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**Statement by Prof. Jallal Toufiq, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
Sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

**High-level side event:
*Protecting Global Public Health and Safety: Mounting a Unified
International Response to Synthetic Drugs and Their
Precursors***

Friday, March 15, 1 pm

Assistant Secretary Robinson, Dr. Gupta, fellow speakers,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to express thanks to the Government of the United States and UNODC. On behalf of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), I am honoured to join you in this continuation of cooperation to address the global synthetic drug crisis. INCB's initiatives to support Member States to this end span precursor control and operational support to suppress trafficking in dangerous substances, namely New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and non-medical synthetic opioids.

As the world faces enormous and unprecedented challenges posed by the rapid evolution of the illicit drug industry, INCB's strategic approach emphasizes the importance of international precursor scheduling coupled with flexible responses to address the dynamic landscape of synthetic drug manufacture and trafficking. INCB's programmes on precursors, NPS and non-medical synthetic

opioids support Governments and society at large in effectively responding to these challenges to public health and welfare.

As Secretary Blinken gracefully and correctly mentioned, INCB is leading global efforts to prevent the diversion and trafficking of precursors under the 1988 Convention, as the proliferation of non-scheduled designer precursors poses a significant challenge due to their elusive nature. INCB is committed to enhancing detection and monitoring efforts to effectively counter this threat. How INCB does it? Through INCB's proprietary online tools such as PEN-Online, PEN-Online Light, and the Precursors Incident Communication System, known as PICS.

INCB is also empowering countries to counter the trafficking of NPS and non-medical synthetic opioids. How? By facilitating operational cooperation, sharing of best practices, promoting public-private partnerships, and consequently bolstering national capacities to respond swiftly and safely to criminals' attempts to traffic highly potent dangerous substances.

Under the INCB Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances Programme, known as GRIDS, we are supporting governments in responding to the fast-changing trafficking dynamics. GRIDS facilitates information exchange, fosters collaboration among law enforcement agencies, and supports enforcement actions to disrupt manufacture, marketing, movement and monetization of NPS and non-medical synthetic opioids. GRIDS' support to law enforcement agencies is being facilitated by another set of the INCB online tools, the Project ION Incident Communication System, known

as IONICS, and the trafficking trends visualization tool, GRIDS Intelligence HD.

In December 2023 a sophisticated synthetic opioids trafficking network operating in Europe that had been trafficking large oxycodone consignments to North America was disrupted, following an investigation that was initiated based on an intelligence package compiled by the INCB GRIDS Programme using IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence HD.

To us, public-private partnerships are also instrumental and since 2018, INCB GRIDS has been facilitating practical cooperation between governments and their private sector partners to prevent the misuse of legitimate services of Internet-related, logistics, chemical manufacturing and online financial intermediary businesses for the trafficking of NPS, non-medical synthetic opioids, and their related precursors. The INCB GRIDS SNOOP tool, for example, identifies listings and posts of vendors of illicit substances misusing legitimate Internet-related services such as e-commerce platforms and social media services. Information related to illicit online vendors is shared with Governments and partnered companies for rapid action. These initiatives have resulted in the dismantling of over 3,000 online marketplaces and illicit vendors of synthetic opioids and related precursors.

In conclusion, INCB remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting international cooperation and supporting efforts to combat illicit drug activities worldwide, including the significant public health threat posed by synthetic drugs that we are facing today in a direct way.

Thank you.