



Special issue on 100 years of drug control

A few words from the INCB President on the centenary of drug control

The publication of this issue of *Focus on international drug control* coincides with the centenary of international efforts in the control of illicit drugs. The world has changed dramatically since the convening of the International Opium Commission in Shanghai, China, in February 1909.

At the turn of the twentieth century, opium was widely available and abused. Although the abuse was most prevalent in China, other countries were also affected, and so-called opium dens, where opium and its derivatives were freely abused, sprang up in many regions, not only in Asian countries, but also in European countries and the United States of America.

The 1909 Commission was the first multilateral gathering on drug control matters, and the month-long conference marked an end to global indifference to the abuse of opium. The Commission was a catalyst for action and in the following years a series of multilateral agreements and treaties were concluded to address the cultivation, manufacture and abuse of, as well as trade and trafficking in, opium and other narcotic drugs.

Those efforts culminated in the adoption of the three international

INCB President visits the Vatican and meets Pope Benedict XVI



The INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, and the Secretary of the Board, Mr. Koli Kouame, visited the Vatican on 26 November 2008. They met with Monsignor Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Under-Secretary of State for Relations with States, and had an exchange of views on the world drug situation and on what faith-based organizations, in particular the Vatican, can do to promote worldwide efforts against drug abuse. During their visit, Prof. Ghodse and Mr. Kouame also met with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

drug control treaties: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The control system established by those conventions has, by and large, been successful. Today, hardly any narcotic drugs are diverted from licit manufacture and international trade into illicit channels.

Prof. Hamid Ghodse
INCB President

See pages 4 and 5 for more information about the commemoration hosted by the Government of China.

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INCB helps set priorities for next decade of international efforts in drug control

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has provided expert advice on the negotiation of a political declaration and plan of action on drug control, within the framework of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

At its fifty-second session, to be held from 11 to 20 March, the Commission will adopt a declaration to guide Governments in establishing their priorities in drug control for the next ten years. The move follows the expiry last year of the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, held in 1998.

INCB has submitted expert contributions to a series of meetings of the Commission on topics covering alternative development and the reduction of drug supply and demand. The Board has also published a report on progress

made under the 1998 Political Declaration, in particular progress made by Governments with regard to amphetamine-type stimulants and precursor chemicals.



Cover page of the INCB report on progress made following the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

Recent and upcoming events

February 2009

INCB held its ninety-fourth session in Vienna from 2 to 6 February and launched its annual report for 2008 on 19 February.

On 26 and 27 February, the Government of China hosted the Commemoration of the Centennial of the Convening of the International Opium Commission in Shanghai, China.

March 2009

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs meets from 11 to 20 March for its fifty-second session to discuss the adoption of a political declaration setting out drug control priorities for the following decade.

During the session of the Commission, INCB will convene a meeting to examine recent developments affecting global production of and demand for opiate raw materials.

About *Focus on international drug control*

Focus on international drug control is a quarterly publication of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) that provides insight into the activities and positions of the Board and information on other issues relevant to the Board's mandate. *Focus* also functions as a forum in which interested parties may share their opinions. At its session in May 2008, the Board decided to launch this newsletter.

Focus on international drug control is developed by the INCB Secretariat, which is based in Vienna. The views expressed in *Focus* do not

necessarily reflect the position of the Board unless expressly stated. INCB is the independent and quasi-judicial treaty body for monitoring the implementation of the international drug control conventions. Established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, INCB supports Government compliance with each of the international drug control conventions.

Board Members are elected by the Economic and Social Council to serve five-year terms. They act in their personal capacity.

The current Board members are:

- Joseph Bediako Asare (Ghana)
- Sevil Atasoy (Turkey)
- Tatyana Dmitrieva (Russian Federation)
- Philip O. Emafo (Nigeria)
- Hamid Ghodse (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Carola Lander (Germany)
- Melvyn Levitsky (United States)
- Maria-Elena Medina Mora (Mexico)
- Sri Suryawati (Indonesia)
- Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia)
- Brian Watters (Australia)
- Raymond Yans (Belgium)
- Yu Xin (China)

The International Narcotics Control Board at work

At its sessions, INCB discusses matters ranging from the content of its annual report to estimates used to determine the amount of narcotic drugs that countries may manufacture or import. At its ninety-third session, held in Vienna from 28 October to 14 November 2008, the Board examined its annual report for 2008, which was launched on 19 February 2009. The Board also received delegations from the Governments of Bolivia and the Netherlands and met with Government and NGO representatives outside of the session.

Board meets with delegations from Bolivia and the Netherlands

At the invitation of the Board, a delegation from the Government of Bolivia attended the ninety-third session of the Board to discuss issues related to the Government's implementation of the international drug control conventions.

