



September 2009: issue 4

Sevil Atasoy elected President of the International Narcotics Control Board

At its ninety-fifth session, held in Vienna from 11 to 23 May 2009, the International Narcotics Control Board elected Prof. Dr. Sevil Atasoy (Turkey) as its president for a one-year term. Sevil Atasoy is the second woman to be elected president of the Board. Betty Gough, a former

diplomat from the United States, was the first, serving in 1985, 1986 and 1990.

Sevil Atasoy is Professor of Biochemistry and Forensic Science at Istanbul University in Turkey. She was the founding editor of the Turkish Journal of Legal Medicine and is the author of over 130 scientific papers on various drug-related issues, including drug testing, drug chemistry, drug markets and drug abuse prevention. Since

2006, Sevil Atasoy has served as the President of the Center of Crime Control and Prevention in Istanbul, Turkey.

Prof. Tatyana Dmitrieva was elected First Vice-President and Dr. Carola Lander was elected Second Vice-President and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Estimates. Dr. Camilo Uribe Granja was elected Rapporteur.

Having served as president of the Board several times and due to other commitments, outgoing President Hamid Ghodse decided not to stand for election this year.



Vienna International Centre celebrates 30 years

On 23 August 1979, the Vienna International Centre was handed over to the United Nations and is today commonly referred to by the Viennese as "UNO City". The construction of the Centre, designed by Austrian architect Johann Staber, began in 1973.

In addition to being home to the Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Vienna International Centre houses the following members of the United Nations family: the United Nations Office at Vienna, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the

Office of Internal Oversight Services, the United Nations Information Service, the United Nations Postal Administration, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and the Vienna Office and Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

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A few words from the INCB President



Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that I write the introduction to this fourth issue of *Focus on international drug control*, which covers a series of major developments that have taken place since the publication of the last issue, in June 2009.

New members of the Bureau were elected at the ninety-fifth session of the Board in May 2009, with three of the four new members being women. Also at that session, the Board discussed the drug control situation in a number of countries, as you will find from the information contained in this issue.

Also in May, elections were held at the meeting of the Economic and Social Council in New York for 6 of the 13 positions on the Board. I congratulate two of our current Board members, Tatyana Dmitrieva and Camilo Uribe Granja, who have been re-elected. This issue of *Focus* introduces the four new Board members, who will begin their five-year terms in May 2010.

It is with regret that we say goodbye to Dr. Maria Elena Medina-Mora, who had to step down from the Board due to professional commitments in Mexico. We pay tribute to her contributions to the Board's work.

As my predecessor Prof. Hamid Ghodse did, I would also like to encourage representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as other readers, to contribute to this newsletter and engage in a dialogue with the Board.

Sevil Atasoy
INCB President

Upcoming events

September 2009

The Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, will be held in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, from 28 September to 2 October 2009.

October 2009

The Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, will be held in Windhoek from 12 to 16 October.

November 2009

INCB will hold its ninety-sixth session in Vienna from 27 October to 13 November 2009. The Board holds three sessions per year with the November session, which lasts three weeks, being the longest.

December 2009

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs will gather in Vienna on 1 and 2 December 2009 for its reconvened fifty-second session.

About *Focus on international drug control*

Focus on international drug control is a quarterly publication of the International Narcotics Control Board providing 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 of America)
- Sri Suryawati (Indonesia)
- Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia)
- Brian Watters (Australia)
- Raymond Yans (Belgium)
- Yu Xin (China)

INCB holds its ninety-fifth session

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 States may manufacture or import. At its ninety-fifth session, held in Vienna from 11 to 23 May 2009, the Board examined a variety of matters, including the abuse of Spice products and “date-rape drugs”.

Board raises awareness of ‘date-rape’ drugs

At its ninety-fifth session, the Board noted a resolution adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs during its last session in March 2009, on the use of pharmaceutical technology to counter drug-facilitated sexual assault.

The Board decided to include in its annual report for 2009 a section on this topic in order to raise awareness among Governments and industry of this issue.

Board notes amendments proposed by the Plurinational State of Bolivia

The Board noted the proposal of amendments by the Plurinational State of Bolivia to article 49, paragraphs 1(c) and 2(e). The issue was taken up by ECOSOC on 30 July 2009.

