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**Statement by Dr. Viroj Sumyai, President,  
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

**Sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

**Item 9(b) Challenges and future work of the CND and WHO in the review of substances  
for possible scheduling recommendations**

**18 March 2019, Vienna Austria**

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the body mandated to assess chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs for possible inclusion in Table I or Table II of the 1988 Convention, the Board welcomes the opportunity to speak under this agenda item.

There has been a lot of focus on the challenges to the scheduling process under the 1961 and the 1971 Conventions, especially because of the rapid proliferation of new psychoactive substances and the related data limitations.

However, the Board has repeatedly drawn attention to similar challenges related to the 1988 Convention and to chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, especially designer precursors. The Board's most recent and comprehensive account of the matter is available in the 2018 Precursors report which I will present to you under agenda item 9c. In that report, the Board also called for a policy discussion at the international level.

The need for that discussion became particularly evident during the Board's recent assessment of three pre-precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants for possible inclusion in the tables of the 1988 Convention. You will vote on the scheduling of these chemicals during the present session under agenda item 9a.

The chemicals are examples of a development that began some 10 years ago and that is characterized by major increases in the sophistication, diversification and scale of illicit drug manufacturing operations.

All three chemicals now recommended for scheduling can be considered designer precursors. By this we mean chemicals that are specifically made to circumvent controls. Two of them are very close chemical relatives. None has any known legitimate use; none is regularly traded. But alarmingly, our analysis shows that substitutes are already available in illicit markets. Some of these substitutes are from the same chemical families as the chemicals you are to decide on. Others are so-called chemical intermediates in the synthesis of a controlled precursor or drug, and yet others are chemically masked derivatives of a controlled drug or precursor.

What many substitute chemicals have also in common is that they are purpose-made.

Because of the absence of legitimate uses and hence legitimate trade, these chemicals do not lend themselves to monitoring in trade flows, a key element of international precursor control. Adding an ever-growing number of designer precursors in the tables of the 1988 Convention may therefore not be practical, as there is little legitimate activity that can be monitored to any meaningful end.

Rather, the Board is of the view that efforts should be focused on measures that would enable authorities worldwide to disrupt the supply of designer precursors to illicit manufacturers without unnecessarily adding to the regulatory burden. Thus, one possible focus of future policy development may be to target a particular characteristic of designer precursors, namely their lack of a legitimate use in industry, medicine or anywhere else.

Therefore, INCB invites you to share your views and observations on this important issue, during the CND, and in response to the Board's recent call for information on national approaches. I also invite you to carefully consider the chemistry when notifying substances for possible scheduling under the 1988 Convention. The Board and its secretariat stand ready to offer Governments advice and guidance in this regard.

The Board hopes that the 2018 Report on precursors and the present discussion will be the beginning of a fruitful dialogue towards making the framework for international precursor control more responsive to the challenges posed by non-scheduled chemicals, in particular designer precursors.

I thank you for your attention.

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