A delegation from the Government of the Netherlands also attended the session at the Board's invitation to discuss the Government's policies on drug control, including measures to promote compliance with the international drug control treaties.

INCB President and Vienna NGO Committee

discuss missions

In November, the INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, and the Secretary of the Board, Mr. Koli Kouame, met with Mr. Michel Perron and Mr. David Turner, representatives of the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Narcotic Drugs, a non-governmental organization (NGO). The Committee works with United Nations drug control organizations to provide information on NGO activities, build partnerships, draw attention to areas of concern and involve a wide sector of civil society in contributing to the development of global drug policies.

During the meeting, Prof. Ghodse underlined that the members of the Board always try to meet with civil society organizations whenever they are on mission. Mr. Perron and Mr. Turner suggested that they could suggest NGOs to act as interlocutors for missions of the Board.



Materials for the exhibition on the occasion of the centennial commemoration held in Shanghai, 26-27 February 2009, were also reviewed.

INCB President meets with the Russian Federal Drug Control Service

The INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, and a Board member, Prof. Tatyana Dmitrieva, met on 13 November 2008 with the Director of the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation, Mr. Viktor Ivanov. They discussed a wide range of drug control issues affecting the Russian Federation and countries in the neighbouring region and agreed that the drug control situation in Afghanistan and trafficking in opium constituted challenges to

international drug control. The other matters discussed during the meeting included drug abuse, the nature of the problem of drug dependence and the treatment of drug abusers.

In addition, Mr. Ivanov and Prof. Ghodse discussed the results of the INCB mission to the Russian Federation in 2005 and Mr. Ivanov described the follow-up action taken by his Government.

Secretary meets with representatives

On 14 January 2009, the INCB Secretary, Mr. Koli Kouame, met with the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Representative of India to discuss drug control matters and cooperation with the Board.

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China hosts centennial commemoration

The Government of China hosted an event in Shanghai, China, on 26 and 27 February to mark 100 years of drug control. Shanghai was where, in 1909, the first International Opium Commission was convened.

At the International Opium Commission, representatives of 13 States laid the groundwork for international drug control. Those States, or their successor States, were represented at the centennial, including Austria, China, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States. Participating in the conference were also representatives of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The representatives adopted the Shanghai Declaration on the Commemoration of the Centennial of the Convening of the International Opium Commission, in which they called on the international



INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, addresses the centennial commemoration in Shanghai, 26 February 2009 (Melitta Borovansky-König).

community to reinforce efforts to address drug trafficking and drug abuse, as well as to increase the resources for drug control.

Mr. Meng Jianzhu, Minister of Public Security of China, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, President of the International Narcotics Control Board, Mr. Antonio Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mr. Han Zheng, mayor of Shanghai, made opening statements.

Prior to adopting the declaration, the representatives participated in round-table meetings, in which a range of topics were discussed, such as international cooperation in fighting drug-related crime and raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. On the second day of the commemoration, the representatives visited a treatment clinic for drug abusers, as well as a community-based rehabilitation centre.

Annexe No. 8.

(Translation.)

HIS MAJESTY'S SPEECH OF 21ST SEPTEMBER 1908 ON THE OPIUM QUESTION.

There remains yet another matter which has been occupying Our thoughts for a long time past; it is that of opium. It is unquestionable that the drug has evil effects upon its consumers; and casts degradation upon every country where the inhabitants are largely addicted to the habit of opium smoking. There is no reason to doubt that the most earnest desire of nearly every country in the world is to suppress this noxious habit among its population. But unfortunately there are many obstacles in the way of the attainment of this object. Briefly speaking there is the considerable shrinkage in the State revenues to be faced, then there is the difficulty of compelling people already addicted to the use of the drug to throw off the habit at once of their own will. Even prohibited, it is not to be expected that such persons will refrain from seeking surreptitious means to gratify their craving for opium; and therefore if a Government, unable to execute measures whereby surreptitious traffic and consumption of the drug can be effectively prevented, were to attempt the suppression of the opium habit, it would only be a considerable loss of revenue to the State without any adequate realisation of its good intentions. It is this great hindrance to the proper attainment of their object that has prevented Governments from immediately suppressing the vice. Notwithstanding these great obstacles which We see standing in Our way, it is nevertheless Our bounden duty not to neglect Our people and allow them to become more and more demoralized by indulgence in this noxious drug. We have carefully considered the subject and find that ways of carrying out Our great desire are not altogether wanting; and We have accordingly decided upon executing special measures in the administration of the Opium Monopoly whereby the spread of the opium habit among Our people shall become gradually lessened until it shall be entirely suppressed.

