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## **Opening of joint INCB-UNODC international conference on Precursor Chemicals and New Psychoactive Substances**

VIENNA, 22 April (UN Information Service) – Around 200 participants from 37 countries, among them Government officials and representatives of international and regional organisations, are discussing the global challenges posed by precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances at a four-day international conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference was opened on Tuesday by the Minister of Justice of Thailand, Mr. Paiboon Koomchaya, the Vice-president of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Mr. Viroj Sumyai, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Representative for South East-East Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Jeremy Douglas.

The conference comes at a critical time, when the achievements of more than 50 years of the global drug control regime are being scrutinized and the international community is discussing the ways and means to best address the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The conference focuses on precursor chemicals, the ingredients necessary to make drugs, and new psychoactive substances (NPS), which are not under international control and yet may cause serious public health problems with little means to effectively address them.

In his opening statement, the Minister of Justice of Thailand, Mr. Paiboon Koomchaya, said: “It is very important that UNODC and INCB have brought together senior public security drug control and justice officials from around the world to candidly discuss chemical trafficking. If we do not take action to stop chemicals that are used to make drugs from crossing our borders we will not stop the drug trade.”

The INCB Vice-president, Mr. Sumyai, highlighted the high-level of attendance at the conference and expressed his hope that the discussions and the outcome of the conference will help to further advance collective approaches in addressing the dynamic challenges ahead. He also announced the launch of a new practical guide that aims to facilitate the voluntary cooperation of government authorities and the industry to prevent misuse of otherwise legitimate chemicals.

The opening day of the conference concluded with the adoption of an action plan to prevent misuse of scheduled and non-scheduled precursors and new psychoactive substances. On the following days of the conference government representatives and experts will discuss the new challenges of precursor chemicals control and NPS as well as approaches to collectively address these challenges globally and regionally.

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