

Thailand Country Report

OVERVIEW

Drug problem is one of urgent priorities of the Royal Thai government led by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej in the wake of growing concern of the general public over the expansion of drug problem and the rising number of new drug addicts. Adhering to the principle that “addicts are patients who need treatment, while traffickers need to be punished according to the judicial process,” the government declared the strategy of “3 Minuses, 3 Pluses and 3 Focuses” as the national guideline to address the re-emerging drug problem. According to the Prime Minister’s Order No. 61/2511 dated 25 March 2008, the National Narcotic Control Management Centre (NNCMC) was also reorganized with an aim to put in place more efficient management system to solve the drug problem. Also the new operational plan entitled “People Alliance against Drugs” (1 April – 30 September 2008) was launched on 2 April 2008 at the Government House. It is to cope with illegal drug use, to curb public concern over drug menace and to ensure integrative efforts made by agencies concerned. The government also demands authorities concerned in each province to a play leading role in addressing the drug problem with a view to intensify drug control measures across the country.

CURRENT DRUG SITUATION

Opium

In 2007, the total area under opium poppy cultivation in Thailand was estimated at 231 ha a slight increase from 157 ha in 2006. With an average opium yield of 15.6 kg/ha in 2007, similar to 2006, the potential production of opium was around 3.6 tons a slight increase compared with 2.46 tons in 2006. However, around 95% of opium poppy crop was eradicated in 2007 with a net opium production left at 177 kg. Even insignificant, the increase in opium growing areas and potential production of opium led to the efforts made by the authorities concerned to introduce alternative development programs in remote, problematic areas of opium growing in the North of Thailand. It is to reaffirm not only the national commitment to provide alternative livelihood for the remaining opium poppy growing farmers but also the regional commitment in pursuit of drug-free ASEAN by 2015.

Heroin

Thailand is not a heroin production country. Also the abuse of heroin has steadily been decreasing since the war on drugs was declared in 2003. Yet Thailand is still one of the transit countries for heroin trafficking from the Golden Triangle to the global market. In 2007, heroin supply in the Golden Triangle continued to decline while heroin from the Golden Crescent was on the rise, relatively lower level. It was often found that 5-10 kg of Heroin were seized in each case broken in 2007. The drug cases still revealed that the West African drug trafficking syndicates continued to involve in international heroin trafficking from the Golden Crescent to Asian market, particularly, China. They often exploited Southeast Asian women as their couriers for transportation of heroin to China via India, Thailand and Malaysia by air travelling. The increasing threat of heroin trafficking by the West African Syndicates led to the number of joint operations among drug control authorities of Thailand, China, India and Malaysia which resulted in the several successful arrests of the syndicate members in each country in 2007. It continued to find heroin concealed in body cavities and personal luggage. But none of the large heroin shipments have been intercepted since 2006 after the largest volume of heroin seizure reached 955 kg in 2005, of which one case of 520 kg of heroin were seized.

Methamphetamine (Yaba)

Methamphetamine in tablet form or Yaba is still a major drug of concern. Typically, each tablet of Yaba with WY logo contains 10-25% of methamphetamine and 60-70% of caffeine. With the growing concern of the general public over the expansion of Yaba trafficking and abuse and the gradual increase in the number of Yaba cases over the past two years, authorities concerned put in place a series of new interventions aiming to address the problem. Most Yaba found in Thailand has been smuggled from neighboring countries into Thailand through the North of the country mostly for domestic consumption. However, the stern interdiction along northern border led to the change in transshipment areas of Yaba from the North to the Northeast and the East, though relatively lower level. Over the past three year, it has been noticeable that drug smugglers from neighboring countries being active in smuggling Yaba into Thailand along the borders through official and unofficial border points of entry.