“[It] is... Our bounden duty not to neglect Our people and allow them to become more and more demoralized by indulgence in this noxious drug.”

Speech on the Opium Question by the King of Siam, 21 September 1908, Volume II, Shanghai report, page 346.

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Final resolution adopted by the International Opium Commission

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INTERNATIONAL OPIUM COMMISSION

The following are the Resolutions as adopted, in their revised form :—

BE IT RESOLVED :

1. **That** the International Opium Commission recognises the unswerving sincerity of the Government of China in their efforts to eradicate the production and consumption of Opium throughout the Empire; the increasing body of public opinion among their own subjects by which these efforts are being supported; and the real, though unequal, progress already made in a task which is one of the greatest magnitude.

2. **That** in view of the action taken by the Government of China in suppressing the practice of Opium smoking, and by other Governments to the same end, the International Opium Commission recommends that each Delegation concerned move its own Government to take measures for the gradual suppression of the practice of Opium smoking in its own territories and possessions, with due regard to the varying circumstances of each country concerned.

3. **That** the International Opium Commission finds that the use of Opium in any form otherwise than for medical purposes is held by almost every participating country to be a matter for prohibition or for careful regulation; and that each country in the administration of its system of regulation purports to be aiming, as opportunity offers, at progressively increasing stringency. In recording these conclusions the International Opium Commission recognises the wide variations between the conditions prevailing in the different countries, but it would urge on the attention of the Governments concerned the desirability of a re-examination of their systems of regulation in the light of the experience of other countries dealing with the same problem.

4. **That** the International Opium Commission finds that each Government represented has strict laws which are aimed directly or indirectly to prevent the smuggling of Opium, its alkaloids, derivatives and preparations into their respective territories; in the judgment of the International Opium Commission it is also the duty of all countries to adopt reasonable measures to prevent at ports of departure the Shipment of Opium, its alkaloids, derivatives and preparations, to any country which prohibits the entry of any Opium, its alkaloids, derivatives and preparations.

5. **That** the International Opium Commission finds that the unrestricted manufacture, sale and distribution of Morphine already constitute a grave danger, and that the Morphine habit shows signs of spreading: the International Opium Commission, therefore, desires to urge strongly on all Governments that it is highly important that drastic measures should be taken by each Government in its own territories and possessions to control the manufacture, sale and distribution of this drug, and also of such other derivatives of Opium as may appear on scientific enquiry to be liable to similar abuse and productive of like ill effects.

6. **That** as the International Opium Commission is not constituted in such a manner as to permit the investigation from a scientific point of view of Anti-Opium remedies and of the properties and effects of Opium and its products, but deems such investigation to be of the highest importance, the International Opium Commission desires that each Delegation shall recommend this branch of the subject to its own Government for such action as that Government may think necessary.

7. **That** the International Opium Commission strongly urges all Governments possessing Concessions or Settlements in China, which have not yet taken effective action toward the closing of Opium divans in the said Concessions and Settlements, to take steps to that end, as soon as they may deem it possible, on the lines already adopted by several Governments.

8. **That** the International Opium Commission recommends strongly that each Delegation move its Government to enter into negotiations with the Chinese Government with a view to effective and prompt measures being taken in the various foreign Concessions and Settlements in China for the prohibition of the trade and manufacture of such Anti-Opium remedies as contain Opium or its derivatives.

9. **That** the International Opium Commission recommends that each Delegation move its Government to apply its pharmacy laws to its subjects in the Consular districts, Concessions and Settlements in China.

[NOTE.—*The Portuguese Delegation reserved its vote on these resolutions in every instance. With regard to the vote of the Italian Delegation, attention is called to the following correspondence.*]

The text of the final resolution adopted at the International Opium Commission contains recommendations to Governments addressing all aspects of the opium problem.

INCB missions

Japan

An INCB mission visited Japan from 1 to 3 October 2008. The mission was conducted by Mr. Raymond Yans, a member of the Board, accompanied by a member of the INCB Secretariat.

The mission met with high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Narcotics Control

Department, the Coast Guard, the Tokyo Customs Office and the National Police Agency.

The discussions focused on the Government's national drug control policy and the achievements made with regard to the prevention of drug abuse. In addition, the mission collected information on current trends in drug abuse and trafficking in Japan and visited a treatment centre for drug addicts.



Mauritius

An INCB mission visited Mauritius from 21 to 24 October 2008. The mission was conducted by Dr. Joseph Bediako Asare, a Board member, who was accompanied by a member of the INCB Secretariat.

The mission met with the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, the Solicitor-General and the Commissioner of Police, as well as with other senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers and the National AIDS Coordinator.

