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**Opening Remarks by Ms Jagjit Pavadia, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

**Member States Consultation on practical and concrete measures and
approaches for global action to address the proliferation of non-scheduled
chemicals and designer precursors**

13 October 2021

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

It is my pleasure to open this two-day event, which is organized by the International Narcotics Control Board, on practical and concrete measures and approaches for global action to address the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors.

The consultation is timely as we see the precursor control framework being increasingly challenged by the emergence and proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals, including designer precursors. I would like to express my gratitude to all participants for making time today to attend this important consultation in what is a priority area of work for the Board. Designer precursors are chemicals that have no known legitimate uses and are not internationally scheduled. They are tailor-made – hence we call them ‘designer precursors’, they are chemically closely related to scheduled chemicals and thus only serve to evade current control measures. For nearly a decade, the Board has alerted Governments to the risks and challenges that these substances constitute for the international precursors control framework. The Board has done so through its annual reports on precursors, special alerts to its focal points and high-level and other operational activities.

In these ten years we have accumulated further experience, which has now led us to call for the mobilization of the international community on this subject. Indeed, what

we see is that as soon as a designer precursor is scheduled internationally or is intended to be scheduled, traffickers quickly move to replace it with a substance that is not under control. We are facing a situation where our important achievements, such as the success in preventing diversion of controlled chemicals from licit international trade, are countered by the persistent appearance of new substances on the illicit markets.

This situation represents a great challenge. Even if effective, the scheduling of individual substances takes time. Moreover, it is important that precursor control measures are practical and not burdensome for national authorities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries . While we are scheduling new substances, traffickers continue to manufacture illicit drugs with minimal risks of prosecution using the most advanced communication and trading platforms. The pace and sophistication of trafficking methods will only continue to increase over time with the evolution of online consumer services and the continued shift from off-the-shelf to on-demand sourcing of chemicals. Therefore, the international community needs to discuss and agree on alternative and creative approaches to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals in the framework of the 1988 Convention which, whilst preserving and protecting free trade and industrial development, restrict the operational room for criminals.

In the last few years, and in parallel to developing several technical resources on this issue, the Board has led and supported a number of policy discussions, including at the sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to advance the global understanding on this topic but also to find practical and creative answers to these challenges. These dialogues confirm that the problem of the use of non-scheduled and designer precursors is not confined to a few regions of the world and limited to certain drugs only but is a global phenomenon applicable to all drug classes. A solution must be found at the global level, which requires the building of international consensus and the generation of clear collective action.

In June, we ran an expert consultation to compile a list of possible measures and approaches that Governments could consider. This consultation resulted in a working document, entitled “Proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors: Options for global action”, which you have before you. I thank the countries which have already provided comments in writing, and I look forward to further feedback from others so that this document can serve as a useful and practical basis for global action

in the future. This working document will now be revised with your help, and the final version should reflect your views and requirements. Following this event, the document will be deliberated upon by the Board for potential adoption as a guidance document for governments.

As stated in our previous events and as part of the mobilization initiative we are facilitating, the Board would favor the formalization of these global efforts and the resulting policy recommendations through a resolution on this matter at the forthcoming sixty-fifth session of the Commission of Narcotics Drugs. I invite governments to consider elements of this working document for such a resolution.

I hope that over the course of the next two days, we will be able to advance the collective work done so far and build effective global consensus to help solve this urgent challenge.

Thank you and I wish you very fruitful discussions.