

In the Name of God

The Merciful, the Compassionate

Statement by H.E. Dr. Eskandar Momeni, Secretary General of the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the 64th annual session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

April 12, 2021

Distinguished dignitaries,

Mr. Chairman,

Esteemed delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank the officials of UNODC for organizing this meeting despite the problems and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's meeting is held at a time when we do continue to witness the Covid-19 pandemic throughout the world. Regretfully, the pandemic has so far claimed the lives of more than 2.8 million people in various countries while more than 130 million persons have been infected with the virus. This is an unexpected

phenomenon that has left behind negative effects and even irreparable ones on various aspects of human life.

In this regard, the issue of drug control is not an exception. Basically, all ongoing plans and activities in the field of drug control have been affected by circumstances caused by Covid-19 which is considered as a new experience.

It should be underlined that the restrictions enforced in accordance with health protocols definitely require different methods in order to proceed with various activities including activities in the field of drug control.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to briefly touch upon major activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of treatment and harms reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Offering regular training, formulating and submitting for implementation the relevant set of instructions as well as oversight for their sound implementation concerning care and control of infections caused by Covid-19 at residential and semi-residential centers as well as TC centers;
- Increasing the capacities for keeping homeless addicts as well as making operational centers for taking medical tests from homeless addicts who suffer from Covid-19;
- Collaborating with UNODC in Tehran for making operational two harms reduction centers for taking care of women and girls who are addicted to narcotic drugs;

- It should be noted that during the past year and in the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Islamic Republic of Iran in collaboration with Tehran-based UNODC took part in more than 20 regional and international events in a virtual manner.

Distinguished participants,

What the world is experiencing these days namely the Covid-19 pandemic is to a large extent similar to the problem of narcotic drugs. The dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemic go beyond national borders. There is the need for international cooperation and participation in order to resolve the problem and no country will remain immune as long as the virus is not fully uprooted throughout the world.

The most important approach in dealing with international problems is the need for the formation of a firm resolve by the global community in order to act on the basis of the international principle of shared responsibility so as to overcome common international challenges.

In line with this, all world countries are currently taking action in a collective way to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and are helping each other. I hope to witness a global resolve as well as collective participation by members of the international community for overcoming the global scourge of narcotic drugs.

Distinguished colleagues,

Regretfully, it must be said that no breakthrough has been made in Afghanistan for controlling drug cultivation and production based on incoming reports from that country so as to reduce the problems caused by traffic in narcotic drugs imposed upon neighboring states as well as countries along the route and destination. Poppy cultivation in western regions of Afghanistan as well as heroin production still goes on. In the meantime, cannabis cultivation is expanding in an unprecedented manner. It goes without saying that continued production means further activities by drug traffickers that cause tragic consequences for neighboring countries and other parts of the world.

At this point, I wish to avail myself of the opportunity and elaborate on major activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran for countering the global problem of narcotic drugs in 2020:

The law enforcement agencies that are members of the Drug Control Headquarters during the year 2020 have managed to seize approximately 1,150 tons of different types of narcotic drugs via continued strengthening of mechanisms for monitoring and control as well as enhancing intelligence exchange among relevant authorities. Such an amount of drug seizure sets a new and unprecedented record in the field of drug control which indicates 41 percent growth compared to 2019. The drug seizure includes 920 tons of opium, 31 tons of heroin, 27 tons of morphine and more than 20 tons of methamphetamine (ice). The said figures constitute 90 percent opium, 26 percent heroin and 48 percent morphine from the total amount of drug seizure throughout the world. The accomplishment was made due to the

martyrdom of 10 members of the country's law enforcement agencies losing their lives in the global front against drug transit despite the hard conditions and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In order to proceed with an inclusive and balanced approach in the field of drug control, the Islamic Republic of Iran counters any diversion to illicit markets and networks and at the same time has implemented a wide range of projects in the fields of demand reduction, prevention, treatment, harms reduction, rehab and vocational training for drug addicts.

Priority has been given to the community-based approach in the field of drug control based on an order by the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hassan Rouhani aimed at participation by people from all walks of life. In this connection, the motto of "Helpers of life-social participation-preventing addiction" has been chosen as this year's motto. The Drug Control Headquarters and relevant national organizations have to adjust and implement their plans on the basis of the said motto.

Distinguished participants,

More than 22 years have passed since the commencement of the Islamic Republic of Iran's cooperation with the UN in the field of drug control and we are on the threshold of the fifth partnership program with UNODC. This is while the Islamic Republic of Iran has cooperated and continues to cooperate with other UN specialized agencies in the field of drug control. These activities emanate from the Islamic Republic of Iran's firm belief in the need for regional and international cooperation in the field of drug control so as to implement a balanced strategy in the said area. An active participation in regional and international meetings related to narcotic drugs

will boost interaction and cooperation and will further prepare grounds for joint actions at bilateral, regional, trans-regional and international levels. In line with such a policy and within the framework of diplomatic relations, the Islamic Republic of Iran will spare no efforts in enhancing cooperation and sharing successful practices with other countries as well as relevant specialized agencies and institutions.

In the absence of self-sacrifices and dedicated efforts by the police force and law enforcement agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Western and European countries had to go after every gram of narcotic drugs on the streets of their capitals. This is while the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys the least amount of assistance and cooperation and has even grappled with the most tyrannical sanctions and unilateral coercive measures of the US for obtaining the equipment needed by its forces in this global campaign.

In conclusion, I wish to re-emphasize the Islamic Republic of Iran's resolve and adherence for a continued fight against the global problem of narcotic drugs and pay homage to the blood of my fellow countrymen who dedicated their lives for the sake of combating drugs and call upon other countries and international organizations to refrain from any obstructionist measure with regard to the transfer of needed equipment and technical assistance in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility and commitments towards international conventions and in this way support Iran and other countries on the frontline of the anti-drug campaign. The resolution of international problems requires understanding and cooperation and no country is capable of eliminating these challenges all by itself. Such measures require common understanding and implementation of fundamental measures by all members of the international community.

It is hoped to bring about a better future for our children through cooperation and solidarity.

I thank you for your patience.