Board examines Spice products

The Board took note of information on abuse of synthetic cannabinoids not under international control contained in products marketed under the name Spice.

Over the past two years, officials in several Western European countries have been alerted to the abuse of Spice products.

When smoked these products allegedly produce effects similar to those produced by cannabis. Different blends and flavours of Spice products are marketed under a variety of names such as Spice Silver, Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Spice Tropical Synergy and Spice Yucatan Fire. Spice products are advertised as mixtures of different herbs and herb extracts that can be used as air-fresheners.



Spice products are sold as mixtures of herbs and herb extracts that can be used as air-fresheners. Some Spice products, however, contain synthetic cannabinoids

Although Spice products are marketed mainly as herbal products, chemical analyses have revealed the presence of varying doses of several synthetic cannabinoids, including JWH-018, CP 47,497 and homologues, and HU-210.

The Board decided to collect information on these substances, including data on their abuse liability, toxicology and user profiles.

Board to review implementation of recommendations

The Board has taken steps to review the implementation of the recommendations it makes to Governments and international organizations in its annual reports. In the coming period, the Board will develop a questionnaire to allow

Governments to evaluate how they have implemented the various recommendations made by the Board over the past several years.

The questionnaire will cover all recommendations published in

the Board's annual reports for the years 2005-2007 in the following areas: prevention of diversion, trafficking and abuse; availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes; and use of the Internet and misuse of courier services.

INCB President addresses Economic and Social Council *Achievements and challenges in drug control*

President of the International Narcotics Control Board Sevil Atasoy addressed the Economic and Social Council in Geneva on 30 July 2009. The President underlined the successes of a century of drug control, including widespread adherence to the three international drug control treaties and the regulation of the global trade in internationally controlled substances. It was noted that the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 represented an important step forward, as it regulates the trade in precursors, in other words in those chemicals used for industrial purposes but also in the illicit manufacture of drugs. The 1988 Convention has made it mandatory for States to control and monitor certain precursors and facilitates judicial cooperation, extradition and controlled deliveries.

The President also drew the Council's attention to problems that the international community has yet to address. One example is the low level of licit consumption of opioid-based medications, which has been a concern of the Board for some time. Although the World Health Organization considers access to controlled medicines, including morphine and codeine, to be a human right, in over 150 countries it is virtually impossible to get access to such medicines. "This is an important issue of public health, one that deserves special mention, particularly at a time when the deliberations of the Council focus on global public health," President Atasoy explained. "Despite the existence of plentiful supplies of opiate raw materials to meet global



The Palais des Nations is the seat of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

needs, many Governments do not ensure the wider availability of the essential medicines derived from them."

President Atasoy noted the marked increase in the smuggling of cocaine from South America through West Africa into Europe. "The Board has serious concerns that drug trafficking will undermine political, economic and social structures in West African countries, weaken the control of Governments over their territories and institutions and have a significant impact on the drug control situation not only at the national level, but also at the regional and international levels."

The President underlined the Report of the Board for 2008 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention. Ten years after the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, Governments and INCB have successfully worked together to tackle many of the problems related to precursor control. The 1988 Convention has achieved near-universal adherence.

Despite such progress, President Atasoy noted that the Board remained concerned that half of the States in Oceania had not yet ratified the 1988 Convention, thus obstructing the achievement of the

goals related to precursor control. International cooperation in drug control was identified as crucial and the rapid exchange of information on shipments of precursors as the most effective way to prevent diversion. In that connection, it was encouraging to note that 105 Governments were participating in the online system for the exchange of pre-export notifications (PEN Online).

The President of the Board concluded by saying that "the international drug control system has stood the test of time with credit, but it is not perfect. It is undoubtedly capable of improvement; for that reason, there are procedures for its modification. It is within the rights of parties to the treaties to propose that the treaties be modified. The Government of Bolivia has exercised this right and requested that parts of article 49 of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs which relate to coca leaf chewing be amended. Until a decision is taken to amend or reject any parts of the conventions, all parties to the conventions, including Bolivia, are bound by the provisions of the conventions. The Board will continue to encourage the Government of Bolivia to meet all its obligations under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs."

