
Mr. President,
Let me at the outset welcome the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem which was adopted at the high-level meeting of the 52\textsuperscript{nd} Session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs in March this year. Let me assure India’s commitment to the implementation of the declaration.

Let me also express my appreciation for the work done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the world drug problem through its various initiatives and reports, and in helping carry forward the drug control agenda through this important and timely review process.

Over the last several decades, some measure of success has been achieved in putting in place an international framework on drug control, notably the three UN Conventions of 1961, 1971, and 1988 and the Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted at the 20\textsuperscript{th} Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1998. The World Drug Report for this year has significantly observed that there is evidence of reduction in the cultivation of crops for drugs and decline in the demand for illicit drugs globally.

However, despite international efforts in this direction, illicit drug production, supply, consumption, and traffic remains a major global challenge that affects the entire international community. It is therefore important to not only reflect on the path traversed so far, but also to build on the gains, incremental as they may be, and translate it into an effective and coordinated international response while charting a future course of action.

Mr. President,

India’s resolve to fight the menace of illicit drugs remains steadfast.

We will continue to adhere to the commitments made in the three UN Conventions as well as in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action to overcome the world drug problem that was adopted at the June 1998 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. India is one of the world’s principal producers of licit opium. We seek to ensure a balance in the demand and supply of licit opiates required for genuine medicinal and scientific purposes.

The legal regime in India is defined by the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 and Prevention of Money Laundering Act which brings drug-related offences within its ambit. Due to persistent efforts during the last two decades, the situation of illicit drugs in India has changed considerably. Significant success has been achieved by the Narcotics 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.

Mr. President,
India supports a balanced approach that relies on destruction of illicit drug crops while at the same time providing alternative means of livelihood to the farmers adversely affected by such destruction. Such an approach could be utilized in Afghanistan as well, which has to be the focus of the problem in the foreseeable future.

There is also a need to control Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) and its precursors, an area where significant gaps exist in the international control regime. We would urge the UNODC to bridge the asymmetry in the regulatory framework between different countries by helping expand precursor control regulation to cover all countries as a shared responsibility.

We must raise social awareness about the adverse consequences of drug addiction, particularly amongst the younger generation, which is one of the most vulnerable groups. Apart from stringent legal measures, societies should strive to inculcate the highest moral values in our youth, including through the teachings of our great philosophers and religious thinkers. Incorporating practices like yoga and meditation in our daily lives is also helpful in weaning the youth away from toxic and destructive lifestyles that lead to problems like drug abuse. However, we are conscious that national efforts alone cannot effectively address this problem. Combating the menace of illicit drugs requires member states to develop a cohesive, balanced and integrated approach to the issue.

In this context, India reaffirms its commitment to working closely with other countries, both bilaterally and through regional and international collaboration, to achieving our common goal of a world free of illicit drugs. Collective, coordinated, and concrete strategies should be devised to effectively combat illegal drug production, consumption, and trade so as to jointly address the challenges in the coming years.

Mr. President,

Drug trafficking is more often a transnational crime and one of the main sources for financing terrorist activities. It cannot be tackled individually or in isolation. Bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation has to be recognized as a key element of any strategy to effectively combat this problem. We cannot succeed in rooting out the threat posed by illicit drug supply and production without also addressing the destructive linkages to narco-terrorism, arms trade and money laundering.

To make a real difference, the international community must break the pernicious nexus between drug trafficking, terrorism, money laundering, illegal arms trade, and trans-national organized crime. This is of particular concern to India which is painfully familiar with the issue having suffered from years of terrorism. The international community must come together to take a coordinated far-sighted global approach. Crucial in this context is the need to now adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, which has been under negotiation at the United Nations for years.
Mr. President,

I would like to reiterate India’s unwavering commitment to working closely with the international community in eliminating the world drug and attendant problems including narco-terrorism and the financing of terrorism through drugs.

Thank You, Mr. President.