Statement
by
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Deputy Secretary-General, NCB
Head of Thai Delegation
Agenda: General Debate

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, may I extend to you, on behalf of the Thai Delegation, my sincere congratulations on your election as the Chairman of this Fortieth Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. My congratulations also go to all members of the bureau on the election to the office. I believe that, under your guidance, this Fortieth Session of the Commission will be successful in its deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe that everybody here is well aware that illicit drug-related activities are problems that plague every sector of the world. Thailand, similar to other countries, greatly suffers from the costs posed by the whole cycle of illicit drug activities. Its limited resources which should be used for the development of the nation are depleted to meet the problems of illicit drug demand and drug supply. The illicit drug business not only brings about costs on the law enforcement and health care systems, but also takes away
capital, needed for investment in legal businesses. In addition to drug abuse, especially among the potential workforce, affect the level of national productivity. The overall national economy and the nation's prosperity, as a result, are threatened.

At present, the problem which has caught attention from the government, the media, and the entire community in Thailand relates to the substantial increase in the illicit demand and illicit supply of methamphetamine. The production and trafficking of this substance are widespread throughout the country. Abuse, once limited to users who consumed drugs for performance enhancement now includes users who take drugs for pleasure. Moreover, methamphetamine abuse is increasingly spread among the youths, young people.

We foresee that the seriousness of methamphetamine epidemic is increasing and there is the trend that the amphetamine-type stimulants are emerging in developed and developing countries. Thailand appreciates the work on the control of amphetamine-type stimulants and its precursors done by UNDCP and INCB. The Meeting of Expert Group on Amphetamine-type Stimulants held in Shanghai had come up with fruitful recommendations. UNDCP should play the important role in materializing those recommendations to concrete action. The technical assistance and programme may be needed to implement the recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the drug phenomenon always keeps on changing, the activities on drug control have to be adjusted to an ever-changing environment. The Thai Government has attached firmly to the two-prong strategy on supply and demand reduction. The varieties of activities on supply and demand reduction have been implemented in line with what has been described in the
Global Programme of Action. We will not state here what we have done but we are certain that many countries can observe our effort from our national programmes and the international cooperation that is extended to all countries and international organizations. The successful crop replacement and highland development programme which helps reduce the illicit opium poppy cultivation area is one of our significant achievements.

Regarding the demand reduction, Thailand welcomes the declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction since the demand reduction is the important component of drug control. The successful demand reduction programme can help protect large number of people not to fall to be drug victims and at the same time can help cure the drug abusers. This year the Royal Thai Government has declared that 1997 is the year for drug-free campaign. The concept of sports against drugs has been promoted. We receive good cooperation from many concerned agencies in the country.

Apart from the internal drug control, the priority is given to the international cooperation on drug control. Thailand fully supports the concept of sub-regional approach initiated by UNDCP. Thailand is a signatory country of the Memorandum of Understanding between Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and UNDCP. As it was reported by the Executive Director on the implementation of a Subregional Plan of Action on Drug Control under the said MOU, 2 subregional projects on precursor control and on demand reduction in highland communities are proceeding progressively. We appreciate the effort of UNDCP who acts as the coordinator for the subregional activities. In implementing the subregional activities, the UNDCP field offices play the important role in coordinating and facilitating the programme activities, so the improvement of these field offices is necessary.

In combating the drug problem which has now become the global problem, the strengthening of cooperation among countries is required. We
anticipate that the forthcoming Special Session of the General Assembly would come up with concrete recommendation. However, at present we have the existing mechanism for drug control such as the CMO, the Global Programme of Action as well as conventions which contain measures and guidance on drug control at national and international level. We may have to look at the existing measures or guidance whether they are fully implemented. Moreover, there are specific issues that need the concerted effort and cooperation from the concerned governments such as the precursors control to prevent the chemical diversion and smuggling. The most important requirement is the cooperation from the chemical exporting countries and chemical trading countries. As I have mentioned earlier that Thailand, now faces a grave methamphetamine problems, I, therefore would like to request precursor chemicals producing countries to impose strict control over the exportation and the smuggling of precursors as well as countries which are precursor chemical traders to be aware of illicit chemical trade.

Mr. Chairman,

At this end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all countries and international organizations especially the UNDCP for the cooperation and assistance rendered to us. Thailand would like to reiterate our willingness to cooperate with countries, international organizations and world communities in fighting against drug peril.

Thank you.