

## **International Forum “Drug Production in Afghanistan: A Challenge to the International Community”**

### **"Establishment of a broad-based anti-drug coalition"**

**9-10 June 2010, Moscow**

**Statement by  
Professor Hamid Ghodse,  
President of the International Narcotics Control Board**

#### ***Introduction***

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for organizing and hosting this important Forum as a contribution to the on-going efforts of the international community and the region to address the challenges of drug production in Afghanistan.

#### ***Afghani opium: a threat to peace and security and regional impact***

We are reminded by the Security Council of the United Nations resolution that the drug situation in Afghanistan poses a serious threat to the political, economic and social stability of Afghanistan as well as to other countries in the region and the world.

The impact of the drug problem is acute. The level of illicit opium poppy cultivation continues to be high at an estimated 123,000 hectares under cultivation in 2009, yielding 6,900 tons of opium.

The challenge is to

- Security: drug money has a destabilizing effect and is partially used to fund extremists and terrorists;
- Crime: which undermines Afghan society and create instability through drug trafficking and related illicit activities;
- Corruption: drug money being used to bribe high-ranking Government officials, police commanders, governors and border guards;
- Health: growing rates of drug abuse and a spread of HIV/AIDS.

This year Afghan opium will kill another 100, 000 people in Europe, Russia and West Asia including several thousand young people in Russia alone. This is a direct result of the inability of the Government of Afghanistan to control its borders. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and countries of Central Asia, through which Afghan opiates are predominantly smuggled, face a

wide range of problems related to large-scale drug trafficking such as organized crime, corruption and the highest rates of abuse of opiates in the world.

In southern Afghanistan, for years, insurgents and drug traffickers alike have taken advantage of the geographical situation to regroup and strike again. Pakistan itself has become the victim of political violence.

In the countries of Central Asia, the rate of abuse of opiates continues to increase. The Russian Federation has also been affected and has become one of the largest illicit markets for opiates in the world.

Excellencies, Afghanistan opium has an impact on the health of your citizens. Whereas in the past many countries were mostly affected by transit, they are now increasingly affected by drug addiction and HIV-AIDS from drug injection and the sharing of needles.

***How do we collectively address the threat of Afghanistan opium?***

First, we need to tackle the problem at its source: in Afghanistan.

We have noted some welcome new trends – although these remain vulnerable. After major increases in the past, opium cultivation in Afghanistan is on the decline. The number of provinces free from opium poppy cultivation is projected to remain stable at 17 and poppy cultivation are concentrated in a handful of southern provinces, in areas controlled by insurgents. To reduce the twin threat posed by illicit opium production and insurgency, the Board has urged the Government of Afghanistan, and the international community, to continue to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of measures to curb opium poppy cultivation and to ensure that farming communities involved in illicit crop cultivation are provided with sustainable, legitimate livelihoods.

Although complex problems require complex solutions, the Board considers that the most powerful tool is development. Greater and better targeted assistance must be provided to Afghan farmers who have abandoned opium cultivation, so that they overcome poverty and the temptation to perpetrate violence. What we advocate is for the bilateral and multilateral economic development institutions, such as UNDP and the World Bank, to assist Afghanistan in establishing an economic power base in as forceful a manner as NATO's efforts to provide military fire-power.

The second instrument is law enforcement, to prevent drug traffickers, in collusion with anti-government groups, from causing instability. Regional cooperation and a coalition of all countries, and particularly regional security institutions, are essential for success.

***Measures taken by the Board under article 14 of the 1961 Convention: Dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan***

Ten years ago the Board, having determined that Afghanistan had become by far the world's largest illicit producer of opium, and that this seriously endangered the aims of the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, invoked article 14 of that Convention with respect to Afghanistan. Under paragraph 1 (a) of that article, the Board highlighted the gravity of the situation to Afghan authorities and underlined their responsibility for the implementation of the international conventions

The Board recognizes that addressing the serious situation in Afghanistan should not be the burden of the Afghanistan Government alone. This should be a shared responsibility. It requires the full support and cooperative action of the international community. The Board has called the attention of the parties to the 1961 Convention, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to the grave situation in Afghanistan.

Within its mandate, the Board has maintained a fruitful dialogue and close contact with the Afghan Government as it continues to closely monitor drug control developments there. It has also provided technical assistance to Afghanistan, in the form of capacity-building and training for Afghan authorities in the implementation of the drug control treaties.

***A platform for partnership: the regional organizations and initiatives***

Limited progress has been made, during the past decade, in eliminating the threat and impact of Afghanistan opium. Effective action to counter the threat of Afghanistan opium and support to the Afghan government requires close regional cooperation and a coalition of all forces at national, regional and international levels.

Regional mechanisms play a critical role. Central Asia is a conduit for precursor chemicals, particularly acetic anhydride, smuggled into Afghanistan. This is only used for the illicit manufacture of heroin and weak border control in the CIS States, for example, has an adverse effect on the situation in Afghanistan by NOT stopping the flow of precursors.

In the area of precursor control, the Board has, within the framework of Project Cohesion, assisted Governments in their efforts to prevent acetic anhydride from being diverted into heroin manufacture. Seizures of acetic anhydride destined for Afghanistan continue to rise. We urge all Governments to continue to give high priority to preventing the illicit flow of precursor chemicals, particularly acetic anhydride, to Afghanistan.

We commend the efforts of UNODC under the leadership of Antonio Maria Costa in working with Governments, particularly those bordering on Afghanistan, to strengthen border crossings, provide training, and set up joint interdiction teams in an effort to secure Central Asia's borders with Afghanistan.

Efforts such as the Triangular Initiative involving Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, the Central Asian Intelligence Centre (CARICC), will improve information sharing and law enforcement cooperation and contribute to restrain drug trafficking through the northern and southern routes. An even larger number of countries take part in the Paris Pact consultative mechanism, and its operational arm, the Rainbow strategy.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Paris Pact, the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Economic Cooperation Organization, have a critical role to play. These common platforms must be used to maximise impact and ensure the broadest partnership possible.

### ***“Technological” coalition***

To defeat this common enemy requires a “technological” coalition – we need to develop and share new technologies, expertise and experience in border control, money laundering, control of precursor chemicals, and knowledge of the modus operandi of drug trafficking syndicates. We have to narrow the technological gap between the drug trafficking networks and our law enforcement and drug control agencies. Regional organizations and initiatives have a critical role to play in this field. Some, like the Collective Security Treaty Organization, are already active in this sector.

### ***Russian Federation: A leadership role***

With its excellent capacity to provide technical assistance, including border control technologies and techniques to counter drug trafficking, the Russian Federation, has an important role to play in drug control. I encourage the Government of the Russian Federation to continue with this role and to strengthen its cooperation with other countries in the region in addressing the challenges of Afghanistan.

### ***The way forward and conclusion***

What we need today is for the drug control conventions to continue to serve as the broad platform of engagement with the Government of Afghanistan as a party to those conventions. The conventions also serve as a platform for a broad-based partnership or coalition at the regional and international levels.

By reducing both supply – through development and security – and demand – through prevention and treatment – we can find a shared solution to a shared problem.

Thank you for your attention