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CONTROL COMMISSION**

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STATEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN INTER-AGENCY DELEGATION

**Statement of the Russian Inter-Agency Delegation
at the 66th Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
(Miami, November 19-21, 2019)**

Mr. Chair,

Ambassador Namm,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Russian delegation would also like to join others in congratulating the U.S. side on assuming the chairmanship of CICAD and wish it great success in the fight against drugs and coordination of anti-drug activities in the Western Hemisphere. Besides, we would like to welcome the adoption of the 14th East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Combating the Spread of Illicit Drugs sponsored by the United States and co-sponsored by the Russian Federation. The document places particular emphasis on the threat of the proliferation of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances in the Asia Pacific region, which is also a major concern in Eurasia and the Americas.

We would like to emphasize the relevance of this matter to Russia as well. The Russian Federation closed down 89 clandestine laboratories in 2018, and dismantled 97 laboratories manufacturing synthetic drugs in the first half of 2019. They mainly specialized in producing MDMA, mephedrone, methadone and their derivatives. This can be explained by their relatively low cost, availability of information on the manufacturing process and easiness of the artisanal production. Criminals use loopholes in the law to legally import precursors declaring them under generic names, such as "aromatic ketones", and bringing their concentration to the level permitted by legislation. Procurement is made through natural persons who create fictitious legal entities for these purposes and purchase chemical agents in bulk from major chemical facilities and stores. At present, the Ministry of Internal Affairs together with competent authorities

focuses on improving the national legislation, as well as identifying and disrupting the channels used for precursor trafficking.

Following the entry into force of the changes introduced in the legislation in autumn 2018 limiting an "easy" access to a number of precursors used for amphetamine production, there has been a significant decrease in the number of the identified laboratories producing the drug.

We would also like to highlight the problem of fentanyl opioids proliferation. In accordance with the current legislation of the Russian Federation, trafficking in 93 fentanyl-related drugs on its territory is limited or prohibited. In 2018-2019, Russia introduced measures to control 12 new types of fentanyl-related drugs owing to its participation in the project of the International Narcotics Control Board "Operational Partnerships to Interdict Opioids' Illicit Distribution and Sales" (OPIOIDS). The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation provides for life imprisonment for the production and sale of 3-Methylfentanyl in the amount starting from 0,2 g, carfentanyl and fentanyl starting from 2,0 g, which is considered an especially large amount.

The largest amount of fentanyl-related substances was seized by the law enforcement agencies in 2017 as a result of a number of operations aimed at closing down major online stores. In 2018-2019, based on the seizure of fentanyl opioids, carfentanyl was found to be the most common fentanyl opioid which accounted for 72% of seizures in Russia, while fentanyl accounted for 13.2%.

We would like to note that the Internet has become a breeding ground for drug trafficking. The organization of the whole cycle of illicit drug trafficking is conducted via online messengers, while payments for laboratory equipment, chemical reagents and precursors are made via electronic payment systems. Drug trafficking is conducted without the seller and the buyer meeting face to face with the help of the so-called "dead drops", and the money is transferred to e-wallets or bank cards and then to bank accounts registered on third parties. We would like to highlight the "popularity" of electronic drug trafficking and the rise in

crimes related to drug money laundering. In 2017, 166 crimes were committed, and in 2018 this figure reached 301. At the same time, financial flow routes associated with drug smuggling do not correspond with drug trafficking routes.

The most recent monitoring of online resources offering drugs has revealed that a significant number of them (276 websites) operate on technical platforms provided by the Cloudflare company. It is registered in San Francisco, United States, and pursues a policy of neutrality towards content hosted on its technical platforms. The company has previously provided services to various criminal groups, including those involved in obtaining illegal access to bank cards, nationalist groups and ISIL. Now Cloudflare is providing its resources to the world's largest criminal trading platform "Hydra", through which narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are disseminated in almost all CIS countries. The Russian delegation would like to warn about the threat posed by this company and request the assistance of the competent authorities of OAS Member States in neutralizing it.

For our part, we are ready to offer cooperation and exchange of best practices in combating the spread of synthetic drugs and illicit financial flows.

In conclusion, we would also like to draw attention to the ongoing discussion in Vienna on the removal of cannabis from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention. We oppose any changes in the conventional status of cannabis and consider it inappropriate to review the scheduling of cannabis recommended by the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. In our opinion, clinical research studies on the therapeutic properties of tetrahydrocannabinol should be conducted as a first step.

Once again, we would like to emphasize that the Russian Federation will continue to advocate the strengthening of international, regional and bilateral cooperation based on the principle of inviolability of the existing drug control regime. We are committed to moving towards a world free of drugs, not a world tolerant of drugs.

May this session be a success. Thank you for your attention!