Meeting on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes

The meeting of the Council of Europe's ad hoc committee on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health was held in Strasbourg, France, from 1 to 4 September 2009. About 50 representatives from 27 countries and 30 other participants attended the meeting.

The Committee held the meeting in order to finish reading the Draft Convention of the Council of Europe on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health. The Committee adopted the Draft Convention, which is to be submitted to the Bureau of the

European Committee on Crime Problems for further discussion in October 2009. If the European Committee agrees on the text of the Draft Convention as proposed, the Convention will be opened for signature in 2010 after adoption by the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

During the meeting, the INCB Secretariat, represented by Gisela Wieser-Herbeck, provided, upon request of the Council's secretariat and of some delegations, expertise on structural and substantive matters regarding several articles of the Draft Convention. The meeting also provided an opportunity

to discuss the matter of illegal Internet pharmacies and their role in the distribution of counterfeit products.

Staff changes

At the end of April, Aida Amanbayeva joined the Convention Evaluation Section of INCB on a temporary assignment.

After two years with the INCB Secretariat in Vienna, Erik van der Veen was transferred to the UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan, where he started working on 1 September 2009.

Six Board Members elected

On 18 May 2009, the Economic and Social Council elected members to the International Narcotics Control Board for a five-year term beginning on 2 March 2010.

The World Health Organization (WHO) nominated three candidates, one of whom was elected:

Rajat Ray (India):

Prof. Ray is currently Head of the Department of Psychiatry and Chief of the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre in New Delhi. Rajat Ray has also participated in numerous international projects on reducing drug abuse.

For the remaining five positions up for election, Governments

nominated 18 candidates. Two current Board members, **Tatyana Dmitrieva** (Russian Federation) and **Camilo Uribe Granja** (Colombia), were re-elected. The following three elected candidates are new to the Board:

Marc Moinard (France):

Before retiring in 2008, Marc Moinard was involved in drug control in a legal capacity, having served as prosecutor-general in France and secretary-general at the Ministry of Justice.

Lochan Naidoo (South Africa):

Lochan Naidoo is a programme developer at ROOTS Office-Based Addiction Treatment. He has designed software programs for the rehabilitation of patients and

families dealing with addiction, depression and stress. He is the co-author of "Medical management of opioid dependence in South Africa", which appeared in the South African Medical Journal in 2008.

Viroj Sumyai (Thailand):

Viroj Sumyai is currently Assistant Secretary-General of the Food and Drug Administration at the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand. Previously, Dr. Sumyai was Director of the Narcotics Control Division at the Food and Drug Administration. He has had articles published on the availability of opioid pain medication and on the use of methadone in maintenance treatment, among other topics.

INCB President meets Director-General of the World Health Organization

INCB President Atasoy met with Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in Geneva on 13 August 2009. They discussed international drug control issues of mutual concern and ways for the two bodies to cooperate closely.

Sevil Atasoy emphasized the important role of WHO in the international drug control system by, for example, supporting the rational use of narcotic drugs and

psychotropic substances worldwide and providing guidance on the provision of adequate treatment for drug-dependent persons.

The international drug control conventions assign specific responsibilities to WHO with regard to changing the scope of control of substances under international control. WHO also nominates candidates for 3 of the 13 positions on the Board.

INCB President visits INTERPOL

On 12 August 2009, the INCB President, Sevil Atasoy, and the INCB Secretary, Koli Kouame, met with the Executive Director of Police Services of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Jean-Michel Louboutin, in Lyon, France. Issues such as the continuing sale through Internet pharmacies of drugs under international control, the abuse of prescription opioids such as oxycodone and the increase in trafficking in captagon in the Middle East were discussed. The INCB President also expressed the Board's wish to increase cooperation with INTERPOL.



INCB President Sevil Atasoy (left) and INTERPOL Executive Director of Police Services Jean-Michel Louboutin (right).
Photo: INTERPOL

INCB participates in Global Cancer Summit

Hamid Ghodse participated in the LIVESTRONG® Global Cancer Summit held in Dublin from 24 to 26 August 2009.

