



DRUG FOCAL POINT MEETING, THE COLOMBO PLAN, CHING MAI, 3-5 SEPTEMBER, 2014

OPENING REMARKS BY SECRETARY GENERAL, THE COLOMBO PLAN

Honorable Rachanikorn Sarasiri, Deputy Secretary General, Office of the National Drug Control Board, Thailand,

Honorable Secretaries to the Government of the member states,

Heads of Drug Control Agencies of the member states, and

All other distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentle men,

1. First of all, I extend a warm welcome to all our distinguished collaborators from Colombo Plan member countries to this Drug Focal Point meeting, held at this beautiful location in Thailand, Chiang Mai.
2. The national host of this meeting is ONCB, our drug focal point in Thailand. I express my sincere appreciation for the ONCB and all others who worked hard in organizing this meeting. I am extremely happy to be present here for this important meeting, where member states have gathered together to strategize the common goals of drug demand and supply reduction.
3. The Drug Demand and Supply reduction have been the main focus of the Colombo Plan since the formation of the Drug Advisory Programme in 1973. A series of initiatives have been taken up by the Colombo plan in the last four decades in standardization of the drug treatment and prevention programmes. One major focus has been to identify and promote evidence based practices in both prevention and management of the drug use disorders.
4. The major agenda of this meeting is to strengthen our network in various areas of drug demand reduction and enhance more visible collaborations and co-operations in the field. Drug addiction is a complex disease which requires multi-disciplinary and innovative approaches, which obviously requires more sharing of best practices in the field from member countries, by developing more vibrant networks.
5. Today, the Colombo Plan has expanded its drug demand reduction programmes to also non member countries. Besides covering the Asia and Pacific regions, it is now expanded to especially the middle east, Central Asia, Latin America and the African countries through its capacity building programs.

6. This meeting is also to listen to you. Each country has adopted drug demand and supply reduction programs and have been implementing many innovative approaches and strategies in tackling the issue. The Colombo Plan's role is to link these initiatives for greater visibility and adaptability, so that we can learn from each other and enrich our efforts. Each country will be given opportunities in this meeting to present their achievements in the field and partake in an action planning for 2015. I want each and every country to have at least one programme in collaboration with the Colombo Plan in the coming year. We believe in "self help and mutual help", networking and collaborations, co-operations and co-ordinations.
7. Our officers will present various initiatives undertaken by the Colombo Plan to develop networks in various areas of our crusade against drugs, which includes treatment and rehabilitation, prevention, youth and children, supply reduction, training and education. The idea is to link our efforts together, so that we can identify our strengths and weaknesses, gaps in services, and need analyses; so that Colombo Plan can address them more effectively in a spirit of co-operation.
8. This meeting is a training workshop; where all of us are trainers and at the same time, trainees. We have something to teach and something learn; something to offer and something to take. So, let us be active, participatory and pro-active in the service of those who need us the most.
9. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the continuous support of the INL, US Department of State in addressing the drug demand and supply reduction programmes in the region.
10. I also would like to thank you all for accepting our invitation and attending this meeting. Together with ONCB, the national host of this program, let me wish you three fruitful days in Chiang Mai. We look forward for sub-regional meetings in 2015 to witness and look forward for more enhanced and focused evidence based practices.
11. Finally, on behalf of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme and Office of the National Drug Control Board, and all other organizers, I am happy to declare this **Drug Focal Point Meeting OPEN.**

Thank you.

Mr. Kinely Dorji,
Secretary General, The Colombo Plan