SUMMARY: GOI HAS DECIDED TO REDUCE AUTHORIZED AREA FOR POPPY CULTIVATION IN 1973 TO 10 PER CENT OF 1972 LEVEL. END SUMMARY

ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT CONSIDER CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM APPROPRIATE US OFFICIAL, WHEN GOI PUBLICLY ANNOUNCES DECISION.

1. MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES HAS INFORMED US THAT GOI WILL AUTHORIZE CULTIVATION OF ONLY 2,000 (TWO THOUSAND) HECTARES OF OPIUM POPPIES IN CROP YEAR 1973, AS COMPARED WITH 20,000 (TWENTY THOUSAND) HECTARES IN 1972. DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL GAZETTE, OR OTHERWISE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS FINAL.

2. DECISION TAKEN BECAUSE AMOUNT OF OPIUM IN STORAGE FROM LEGAL CULTIVATION AND SMUGGLING SEIZURES IS
SURPLUS TO NEEDS OF REGISTERED ADDICTS BY ALMOST ONE YEAR'S SUPPLY. THIS IMPLIES, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT CONFIRMED IT, CONCOMITANT TACIT DECISION NOT TO LOWER AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR REGISTRATION, AS OCCASIONALLY DISCUSSED.

3. REDUCTION DECISION APPLIES ONLY TO 1973 CROP YEAR, BUT IT SHOWS WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY OF GOI TO MAKE DRASTIC CUTS IN OPIUM PRODUCTION WHENEVER INDICATED. SINCE ALL LEGAL GROWERS ARE MEMBERS OF STATE-SPONSORED COOPERATION, GOI HAS MEANS ALREADY AT HAND TO ENFORCE CUTS AND MINIMIZE EFFECT ON FARMERS' INCOME. WE UNDERSTAND GOI IS CONSIDERING WAYS OF USING CUT TO DRAMATIZE TO NEIGHBOURING PRODUCING COUNTRIES ITS LONG-STANDING POSITION THAT IT WILL REIMPOSE COMPLETE PRODUCTION BAN WHEN NEIGHBORS ABLE TO RECIPROCATE.

4. ONCE GOI HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED DECISION, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR APPROPRIATE US OFFICIAL TO ISSUE STATEMENT OR SEND MESSAGE CONGRATULATING GOI ON DECISION AND EXPRESSING HOPE THAT PROGRESS BY NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IN HALTING ILLICIT POPPY CULTIVATION WILL SOON MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR GOI TO IMPLEMENT ITS DECLARED INTENT TO REIMPOSE TOTAL BAN WHEN SMUGGLING THREAT FROM NEIGHBORS ELIMINATED.