

PRESS RELEASE

The U.S. Department of State on 27 February 2009 released an International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on over 100 countries, including Myanmar. The report has groundlessly identified Myanmar as one of the three countries in the world that had "failed demonstrably" to meet its international counter narcotics obligations. It is regrettable that such an unfair categorization was made, ignoring Myanmar's strenuous efforts in combating narcotic drugs.

Myanmar has been waging a relentless war against illicit narcotic drugs for decades. A comprehensive 15-year National Plan was laid down in 1999. Myanmar's national efforts against the drug problem are based on two strategies: (1) eradication of narcotic drugs as a national task and (2) total eradication of opium poppy cultivation through the promotion of living standards of all the national races residing in the border areas where opium poppy was cultivated. These strategies are supported by three tactics: to reduce supply of drugs, to reduce demand and to increase enforcement measures.

Amphetamine-type stimulants pose a new and ominous threat because they are extremely easy to produce. The best way to counter this threat is to deny the traffickers of precursor chemicals required in the production of these drugs. Myanmar neither produces nor imports any precursor chemicals.

At the regional level, Myanmar is working together with other members of ASEAN to reach its common goal of making the region free from drugs by 2015. Myanmar has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with six countries for the creation of a Greater Mekong Sub-Region Drug-Free Zone. Myanmar aims to rid the country of narcotic drugs by 2014, one year ahead of the date set by ASEAN.

The problem of drugs is closely linked to transnational crimes including terrorism. It is a global problem which can only be addressed through close international cooperation. National efforts must be complemented by cooperative efforts both at the regional and international levels.

The allegations of money-laundering leveled against Myanmar are also unfounded and politically motivated. Myanmar joined the UN Drugs Convention in 1988 and became a member of the Asia Pacific Group on Anti-Money Laundering in March 2006. Due to Myanmar's Anti-Money Laundering Projects in accordance with international regulations, the

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) deleted Myanmar from its list of Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories on 13 October 2006.

Myanmar's national efforts in combating drug problem were carried out with little or no external assistance. It is a sad fact that these sincere efforts have not received the full acknowledgement and support that they deserve.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar therefore categorically rejects the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report issued by the US Department of State as inaccurate and politically motivated assessments.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
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