

**A Message by the Chairman of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control cum
Union Minister for Ministry of Home Affairs during the 35th Anniversary for International
Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking**

Since the recognition in 1987 by the United Nation General Assembly for 26th of June as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, nations around the world have been conducting its ceremony annually which has now reached to 35th occasion.

In today's ceremony seized drugs, precursors and its related substances will be destroyed in accordance to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi simultaneously attended by the representatives of UN agencies, local and international organizations and diplomats in Myanmar.

Due to the negative impact of drug abuse, trafficking and its related problems, it has severely destroyed our health system, stability and development of every nation. In spite of its impact, every nation has carried out their drug control activities relentlessly but has not obtain significant impact to control the threat of drugs.

Although the successive governments of Myanmar has continuously tried their best to eliminate drugs, it has only been able to reduce the production of opium, while the increase of synthetic drugs such as stimulant tablets, ICE (methamphetamine), and ketamine has become a major challenge to the country.

We must be aware that the pandemic of COVID-19 has not affected the consumption and trafficking of drugs to decline but on the other hand has significantly increased.

As for Myanmar, the country has put the drug problem as one of her prioritized national duty with a balanced approach by drafting a new national drug control policy and also a national strategic action plan to support the new policy. Furthermore, the strategic action plan will be a guideline for the implementation of action plans in all the states and regions of Myanmar.

The leading role by the local governments of the states and regions play a crucial role in the drug control process and the commitment and cooperation of the civil society and non-governmental organizations are necessary to be successful.

The Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stated during the Union Government Meeting (1/2021) on 27th September 2021 that “Drug traffickers are taking advantage of the current political situation and effective measures are required to counter the challenge!”

And to further carry out its action plan effectively, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control was reorganized to 19 members by the order number (25/2022) of the State Administration Council on 21st January of 2022.

In addition to enforce the 1993 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law in accordance to international standards and norms, the existing law was also successfully amended on 14th February of 2018. The amended law aims to encourage drug users to blend in back into their society instead of giving out severe punishment. And in order to enforce the amended law, Rules will also be amended in the near future.

The Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force and Custom Department are closely cooperating with one another to effectively fight drugs. Likewise, Drug Enforcement Division which is under the supervision of the Myanmar Police Force was initiated with 10 sub-division and 65 drug units has now expanded with No. (11) X-Ray sub-division and (6) X-Ray Anti-Narcotic Task Forces, installing advanced X-Ray machines to inspect and detect drugs.

Furthermore, Myanmar has closely cooperated with neighboring countries and carried out special drug operations such as “Operation 1511” among 6 MoU Mekong member countries during 2020, “Safe Mekong Operations” during 2021 among Myanmar-Laos-Thai and Operation 1511/22” during the month of January to May of 2022 in which we were able to successfully prevent the flow of precursor into the Golden Triangle Region and stop the spread of narcotic drugs to other regions.

In this regard, the installation of advanced X-Ray machines has caused drug traffickers to use alternative routes, to change to new routes, to change their method of concealment, and more frequent use of maritime routes.

Precursor chemicals are also used in the production of cosmetics, production of commodity goods and extracting minerals. And it has become a grave concern of precursor chemicals being diverted to drug production sites using “designer precursors” to produce various types of drugs.

Thus, Myanmar has formed the Committee for the Supervision of Controlled Precursor Chemicals with representatives from line ministries to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals into the country. Relevant ministries of the Committee also need to closely cooperate and coordinate with the civil society to prevent the diversion of precursors. In addition, seized precursors from clandestine laboratories need to be carefully recorded for research, and for non-controlled chemicals seized in those areas need to be examined by the relevant departments and kept as a record for further examination.

As for the supervision of the importation of precursor, CCDAC is closely cooperating with international agencies. State and Regional Committees for the Supervision of Controlled Precursor Chemicals are also closely monitoring the importation of precursor to prevent diversions. Since Myanmar is located between industrialized countries that produce precursor chemicals it is a grave challenge for the country to monitor and prevent diversions. In this regard, Myanmar is closely cooperating with neighbouring and regional countries to exchange timely information to avoid any diversion of precursor chemicals.

The Union Government not only focus on the development of rural areas and alleviation of poverty, but also coordinating with international agencies to uplift the living standards of opium poppy farmers by implementing sustainable alternative development projects in poppy growing areas.

In terms of assisting the opium poppy farmers, the Union Government has spent vast amount of funds to build roads, bridges, constructing irrigation systems, reclaiming land for agriculture, providing high quality seeds, fertilizers, conducting capacity building training on agriculture and livestock breeding, arranging plans for livestock breeding ventures that are suitable to the area for the reduction opium poppy cultivation.

Since prevention plays a fundamental role in demand reduction process, students and youth are being early introduced to the consequences of drug abuse and educational awareness are consistently carried out to be aware of the danger of drugs. In collaboration between the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Health, a balanced approach with various perspective are being exercised to ensure that youth, student and the community are well aware of the danger of drugs. However, the restrictions of COVID-19 may set us back, we will continue to carry out with our educational awareness on drugs as the pandemic of COVID-19 slowly vanish.

On the sector of treatment and harm reduction process for drug users, Ministry of Health has set up 29 major drug treatment centers, 59 minor drug treatment centers, and 89 methadone clinics in which 26318 drug addicts were given treatment and 25806 drug addicts were given methadone treatment during the year of 2021.

On the other hand, Ministry of Social Welfare and Resettlement has also set up Rehabilitation Centers for the drug addicts to encourage them to get back into the community for which 14 rehabilitation centers are currently being set up and depending on the availability of the funds, more centers will be opened throughout the whole country. In addition, we also provide treatment and rehabilitation trainings for drug addicts in Wat Hti Kan, Mandalay, Myitkyina, and Kyaing Tong respectively.

Myanmar is a signatory country to all 3 UN Conventions and has been consistently cooperating with UN member states, ASEAN member states, neighboring countries, Mekong Sub-Regional countries, and BIMSTEC member states. Furthermore, Myanmar is

also actively cooperating with Myanmar based agencies such as UNODC, AFP, DEA, NNCC, and ONCB as well as the civil society organizations in carrying out drug law enforcement in the region.

To conclude my message, I would like to reiterate that Myanmar is carrying out its drug elimination endeavors as her national duty. The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control will also perform its duty by utilizing any means to accomplish its goal and for this year's motto by the United Nations "**Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crisis**", I would like to take this opportunity to urge encourage all the line ministries, departments, and the civil community to work together to overcome the threat of drugs by underlining the health and humanitarian crisis.