

The United States-India Drug Policy Framework for the 21st Century

On June 22, 2023, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirmed a vision of the United States and India as among the closest partners in the world – a partnership of democracies looking into the 21st century with hope, ambition, and confidence. As stated in the June 22, 2023 *Joint Statement from the United States and India*, the U.S.-India comprehensive global and strategic partnership is anchored in a shared desire to build an even stronger, diverse U.S.-India partnership to advance the aspirations of their peoples for a bright and prosperous future grounded in respect for human rights and shared principles of democracy, freedom, and rule of law.

President Biden and Prime Minister Modi committed to work towards a broader and deeper bilateral drug policy framework for the 21st century. Both countries aspire to expand cooperation and collaboration to disrupt the illicit production and international trafficking of illicit drugs and chemicals of concern such as fentanyl and Amphetamine Type Stimulants, as well as the diversion and illicit use of their precursors. They committed to a holistic public health partnership to prevent and treat illicit drug use, address workforce shortages and skilling requirements, and develop a secure, resilient, reliable and growing pharmaceutical supply chain as a model for the world. In addition to this commitment on drug policy, both leaders made clear their commitment to bilaterally address critical issues on several fronts, some of which are relevant to the illicit drug problems such as new research partnerships; people-to-people exchanges; the movement of professional and skilled health workers and students; and deeper collaboration to secure, de-risk, and strengthen the pharmaceutical supply chain.

This framework, the *United States-India Drug Policy Framework for the 21st Century* is intended to build on and complement existing partnerships between India and the

United States, including the “Memorandum of Understanding on Safety of Medical Products between the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services of the USA and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization within the Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India,” as well as the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India and the Department of Health and Human Services of the United States of America, Concerning Cooperation in the Field of Health and Biomedical Sciences.”

This framework follows through on our leaders’ commitment to establish a broader and deeper partnership, through the existing bilateral Counter Narcotics Working Group (CNWG), to address the dynamic and complex global drug environment the world now faces. It involves expanding the existing architecture of the CNWG to ensure extensive participation of both governments and advances tangible objectives in a broader sector of the drug policy environment. This framework is laid out in three pillars, denoting areas of cooperation moving forward. These three pillars, also reflected in a “Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and The Republic of India Concerning a Drug Policy Framework,” which once signed, will be the vehicle through which this framework is implemented.

Pillar One: Demonstrate Global Leadership in Countering the Illicit Production and trafficking of Drugs, their Precursor Chemicals of Concern and diversions thereof, in illicit drug production.

- Effective leveraging of the existing CNWG mechanism to advance law enforcement information sharing for case development.

- Under the CNWG mechanism, establishing a mutually desired approach and engaging multilaterally to combat the global illicit synthetic drug production and trafficking supply chain, including the diversion and trafficking of synthetic drugs and their precursor chemicals.
- Deepening mutual understanding in the adoption of an evidence-based approach in the scheduling processes, in particular for drugs and unregulated precursor chemicals of concern at potential risk for diversion and illicit trafficking.
- Expanding the use of combined education and training for narcotics control officers through the CNWG, including countering drug and chemical diversion.
- Under the CNWG mechanism, engaging in mutual assistance in securing postal systems as well as the courier and cargo services of both countries from exploitation by drug traffickers.
- Utilizing relationships under the CNWG to enhance the sharing of real-time information on drug seizures and the testing and identification of seized drugs and chemicals of concern.
- Cooperating on assessing and ensuring that there are enough personnel in each other's country with requisite skills and expertise to address the scale, complexity, and dynamic nature of illicit drug trafficking and chemical diversion.
- Collaborating on addressing illicit drug production and trafficking, more effective control and oversight of chemicals of concern, and drug demand reduction within multilateral and regional fora.
- Assisting in identification and prevention of drug trafficking through internet including web sites, encrypted message services, social media and the dark-net. Further, assist in the identification of illicit drug proceeds and money transactions related to drug trafficking.

Pillar Two: Advance a Sustainable and Holistic Public Health Partnership, including evidence-based drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug users. .

- Cooperating on addiction treatment and rehabilitation workforce development.
- Cooperating on the development of curricula and guidelines, including for addiction treatment and rehabilitation.
- Expanding student-to-student as well as faculty exchanges in addiction medicine, mental health care, drug use prevention, and addiction treatment.
- Exploring viable mobility pathways for healthcare and other professionals engaged in substance use prevention, harm reduction, and rehabilitation.
- Considering the expanded use of telemedicine to extend addiction treatment and mental health services.
- Under the CNWG mechanism, collaborating on youth substance use prevention initiatives and programs.
- Expanding research and academic partnerships in prevention and treatment against addiction.
- Working together to deepen understanding of the potential role of evidence-based traditional and complementary medicine for treatment of addiction and mental health disorders. Both countries could collaborate on further exploring and researching the potential therapeutic effects of non-pharmacological interventions, including by conducting clinical research and encouraging interface between academia and research organizations.

Pillar Three: Advance a Secure and Growing 21st Century Pharmaceutical Supply Chain as a Model for the World

- Securing and appropriately monitoring the dual use pharmaceutical raw material supply chain to prevent exploitation by illicit drug traffickers including the prevention of illicit production and sale of counterfeit pharmaceuticals.
- Preventing the diversion of legitimate pharmaceuticals.
- Engaging bilaterally to promote access to safe, effective, and affordable pharmaceutical drugs and legal narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances meeting applicable quality standards, and raw materials frequently used in their manufacture,
- Exploring partnerships with the private sector to enhance end-to-end pharmaceutical and chemical supply chain security.
- Examining the scope for reducing the cost of drugs, including for medication-assisted therapies and opioid overdose reversal.
- Strengthening and incorporating protective measures by exchanging customs and shipping information to counter the exploitation of legitimate transport systems used by traffickers of drugs and chemicals of concern.
- Exchanging knowledge, where feasible, related to biosimilars including for Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder therapeutic medicines.
