Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the Agenda items on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and International Drug Control.

We have carefully studied both reports and are satisfied that the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has devoted considerable attention and energy to the important aspect of imparting technical assistance through training and capacity-building. We support the UNODC’s integrated approach to drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, and encourage it to continue with its ongoing programme of operational transformation. It is our hope that this integrated approach would enhance the effectiveness of UNODC in dealing with these issues. There is also an urgent need for recasting drug and crime policies into a broader developmental mould, based on the promotion of justice and good governance. We welcome UNODC’s initiatives in this direction. India looks forward to a growing partnership with the UNODC, and has increased its contribution to the UNODC by five-fold to US $ 0.3 million with effect from this year.

Mr. Chairman

Narcotic drugs have been one of the main sources of funding for transnational criminals and terrorists. The close nexus between international terrorism on the one hand and trans-national organised crime, illicit drugs, money laundering, illegal arms transactions and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical and biological materials on the other, pose a serious threat to international security, and must be monitored carefully and addressed forcefully.

We have been advocating that the United Nations should convey a strong and unambiguous message directed at countering terrorism. We firmly reject the
notion that any cause can justify terrorism. No consideration can ever justify the targeted killing of innocent men, women or children. We hope that the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the UN General Assembly last month, would provide the impetus to unite the international community in its fight against terrorism via practical measures that facilitate cooperation by way of extradition, prosecution, information flows, and capacity building. We continue to believe that a strong response to terrorism requires broad-based international cooperation, reducing the space available to terrorists, and increasing the capability of States to address terrorist threats. It requires sustained and specific cooperation by a variety of national, regional and global agencies. Moreover, India, as an initiator of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, encourage an early conclusion of negotiations on that Convention.

The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has emphasized that “just as our interconnected world has brought with it an easing of borders or softening of borders, it has also unfortunately enabled many security problems to attain transnational and global dimensions. The specter of international terrorism is one such phenomenon evolving out of the churning that has accompanied globalization processes. It is imperative to contend with both trans-border, regional and global ramifications of local problems as well as the reverse. In devising strategies to meet trans-border challenges, we must now consider ways of evolving multinational strategies.”

India has borne the brunt of terrorist attacks over decades and has taken extensive measures and entered into several bilateral and regional arrangements directed against terrorism. India is a signatory to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, and is taking steps for their ratification. India has entered into bilateral agreements that provide for development of joint programmes to counter terrorism, money laundering and organised crime. India has strong domestic legislation to deal with these issues, and this has been strengthened further with the enactment of the Money Laundering Act. India has also signed the UN Convention against Corruption, which entered into force on 14 December 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

The UNODC Executive Director recently highlighted three key weaknesses in the global drug control situation: heroin supply in Afghanistan, cocaine demand in Europe and cannabis supply/demand everywhere. The World Drug Report 2006 points that about 200 million people, or 5% of the world’s population age 15-64, have used illicit drugs at least once in the last 12 months. While there are positive trends such as significant reduction of opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia, particularly in Lao PDR and Myanmar, and also a
steady decline in global coca cultivation and cocaine manufacture since 1999, there are worrisome trends with regard to global illicit opium production and increased use of ATS (amphetamine type stimulants). The international community must act early to prevent this menace from posing even greater risks to the social and economic fabric of the countries affected.

India has taken steps necessary to achieve the targets set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action to overcome the world drug problem that was adopted at the 20th special session of the General Assembly, which laid down the goals and objectives to be achieved by Member States by 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

As a traditional producer of licit opium, India has contributed to the maintenance of the delicate balance between the licit supply of and demand for opiate raw materials while at the same time fulfilling its obligations of supplying licit opiate materials to the international community for medicinal and scientific purposes. This delicate balance is being upset by the proliferation of sources of licit production and the ensuing oversupply of opiate raw materials. However, we are relieved to note from the INCB Reports in recent years that Governments of most producing countries have taken action to reduce the production of opiate raw materials to reflect the global demand for the same. The INCB’s efforts to monitor and maintain a lasting balance between supply and demand of opiate is commendable.

Mr. Chairman,

We are concerned about the emerging new problem of trafficking through online pharmacies. Given their seamless operation across national boundaries and the existing legal systems of various countries, no single country can tackle this problem alone. There is a growing imperative to tackle this new challenge by way of strengthened cooperation between countries and also by harmonizing national laws governing online pharmacies.

Significant success has been achieved by the Narcotic Control Bureau of India in recent years through seizure of various illicit narcotic drugs and also in combating trafficking, interdiction and investigation, and destroying illicit drug. However, national efforts alone cannot deal comprehensively with the illicit drug problem. India remains fully committed to working closely with other countries, both bilaterally and through regional and international collaboration, to address the illicit drug problem. We are convinced of the importance of working closely and cohesively towards achieving our common goal of a world free of illicit drugs and the malaise of narco-terrorism and organised crime.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.