



**Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
Fact-Finding Committee (AIFOCOM) to Combat the Drug Menace
Singapore, 22-25 June 2008**

**COUNTRY REPORT OF SINGAPORE
- PRECURSOR CONTROL IN SINGAPORE -**

Singapore has maintained its status as a relatively drug-free society and continues to adopt a firm stand against drug trafficking. It is a non drug-producing country and there are no major syndicated drug activities linked to organized crime in the country.

DRUG SITUATION

2 The drug threat has been contained in Singapore. There are no areas where drugs are openly sold or blatantly abused.

Abuse Situation

3 2,211 drug abusers were arrested in 2007 as compared to 1218 in 2006. The increase in drug abusers arrested was confined mainly to repeat abusers, who made up 76% of total abusers arrested.

4 520 new abusers are arrested in 2007, compared to 477 in 2006. The number of new abusers arrested remained low and stable. They formed 24% of total abusers arrested, down from 39% in 2006.

5 With the classification of buprenorphine as a controlled drug in the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) in August 2006, CNB has enhanced enforcement against buprenorphine abuse. This has enabled us to rein in a significant number of buprenorphine abusers. Unlike the situation in previous years when synthetic drugs dominated the drug scene, buprenorphine and heroine abusers made up the majority of drug abusers arrested in 2007. Specifically, buprenorphine abusers made up the largest proportion at 38%, followed by heroin abusers at 31%. Synthetic drugs, which refer to 'Ecstasy', methamphetamine, ketamine and nimetazepam, accounted for 26% of drug abusers arrested in 2007 compared to 46% in 2006.

ANTI-DRUG STRATEGY

6 anti-drug strategy is targeted at reducing both drug supply and demand. To this end, it adopts a multi-pronged approach comprising tough legislation, vigorous enforcement, intensive preventive drug education and coordinated rehabilitation as well as aftercare in its fight against drugs.

NATIONAL REGULATORY PRECURSOR CONTROL FRAMEWORK

7 Singapore acceded to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1998. A key requirement of this convention is the monitoring of 23 precursor chemicals as listed in Table I and Table II.

8 The Central Narcotics Bureau was subsequently made the competent authority for precursor control in Singapore, and a Precursor Control Unit (PCU) was set up to monitor the importation and exportation of precursor chemicals. In the same year, the MDA was amended to provide for precursor control and to criminalise those who divert precursor chemicals for the purpose of producing controlled drugs.

Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA)

9 The MDA, the main legislation for drug crimes, is a potent weapon that assists CNB in its fight against the drug scourge. Specifically, Section 10A of the MDA prohibits the manufacture, distribution and possession of controlled substances useful for producing drugs without proper authorization. This offence carries a punishment of up to 20 years imprisonment, \$200,000 fine or both.

10 In addition, the MDA provides for strict regulations on controlled substances. For example, traders are required under the regulations to maintain records of all transactions involving controlled substances for a period of 2 years. They have to inform CNB concerning the storage of precursor chemicals. It also specifies that all containers of precursor chemicals must be properly marked and labeled. Failure to comply with the regulations may result in punishment of up to 3 years imprisonment, \$10,000 fine or both and is targeted at the traders.

Enforcement Strategies

11 In order to be effective in enforcing the laws, PCU has adopted the following strategies:

- a) To heighten the awareness of parties involved with the importation and exportation of listed precursors;
- b) To control the movement of listed precursors into and out of Singapore;
- c) To work closely with external competent authorities and international control bodies.

Operationalising the Strategies

a) Heighten Awareness

Site Visits

12 In order to heighten the awareness of parties involved with the importation and exportation of listed precursors, PCU conducts rigorous site visits on companies dealing with controlled chemicals. To make an impact, the number of such visits has to be substantial. We have targeted to visit at least 300 companies a year. This will translate into 25 companies a month.

13 We have been promoting industry awareness through site visits on companies, intermediaries and end users of controlled chemicals. These visits provide an opportunity for us to disseminate information and guidelines on our legislative and

administrative requirements. At the same time, they are informed of the various methods of diversion and the importance of knowing their customers. Traders are also encouraged to notify us of any suspicious transactions.

14 During site visits, we inspect records, labeling of consignments and storage arrangements. Our officers also conduct random physical stock checks when necessary.

b) Monitor Movement

Leverage on the TradeNet System

15 Under the Import & Export regulations, any person who wishes to import goods into or export any goods out of Singapore has to apply to Singapore Customs for a permit to do so. As the National Authority for both local and foreign trade, IE Singapore has established the TradeNet system to facilitate this.