In addition, the mission visited several non-governmental organizations involved in the prevention



of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

Romania

An INCB mission visited Romania from 13 to 15 October 2008. The mission was conducted by Board member Dr. Carola Lander,



accompanied by a member of the INCB Secretariat. The mission met with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, the police and the customs authorities.

Discussions focused on issues related to measures to combat drug abuse and drug trafficking and on the availability of narcotic drugs for the treatment of pain. The mission also visited two facilities providing treatment services.

Finland

An INCB mission visited Finland from 27 to 28 January 2009. The mission was conducted by Prof. Tatjana Dmitrieva, a member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the INCB Secretariat.

The mission met the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Justice, as well as senior Government officials involved in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking. Among the issues discussed were cooperation with the Board as well as recent developments regarding drug abuse and drug trafficking in the country.



INCB President addresses Subcommittee in Tehran

The INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, and the Secretary of the Board, Mr. Koli Kouame, attended the forty-third session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, which was held in Tehran from 16 to 20 November 2008. It was the first time in almost ten years that the Board had attended a session of the Subcommittee.

Prof. Ghodse delivered the keynote address, in which he stated:

“For centuries, the region of the Subcommittee has been affected by the pernicious effects of the cultivation of opium poppy, and over the last five years the cultivation of that plant has reached unprecedented levels.

“The illicit cultivation of opium

More recently, trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs such as amphetamine-type stimulants and other dangerous drugs have been added to this grim picture. Cultivation of cannabis has also become a concern for some countries in the region.

“Trafficking in drugs and the chemicals that are needed to manufacture them illicitly is



Participants at the forty-third session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, which was held in Tehran from 16 to 20 November 2008.

The Subcommittee is a subsidiary body of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and meets annually in a country in the Near and Middle East to discuss ways of enhancing drug control efforts and cooperation. The current members of the Subcommittee are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

poppy, illicit heroin manufacture and drug trafficking leave a trail of devastating social ills in their wake, including a rise in organized crime, corruption and, most unfortunately, drug abuse.

“Several countries in the region, including Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan have some of the highest rates of drug abuse in the world. Major abuse problems also affect almost all other countries in the region. Many countries in Central Asia, for example, have high levels of drug abuse, with heroin abuse having replaced cannabis and opium abuse as the main drug problem.

a challenge that presents a potential threat to the stability of the region. It is noteworthy that the Subcommittee has been furthering these tools since its inception.”

During his visit to the region, Prof. Ghodse also met with Dr. Manouchehr Mottaki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and with Dr. Esmail Ahmady Moghadam, Adviser to the President and Secretary-General of the Drug Control Headquarters, to discuss drug control matters in the country and regional cooperation efforts.

First World Forum against Drugs held in Stockholm

The INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, attended the first World Forum against Drugs, held in Stockholm in September 2008.

The Forum was organized to serve as a meeting place for organizations and individuals (including non-

that stated that there “can be no other goal than a drug-free world. Such a goal is neither utopian nor impossible. Too often, we seem to act according to what we think is possible, rather than what is necessary or desirable.” It further says that “All people have the right

platform to reduce drug abuse and its associated harms.”

In his address to the Forum, Prof. Ghodse stressed that INCB has valued and benefited from the knowledge and actions of NGOs and other members of civil society in addressing the drug problem: “In many countries, NGOs are the backbone of demand reduction activities, staffed with highly professional and dedicated people who carry out important tasks, sometimes with little recognition and minimal financial compensation.”

Prof. Ghodse continued: “With respect to reducing demand, the Board has emphasized for many years that Governments must seriously address the problem of drug abuse, heeding the adage that ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. Compared with the costs of treating and rehabilitating drug abusers, the costs of implementing measures aimed at preventing the first use of drugs are minute.”



Signing of the Declaration of the World Forum Against Drugs (Liza Viktorsson).

governmental organizations (NGOs), self-help groups, treatment centres, academics, local authorities, politicians and the business community) working to prevent drug abuse around the world.

The Forum adopted a declaration

to expect their Governments to protect them and their families from drug abuse and to have a life free of drug abuse. A balanced policy of drug abuse prevention, education, treatment, law enforcement, research and supply reduction provides the most effective

Staff changes

After six years with the Convention Evaluation Section of the INCB Secretariat, Mr. Saul Takahashi has transferred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Ramallah.

Mr. Darmen Zhumadil has returned to the Psychotropics Control Section, after having served for over a year at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in Kabul.

Call for contributions

The Board invites readers to submit comments and contributions, preferably by e-mail (focus@incb.org), but also by facsimile ((+43-1) 26060 76948) and mail at the following address:

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