

## **PRAMUN 2016 Drug Control Committee**

**Question of:** Synthetic Drugs- an unregulated and emerging threat

### **I. Terms to Know**

- New psychoactive substances- NPS
- Amphetamine type stimulants- ATS
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime- UNODC
- Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting, and Trends Programme- Global SMART Programme

### **II. Background**

Synthetic drugs are drugs made with man-made chemicals rather than natural ingredients. These drugs are dangerous and are named “designer drugs”. Synthetic drugs are created with new psychoactive substances (NPS), which include cannabinoids (generating a similar effect as delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol used in marijuana), phenethylamines (producing a similar effect as amphetamines) and piperazines (reporting a similar effect as ecstasy). Synthetic marijuana is the most popular designer drug, while Amphetamine type stimulants (ATS) follow close behind. Some traffickers disguise the drug as potpourri and in vaporizers, rolled joints and pipes.

There are many side effects when consuming these dangerous drugs to attain a “legal high”. Some responses include nausea, vomiting, agitation, anxiety, and dilated pupils. More extreme effects include tachycardia (a fast, racing heartbeat), elevated blood pressure, tremors, seizures, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts and other harmful thoughts and actions. These effects can be compared to the extremity of the effects of LSD, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

The majority of synthetic drugs are manufactured in China and sold out of Hong Kong. Most of the drugs are consumed around Southeast Asia, where they were produced, but more and more are being trafficked to other continents. In 2013, more than 650 designer drugs swept into Europe. A \$65 billion global market has been created because synthetic drugs are very inexpensive to produce, and therefore can be made in large quantities. Since chemists are constantly introducing new chemical mixtures for synthetic drugs, countries cannot write legislation rapidly enough to keep up with the new drugs and eliminate this growing issue. Most

of these substances are not illegal internationally, making it more challenging to regulate trafficking routes.

Synthetic drugs are becoming increasingly prominent in developing countries and popular for young people. Consuming these drugs can result in extremely hazardous behavior, and therefore place public health and safety in danger.

### **III. UN Involvement**

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) acknowledged that the criminals trafficking synthetic drugs are always one step ahead of law enforcement. Chemists continuously produce new, uncontrolled substances, which challenges the UN to find ways to combat the issue. The UN released the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends Programme, or the Global SMART Programme, which serves to inform the world of ATS as they appear. It is primarily funded by Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Thailand. The goal of this programme is to collaborate with countries' governments in order to find and analyze information on synthetic drugs, their use, and trafficking routes in their country. This information is then shared among all 11 countries that participate in the programme in order to lessen the information deficit.

The first phase of the Global SMART Programme was released in September 2008. The latest volume, published in March 2015, included information mainly on synthetic cannabinoids, the largest group of NPS. This programme has been somewhat successful, as it has led to the seizure of more synthetic drugs in the Southeast Asian region than ever before, but has not decreased the circulation of synthetic drugs significantly.

### **IV. Possible Solutions**

Previously, the primary reasons for the stronger threat of synthetic drugs were poor implementation of regulations and a lack of necessary resources to seize the drugs. Expanding the Global SMART Programme to developing countries would assist these vulnerable countries in becoming less susceptible to the threat of synthetic drugs. As of now, there are no African or Middle Asian countries covered in the programme. Including this information in the reports could possibly lead to more information about ATS, but more importantly, the trafficking routes that run through these regions.

Increasing the knowledge of the harmful consequences of consumption of these drugs would aid in the elimination of the trade. If the demand for the drugs decreases, the global market of synthetic drugs suffers. Strengthening the borders and establishing checkpoints across trade routes could restrain the drugs from being spread into more regions.

## **V. Questions to Consider**

- How do synthetic drugs affect your country?
  - To what extent?
- How does my country classify synthetic drugs?
  - Do different kinds have different classifications?
- Are there drug trafficking routes in or around my country?
- What has my country done, if anything, to eliminate the use of synthetic drugs?
  - Are there regulations currently in place regarding synthetic drugs?
- Can my country directly assist in the elimination of synthetic drugs?

## **VI. Websites to look at**

- [https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/ondcp-fact-sheets/synthetic-drugs-k2-spice-bath salts](https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/ondcp-fact-sheets/synthetic-drugs-k2-spice-bath-salts)
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/china-synthetic-drugs-trade-control-160628035727827.html>
- <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/new-markets-for-synthetic-drugs.html>
- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/10249399/Hundreds-of-new-legal-high-designer-drugs-flooding-into-Europe-warns-report.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/smart.html>
- [http://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Global\\_SMART\\_Update\\_13\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Global_SMART_Update_13_web.pdf)

- [http://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/SMART\\_A5\\_4p\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/SMART_A5_4p_WEB.pdf)
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