16 In the beginning when PCU first started, we relied on traders to approach us to apply for an approval. These arrangements were not entirely satisfactory as we were unable to reach out to each and every trader. Meanwhile we were working on a more efficient system to cast a wider net. Knowing the potential of the TraderNet system, we negotiated with IE Singapore and managed to convince them to route all precursor transactions through the TraderNet system for us for approval. This new arrangement has worked very well. The number of applications that we have handled has since shot up from about 500 cases in 1999 to more than 5,000 in 2007.

17 However, traders are required to notify CNB at least 14 days in advance. A lot of details that are required for the TradeNet are only available to the traders a few days before the shipments. To overcome this constraint, we have devised a Declaration Form to supplement the TradeNet system. This has helped traders to conform to our legislative requirements.

Other Measures

18 In addition, traders are notified to declare their annual consumption and usage of the controlled chemicals. This will enable us to monitor the movement of these substance more effectively and at the same time discourage unnecessary stock piling. It also allows us to assess and indentify any potential risk of diversion.

19 We also monitor and track transactions. This includes the monitoring of licit trade both international and domestic and identifying the end users. PCU officers are assigned to study and track selected chemicals in the course of each year. If any unusual trend is discovered, we will launch an investigation.

20 With such a mechanism in place, we are able to identify suspicious cases for investigation.

c) International Cooperation

Import Control

21 The problems of precursor chemical diversion cannot be tackled by individual countries alone. With this in mind, our strategy is to work closely with external competent authorities and international control bodies through the exchange of information and intelligence.

22 CNB will be informed of an importation through the following channels. A Pre-Export Notification (PEN) issued by the exporting country in accordance with the Vienna Convention or a declaration made by a local trader as required under our laws.

23 In the first scenario, after receiving the PEN, checks will be made by PCU before granting an approval. Upon completion of the import enquiries, we will send a No Objection Letter to the exporting country. At the same time, an import authorization will be issued to the importer.

24 In the second scenario, the local importer makes an import declaration to CNB. PCU will conduct the necessary checks before issuing an import authorization to the importer. A copy of the import authorization will also be sent to our counterparts in the exporting country. Each import authorization is valid for one consignment only.

25 However, should there be any irregularity or doubt as to the legitimacy of the transaction, we would suspend or disallow the company concerned from importing the controlled substances. If necessary, any investigation would be launched.

26 The enquiries that we do include background checks on the importing company and its office bearers. In addition, we have to determine the purpose and intended use of the chemical concerned and to establish the identity of the ultimate consignee, if any. We must also ensure that the importer complies with all stated requirements.

27 Upon our approval, the transaction will be routed to Customs and Excise Department for final checks and clearance, including physical examinations.

Export Control

28 Upon receiving a declaration made for the exportation of controlled chemical, we will carry out the necessary checks before approval is granted. These include the checking of invoices, packing list, etc., the mode of payment and the shipping details. A more thorough check will be made on new applicants. After enquiries, a PEN will be issued to our counterparts in the importing country.

29 If our counterparts raise an objection, we will act immediately to stop or suspend the shipment. This will be followed by an investigation.

Transshipments

30 We treat all transshipment cases as an import followed by an export and hence the same control for import/export applies.

31 The approach that we have adopted to control the import or export of controlled precursor is consistent with the various countermeasures laid down in the Vienna convention.

CONCLUSION

32 Illicit drugs continue to be a world-wide concern and Singapore is not isolated from it. To ensure that the drug problem remains well-contained, Singapore will remain vigilant and sustain our vigorous drug enforcement and preventive drug education efforts. Singapore will also continue to forge closer co-operation and work with our partners and the community to combat drug trafficking on both the domestic and global fronts.

**PRECURSOR CHEMICALS LISTED IN TABLE I and TABLE II
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST ILLICIT
TRAFFIC IN NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC
SUBSTANCES**

TABLE I	TABLE II
<i>N</i> -acetylanthranilic acid	Acetic anhydride
Ephedrine	Acetone
Ergometrine	Anthranilic acid
Ergotamine	Ethyl ether
Isosafrole	Hydrochloric acid
Lysergic acid	Methyl ethyl ketone
3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone	Phenylacetic acid
1-phenyl-2-propanone	Piperidine
Piperonal	Potassium permanganate
Pseudoephedrine	Sulphuric acid
Safrole	Toluene
The salts of the substances listed in this table whenever the existence of such salts is possible	The salts of the substances listed in this table whenever the existence of such salts is possible (the salts of hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid are specifically excluded)