

Key-Note Address by

Secretary (Finance & Revenue) Shri R.S.Gujral

on the Inauguration on 22nd November 2011 at 10 a.m at Agra

Thirty Fifth Meeting of

Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies , Asia & the Pacific.

Ms. Christina Albertin ,Resident Representative UNODC, ROSA,

Mr Ian Munro Chief of the Anti Trafficking Section ,UNODC, Vienna

Distinguished Delegates

Mr. O.P.S Mallick, Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau

Smt. Jagjit Pavadia ,Narcotics Commissioner of India

Ms. Joanne Greig, from CND Secretariat in Vienna

Representatives of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I extend the warmest welcome to you all for the 35th session of the HONLEA being held in Agra, the city of the Taj Mahal. I am heartened to see so many heads of National drug enforcement agencies from 28 countries and representatives of international organizations here to day. Your presence here is a clear indication of your commitment to concerted global action against the multifarious problems relating to containing drug trafficking

The HONLEA has been meeting every year to examine issues which are facing all nations. The necessity of these meetings is underlined by the fact that today we all live in a globalised world. Our economies and societies are linked in many ways.

Globalization has brought untold benefits to countries worldwide. But it has also created some difficult challenges. Crime too has become global. Criminals can move around more easily and run transnational

operations. They often direct crime from offshore bases. Using modern communications tools, criminals can freely exchange information, coordinate their operations, even share "best crime practices". Terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and cybercrime are all global in scale and transnational in nature. The same modern day technologies and techniques that improve our lives are as easily applied to more sinister ends.

To deal with new crimes and more sophisticated criminals, it is necessary, but not sufficient, for drug law enforcement authorities to also become smarter and better equipped. Law enforcement officers must also learn about the latest technologies; understand how they might be abused by criminals, as well as how they could be deployed to enhance investigative work to always stay one step ahead of criminals.

But in addition to this, countries have to cooperate more closely with one another, by sharing intelligence, watching for international fugitives and conducting joint enforcement actions. Only by working together can we effectively tackle transnational drug crime and terrorism.

The United Nations plays a vital role dedicated to international cooperation bringing together the international community and facilitates international cooperation. We acknowledge the leading role played by UNODC to seek synergies amongst partners in providing technical assistance for the fight against the drug problem.

We are gathered here at a time of reports of increase in area under opium cultivation in Afghanistan. These developments have critical implications for the long term security of our region and of the world, for economies of our countries and the well-being of our people. The 2011 Afghan Opium Survey released by the Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics & UNODC has indicated that there has been 7% increase in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan to 1,31,000 hectares in 2011. The total amount of hectares eradicated increased by 65 percent in 2011 but the area eradicated represented only 3 percent of the total cultivation area. Though some progress in tackling the problem has been achieved, the medium term indicators of opium produced are not positive. The amount of opium produced has arisen from 3600 MT in 2010 (mainly owing to opium diseases that had affected the opium crop) to 5800 MT in 2011.

During recent years, routes from producing areas have multiplied, modes of transportation have diversified and several countries have become transit zones. Powerful networks of traffickers are seriously threatening the stability of several countries. The drug problem is of great concern not only because it involves illegal actions/activities but also because it has implications on health and society. Afghan opium kills 100000 people every year, worldwide. The problem of drug addiction and diseases spread by intravenous injection such as HIV-AIDS in most of the participating countries indicates worrying trends that should provide an incentive for all governments to consider drug abuse as an integral part of public health policies and to deal with it at regional and international level. Particular attention needs to be paid to strengthen actions on prevention and treatment of heroin abuse.

The proceedings of the Regional HONLEA's have contributed in many ways to sharing of information and successes in the field of drug control. I observe from the agenda that this 35th session is going to review the implementation of the recommendations made by 33rd HONLEA Asia & the Pacific.

Towards this end I would like to reaffirm India's commitment to fight drug trafficking and its proliferation at the cost of the health and safety of the global community.

India has been working consistently to strengthen its legal framework in compliance with international standards set by the United Nations Convention against Transnational crime and the international drug control conventions. The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 and is a comprehensive legislation which covers financial investigation and forfeiture of drug related assets. India is a signatory to 1961, 1971 and 1988 UN conventions and is participating in the project for Strengthening Drug Law enforcement capacities in South Asia. The UNODC Computer Based Training Module is being used in law enforcement academies for capacity building of drug law enforcement officials.

India is a producer of precursor chemicals. Indian has stringent control over precursor chemicals. Precursors are controlled under three different Acts namely the NDPS Act, 1985, the Customs Act, 1962 and the Foreign Trade Development & Regulation Act, 1992). Movement of precursor chemicals in India is controlled at two ways. For external

movements, India adheres strictly to the Pre Export Notification (PEN) regime. For internal movements, controls are made under the provisions of national legislation i.e. Regulation to Controlled Substances Order 1993. India has also formulated Voluntary Code of Conduct to the manufactures of precursor chemicals which are being followed strictly.

Instances of establishing clandestine laboratories in association with the foreign operatives have come to notice. Labs have been successfully dismantled sizeable quantities of illicit drugs seized. Standard operating procedures have been issued to field formations in controlling precursor movements.

For the purpose of production of ATS, ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine are used as inputs for the region. Both of these precursor chemicals have also been notified as a specified substances under Section 11 of the Customs act, 1962 for the purpose of checking their illegal movement within the area specified (50 Km & 100 Km) along the Indo-Pak border and Indo-Myanmar border.

The further tightening of control over precursor chemicals is under consideration of the Government.

In line with the development of abuse potential of Ketamine, India has declared Ketamine as a psychotropic substance

From this HONLEA, then, I look forward to learning about your own perspectives on the trends which you see emerging and your ideas on how to play a role in the containing the problems of drug abuse and drug trafficking.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me end by urging that we continue to identify areas where we can enhance regional drug law enforcement cooperation highlight new initiatives and best law enforcement practices and promote modern rights-based and evidence-based law enforcement approaches as well as practical procedures to combat illicit drug trafficking and cross-border crime.

* And - finally - let us use this HONLEA meeting to build upon the achievements of international drug control which we have achieved so far.

To win against misguided but determined foes, the forces of law and order have to work together and keep ahead of the traffickers. Conferences such as this offer a valuable platform for meaningful dialogue and knowledge sharing. I hope you will use this opportunity to chart the way forward and take international law enforcement to new levels. I wish you all an enriching conference, and a pleasant stay in India.