Origin for heroin and morphine seizures. I wish to encourage countries to investigate further before claiming such inaccuracies. Determining a Country of Origin should be based on evidence and not on convenience. I call on European countries and all partner countries to respect scientific approaches when coming to such conclusions.

For example, for a heroine seizure in Europe for which the opium has been originated from Afghanistan, the Acetic Anhydride originated from Europe and the production took place in a third country through the Balkan Route and the Northern Route. Such heroine seizures must not be mentioned as heroin originating from Afghanistan.

Let me conclude by reiterating our active engagement in the combined efforts of the international community to address and counter the world drug problem, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.

I thank you!