The Summit was a landmark event bringing together world leaders, representatives of industry and non-governmental organizations, and individuals to spotlight their collective commitment to the global fight against cancer. Several members of the United Nations family, including the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, were also represented by high-ranking officials.

Hamid Ghodse participated in a panel on "Answering the call, making new commitments to cancer control". In his presentation, Prof. Ghodse focused on the availability of internationally controlled drugs as pain relief medication for cancer patients. He explained that the pain suffered by most cancer patients could be relieved cheaply and effectively by using opioid analgesics.

Data indicate that in many countries the use of such medication is much lower than the medical need and that many Governments have yet to address this important deficit.

He recommended that Governments and international organizations increase their efforts to bring pain relief medicines to the people who need them.

INCB missions

Sudan

INCB President Sevil Atasoy and INCB Secretary Koli Kouame visited Sudan from 22 to 24 June 2009 to discuss the implementation by Sudan of the international drug control conventions and cooperation with INCB. Meetings were held with senior officials of competent authorities, including the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Health.



Spain

An INCB mission visited Spain from 20 to 22 July 2009, conducted by Camilo Uribe Granja, member of the Board, accompanied by Eva Fernández Santis of the INCB Secretariat.

The purpose of the mission was to review the Government's

experience in implementing the international drug control conventions through its national legislation and its national drug policy. The INCB representatives met with the official working on the Spanish National Plan on Drug Addiction and with other senior officials in ministries or other government entities involved in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking.

The following specific issues were addressed: the latest developments in drug trafficking, in particular cocaine trafficking through Spain; abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and other illicit drugs; cannabis cultivation; measures against money-laundering; recent changes in precursor control legislation; licit production of opiate raw materials; and demand reduction policies.



Jordan



An INCB mission visited Jordan from 16 to 19 August 2009. The mission was conducted by Sri Suryawati, member of the Board, accompanied by Margarethe Ehrenfeldner of the INCB Secretariat.

The aim of the mission was to review the implementation of the three international drug control conventions, to which Jordan is a party. The delegation met with senior officials from the various ministries involved in drug control. Deliberations during the visit focussed on recent developments in drug trafficking and abuse in Jordan as well as on countermeasures taken or planned to address this situation. Specific issues discussed were the continued trafficking of amphetamine type stimulants.

President Sevil Atasoy to address the Economic and Social Council on 8 October

On 8 October 2009, INCB President Sevil Atasoy will highlight to the Economic and Social Council the challenges that Governments are facing in implementing the international drug control treaties. For example, in over 150 countries there is limited access to internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and slow progress is

being made in reducing the demand for illicit drugs, as efforts to prevent drug abuse among youth and other vulnerable groups are given low priority in many countries. President Atasoy will also highlight the fact that cannabis control provisions are implemented inconsistently throughout the world, with cannabis use being tolerated in some countries even though

cannabis is listed in schedules I and IV of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961. President Atasoy will call upon Governments to take measures to address those challenges and, in particular, to examine how to best ensure the effective functioning of the international drug control treaties.

INCB Board Member resigns

Renowned drug abuse expert, Dr. Maria Elena Medina-Mora (Mexico) has resigned from the Board due to pressing professional commitments.



Maria Elena Medina-Mora (right) receives an end-of-service award from INCB President Sevil Atasoy (left) during a goodbye ceremony held at the ninety-fifth session of the Board in May 2009. Pictured in the middle is Tatyana Dmitrieva, First Vice-President

Maria Elena Medina-Mora served as member of the Board from 2000 to 2005 and started her second term in 2007. She has served as its Second Vice-President and as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Estimates.

A clinical psychologist with a PhD in Social Psychology and knowledge and experience in drug demand reduction, Maria Elena Medina-Mora is the author of four books and more than 163 research papers that have been cited in numerous scientific publications. In 2006, she was named Woman of the Year in Mexico in recognition of her academic and professional experience and achievements in the field of drug dependence and mental health.

"I am sad to see her go and thank Maria Elena for her long-standing and exemplary service to the Board," said INCB President Sevil Atasoy.

In accordance with the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the ECOSOC will fill the vacancy by electing a new member to serve the remainder of Medina-Mora's term.

Call for contributions

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

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The Board reserves the right to edit and select articles depending on their relevance and the availability of space.