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International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Urges International Community to Fully Support Afghan Authorities in Addressing The Drug Control Situation

VIENNA, 12 February (UN Information Service) -- The drug control situation in Afghanistan needs to be addressed at national, regional and international levels, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) said today in Vienna, at a press conference following its consultation with the Afghan Government under article 14 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961.

“Afghanistan is not only being confronted with a serious situation of illicit cultivation, but also a growing problem of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in opiates, as a result of increased opium production.” said Dr. Philip O. Emafo, President of the Board, “Opiates of Afghan origin continue to be smuggled on a large scale into other countries in West Asia and through these countries to Europe.”

The Board invoked article 14 of the 1961 Convention with respect to Afghanistan in 2000, in view of the serious drug control situation in the country. Article 14 of the Convention is invoked by the Board when a situation in a country seriously endangers the aims of the Convention. The Board has since closely monitored the developments and is confident that progress is being made by the Government of Afghanistan under article 14 of that convention.

Despite some progress observed in the past year, the Board underlined the responsibilities of the Afghan Government to fulfil its obligations under the international drug control treaties to which Afghanistan is a party. The prevention of the cultivation of illicit crops, and its eventual eradication should be of the utmost importance to the Government of Afghanistan in fulfilling its treaty obligations, thereby achieving peace and security. The Board urges the Government to take adequate measures to ensure that progress is made in the implementation of its ban on opium production, and that the illicit cultivation in Afghanistan is effectively prevented and substantially reduced in the coming years, as targeted in its National Drug Control Strategy.

However, the addressing of the serious drug control situation in Afghanistan cannot depend on the Afghan Government alone, but requires the full support and cooperation of the international community.

The Board reiterated that trade in Afghan opiates generates funds that corrupt institutions, finance terrorism and insurgency, and lead to a destabilization of the region. The Board expressed its concern that the limited progress in reconstruction over the last two years has been accompanied by various illegal activities, including drug production and trafficking, which have become one of the main sources of income and employment in Afghanistan. This situation has further expanded insecurity and lawlessness, hampering the Government's efforts to combat those illicit activities. The addressing of the serious drug control situation in Afghanistan is therefore a matter of urgency and importance not only to Afghanistan but also to the international community at large.

The Board once again called upon the international community, the countries to which Afghan opiates are being trafficked, including neighbouring countries, to strengthen their cooperation with the Afghan Government. Such cooperation should include, whenever possible, provision of technical and financial assistance to the Afghan Government with a view to enhancing its capacity in law enforcement.

The Board further urged the international community, particularly the donor countries, to accelerate their delivery of assistance to the Afghan Government in its endeavour to rid Afghanistan of all illicit activities related to drugs, thereby fulfilling its obligations as required under the international drug control treaties and responding to the Board's invoking article 14 of the 1961 Convention.

Invoking of article 14 of the 1961 Convention will remain in force until the Board is convinced that Afghanistan complies with the provisions of the Convention. The Board, within its mandate under the 1961 Convention, will maintain the dialogue with the Afghan Government and continue to closely monitor the drug control developments in Afghanistan to ensure that progress is made by the Government under article 14 of the Convention.
