



MYANMAR

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National Statement by
His Excellency Dr. Myint Htwe
Union Minister for Health
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
A Side Event of UNGASS 2016

**A Coordinated Regional Response to Drug Production,
Trafficking and use in the Mekong: the Importance of the
Golden Triangle in 2016**

New York

19 April 2016

Statement of H.E. Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister of Health, and Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Mekong MOU side event at UNGASS 2016 as delivered

19-4-2016, 14:30 UNHQ CR.11

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to thank the Governments of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR and Thailand as well as UNODC for their strong inputs and participation at this side event in line with Mekong MOU spirit.

All of us sitting in the room are equally concerned about the threat posed by the use, trafficking and production of illicit drugs, which burdens our health, justice and law enforcement systems and destroy the social fabric of the communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Myanmar is fully and deeply committed to fight against the narcotic drugs problem. We are party to all three UN Conventions on Drugs and have been implementing the provisions contained in these Conventions seriously.

Myanmar is attacking the narcotic drugs problems as a national duty to counter and aim to eradicate opium poppy cultivation while helping to improve the standard of living of people residing in the border areas.

Three tactics, namely, supply reduction, demand reduction and law enforcement strategies are being deployed as much as possible and in a systematic manner in a in implementing the strategies.

We have also extended the 15-year drug elimination program, which started in 1999, carried out in 51 townships until 2019.

The Drug Enforcement Division of Myanmar Police Force has recently been expanded and places its units in strategic areas to effectively implement narcotic drugs control activities.

The Government of Myanmar is fully aware of its largest share of opium poppy cultivation in the Golden Triangle area. The data for 2014 and 2015 shows the trend of poppy cultivation has been halted or on a downwards trend.

We have been promoting sustainable alternative development programmes with support and technical assistance from UN organizations, relevant NGOs, the European Union and our neighbors, such as the Royal Thai Government and the People's Republic of China. We will further enhance these programmes to the extent possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government also recognizes the problem with methamphetamine pills trafficking and production. Recently, domestic seizures of methamphetamine pills are reported from all administrative regions which suggest the use of this drug in the country may be on the rise. This is a very serious matter and we will tackle it accordingly and in a prioritized manner.

The availability of precursor chemicals had posed a problem for us, where this chemical industry does not exist in the country. We would earnestly request our neighbors to help in this aspect so that precursor chemicals are no more available in our country and in the region.

Drug use is clearly a public health issue and we are providing preventive, treatment, and rehabilitation services to the drug users in 26 Major Drug Treatment Centers, 47 Minor Drug Treatment Centers, 46 Methadone Maintenance Clinics, 6 Rehabilitation Centers and 3 Youth Rehabilitation Centers across the country.

We will also review and study the services being rendered in these centers by way of conducting operational research so that, our services are effective and efficient. We will also streamline, fine-tune and modify the services and strategies according to the changing epidemiological situations.

A review of current drug related legal framework and laws is in progress and it is being submitted to the parliament for consideration.

The dire consequences of illicit drug use are also included in the life skills curriculum in the schools to raise the awareness among the students. This could result in long term dividends.

We are closely working with US Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Narcotic Control Board of Thailand, Australian Federal Police (AFP) and National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) of China to jointly combat illicit drugs problem effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to apprise our neighbors that “we are reviewing the current approaches, adopting strategic plans and implementing programs and activities to suit our local context. It would be done based on the findings of thorough reviews and operational research studies. We would like to have more intensified cooperation and coordination from all of you to tackle this drug problem in unison and with greater momentum in our region”.

Thank you for your kind attention

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