

28 November 2017

English only*

**Forty-first Meeting of Heads of National
Drug Law Enforcement Agencies,
Asia and the Pacific**

Bangkok, 27–30 November 2017

Agenda item 10

Adoption of the report**Draft report***Rapporteur:* Lee Pin How (Singapore)**Addendum****Consideration of topics by working groups****(a) Role of the Internet in addressing drug trafficking and abuse**

1. The working group on the above topic met during the 3rd meeting, held on 28 November 2017. In its consideration of the issue, the working group formulated the following observations, conclusions and recommendations.

2. The working group made the following observations:

(a) The use of Internet, and more specifically of the deep web and Darknet, for the purpose of drug trade is increasing and cooperation with the private sector in addressing this threat, in most cases, remains inadequate;

(b) Law enforcement agencies face difficulties in investigating drug-related crimes committed by criminals who use information communication technologies, with particular challenges being posed by encryption and anonymizing technologies such as TOR, encrypted chat applications, anonymous remailer services and cryptocurrencies;

(c) There is a significant lack of trained personnel, training tools and materials, as well as of necessary specialized hardware and software to counter the challenges in this area;

(d) There is a strong need to enhance the skills and knowledge of national law enforcement agencies of digital forensics techniques in the areas of identifying, seizing, handling with a proper chain of custody, including analysing, examining and storage of digital evidence;

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(e) The experience of some countries, which have specialized units that deal with the Internet and, more specifically, Darknet related drug crimes, proves the effectiveness of this approach;

(f) Social media networks are seen by national authorities as important tools for raising awareness and preventing drug abuse.

3. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) The use of social media networks has proven to be effective in reaching various levels of population in raising public awareness and preventing drug abuse;

(b) The use of special investigative techniques, using both available technological resources and human intelligence, continues to be crucial;

(c) Cooperation with the private sector and Internet service providers should be encouraged in support of the investigative process.

4. The working group made the following recommendations:

(a) Governments are encouraged to develop, with the support of UNODC, guidelines and standard operating procedures for handling digital evidence and the investigation of Internet related drug crimes and cryptocurrencies seizures, as well as to identify modalities to share best practices and experiences in addressing these issues;

(b) Governments are encouraged to allocate sufficient resources and build the national capacities and capability in the field of online investigations, digital forensics and cryptocurrencies, as well as to cooperate with Internet service providers, in countering drug-related offences;

(c) Governments should encourage their law enforcement agencies to set up specialized units that deal with the use of Internet and other technologies for drug trafficking, with a special focus on Darknet and cryptocurrencies investigations, to appoint focal points, as appropriate, and to ensure better integration between those units and their counterpart cybercrime units, as well as to conduct joint operations to counter the use of Internet in the commission of drug-related crime;

(d) Governments should continue to use the Internet in conducting awareness-raising and drug abuse prevention campaigns, targeting, in particular, youth;

(e) Governments are encouraged to engage in and promote cooperation at the regional and international levels in the area of the use of the Internet and modern technologies in the commission of drug-related crimes inter alia through platforms for research and joint trainings.
