

Transcript of video message by Mr. Inshik Sim, UNODC Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific for the CND Intersessional, 16-18 October 2019

Agenda item: Precursors

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to speak at the CND intersessional meeting on the implementation of all our international drug policy commitments, following up to the 2019 ministerial declaration.

In East and Southeast Asia, where I am based, there has been a profound change in the illicit drug market in recent years due to the surge in production of synthetic drugs, in particular methamphetamine. Annual seizures of methamphetamine in East and Southeast Asia have been increasing every year, reaching 126 metric tons in 2018, by far the largest amount ever reported from the region. Substantial quantities of the drug manufactured in the region have been trafficked within the region and increasingly to neighbouring regions, including South Asia and Oceania. According to a UNODC' recent study, the illicit methamphetamine markets of East and Southeast Asia and neighbouring countries are now estimated to be worth up-to sixty one billion dollars. The figure represents a four-fold increase compared to the same estimate done six years ago.

However, in East and Southeast Asia, recent seizure trends of precursor chemicals do not show the same trends of the drug. In fact, miniscule amounts of precursor chemicals have been seized. This confirms that national authorities in the region have not been able to cope with increasing diversion in and trafficking of precursor chemicals. As a result, methamphetamine continues to flood markets and street prices have fallen drastically. In addition, the region has been referred to as the most likely source for synthetic opioids and related precursor chemicals that constitute one of the most significant drug problems worldwide. All

in all, coordinated regional action is urgently needed to reduce illicit flows of precursor chemicals and prevent and counter drug challenges.

With this understanding, UNODC organized a high-level conference on precursor chemicals last November in Myanmar, which brought senior officials of drug law enforcement agencies and relevant regulatory authorities from each ASEAN country, as well as neighbouring countries with large chemical and pharmaceutical industries. The Conference aimed to move forward plans for effectively reducing precursor diversion and trafficking, and to lay the foundation for a regional precursor strategy and multilateral programme, which were echoed by all participating authorities.

To this end, UNODC has initiated a programme dedicated to precursor chemical control for South-East Asia. The programme will be implemented under the framework of the UNODC Regional Programme for Southeast Asia and will support the implementation of the UNODC Integrated Strategy on the Global Opioid Crisis for the region. UNODC will leverage pre-existing mechanisms, plans and expertise at the Regional Office and Headquarters, such as the Mekong MOU on drug control and the Global SMART Programme throughout the implementation period to ensure integrated approaches.

In closing, UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific is committed to working governments in the region to take more effective regional and inter-regional action to address diversion in and trafficking of precursor chemicals and associated illicit drug challenges.

Thank you.