

Foreword

This year's report of the International Narcotics Control Board on precursors is dedicated to the centennial of the first international drug control treaty, the International Opium Convention signed at The Hague in 1912, which created the foundation of international drug control. At the same time, the most recent drug control treaty, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, is entering its third decade since coming into force. During that time, the international precursor control regime has resulted in many significant achievements and accomplishments. With the ongoing cooperation and support of the international community, it is clear that the regime will remain a vital component of efforts to counter illicit drug manufacture and trafficking in the decades to come.

For more than 20 years, the Board, with a mandate to monitor and assess the compliance of Governments with their obligations under article 12 of the 1988 Convention, has analysed and identified trends and patterns in trafficking in precursors, identified weaknesses in national and international control systems and provided Governments with constructive and targeted solutions.

In the 2011 report on precursors, the Board continues to present its analyses of the latest developments in global precursor chemical control and has also included a new thematic chapter which reviews the past 20 years of the precursor control regime. By reinforcing the use of its Pre-Export Notification (PEN) Online system and developing new international initiatives that build on the successes of Project Prism and Project Cohesion, the Board is confident that, over the next decade, it can continue to bring Governments together with the aim of preventing the diversion of precursors and investigating trafficking.

In 2011, this cooperation led to considerable achievements, highlighted by the 133 Governments that, over the past five years and pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/3, have provided the Board with their annual legitimate requirements for precursor chemicals. Domestic and international efforts in 2011 led to more than 250 seizures of controlled chemicals, totalling more than 240 tons and thousands of litres, which would have been used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. This demonstrates how well these cooperative activities can work in practice. Nevertheless, challenges remain that will require concerted action by the international community. The sourcing of non-scheduled substances as substitutes for controlled precursors, the diversion of precursors from domestic distribution channels and the continuing vulnerability of less affluent Member States require both political will and the recognition that precursor control is a shared responsibility that requires the special attention of national drug control authorities.

Diversion of precursors is a problem for the international community; its solution can be addressed only at the international level. As such it is clear that only through joint efforts can effective solutions be found to curb this activity and those related to drug trafficking and organized crime. The last 20 years of chemical control have shown just what such cooperation can achieve.



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