Methamphetamine Hydrochloride (ICE)

No production of methamphetamine hydrochloride or ICE is detected in Thailand. But case information and intelligence reveals that the number of ICE production located in neighboring countries. It is rather smuggled into Thailand via Thailand-Myanmar borders both for domestic consumption and further trafficking to Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong SAR, and Japan. For domestic consumption, the abuse of Ice is quite limited and often found in entertainment places in Bangkok and nearby provinces as well as tourism-based provinces. Sometimes, ICE was found being used with Ecstasy, Cocaine and Ketamine. All of them are classified as club drugs. In 2007, the volume of ICE seizure declined by 52%, to 45 kg compared with 94 kg in 2006, while the number of Ice cases stood at 903 in 2007, relatively stable, compared to 926 cases in 2006. It still reflects a remarkable decrease in ICE seizure which was recorded in 2005, reaching 323 kg which four large shipments of ICE detected prior to being further shipped to the third country.

Ecstasy

There is no ecstasy production in Thailand. Ecstasy is mostly trafficked into Thailand from overseas, particularly the Netherlands. Over the past two years, drug cases revealed that Southeast Asia has become the emerging source of ecstasy production though. This trend brings down the retail price of ecstasy in Thailand to 400-800 Baht/tablet (US\$ 12-25/tablet). The decreasing trend of ecstasy price triggers concern among drug control authorities over the possibility of ecstasy being used as the Yaba substitute in the future. However due to its relatively high price, the demand for ecstasy is yet limited to the wealthy groups. Epidemic areas of ecstasy abuse can often be found in Bangkok and tourism-based provinces. It is one of club drugs often used in private parties or entertainment places. Singaporean and Malaysian groups remain major syndicates actively smuggling ecstasy from Europe to Thailand via Thailand-Malaysia border. Case information reveals that syndicates of Thai, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese origins involve in ecstasy smuggling into Thailand via Bangkok International Airport by air passengers and air mails. Authorities concerned are keeping close watch to the situation of ecstasy trafficking and abuse.

Cocaine

African drug trafficking network remains a key syndicate actively involving in cocaine trafficking from producing countries in South America to Thailand by air passengers. Thai and Filipino nationals are often used as drug couriers. These groups also use Thailand as their base to smuggle Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin to the third countries. Cocaine abuse in Thailand is limited among some certain groups of well-off abusers and foreigners and often found in private resident and entertainment places in Bangkok and tourism-based provinces.

Ketamine

Ketamine abuse has been found in Thailand since 1989. Classified as club drugs like ecstasy, Cocaine and ICE, ketamine abuse is often found in entertainment places or small parties held in private apartments. Ketamine, both in liquid and powder forms, has frequently smuggled into Thailand via Thailand–Malaysia border and Thailand-Cambodia border for domestic consumption which the youth are the main ketamine abusers. However, the trend of abuse has decreased because of the continued stern suppression in each country affected in the region.

Volatile Substances

Based on the registered drug treatment patients in 2007, the abuse of volatile substances among the youth remains a cause of concern as an increase in the number of treatment admission for volatile substances. Widely used volatile substances are glue, thinner and lacquer. Children and teenagers are the main abuser. In order to ensure that volatile substances are under control, Thai authorities have made their effort to monitor and prevent volatile substances not be used as the substitute for hard-to-find drugs.

Marihuana

The continual eradication and suppression during the past 20 years has dramatically dropped down the amount of marihuana growing in Thailand. Most marihuana has been brought in from neighboring countries to Thailand along the northeastern borders. Most of which is further transported to Malaysia via Thailand-Malaysia border bound to European market, while some is distributed for domestic consumption. Recently, Marihuana has increasingly smuggled from Lao PDR to Thailand. Average of 10 metric tons of marihuana was seized each year.

Cannabis resin

According to the arrests at the Bangkok International Airport, Nepalese is an active smuggler of cannabis resin from Nepal to Thailand. The drug is partly destined to the third country, particularly Japan while the rest is distributed to foreign tourists in tourism areas in the country.

NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY

Drug control strategy of Thailand comes out of an idea of disconnecting drug demand from drug supply and being obliged to the principle “addicts are patients who are in need of treatment while traffickers are those who must be punished under the judicial process.” In 2008, the government launched the Operational Plan on People Alliance against Drug (1 April – 30 September 2008) with an aim to reduce illegal drug use and eliminate the drug threat that poses to the well-being of the Thai people. In implementing the plan, the general and specific objectives are set to be achieved. For the general objective, each province is demanded to reduce the number of drug dealers, drug users and risk groups/factors as much as possible. For the specific objective, the area of 25 provinces, 240 districts and people who still commit drug–related activities are the priority targets for an immediate action made by authority concerned.

