

2017 ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM STATEMENT ON ENHANCING COOPERATION IN ADDRESSING AND COUNTERING THE DRUG PROBLEM

Adopted in Manila, the Philippines on 7 August 2017

Promoting a balanced, comprehensive, integrated and evidence-based approach to address the World Drug Problem;

Realizing that illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have been undermining the political stability, economic and social development of the region and posing a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all people in the region;

Recognizing drug dependence as a complex, multifactorial health disorder characterized by a chronic and relapsing nature with social causes and consequences that can be prevented and treated through, inter alia, effective scientific evidence-based drug treatment, care and rehabilitation programmes;

Reaffirming the commitment to promoting comprehensive demand and supply reduction efforts that include preventive measures addressing, inter alia, the relevant factors that may facilitate, drive, enable and perpetuate organized crime and drug-related crime;

Noting with grave concern the rebound of opium poppy cultivation in many parts of the world, including in the Golden Triangle and the growing production, trafficking and use of synthetic drugs, especially methamphetamine in the Asia Pacific;

Recognizing that the States most affected by the transit of drugs, especially developing countries among them, continue to face multifaceted challenges resulting from illicit drug trafficking, and emphasizing the continuing need to provide concrete, sufficient and sustainable support to such States in their efforts to curb illicit drug trafficking and deal with associated challenges;

Reiterating that the three international drug control conventions constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control system;

Reaffirming the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the leading entity in the United Nations Systems for addressing and countering the world drug problem, and reaffirming also the drug treaty-mandated roles of the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization;

Emphasizing that the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the Implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the World drug problem, which represents the most recent consensus, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing countering the world drug problem”, as the basis to build on our work towards the 2019 UN-CND Ministerial Segment. These documents represent the commitment made by the international community over the preceding decade to addressing and countering, in a balanced manner, the world drug problem, and recognizes that those documents are complementary and mutually reinforcing;

Acknowledging the contribution made by ASEAN and relevant ASEAN drug control mechanisms such as ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters and Safe Mekong Operation Project in combating the drug problem and promoting regional cooperation, and supporting the efforts made by countries and organizations in the Asia-Pacific and Europe to counter the drug problem;

Taking note of ASEAN's Drug Free Vision and supporting the efforts of ASEAN to contribute to promoting a society free of drug abuse and ensure, that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity;

Fully aware of the fact that addressing the drug problem is a common and shared responsibility of the international community and the need to accelerate collective efforts, including through enhanced international and regional cooperation, and demands integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing and balanced approaches based on scientific evidence and experience, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

To this end, ARF participating countries commit to, in the spirit of solidarity, enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation to effectively address and counter the drug problem in the following ways:

1. Fully respecting purposes and principles of Charter of the United Nations, international law, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the sovereignty of States in choosing their approaches for countering the drug problem, in line with the international drug control conventions, and also taking into account relevant regional documents and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.
2. Fully respect and fulfill all human rights and fundamental freedoms while addressing the drug problem, paying special attention to protecting the safety, interests and rights of vulnerable groups including women, children and youth.
3. Promote the policies and the principle of the rule of law of states in addressing the drug problem, adopt an integrated, comprehensive and balanced strategy, in order to reduce the supply and demand of the illicit drugs, while ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, while effectively preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking according to the three UN conventions and national legislation.
4. Address the drug problem using evidence-based practices in a transparent and effective way, especially focused on poverty reduction, prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures, education and information dissemination among the youth, adapting policies and measures to the specific needs of drug-affected or at-risk populations, raising public awareness of the dangers and risks associated with drug abuse as well as initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse.
5. Continue efforts to mobilize relevant social sectors, if possible, and invite relevant national authorities to consider, in accordance with their national legislation and the three international drug control conventions, including in national prevention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures and programmes, in the context of comprehensive and balanced drug demand reduction efforts, effective measure aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse, including, appropriate medication-assisted therapy programmes, injecting equipment programmes, as well as antiretroviral therapy and other relevant interventions that prevent the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug

use, as well as consider ensuring access to such interventions, including in treatment and outreach services, prisons and other custodial settings, and promoting in that regard the use, as appropriate, of the technical guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care for injecting drug users, issued by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

6. Encourage the voluntary participation of individuals with drug use disorders in treatment programmes, with informed consent, where consistent with national legislation, and develop and implement outreach programmes and campaigns, involving drug users in long-term recovery, where appropriate, to prevent social marginalization and promote non-stigmatizing attitudes, as well as to encourage drug users to seek treatment and care, and take measures to facilitate access to treatment and expand capacity.
7. Significantly strengthen the cooperation between competent authorities, including judicial and law enforcement authorities, as relevant, in countering drug-related criminal activities, especially in combating transnational organized drug trafficking including suppressing illicit traffic by sea, diversion of precursor chemicals and money laundering, improve information exchanges. Commit to address the drug problem from its root.
8. Promote effective measures capable of addressing the links between drug-related crimes and corruption, as well as obstruction of justice, including through the intimidation of justice officials, as a part of national anti-corruption and drugs control strategies.
9. Strengthen actions to address the new trends in drug trafficking and new challenges such as illicit trade of international or state controlled substances and new psychoactive substances through the Internet, as well as the evolving threat of amphetamine-type stimulants, including methamphetamine in the region and the financing of terrorism through drug trafficking.
10. Support research, data collection, analysis of evidence and sharing of information and strengthen law enforcement, criminal justice and legal responses, as well as international cooperation, to prevent and counter drug-related criminal activities using the Internet, consistent with relevant and applicable law.
11. Call on all members to continue to identify and monitor trends in the composition, production, prevalence and distribution of new psychoactive substances, including through use of early warning networks, developing appropriate national legislative, prevention and treatment and rehabilitation models and supporting scientific evidence-based review, and scheduling of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful substances.
12. Call on all members to share experiences in the legislation on countering the abuse and trafficking of new psychoactive substances, promote its incorporation into the regulatory of international conventions of the substances which are socially harmful, of high abuse risk, and endangering public security.
13. In line with national legislations, consider the development, adoption and implementation of alternative measures to conviction and punishment and promotion of proportionate national sentencing policies, practices and guidelines for drug-related offences, consistent with the three UN drug control conventions, international law and taking into account relevant UN standards, and regional documents.

14. Support development efforts, including to work to help resolve the social and economic problems related to illicit crop cultivation and illicit drug production, manufacturing and trafficking, and promote sustainable alternative development and preventive alternative development, as an essential part of successful prevention and crop control strategies.
15. Enhance the role and function of regional drug control and prevention systems, and under the international drug control system based on the three international drug control conventions, improve the coordination and synergy among regional and international mechanisms.
16. Promote exchanges and sharing of experience, intelligence and technology, as well as capacity building in countering the drug problem among ARF participating countries and consider providing appropriate assistance to less developed members in terms of funds, technology and capacity building.
17. Encourage the international community to pay more attention to and consider putting resources into addressing the worsening drug problem in the region.
18. Recognize that the supply and demand of drugs reinforce each other and drug trafficking has multiple and severe negative impacts on the development of all countries and call to continue to develop and implement effective prevention strategies, in accordance with national legislation and national requirements, and while simultaneously developing and implementing supply reduction strategies, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.