

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**PARIS PACT EXPERTS' WORKING GROUP MEETING ON PRECURSORS
FOCUSES ON ACTION TO COUNTER THE DIVERSION OF CHEMICAL
PRECURSORS, USED IN THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURE OF HEROIN, THE
RECENT TRAFFICKING TRENDS AS WELL AS CHALLENGES CONCERNING
MEASURES TO PREVENT THEIR DIVERSION FROM LICIT MARKETS**

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The 2nd Paris Pact Experts Working Group Meeting on Precursors focused on priority action to be taken to counter the diversion of chemical precursors, used in the illicit manufacture of heroin (in particular acetic anhydride), the recent trafficking trends as well as challenges concerning measures to prevent their diversion from licit markets. This meeting brought together national competent authorities responsible for regulatory and law enforcement control from the Paris Pact partners.

The 2nd Paris Pact Expert Working Group Meeting on Precursors was held here on 14-15 November 2011. The Ministry of Finance, Government of India in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) hosted the event. The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN), Gwalior (MP) organized the event on behalf of the Government of India.

This meeting was a follow-up of the discussions which occurred between Paris Pact experts at the first meeting on precursors held in Paris in 2010. The Paris meeting already stressed the importance of a political mobilization of all the partners of the Paris Pact and international operational cooperation and special measures to disrupt the illicit flow of precursors.

After a review of the latest trends, routes and techniques used by criminal networks when smuggling precursor chemicals to Afghanistan, the meeting took stock of the current status of implementation of the recommendations made at the first Paris Pact Expert Working Group on Precursors held in Paris in November 2010. Thereafter, ways of improving intelligence-led operations on precursor chemicals have been at the centre of experts' attention by analyzing lessons learned from Operation TARCET and by identifying the role of regional and international criminal intelligence platforms in this context. Experts have also addressed the elements of the supply chain of precursor chemicals including the involvement of the private sector.

Attended by more than 50 participants from 30 countries and organizations, UNODC experts from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and headquarters, the meeting resulted in consensual operational and concrete recommendations to enhance the cooperation between all partners to identify priority measures to be taken to deal with the problem of the diversion and smuggling of chemical precursors. These recommendations will now be submitted for final approval by the Paris Pact Policy Consultative Group Meeting in Vienna later this year.

A partnership of more than 55 countries and international organizations, the Paris Pact Initiative is aimed at combating Afghan opiates trafficking, consumption and related problems in the affected priority countries along the Afghan opiates trafficking routes. The Expert Working Group meeting took place under the Paris Pact consultative mechanism, which facilitates periodical consultations at the expert and policy level between partners, in order to jointly discuss, identify and set in motion concrete measures to stem the increasing level of opiates trafficked from Afghanistan.

The meeting was inaugurated on 14th November 2011 by Shri Palanimanickam Minister of State for Revenue. Shri Palanimanickam emphasized the importance that India gives to the issue of combating the drug problem. Recognizing the extent and gravity of the problem India has committed US\$ 200,000 as support to the activities under the Paris Pact initiative. He highlighted that India has a strong legislative and regulatory framework to tackle the problem.

Shri R.S Gujaral Finance Secretary who was present on the occasion highlighted the challenges faced by the expert group in addressing the situation arising out of reports of increased opium cultivation in Afghanistan and of putting their expertise together to prevent the movement of precursor chemicals like Acetic Anhydride from reaching the hands of traffickers. 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.

Cristina Albertin, Representative UNODC, stressed the importance of regional and international cooperation in combating the flow of precursor chemicals used in the illegal manufacture of drugs.

The Paris Pact 3rd Ministerial Meeting will take place on 16 February 2012 in Vienna to review progress made to counter the trafficking of Afghan opiates and define the way forward.

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