Drug Control Concept

The concept of “3 Minuses, 3 Pluses and 3 Focuses” is adopted as the national strategic guideline to address the drug problem. It is to prioritize the areas of interest in solving the drug problem.

1. **3 Minuses:** It is to reduce factors related to the problems of drug dealers, drug addicts and risk youth groups;
2. **3 Pluses:** It is to increase operational levels of anti-drug mechanisms, i.e. government sector, civil sector, local administrative organizations and channels for the public to take part in drug surveillance;
3. **3 Focuses:** It is an implementation focusing on areas with more serious drug problems than normal level i.e. Bangkok and peripheral provinces, southern border provinces, drug smuggling areas along the border and unresolved illegal drug-prone areas.

Drug Control Strategy and Implementation

1. The Strategy ‘3 Minuses’

Every province shall set up strategic goals orienting towards the decrease of 3 elements—(1) major drug trafficker groups (2) drug abusers in villages/communities who have not been arrested and given treatment and the rest of drug abusers according to the Drug Rehabilitation Act B.E. 2545, and (3) risk/youth groups and risk factors.

1.1 Drug Traffickers

The implementation regarding drug traffickers is divided into 3 levels i.e. national, regional and provincial levels. In the national level, all concerned agencies shall unit their efforts against drug problems in investigating and suppressing the offenders with arrest warrants and major drug networks. In the regional level, main drug syndicates in the region shall be identified and mechanism for monitoring the anti-drug operations shall be established. For the provincial level, the epidemic of drugs in communities shall be shrunk as each province shall set up and improve the effectiveness of the integrated drug checkpoint operations.

1.2 Drug Abusers

Local mechanisms shall be used in detecting drug abusers in villages/communities for having them to undergo treatment and after care service. For the rest of drug abusers according to the Drug Rehabilitation Act, local authorities shall join hand with concerned mechanism to send the arrested drug abusers to treatment centres and to promote and provide assistance to them to successful reintegrate into the society.

1.3 Risky/youth group and risk factors

An operational team shall be established and assigned to reduce and delete negative factors/risk factors in the target areas, hinge on strict use of law enforcement and increase in positive factors by hosting constructive activities as alternatives for solving drug problems.

2. The Strategy ‘3 Pluses’

This strategic goal is set to increase the role of state officials, civil organization, local administration organization and the public in watching and solving drug problems in every province.

2.1 Official operation levels

All concerned agencies shall increase the intense of law enforcement operation at all levels while drug addicts/abusers shall be brought into the attitudinal change process.

2.2 Role of the civil sector and the local administration organization

The role of the civil sector shall be maximized to actively participate in fighting against drugs and strengthening their own villages/communities to become the villages under the project of the Mother of the Land Fund.

2.3 Role of the public in watching the drug problems

The drug information system for informants shall be widely opened in order to gather data and tip-off systematically. Drug surveillance shall be upgraded to a warning system of drug trafficking and drug epidemic in the areas.

3. The Strategy '3 Focuses'

The goal of this strategy is intended to reduce drug problems in the areas where special circumstances are found as well as to improve the anti-drug management system subject to the size of the drug problems.

3.1 Bangkok and some peripheral areas

The anti-drug management in the vicinity of Bangkok and some connecting areas of peripheral provinces shall be improved to be more flexible and compliant with the problem volume.

3.2 Southern border provinces

The anti-drug campaign shall be used to draw cooperation from local people by which all governmental agencies collaborates with religious leaders and community leaders to fight against drugs in sustainable manner.

