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PRECURSORS REPORT

Two series of closely related chemicals recommended for international control

INCB assessed and recommended the international control of 16 amphetamine-type stimulant precursors representing two groups of closely related chemicals. Putting into practice resolution 65/3 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the first-of-its-kind scheduling proposal aims to prevent illicit drug manufacturers from replacing certain controlled chemicals with closely related substitutes. The Report on Precursors for 2023 includes some of the data that the INCB gathered before deciding to recommend these two groups of substances for scheduling. Sources for these data included an international intelligence-gathering exercise codenamed “Operation Backup”, as well as legislative examples from countries that are already controlling closely related substances at the national level.

Fentanyl precursors: developments in international control and seizure trends

Following a request made by the United States, the Board also assessed and decided to recommend the international control of two fentanyl precursors, 4-piperidone and 1-boc-4-piperidone. The report also analyses the latest available data on the international seizures of fentanyl precursors, reflecting a surge of non-controlled fentanyl precursors in North America in 2023.

In March 2024, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will vote on placing all 18 substances (16 amphetamine-type precursors and 2 fentanyl precursors) under international control, through placement in Table I of the 1988 Convention.

Measures against diversion of chemicals and equipment

An increasingly broad range of industries need to be sensitized against the possibility of being targeted by traffickers for the diversion of chemicals and equipment that could be used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. INCB is therefore encouraging Governments to analyse their national industry landscapes to enhance knowledge about relevant industries. In its Precursors Report, INCB further recommends that national authorities use PEN Online Light, a platform that enables the voluntary exchange of information on the export of non-scheduled chemicals.

Conflict zones, free-trade zones, and political changes

This year’s report presents examples of challenges in precursor control due to political developments or the status of various countries and territories around the world. For instance, it describes data gaps on methamphetamine precursors in Afghanistan, as well as the lack of audits and inspections in certain free-trade zones. In the report, INCB recommends several actions to address these challenges.

Cocaine extraction continues to be reported outside South America

Notable seizures of cocaine precursors outside South America reflect the existence of extraction laboratories of significant scale in Europe, and a trend towards greater sophistication and process optimization.

