

For information only – not an official document

UNIS/NAR/1189
4 December 2013

Joint INCB-UNODC international conference on Precursors Control in Asia ended today in Bangkok

BANGKOK/VIENNA, 4 December 2013 (UN Information Service) – Looking to find ways to combat trafficking in the chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of drugs and new psychoactive substances, was the aim of the high level conference in Bangkok organized jointly by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in cooperation with the Government of Thailand.

The conference held between 2-4 December brought together representatives from government and international organizations as well as national experts who were discussing possible ways to address the challenges posed to countries in Asia and beyond by criminal groups smuggling precursor chemicals. Many of these groups seek to traffic both controlled and non-controlled chemicals, as well as medicines containing precursor chemicals necessary to manufacture drugs of abuse, like methamphetamines, heroin and new psychoactive substances.

Some 100 leading Government officials from the Asia region and beyond attended the event, including Deputy Minister of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan, Ibrahim Azhar, INCB President Raymond Yans, INCB Board member Viroj Sumyai, and UNODC Regional Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Jeremy Douglas.

The INCB President expressed his concern about the threat posed by trafficking of new substances not subject to international control and used to manufacture illicit drugs, in parallel with the ongoing threat posed by illicit manufacture of amphetamine type substances (ATS): "The rise in use of non-controlled substances fundamentally challenges the way we now approach precursors control. While we must continue to use the tools already available, it is important to focus our political will, and combine our experiences and expertise in order to combat the menace it poses."

UNODC Regional Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Jeremy Douglas, also highlighted the threat posed by illicit drugs in Asia and beyond, and the importance of finding ways to cooperate more effectively to combat organized crime groups which are increasingly sophisticated and threatening. He added that "the need to raise awareness about these issues is crucial and the conference was organised to do this."

Following the first day of high-level political discussion and the adoption of a political declaration, participants engaged in expert-level panel discussions in order to further develop industry-government cooperation to prevent use of precursors and other chemicals in illicit drug manufacture. Officials agreed on the need to develop concrete measures in Asia and beyond, which would include practical measures to implement the INCB's "Guidelines for a voluntary code of practice for the chemical industry" as well as codes of conduct and memorandums of understanding.

Concrete action to prevent domestic diversion and enhance domestic controls was also agreed during the conference. Actions envisaged are aimed at ensuring that traders and end-users employ precursor chemicals only for the production and manufacture of licit products.

Officials also agreed on concrete recommendations to facilitate information exchange and cooperation in order to launch operations targeting major chemical trafficking organizations, as well as the need to support and use existing tools such as INCB Precursors Incident Communications System (PICS).

However, more needed to be done to address the new challenges posed by non-scheduled chemicals and new psychoactive substances. That is why the participants agreed on developing multilateral mechanisms to help officials exchange information in a timely manner. This would help facilitate the exchange of intelligence on the appearance of new substances and the modus operandi used by traffickers in order for authorities in Asia and beyond to more effectively combat traffickers and illicit drug production.

INCB is the independent, quasi-judicial body charged with promoting and monitoring Government compliance with the three international drug control conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

* * * * *

For further information, please contact:

INCB Secretariat

Telephone for media inquiries: (+43-1) 26060 4163

Email: [secretariat\[at\]incb.org](mailto:secretariat[at]incb.org)