

Foreword

In the run-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in April 2016, I am pleased to present the International Narcotics Control Board's 2015 report on precursors.

The 2015 report, like the previous reports, highlights the dynamics of chemical diversion control, in terms of geographical aspects and in terms of the chemicals themselves. It also highlights, once again, the successes that can be achieved when Governments work together, share information and engage in joint action. The Board's initiatives, platforms and networks, such as the Precursor Task Force, Project Prism and Project Cohesion and the related communication platform known as the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS), provide a framework in which Governments have achieved significant and tangible results at the global level.

The report also covers the Board's Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system. In the nearly 10 years since it came into existence, PEN Online has become the most effective tool used by Governments to monitor, and communicate about matters related to, international trade in scheduled chemicals worldwide. The Board is pleased to have been able to launch an enhanced version of the system in 2015.

At this point in the run-up to the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 2016, a realistic assessment of the situation is needed. The international precursor control regime has made significant progress in monitoring legitimate international trade in a defined set of precursor chemicals to prevent them from being diverted into illicit channels. However, drugs are still being manufactured using non-scheduled chemicals, and they are emerging in a seemingly unlimited number of new forms or with new modifications.

The Board is convinced that the current challenges require efforts that go beyond the letter of article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. The Board is also convinced that the time has come to take new paths. First steps have already been made by some, including at the regional level, moving away from defined lists of controlled chemicals towards innovative generic approaches, such as the concept of "immediate" precursors, or providing a framework for law enforcement action when there is evidence that a substance is intended for use in the illicit manufacture of drugs. Voluntary private-public partnerships, as the present report shows, are also among those tools that can effectively and proactively prevent the diversion of any chemical at its source.