



DELEGATION OF AFGHANISTAN

STATEMENT

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**Reconvened 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

**ITEM 11: SPECIAL SEGMENT**

**Preparations for the ministerial segment to be held during the sixty-second session of the Commission, in March 2019**

Wednesday, 5 December 2018  
10:00 a.m., BR-C

**Madam Chair, H.E. Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

Madam Chair, I congratulate you for magnificently leading five intersession meetings throughout this year as well as successfully organizing this very important reconvened CND Session.

Madam Chair,

10 years ago, all of us together, adopted certain commitments to seriously tackle the world drug problem. These commitments are very well reflected in Political Declaration of 2009. Now, 10 years later, not only we could not manage to meet these targets but the drug market has expanded vigorously, the death toll is high, and the price our societies are paying is immense.

In Afghanistan, from 2009, the opium production has doubled from 123,000 tons to 236,000 tons. Consequently, an increase in production of heroin has been following that trend. Drug as one of the main drivers of insecurity, has contributed in expansion of the Taliban influence throughout the country which subsequently has driven vast areas of lands, out of the control of the Government to be used for production of opium. A symbiotic relationship between drugs and insecurity is already established. This has given a dangerous momentum for opium production and has accelerated the deterioration of the security situation. With the partial withdrawal of the international troops from Afghanistan, which started in 2014, both insecurity and opium production spiked. Now, our security forces are facing bigger and more complex challenges. They need to simultaneously fight in two fronts; terrorism and drugs. This has exhausted our National Security Forces as well as our society. Only in 2017, our law enforcement forces have launched a total of two thousand seven hundred ninety eight (2,798)

counter narcotics operations. While insecurity is the main root cause of drug problem in Afghanistan but it is not the only one.

Availability of precursors and transit routes, illicit demand, money laundering, poverty, and lack of market for licit agricultural products, are other main drivers of opium and heroin production in my country.

Madam Chair,

Without addressing these root causes, we will never be able to meet any such targets in the future. In 2019, when our ministers get together, we have to be realistic both in adopting new targets as well as developing new strategies to reach these targets. We should more focus on data collection, information sharing and expansion of our cooperation in tackling this menace. First of all we need a real, clear, and reliable picture of the drug problem. Then we would be able to sit and work together to address the problem. But before everything, we all must accept that this is a disaster for all of us, for each and every nation in this room, and have to genuinely commit ourselves to the principle of shared and common responsibility. With this we would be able to go forward and talk about real progress.

In Afghanistan, we will need to take some very specific steps to tackle the drug problem:

- Security is the most fundamental precondition for expanding the government control over areas that are being used for opium cultivation and heroin labs. Without security we will never be able to reach any goals in the near future.
- Concerted action to totally thwart precursors from reaching our borders, especially acetic anhydride, which is indispensable for conversion of opium to heroin, is a must. Extreme control on global trade of Acetic Anhydride, prevention of diversion illicit trafficking in of Acetic Anhydride, full and timely cooperation with the INCB to investigate suspicious cases and follow up sources of diversion are vital. We must accept that without acetic anhydride, there would be no heroin to destroy and kill thousands

of our young women and men around the globe. We need a resolute and coordinated action on this. I should remind you that Acetic Anhydride is totally illegal in Afghanistan and any kind of trades that engage this substance, is banned by law.

- We will not be able to entirely abolish illicit demand for heroin. But, if we try harder, we would be able to meaningfully reduce demand. Furthermore, in case of Afghanistan, if we meaningfully increase the market for licit agricultural products, we would be able to provide our farmers with two options to choose between two profitable markets; either the profitable market of opium or the profitable market of licit agricultural products. They would naturally and logically choose the licit market. Currently, the case is totally the opposite; farmers have reliable market only for opium. They do not have meaningful access to global licit market. If we do not change this we will not be able to change the trend.
- We know many countries which are transit routes for heroin, are doing a lot. They are sacrificing their young men and women in uniform, their people are suffering from addiction, and they are very cooperative and transparent in sharing information with the international institutions including UNODC and INCB. But we believe there is still room for more work to be done, a higher level of cooperation to be achieved; to finally preventing the transnational organized crime groups from exploiting these countries for their devil intentions. We must cut their safe smuggling routes. We must destroy their profitable market.
- Global revenue of the heroin market is estimated to be around 80 billion dollars per year. If we tackle the problem of money laundering, we will be able to dramatically decrease the supply and bring the drug market under significant control. We must not allow, international crime organizations to be able to use money-laundering as a tool to enjoy this huge amount of money. We need to stop them.
- Last but not least, we should not forget our responsibilities towards the real victims of this drug menace. We should not treat

drug abusers as criminals. We must help them. We must help them together. Harm reduction has to remain a priority for all of us. According to our estimation in Afghanistan more than three million people use drugs while near to one million of them suffer from drug addiction. We consider their addiction as sickness. We believe that most of them were addicted out of misery and poverty and in most cases due to working under unhealthy work circumstances. Please allow me highlight that prior to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980s, not only addiction to opiates was rare but cigarette and tobacco was generally rejected by our society. Heroin was not known at all.

Thank you Madam Chair