3.3 Drug-smuggling areas along the border and unresolved illegal drug-prone areas

The interception strategic plan for the areas along the border of 22 districts in 9 provinces where the drug smuggling is always threatening shall be devised. An opium eradication plan designed specifically for the areas of 6 districts in 3 provinces where the opium is intensely and continually grown shall be formulated. Along with the operation, the alternative development measure shall be practiced to help the hilltribes who grow the plant and provide them new appropriate alternatives. Furthermore, the anti-drug plan shall also be specifically designed for the areas where drug trafficking and epidemic are consistently reported. These areas include 7 provinces, i.e. Kanchanaburi, Chonburi, Ayudthaya, Supanburi, Ratchburi, Songkla and Surathani, and 240 districts countrywide.

Management of Strategies

1. All agencies concerning each activity under this operation shall put the policy and orders into practice. They shall also devise an integrated action plan for the period of 6 months.

2. The inspector of the Prime Minister's Office, the inspector of the Ministry of Interior and other mechanism set up by the National Narcotics Control Management Centre (NNCMC) are accountable for monitoring and following up the progress of the operation implementation, making a progress report, and giving recommendations periodically.

3. All concerned agencies shall report the implementation outcomes subject to the form and the timetable specified. The Office of the Narcotics Control Board shall evaluate the overall success of the implementation.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Drug Suppression

**Statistics on Drug Cases and Offenders in Thailand (2000-2007)
As of 10 March 2008**

Year	Cases	Offenders
2000	222,614	238,380
2001	207,447	220,525
2002	208,817	220,106
2003	102,334	108,315
2004	55,423	60,669
2005	71,507	78,466
2006	82,624	90,845
2007	97,573	106,617

**Statistics on Major Drug Seizures and Cases in Thailand (1998-2007)
As of 10 March 2008**

Methamphetamine (YABA)			Heroin		
Year	Cases	Million Tablets	Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	131,366	33.5	1998	13,918	541
1999	154,029	50.2	1999	7,872	405
2000	180,293	84	2000	4,925	385
2001	169,148	94	2001	3,482	475
2002	167,810	95.9	2002	2,756	635
2003	63,595	71.5	2003	1,609	437
2004	34,860	31.1	2004	686	820
2005	54,076	17.8	2005	491	955
2006	59,272	13.8	2006	424	92.8
2007	75,552	14.3	2007	368	293.4

Dried Marihuana

Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	25,756	5,890
1999	22,720	14,680
2000	19,891	10,320
2001	20,525	10,921
2002	20,633	12,404
2003	15,525	13,773
2004	7,476	9,907
2005	7,225	13,288
2006	10,245	11,573
2007	9,493	15,384

Ecstasy

Year	Cases	Tablets
1998	120	5,920
1999	183	21,794
2000	375	72,182
2001	383	68,089
2002	591	150,895
2003	664	132,990
2004	563	124,980
2005	335	34,608
2006	361	27,210
2007	306	113,573

Ketamine

Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	14	0.3
1999	74	264
2000	149	38
2001	187	95
2002	250	27
2003	325	98
2004	164	164
2005	106	48
2006	121	22
2007	71	3

Volatile Substances

Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	18,033	599
1999	17,004	4,141
2000	13,106	455
2001	10,649	360
2002	13,200	454
2003	15,410	536
2004	8,839	279
2005	6,734	171
2006	7,637	233
2007	6,013	130.9

Cocaine

Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	22	3.56
1999	16	0.62
2000	16	4
2001	25	5
2002	57	15
2003	87	11
2004	119	12
2005	88	6.8
2006	155	38
2007	119	18.7

Methamphetamine Hydrochloride (ICE)

Year	Cases	Kilograms
1998	NA	NA
1999	NA	NA
2000	5	0.4
2001	3	0.01
2002	41	8
2003	70	49
2004	195	47
2005	586	323
2006	966	94
2007	1,309	47.4

