

Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria  
Telephone: +43-1-26060, Telefax: +43-1-26060-5867 / 5868  
E-Mail: [incb.secretariat@un.org](mailto:incb.secretariat@un.org) Internet Address: <http://www.incb.org/>

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**Statement by Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, President,  
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)  
Sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

**Item 5 (d): International cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs  
and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while  
preventing their diversion**

**15 March 2022**

Thank you Chair.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Almost all consumption of opioid analgesics continues to be concentrated in developed countries in Europe, North America and Oceania. On the other extreme, the lowest-consuming regions in the world include South Asia, Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and East and South-East Asia.

In 2020, 82.6 per cent of the world's population, mainly people in low- and middle-income countries, consumed only 17 per cent of the total amount of morphine used for the management of pain and suffering.

Likewise, the availability of some essential psychotropic substances is still limited to high-income countries, regardless of a much greater number of people living with anxiety disorders and epilepsy in low- and middle-income countries, based on limited data available to INCB.

Lack of adequate availability has often been incorrectly attributed to the international drug control framework. However, competent authorities' responses to the INCB availability questionnaires in 2010, 2015 and 2018 indicate that the main impediments are in fact linked to lack of capacity and training, weak and under-resourced health-care systems, lack of know-how and awareness for accurately evaluating the needs of the population, inadequate regulation and too few and insufficiently trained health-care professionals. In our 2022 Annual Report, INCB will be examining these areas and supporting Member States in this regard.

Emergency situations such as pandemics and humanitarian emergencies remind us of how essential these substances are for the well-being of patients. The Board reminds all Governments that in acute emergencies it is possible to apply simplified control procedures for the export, transportation and provision of controlled medicines.

INCB continues to implement the INCB Learning programme to support Governments in ensuring the adequate availability of controlled substances. The Board relies on your voluntary contributions for these activities.

Some progress has been made since 2016 in realizing the goal of ensuring adequate availability of and access to controlled medication, a purpose that is key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being.

I look forward to continuing working with you to ensure that this goal is enshrined in all national drug control policies and practices. I reiterate the commitment of the Board to work in the spirit of the Joint Call to Action announced by the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and work towards greater availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.

Thank you.