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**Statement by Dr. Viroj Sumyai
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

Forty-third Meeting of HONLEA, Asia-Pacific

The Methamphetamine Crisis in East and South East Asia

22 October 2019, Bangkok

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Narcotics Control Board, I thank you for this opportunity to address the 43rd meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in Asia and the Pacific, and to offer the Board's insights on what can be referred to as a crisis of methamphetamine trafficking and abuse in the region.

Over more than a decade, the Board, in its mandated role as a quasi-judicial body monitoring States' compliance with the international drug control conventions, has observed the expansion of illicit markets for amphetamine-type stimulants in East and South-East Asia.

Year on year during that period, countries in the region have set new records in the amounts of methamphetamine seized by their law enforcement agencies. At the same time, the ever-growing abuse of this drug in the region and beyond has fuelled a threat to the health and welfare of people.

The Board has continuously expressed its concern about these developments and wishes to highlight, once again, that no discernible change in this worrying trend will be attained without adequate attention being given to ensuring control, and exchange of intelligence information, over ATS precursors.

Substances such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which had dominated known methamphetamine manufacturing methods in East and South-East Asia for years, are no longer the only precursors of concern. There is limited, yet growing, evidence in the region of the use of P-2-P-based manufacturing methods, and, in line with global trends, a variety of pre-precursors and non-scheduled "designer" precursors have been encountered in clandestine laboratories dismantled in recent years or identified through forensic analysis of seized methamphetamine.

The Board has particularly noted the apparent mismatch between the large amounts of end-product seized versus the comparatively low number and limited volume of methamphetamine precursors secured in comparison.

Despite significant efforts, much remains to be done in the realm of precursors monitoring, to enable a more effective response to the ongoing methamphetamine crisis in East and South-East Asia. The Board has put a range of modern tools at the disposal of Governments to help close existing gaps in knowledge, intelligence and operational responses to precursor trafficking and diversion from legitimate trade.

- PICS, the Board's Precursors Incident Communication System, enables the direct and secure communication of suspicious transactions and incidents among countries in real time, thereby facilitating investigations and the sharing of intelligence.
- Project Prism maintains an international focal point network, providing an operational framework for cross-border cooperation.
- Special alerts disseminated under Project Prism raise awareness of trends and the modus operandi encountered globally, regionally and at the country-level.
- PEN Online, the pre-export notification system that represents the very backbone of international precursors control today, complements this set of tools by supplying a crucial element to the puzzle, without which all else fails: a means to understand and monitor the licit movement of precursors, and of pharmaceutical preparations containing such precursors, that makes apparent where diversion may occur and what may constitute a suspicious pattern of otherwise legitimate trade.

The Board urges Governments, and in particular law enforcement representatives present here today, to make full use of the relevant tools available and to keep the Board abreast of their efforts, their successes and their challenges.

Only with the best available data and understanding of the issues can the international community live up to its common and shared responsibility in facing the world drug problem.

Thank you.

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