Precursor Control

Thailand is not a chemical producing country. Most chemicals and precursors are imported for medical and industrial purposes. To control the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals from legitimate industry, the Precursor Chemical Control Committee has been set up since 1993 to formulate national strategy on precursor control, supervise the precursor control and implementation, and integrate the efforts made by precursor control agencies concerned. In accordance with the 1988 UN Convention, 23 chemicals listed in the table I and table II, have been controlled in Thailand. Moreover, in respond to domestic concern, 8 additional precursors and chemicals are also under control, comprising Acetyl Chloride, Chloroform, Ethylidine Diacetate, Glacial Acetic Acid, Phosphorus Trichloride, Phosphorus Pentachloride, Thionyl Chloride and Caffeine. For Thailand, there are 5 laws applied to control the 31 chemical substances mentioned above, including Narcotic Act B.E.2522 (1979), Psychotropic Substances Act B.E. 2518 (1975), Import and Export Act B.E.2522 (1979), Hazardous Substances Act B.E. 2535 (1992) and Commodities Control Act B.E.2495 (1952). Pre-Export Notification (PEN) is also conducted to discourage diversion of precursors and essential chemicals to the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Asset Forfeiture

There are two major legislations applied for forfeiture of property in Thailand. As a signatory to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, Thailand has firstly enacted the Act on Measures for the Suppression of Offenders in an Offence Relating to Narcotics B.E. 2534 (1991) as a criminal forfeiture law allowing law enforcement agencies to manage property seized and forfeited in drug criminal cases. The proceeds from the sale of forfeited assets are used to further law enforcement initiatives to fight against drugs and to distribute to the Narcotics Control Fund after the owner convicted of a crime. Later on, the Anti Money Laundering Act B.E.2542 (1999) was also enacted in 1999 as a civil asset forfeiture law applying asset seizure measure to seven predicate offences including the drug offence. At present, after amended in 2001, this law could be applied for one more predicate offence of terrorism. In case that the said two laws could not be applied, personal income tax examination would be imposed under the Thai Revenue Code as an additional measure for prosecuting drug criminal suspects committing tax evasion. All these measures aim to cripple money influences of drug traffickers.

In 2007, Under the Act on Measures for the Suppression of Offenders in an Offence Relating to Narcotics B.E. 2534 (1991), 1,453 alleged cases were filed for financial examination, a slight decrease compared with 1,639 cases in 2006 and a total value of assets seized was at 573 million baht, compared with 943 million baht in 2006. In addition, under the Anti Money Laundering Act B.E.2542 (1999), 83 cases were filed and 309 million baht were seized in 2007. The drug offence generally constitute for 90 % of the whole civil cases.

Legal Framework

In 2007, drug legislation was developed according to the following 3 policies on drug legislation:

1. The Royal Thai Government's policy as stated in the policy declaration of the General Surayud Chulanont Administration to the National Legislative Assembly on 3 November 2006. Regarding the social policy, the government issued policies to reform the justice administration with public participation; improve investigation system, case consideration and the trial and adjudication, the

detention and rehabilitation of offenders; protect people's rights and freedom, in order to create social justice and provide people with easy and efficient access to the justice administration.

2. The Royal Decree on Criteria and Procedures for Good Governance, B.E. 2546 assigning government agencies to explore, examine and review laws under their responsibility to be up-to-date and appropriate for a situation or consistent to a social necessity, an economy and a national security.
3. The 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011) stipulating legislative development in order to put strategies into practice efficiently and effectively under legislative revision framework favouring good governance, complying with economic changes in the era of globalization, and responding to government necessities and world changes.

At present, the Act on Procedure of Narcotic Case B.E. 2550 (2007) were drafted in order to allow the court to try, adjudge and sentence effectively and stipulate criteria on investigation by special techniques and provisions on procedure in courts of first instance, an appeal, an appeal to the Supreme Court and prescription. The Act will take effect as from the 12th of July 2008, 180 days after being promulgated in the Government Gazette on the 14th of January 2008.

Cooperation on Alternative Development

Thailand is currently acknowledged at international and regional level as one of the countries which is successful in applying alternative development in solving the problem of opium poppy cultivation. It is resulted from 40 years of experience in alternative development work which was inspired by His Majesty the King's initiation for the establishment of the Royal Project in 1969. Currently, there are two non-governmental agencies playing leading roles in alternative development work in Thailand including the Royal Project Foundation and the Mae Fah Luang Foundation.

