Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Zahir Tanin at the Third Committee on International Drug Control Prevention and Criminal Justice

10 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure to addressing today’s meeting on a topic of crucial importance to my country Afghanistan.

It remains a dominant fact that the problem of narcotic drugs poses a serious threat to peace, stability and development of societies worldwide. No country is more aware of this fact than Afghanistan. The problem of narcotic drugs is the legacy of three decades of conflict, which left our state institutions in shambles and destroyed the social fabric of our society. In light of our experience, we know that the elimination of illicit drugs from Afghanistan is a task that requires time, and resolute efforts on the part of all concerned.

Terrorism and insecurity are indivisible from the scourge of narcotics. Experience shows that cultivation and production are highest in areas with the highest levels of violence and insecurity. Terrorists and extremists exploit the proceeds of drug production to continue the cycle of violence. Counter-narcotics efforts are an important component of our overall national security strategy. The counter-narcotics police unit of the Ministry of Interior is engaged in cracking down on illegal cultivation, production and trafficking. They have arrested and brought to justice major smugglers responsible for moving tons of drugs on a monthly basis outside Afghanistan. This effort continues unabated.

Our counter-narcotics strategy is mainstreamed into various government institutions. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics is working to implement our multi-pillared national control strategy, which includes law-enforcement, alternative livelihoods, demand-reduction and public-awareness. To this end, we have increased our counter-narcotics efforts at both the national and sub-national levels. Counter-narcotics measures are advocated by all segments of society, our security forces, tribal and religious elders, teachers, and women’s groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Afghanistan is sparing no effort to eliminate drugs from our society. Having said that, we are convinced that a real solution to this problem requires a comprehensive regional and global effort – focusing on all aspects of the problem: production, trafficking and consumption. We underscore, in this regard, the principle of shared responsibility, which must remain the foundation of our collective efforts to defeat narcotic drugs. Our fight against drugs will not succeed if the focus is purely on production. We all must do our part, respectively.

Regional and international cooperation is vital. The drug problem will be defeated only if our efforts to eliminate cultivation and production are complemented by vigorous efforts by
neighboring countries to crack-down on trafficking, including chemical precursors used for production. By the same token, we urge our international partners to do what is necessary to reduce demand.

Mr. Chairman,

We must also ensure sustainable progress in the area of alternative livelihoods. Afghan farmers are cultivating out of desperation, not choice. We are focusing on enabling farmers to rely on licit products as a source of income. Recent progress in the area of our agricultural sector has been positive. We will continue these efforts as part of our goal of strengthening our economy, which will be essential in not only defeating narcotics, but also achieving our long-term stability and prosperity.

We are working closely with our regional and other relevant partners through the Paris Pact Initiative, an effective framework for joint counter-narcotics efforts. We are optimistic about enhancing our counter-narcotics efforts during the fourth phase of the initiative (2013-2016).

In conclusion, we thank the international community for its continued support to our counter-narcotics efforts. We are particularly indebted to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its continuing support and assistance.

I thank you Mr. Chairman!