

**3rd High-level Special Event  
United Nations and Shanghai Cooperation Organization**

**“Cooperation to promote peace, security and stability: preventing the linking of terrorism with organized crime and its financing through drug trafficking”**

**Statement by  
Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin  
Permanent Representative**

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Mr Chairman,

I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation and the SCO for organising the third high-level special event on UN-SCO cooperation. I also thank the speakers on the podium for their comprehensive presentations.

2. India values the cooperation in various fields under the SCO framework. Since joining the SCO in June 2017, India has actively engaged in enhancing the role of SCO at the international level. We see this meeting as one such effort.

Mr Chairman,

3. We have heard today how the twin scourges of terror and organised crime feed off the same lifelines. The nature of their relationship may vary, but they are sustained by the same malignant forces that seek to undermine governance, development and social cohesion through the illegitimate use of violence.

4. UN designated terrorist organizations such as ISIL, Al-Shabab, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, continue to destabilise entire regions through their cross-border financing, propaganda, and recruitment, including by using - rather abusing - evolving global public goods such as the cyberspace and social media. Terrorist organizations are engaging in lucrative criminal activities such as human trafficking to raise funds. Criminal groups have joined hands with terrorists to provide illicit financing through drug trafficking, arms dealing, selling looted antiquities, money laundering and counterfeiting. Depending upon the circumstances, these groups can coexist, cooperate and even converge.

5. In our region, there are examples of how drug trafficking finances these networks. According to the latest UNODC's Afghanistan Opium Survey, of an estimated \$ 29 million \$ generated in "illegal taxation" of opium revenues in Afghanistan in 2018, 21 million \$ was said to be collected by anti-government elements, including the Taliban.

6. The cross-border nature of such fused entities and their financing activities poses a serious challenge, as coordinated international response is too slow to be effective in most cases.

7. The foundation of a coherent response to issues of narcotics trade, illegal financing and counterfeiting lies in frameworks like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), that set standards with respect to combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Terrorist organizations have to recruit and train fighters, buy weapons and equipment, wage propaganda campaigns, and plan and carry out operations. These activities cost money, so understanding how groups raise, store, move, and spend that money helps bringing terrorists to justice and deters others from harboring them or funding or joining their organizations.

8. The UN needs to increase cooperation and coordination with such bodies. Also, there needs to be much greater rigour and transparency in the implementation of instruments already at the disposal of the UN, such as the Security Council regimes targeting terrorist entities and individuals. The efforts at concluding the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) have seen little progress at the UN and require to reinvigoration.

9. An added challenge is the role of new and emerging technologies, including virtual currencies, encrypted communications and artificial intelligence. Such technologies are making networks loosely associated on the ground, closely intertwined in cyber-space.

Mr. Chairman

10. Addressing these challenges requires increased sophistication and a coordinated international response, with real time intelligence sharing, capacity building and technology assistance. While we have an expanding body of international legal instruments to prevent transnational organized crimes in specific sectors, there is still no common global strategy to curb criminal activities in cyberspace. The Christchurch Call which brought technology companies and governments together to commit to "eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online" is one way forward.

11. The SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a useful mechanism for coordinated action against terrorism and drugs. We welcome the expansion of SCO's cooperation with UNODC and the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Narcotic-Trafficking.

12. On its part, India has acceded to the 'SCO Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illegal Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors' which provides for cooperation in the analysis of crimes related to illicit narcotic-trafficking and harmonization of national legislation in the fight against narcotic trafficking.

13. India is part of the SCO dialogue mechanisms in the field of counter-narcotics. We look forward to organizing an SCO event in India on combating illegal financial flows related to narcotics trafficking in 2020. This will be an opportunity to share skills and experience in various crime prevention areas, including law enforcement, forensic science and cyber-security.

Mr Chairman,

14. The terror-crime nexus is an existential global threat, the contours of which are mutating everyday. To combat this menace we will all need to keep ahead of the new trends and technologies - something that can only be achieved if we work together, with a zero-tolerance approach, bereft of double standards. India is committed to support such cooperation with the UN system and its global partners.

Thank you.