In 2002, it was the first time that Thailand expanded her efforts to address illicit crop cultivation outside the country through promoting cooperation on alternative development with Myanmar. In cooperation with Mae Fah Luang Foundation under Royal Patronage, the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) on behalf of the Royal Thai Government assisted the government of Myanmar to implement sustainable alternative development project in Yong Kha community areas in southern Shan State of Myanmar. Following the people-oriented development principles of His Majesty the King and the late Princess Mother, the project called "Yong Kha development Project" was launched during 2002-2004 and turned out to be the successful project in providing alternative livelihood to the people in the project area. In implementing Yong Kha Development project, a holistic and integrated approach to solving the problems relating to health, poverty and education was applied together with a market-oriented approach which aimed to ensure the sustainable reduction in opium cultivation and alternative livelihood. In February 2008, Thailand and Myanmar agreed to cooperate in the new project on alternative development at Ban Yin, southern Shan State of Myanmar with the view to further develop the cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar on sustainable alternative development.

At the 27th ASOD meeting hosted by the ONCB during 1-2 August 2006, Thailand played a leading role in alternative development work through committed itself to share experience and expertise in alternative development work with ASEAN member countries. On this occasion, the Royal Project Foundation and the Mae Fah Luang Foundation was declared as the regional centres of excellence to provide technical assistance and to promote

capacity-building activities for interested ASEAN member countries. At present, many countries across the world have come to visit the number of Royal Project sites under the Royal Project Foundation and the Doi Tung Development Project under the Mae Fah Luang Foundation. All of those organized by the ONCB, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNODC and etc.

Moreover, given the rising trend of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, alternative development has increasingly captured the global attention. Likewise, the significant achievements of Thailand in implementing the number of sustainable alternative development projects in the country leading to the successful eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation have drawn the global community to learn from Thailand's experience in crop control particularly sustainable alternative livelihood development model. The number of new regional networks has been built upon the interest in Thai expertise in alternative development work such as Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), ASEAN-ECO Cooperation and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Lately, at the Fifty-first Session Commission on Narcotic Drugs during 10-14 March 2008, Thailand proposed the resolution on promoting best Practices and lessons learned in sustainable alternative livelihood development which was highly acclaimed by UN member countries.

International Cooperation

Thailand is signatories to the three United Nations Conventions on Drug Controls namely Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 and United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

Also Thailand has actively cooperated with foreign countries and international organizations on drug control for more than thirty years leading to the development of numerous mechanisms, both in bilateral and multilateral forms, serving as the platform for addressing domestic, regional, and international drug problem. The policy of giving a full cooperation on drugs control to international counterpart is still unchanged.

Bilateral Cooperation

Thailand has joined hands with countries around the world for years with the hope to reduce and finally eliminate the worldwide problem of drugs. The cooperation has been done with countries in different regions i.e. Asia and the Pacific, Africa, America and Europe.

At present, Thailand signed the MOU on drug control with Argentina, Cambodia, Poland, Vietnam, Peru, China, Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Tajikistan. Thus, bilateral meeting between Thailand-Malaysia, Thailand-Myanmar, Thailand-Lao PDR, Thailand-China, Thailand-Vietnam and Thailand-Cambodia have annually been organized to facilitate cooperation on drugs control. Cross-border cooperation has also been established with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

Sub-regional Cooperation

Thailand cooperates with neighboring countries in the sub-region to solve drug problem. A significant mechanism is cooperation among four countries, namely, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand on drug control. The First Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting of the four countries were organized on 10-11 August in Yangon and on 27 – 28 August 2001 in Beijing, respectively. The meeting adopted the Beijing Declaration which underlined the framework of cooperation. The four countries highlighted a joint control of drugs and precursors smuggling along the Mekong River.

Thailand also invited India to join the four countries cooperation (China, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand) by organizing the first Senior Officials and Ministerial Meetings of five countries on 23-25 July 2003 in Chiang Rai. The meetings were successfully organized with the emphasis on precursors control and alternative development cooperation. The workshop of five-country working group on precursors control was held during 16-18 December 2003 in Thailand. The 2nd Senior Officials Meeting of Pentalateral Cooperation on Drug Control was organized on 21-23 April 2004 in Pattaya, Thailand. Recently, the 3rd Senior Officials Meeting of the Pentalateral Cooperation on Drug Control was held on 11-13 January 2005 in New Delhi, India.

