> Statement by the President on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 26 June 2019

Your Excellencies, Vice President, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Deputy Ministers, Ambassadors and Military Attaches`, Representatives from the UN Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations, Members of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, Representatives from the Civil Society and Community based organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, A very Good Morning. Auspiciousness to you all !

## Distinguished guests,

The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking has been observed annually all over the world since 1987, and today marks $32^{\text {nd }}$ occasion. Illicit drugs can break down health and social fabrics, and the basic economy of the people and link to terrorist activities, money laundering, illicit financial flows, bribery and corruption and transnational crimes in the country. Profits generated from illicit drugs trade can also breed armed insurgencies and terrorist activities.

Every Nation and every Government has been trying to resolve the emerging threats of drugs related problems through various ways and means, utilizing their own available resources. Myanmar has also given special attention on drug related problems as a national responsibility and has been cooperating with the UN

Agencies, International and Regional organizations, NGOs and CBOs in various sectors.

It is found out that $5.6 \%$ of the world population, amounting up to 275 million, has been addicted to drugs at least once in their lifetime and 31 million desperately need medical treatment and health care. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Health and Sports in 2018, there are around 93,000 injection drug users in Myanmar, and as a consequence, the drugs related communicable disease such as HIV, Hepatitis C and Tuberculosis have been increased.

As we need a comprehensive, inclusive and balanced approach to resolve the drug related problem, we have adopted a new Drug Control Policy in 2018. Accordingly, the national strategic plan will be drafted in order to effectively implement the Drug Control Policy on a nationwide scale. Most importantly, we need effective policy implementation to address this daunting challenge.

## Distinguished guests,

A hotline office was established on 22 June 2018 so that the people can file complaints and report drugs related information and thus effective actions have been taken to certain extent. However, there is a need to have more information on large scale production, distribution and trafficking. People are therefore encouraged to provide information to this office in a safe and discrete manner. Drug Enforcement Police has, up to present, conducted 25 special operations in hotspot areas and significant amount of heroin and other drugs have been seized.

In 2017, there were 41,000 hectares of poppy cultivation in Myanmar, producing 550 metric tons of opium. Poppy Cultivation dropped to 37,300 hectares in 2018, producing 520 metric tons of opium, a decrease of $9.1 \%$ in cultivation and $5.45 \%$ in production respectively.

However, the drugs problem escalated with the increased production of psychotropic stimulant tablets, ICE, and precursor chemicals have been trafficked illegally from the borders of neighboring countries. Seizures of psychotropic drugs also increase drastically. On the other hand, the increased production of stimulant tablets could unavoidably increase of the demand and the drug users among the younger generation. Consequently, values and ideals of the youth have been impacted dramatically.

As drugs endanger and pose vulnerability to the new generation, it is vital to enhance a comprehensive endeavour to eradicate the drug menace by the public as a national duty. As you may recall what I have stated last year on the same occasion that "if we do not collaborate and successfully combat the drug problem today, Myanmar will face a severe and drastic situation in the coming decade." The menace of drugs is slowly eroding our society, ruining the lives of our youth and destroying the dignity and future of our country. In this regard, I earnestly urge all stakeholders to join us in our efforts to fight against drugs.

## Distinguished Guests,

In addition to the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information and relevant government departments, we will enhance cooperation and collaboration with the private media and the civil society to raise awareness among the public in a comprehensive manner.

We will also scale up our cooperation with the CBOs, CSOs and the general public at large to implement prevention, treatment and rehabilitation measures for drugs users.

We are fully aware that no single country alone can resolve the drug related problems, and we need to enhance cooperation in prevention and trafficking of drugs with neighboring countries.

To create a drug-free youth among the upcoming generation of students, priority must be given to strictly ban easy access to and selling of drugs, including cigarettes, in the vicinity of school environment. It is also imperative that State and Regional Governments must collaborate with students, parents and teachers and work closely with the CBOs.

It is also necessary for the public to report to the State and Regional Committees for Drug Abuse Control on drugs trafficking and drug related trade taking place in their respective communities. As we embrace the local communities and the public to have closer cooperation through performance review and recommendations, we look forward to bring about effective and concrete changes in our endeavours with greater success.

## Distinguish Guests,

This year's theme selected by UNODC for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is "Health for Justice, Justice for Health". It is important to take drugs related problems not as a crime but as a health issue. On one hand, effective and pragmatic measures for treatment need to be undertaken. On the other hand, legislative and judiciary bodies need to work together to realize objective in an effective manner.

Before Concluding, I wish to state that our Government is striving all out efforts to reduce and eradicate the drug menace through effective cooperation and collaboration among government agencies. It is also imperative for the public to join hands and work together as a national duty and obligation of every citizen.

In conclusion, I wish to urge all of you:-

- to implement our obligation, and promote awareness on the immediate dangers of drugs among the youths and students through educational talks and exhibitions on a sustained basis;
- to encourage community based initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness on the dangers of drugs at the grass root level;
- to support and implement social-reintegration programes for drugs users and lend a helping hand to those who are in need through counselling and therapy;
- to report and provide information on drugs and drug trafficking, especially detailed information and intelligence on major drug syndicates, and drug producers;
- to provide information on officials who are turning a blind eye on drug cases and corrupt officials, so that we can take action against them; and
- to urge the Regional and State governments, and administrative bodies at all levels to abide by the policy that "There will be no excuse on drugs matters".

Last but not least, I strongly urge the legislative, judiciary and administrative bodies, the media and civil society to take part in the building of drugs-free society through the public health-care, inclusive and fair approach.

Thank you.


















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