

Foreword

For over 20 years, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, as well as resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has monitored and promoted national and international controls over precursors and chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. It has also carried out numerous tasks entrusted to it by the international community, including: to administer and report on the implementation of the international precursor control system; to monitor the licit movement of scheduled chemicals; and to monitor, analyse and report on trafficking activities.

The success of the international precursor control system is such that there is little diversion from international trade of the 23 scheduled precursors. A variety of tools and technology made available by INCB are partly responsible for this success. In particular, technology such as the Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system has, since 2006, allowed Governments to prevent the diversion of thousands of tons of chemicals without hampering legitimate trade.

Moreover, the flexible and proactive operational activities that the Board has initiated under Project Prism and Project Cohesion have helped to address urgent issues related to international precursor control, such as the increasing use of emerging, non-scheduled substances for illicit purposes. In this regard, the online Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS) is a promising new tool as it allows Governments to share information on diversions, attempted diversions and seizures of precursors and to launch investigations.

Each year, INCB, in its report on precursors, provides an overview of the licit international trade in and requirements for scheduled chemicals. It also analyses illicit activities related to the diversion of and trafficking in precursors aimed at circumventing the control system. Over the past few years, the Board has included a thematic chapter in its report on precursors. In its 2011 report, the theme was “Twenty years of international precursor control: progress and challenges”, and the Board described the evolution and took stock of the chemical control framework. In the 2012 report, the theme was “Challenges in international precursor control”, and the Board focused on the status of implementation of the legal framework at the national level, international controls, and emerging precursors and other non-scheduled substances, as well as the role of the Internet.

The thematic chapter of the 2013 report on precursors is entitled “Action to enhance international precursor control” and includes an analysis of regional priorities. The report contains the most salient conclusions and recommendations for 2014 and draws particular attention to the two most important recent developments: the diversion of and trafficking in scheduled chemicals at the domestic level; and the increasing use of non-scheduled chemicals in the illicit manufacture of drugs. It is extremely important that members of the international community take concrete measures to rapidly deal with these two issues by making use of the various tools and technology made available by INCB.

Viewed as a whole, the Board’s reports on precursors are essential sources of information on all issues related to the evolving situation with regard to precursor control, in particular recent developments. However, the true value of the reports lies not only in the quality of the analysis, but also in the practical guidance they offer to government authorities on ways to deal with issues of chemical control.

I therefore invite the parties to the 1988 Convention and interested international organizations, particularly in preparation of the 2014 high-level review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, to make use of the Board's reports on precursors, as those reports together provide a comprehensive overview of the licit trade and patterns of trafficking in precursors, as well as the measures that need to be taken to more effectively deny criminal organizations the chemicals they require to manufacture dangerous drugs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'RY' followed by a horizontal line.

Raymond Yans

President of the International
Narcotics Control Board