Another important sub-regional framework is the cooperation under 1993 MOU on Drug Control between Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and UNODC. Yearly, meetings have been held since 1993, when the Governments of Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, China and UNODC signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control under the belief that concerted international efforts were required to address the severe problems of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse in the region. In 1995 Cambodia and Vietnam joined the regional anti-narcotics efforts and became parties of the regional group. The six governments and UNODC hold annual meetings to discuss drug control developments in the region, to assess the measures being undertaken on national and regional levels to deal with illicit drug problems and to decide on new joint remedial action. Under the MOU, the sub-regional activities are introduced to strengthen the cooperative efforts. The commitment of the MOU signatory countries will lead to the reduction of drug supply in sub-region and this will affect the decrease of illicit drug in the world market as well. Lately, the Senior Officials Committee Meeting and the Ministerial Meeting of 1993 MOU signatory countries were held during 22-25 May 2007 in Beijing, China.

Cooperation with International Organizations

The international organizations which have good connections with Thailand are UNODC, ASEAN, the Colombo Plan Secretariat, EU, the ICPO/Interpol, as well as international non-government organizations such as WIF, IOGT, IFNGO, NCA, Daytop International, etc.

At the regional level, cooperation under the ASEAN framework is carried out through the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD). Various ASEAN projects on drugs control were supported by ASEAN Dialogue Partners. However, during the past few years from 1992 onward, the ASEAN Projects on drug control have been delayed due to the lack of financial support. Since ASEAN declared “Drug-Free ASEAN by 2015”, efforts have been made to achieve the target year. The International Congress in Pursuit of a Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 was held on 11-13 October 2000 in Bangkok. During the meeting, the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs, known as “ACCORD Plan of Action” was endorsed and adopted as a regional cooperative mechanism on drug control. Recently, the 2nd ACCORD International Congress was held during 18-20 October 2005 in Beijing. The meeting adopted Regional Joint Action against ATS-related Crime among ACCORD Countries proposed by China.

Regional Trainings

Thailand received the support from the Japanese Government through JICA and NPA in implementing the Regional Cooperation Project on Capacity Building of Drug Analysis for Improvement of Drug Law Enforcement. The trainings in drug qualitative and quantitative analysis for scientists were carried out in Thailand and in CLMV countries. The

project was very beneficial to the work on investigation and intelligence in identifying illicit drug sources.

The Office of the Narcotics Control Board, as designated by ASOD as the ASEAN Narcotics Law Enforcement Training Centre, organized, with the auspicious support of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme (DAP), the “The 4th Training Course on Precursor and Chemical Control for ASEAN Narcotics Law Enforcement Officers” during 2 to 8 July 2007 in Bangkok. The trainees are from ASEAN countries, and India. The main objective of the training is to provide knowledge on an overview of illicit traffic of precursors and chemicals in Southeast Asia, China and India, including investigation techniques and methods to conduct precursor and chemical control operations. Knowledge on the precursor and chemical control is rather new for ASEAN narcotics law enforcement officers in ASEAN countries who mostly still lack adequate experiences and skills in this area.

Also, during 10 – 21 September 2007, the Office of the Narcotics Control Board in cooperation with Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) of Thailand will organize a training course entitled ‘International Narcotics Law Enforcement’ in Bangkok. At present, 16 countries in Asia join the training programme namely, Afganistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, China, Iran, Jamaica, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Tajikistan and Thailand.

CONCLUSION

The national drug control policy of Thailand still reflects the strong commitment of the Royal Thai government to address all aspects of the drug problem. As political will to cope with drug problem is apparently demonstrated through a strong commitment of the Prime Minister, policy on narcotic control is not only strongly supported by each agency concerned but also tremendously welcomed by Thai people. Also Thailand stands ready to make a contribution to the reduction in the regional and global opium poppy cultivation with sharing its expertise in sustainable alternative development with other countries.
