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**Opening Remarks by Mr. Jallal Toufiq
President, International Narcotics Control Board**

**International Conference “Engaging the private sector to address
illicit drug manufacture – Know your industries”**

Vienna, 12 and 13 December 2024

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Narcotics Control Board, it is my honour to welcome you to the International Conference entitled “*Engaging the private sector to address illicit drug manufacture – Know your industries*”.

This conference has been organized in recognition of the vital role of industry in preventing illicit drug manufacture, a role that has only increased over the years. The developments that have made reliable cooperation between the public sector and chemical industry more important than ever are well known to all of you. They include:

- First, the rapid pace at which alternative chemicals are emerging and the almost infinite number of non-scheduled chemicals that could potentially be used to replace the traditional precursors;
- Second, the emergence of designer precursors, which are made specifically to circumvent existing legislation, and which are often derivatives or other close relatives of controlled precursors; and

- Third, the scale and sophistication of today's illicit manufacturing operations, which are vastly dissimilar to the make-shift clandestine laboratories of some 20 years ago, and which can be utilized for significantly more sophisticated syntheses, further broadening the range of suitable precursor chemicals.

Another well-known development is the fact that successes in monitoring international trade in the chemicals controlled internationally, under the 1988 Convention, have led drug traffickers to change their *modi operandi* and exploit vulnerabilities in domestic trade.

The concept of cooperation with industry has its roots in the 1988 Convention (namely, article 12, paragraph 9 (a), of that Convention), and the Board has supported Governments in developing and enhancing cooperation with industry for a number of years, through the publication of various guidance materials and capacity-building support in the form of twinning.

However, it is the aforementioned developments that require a renewed approach.

The Board has therefore emphasized over the past few years that one of the most important elements of a successful partnership is knowledge of the range of industries that deal with the chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture, especially industries that are not already regulated under existing precursor legislation, and that might – often unknowingly – be exploited by traffickers.

To guide Governments in addressing these challenges, the Board released a resource in August 2022, establishing a framework for identifying or “mapping” the relevant industries at the national level. Since then, several pilot countries have conducted “mapping exercises” with the support of the Board and I very much look forward to hearing their experiences in this regard.

However, we do not only want to hear about industry mapping: A number of countries have well-established cooperation models, many in place for several years, and some developed more recently. As the models of industry cooperation vary depending on the national context, I also look forward to hearing from other participants their experiences, challenges and successes with such cooperation, as well as good practices in addressing diversion from domestic distribution channels and innovative approaches to disrupt supply chains of alternative precursors, which are often uncontrolled.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here to discuss challenges as well as good practices of public-private cooperation models to deny traffickers the chemicals they seek, regardless of whether these chemicals are controlled or not. And we would like to discuss two perspectives, Governments and industry.

We are therefore pleased to have a number of industry associations participate in the conference and are excited to hear first-hand, from them, about the challenges they are facing and the solutions they may offer, whether it be at the national, regional or global levels. Likewise, our regional and international partners will contribute their views as well.

Finally, let us keep at the forefront of our discussions the knowledge that diversion can and does happen at all stages of the distribution chain. Cooperation with industry should therefore not be limited to countries with manufacturing industries but should become a standard good practice everywhere in all relevant areas of business along the chemical supply chain.

I look forward to your contributions to this conference, your visit to our exhibition room featuring relevant INCB publications and electronic platforms, and your discussions on specific issues and approaches related to cooperation with industry to address illicit drug manufacture.

Given your range of expertise and geographical diversity, including through representation from industry associations, I am confident that the discussions and outcomes over the next few days will be fruitful in advancing our collective efforts in addressing the dynamic challenges at hand.

Thank you for joining us in Vienna, and I would like to once again extend the Board's sincere thanks for your continued commitment to safeguarding health and welfare by addressing illicit drug manufacture, which each year takes the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world.