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English only*

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

Bangkok, 22–25 October 2019

Draft report*Rapporteur:* Blair Macdonald (New Zealand)**Addendum****Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures**

1. At its 1st, 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 22 and 23 October 2019, the Meeting considered item 3 of its agenda, entitled “Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures”. For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it the Report on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking (E/CN.7/2019/5 and UNODC/HONLAP/43/2) and a report of the Secretariat on regional and subregional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (UNODC/HONLAP/43/3). In addition, country reports were submitted by Brunei Darussalam, China, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Macao (China), the Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, the United States of America and Viet Nam [...] (UNODC/HONLAP/43/CRP.2-[...]). The reports were made available to all delegations on a dedicated website.
2. A representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) introduced the item and made a presentation. The representatives of India, Nepal, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Myanmar, China, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Fiji and the Russian Federation made statements or presentations.
3. Speakers reported on the current drug trafficking trends in their countries, as well as on other areas relevant to the situation regarding drugs such as the most relevant drugs of abuse, drug prevalence and abuse surveys, as well as prevention, treatment and harm reduction measures, new methods of concealment and transport, the Internet drugs trade, organized crime, precursor chemicals, border control and money-laundering.
4. Many countries reported sharp increases in drug trafficking and related seizures in recent years and indicated that new record levels were expected for 2019. As such, the trend in the Asia and Pacific region was found to correspond with the worldwide

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trends as noted in the world drug report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

5. Drug trafficking routes remained dynamic within the region with trafficking organizations shifting routes frequently in response to law enforcement efforts, at the same time speakers also recognized increased drugs flows to the region coming from West Africa, North and South America, Europe and Oceania.

6. An increase in the use of parcel services and airline couriers was observed by many countries, notwithstanding the fact that the bulk of drugs was still transported via land and sea routes.

7. Speakers referred to different trafficking methods, including innovative ways of concealing drugs in large vessels such as gas trucks, or items of everyday use such as tea packages.

8. Some speakers highlighted the continuing rise of domestic, regional and international organized criminal groups in drug trafficking and reported on an increased number of joint operations in response.

9. Many speakers reported methamphetamines, in some contexts and forms also referred to as Yaba, Shabu or Ice, to be the drugs most widely abused and trafficked, with seizure numbers recently surpassing those of opiates in some countries. One delegation reported the production of crystal meth in their country on industrial levels.

10. Increased flows of related precursors such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, and to a lesser extent also P2P, were also observed. One speaker highlighted that the prevalence of opioids was three times higher than 15 years ago. Synthetic opioids were also addressed, many countries are closely monitoring the situation regarding fentanyl, which is not yet prevalent in the region in large quantities.

11. With regard to data gathering tools to analyse trends, one speaker reported that data gathering through waste water analysis had proven useful, including in the assessment of the impact of major law enforcement operations.

12. A number of speakers reported on investigation successes in major drug trafficking cases, especially on seizures, the closing of clandestine laboratories, the dismantling of criminal groups and arrests of suspects. They reported on the usefulness of intelligence-led operations and special investigative techniques, including controlled delivery. Some speakers reported on the work of inter-agency task forces and working groups that helped to coordinate national law enforcement agencies.

13. Speakers referred to the drug control strategies adopted by their Governments that included aspects such as improvements to data collection systems, responses to new psychoactive substances, strengthened expertise for Internet related crimes and illicit financial flows, strengthened mechanisms to comply with the international drug control conventions, as well as legislative reforms on investigation methods and the regulation of new psychoactive substances.

14. A number of speakers referred to bilateral law enforcement cooperation on the basis of informal information-sharing agreements and on successful joint operations. The role of drug liaison officers was highlighted. Further, joint trainings and the exchange of expertise and experience were considered important aspects of bilateral and regional cooperation.

15. Speakers made reference to initiatives to strengthen international cooperation, including the Container Control Programme by UNODC, the operational cooperation under the auspices of ASEAN and the role of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).