

The theme of discussion “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”.

66th session of Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

13th to 17th March 2023

Statement by Mr. Vivek Aggarwal, Additional Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Chair, His. E. Miguel Camilo Ruíz Blanco

Her. E. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC,

President INCB,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the Government of India, I congratulate Chair and other members of the Bureau on their election to conduct this 66th session of CND. We pledge our full support for the success of this session.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic rendered a significant impact on the world, and the recovery has to be rightly addressed in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure safe and sound health, and general well being and livelihood security for all.

3. The critical area to address the post COVID 19 scenario and recovery is by way of strengthening the medicare and the pharmaceutical sector. The

Government is working to prioritize equitable allocation of medical and palliative care resources. The focus is on upgrading and upscaling healthcare systems and safeguards to improve access to quality healthcare for all including the availability of essential medicinal drugs for palliative care, pain management and de addiction purpose. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected marginalized and vulnerable communities, highlighting existing inequalities in society and in particular essential drugs requirement for the patients and the addicts.

4. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of leveraging digital technology in connecting people and facilitating activities which includes digitization of records, existing licenses and export / import permits for ease access and business process facilitation. On the other side abuse of dark net and crypto currency payment gateways for illicit trafficking of controlled substances and NPS has emerged as a new challenge. It is felt digital technology should usher to address the essential drug supply chain management with efficient use of telemedicine and blocking channels for illicit diversion. India realizes need for swift and timely action and thus seeks for shared responsibility, efficacious and robust mechanisms for sharing of actionable intelligence for counter trafficking and preventive measures.

5. The Governments of India's policy is with twin objective to promote licit use of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances for medical and scientific purposes, while simultaneously preventing their diversion from licit sources, and prohibiting illicit traffic and substance abuse. I would like to make special

mention of recent case booked by Indian Customs wherein the Chief Operating Officer of one Bangalore-based company was intercepted and arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle around 10 lakh tablets of *Tramadol* to Sudan. It is reassuring India has taken proactive steps and necessary safeguards by way of listing substances such as *tramadol* under the aegis of NDPS Act. Central Bureau of Narcotics India in assistance with other authorities has made pathbreaking and extraordinary efforts in destroying large areas under illicit cultivation of opium crops in a geographically difficult terrain.

6. India remains steadfast and committed to the objective of welfare, research and development in medical/ palliative care for patients and addicts. The Centrally sponsored and aided schemes have been promoted for meeting objectives of Combating illicit trafficking; Controlling & preventing the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; Identifying, treating, rehabilitating addicts; Educating public especially children, youth & women against ill effects of drug abuse; and Supplying drugs to addicts where such supply is a medical necessity. Government of India has emphasized on the targeted intervention through 'Drug Free India Campaign' in the areas found most vulnerable to Substance abuse. India is keen to harness the innovations and advancements made in techniques for environmental friendly & sustainable cultivation technologies; understanding the forging & fructuous collaboration of private public partnerships for NDPS matters; realizing and tapping the potential assessed and created as product of the Research & development in the areas of addiction, rehabilitation & harm reduction; sharing of knowledge resources, best practices & technologies deployed for end to end

monitoring & mounting surveillance over licit movements of precursor and NDPS.

7. India has placed systematic structures in place for inter agency coordination and intelligence sharing by Centrally monitored high level committee (NCORD) for preventing illicit diversion, promoting & deliberating upon safeguards and collaborating mechanisms for supply reduction and harm reduction.

8. In conclusion, I compliment and thank the international community for the efforts made to recover from the challenges posed by COVID -19 pandemic and express solidarity with the forum. However it is the time to accelerate our efforts and shared responsibilities in achieving the goals set out in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030. And with the spelt out objectives I seek the benign cooperation of the members and plead for your support to India's membership for the ensuing 2024 to 2027. I therefore reiterate India's firm commitment in this regard.

Thank You.