

## **34th session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East**

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Statement by Mr. D.J. Khan, First Vice President,  
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Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my short intervention, I will give you an overview of the general situation in the region, focusing on the implementation of the international drug control treaties by Governments in the region and the latest developments in illicit drug trafficking.

The International Narcotics Control Board, as the main monitoring body of the international drug control treaties, continuously reviews and analyses action which Governments have taken to bring the provisions of the conventions into effect. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of the situation, the Board collects, collates and analyses statistical and other information which Governments provide, either directly to INCB or to other international and regional bodies, on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. Based on this data, the Board analyses the licit movement of drugs, the trends in illicit trafficking and abuse and assesses the measures Governments are taking in the field of drug control. The everyday work of the Board's secretariat has been instrumental in the prevention or detection of diversion of drugs and chemicals from licit activities to illicit channels and in monitoring adequate supply of drugs and chemicals for legitimate purposes. The Board publishes an annual report on its work in which it reviews the global drug control situation, draws the attention of Governments to any gaps and weaknesses in national drug control and treaty compliance, and suggests possible improvements which may be undertaken at both national and international levels.

The international drug control system continues to function in a satisfactory manner and more Governments adhere to the international drug control treaties. Of the 23 members of the Subcommittee, 17 States, or roughly 74 percent, are parties to all of the conventions. The 1988 Convention enjoys the highest rate of adherence -- with the exception of Kuwait, all States members of the Subcommittee are party to it. Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have adhered to the 1988 Convention, have not yet become parties to either the 1961 Convention, the 1971 Convention or both. This is unfortunate since both treaties provide for the establishment of a functional control system which ensures that narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are not diverted into illicit channels. Unless these two conventions are fully implemented, the objectives of the 1988 Convention cannot be achieved. Only when the provisions of the conventions have been translated into action can the scourge of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking be comprehensively addressed at all levels. Azerbaijan, in particular, remains the only country among the Subcommittee members which is not party to the 1961 Convention. However, following a 1997 Board mission to that country, we are confident that the

Government of Azerbaijan will accede to this treaty and the 1971 Convention as a matter of priority.

The 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention is another important international treaty because it stresses the need not only to tackle the problem of drug trafficking but also to assess the extent of drug abuse and to take measures to treat and rehabilitate drug abusers. Nevertheless, Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey continue to be parties to the 1961 Convention in its unamended form only. The Board therefore urges those countries to accede to this Protocol as soon as possible, following the example of Saudi Arabia which did so in 1998.

Implementation of the provisions of the international drug control treaties is crucial if strides are going to be made in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. This is particularly true for the money-laundering provisions contained in the 1988 Convention. Depriving traffickers of their ill-gotten gains is essential because it hits traffickers where they are most vulnerable-- their wallet. The extensive provisions of the 1988 Convention must be applied in order to prevent drug traffickers from introducing proceeds from drug trafficking into the legitimate financial system and thus acquiring influence to destabilise local economies, endangering social and economic foundations and even ultimately undermine the political system.

As in other regions of the world, the provisions on money-laundering have not yet been fully translated into action in all countries in the Near and Middle East. Thus, several States remain vulnerable to the ruthless exploitation by traffickers for drug-related money-laundering. This could have devastating consequences. If large sums of illegally acquired proceeds are invested in a certain part of an industrial or commercial sector, other parts of that sector either will not be able to compete and will disappear or, in order to remain competitive, will have to adopt similar corrupt practices. Thus, the rest of the industrial or commercial sector and the entire economy will eventually become corrupt and political and social life as a whole will suffer similar consequences.

Some Governments in the region, for example, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, have introduced or are examining anti-money-laundering measures. The Board also welcomes the law that has been adopted in Lebanon, which allows for bank secrecy to be lifted in certain cases. We are confident that the Government of Lebanon will now withdraw its reservations on the 1988 Convention against money-laundering. Anti-money-laundering measures at the national level must be complemented and strengthened at the regional level. The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, which is a member of the Financial Action Task Force, could participate actively in developing measures against money-laundering and to guide its member States in this respect.

Another pivotal area in combating drug trafficking is the control of chemicals which are used in illicit drug manufacture. The Board notes that several CIS States in Central Asia are increasingly being used as alternative sources for the supply of chemicals. Some of them are, or have the potential to be manufacturers of key chemicals required for the manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine. Those countries are also used as transit

countries for smuggle chemicals, in particular, acetic anhydride into Afghanistan and other countries in south-west Asia out of industrial establishments in the Russian Federation, as well as out of other European countries. Efforts have to be stepped up by all countries in West Asia to intercept such chemicals. I hope that the working group which will be established at this session will consider practical measures and exchange of information to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation, including cross-border operations, with respect to illicit drugs and precursor chemicals, and agree on a set of concrete steps that will be taken by all Governments affected by this problem.

Before closing, I would like to say a few words about one of the highlights of 1998, namely, the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem which was held in New York in June 1998. That meeting not only saw a forceful reaffirmation of the political commitment to root out drug abuse and illicit trafficking, it also adopted practical and fairly ambitious action plans which will assist Governments in tackling the drug problem. The action plans make use of the lessons learned from drug control efforts over the past decades and take account of the multi-dimensional nature of this task, stressing law enforcement as well as alternative development and demand reduction. The implementation of those action plans will be decisive and is one of the major tasks for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its subsidiary bodies, such as the Subcommission. The Board welcomes the action plans and notes that a key element of their success will be concerted and uniform application of the international drug control treaties. The Board will continue to monitor the progress made by Governments in implementing the measures outlined in the action plans and stands ready to assist Governments in matters that fall within its treaty functions.

Thank you for your attention.