

371. In June 2001, the Board sent a mission to Chile. The Board notes with satisfaction that the policies of the Government of Chile concerning drug abuse and illicit trafficking provide for a balanced system of measures for the reduction of illicit drug demand and supply. Procedures for assessing the extent and nature of drug abuse are in place. Control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to be used for medical purposes is strict, allowing for early detection of drug abuse patterns. Drug law enforcement authorities have been successful in seizing significant quantities of illicitly manufactured drugs entering or passing through Chile.

372. Chile is an important manufacturer and importer of precursor chemicals. Some of those precursor chemicals have been diverted for use in the illicit manufacture of cocaine, mainly in neighbouring countries. During the year 2000, two clandestine laboratories for processing coca paste (cocaine sulphate) into cocaine hydrochloride were detected in Chile. The Board therefore welcomes a new law in Chile that deals more effectively with offences related to precursors; at the same time, the Board urges the Government to review and strengthen existing mechanisms for precursor control in order to prevent the diversion of precursors and facilitate the detection and prosecution of attempts to divert such substances.

373. In March 2001, the Board sent a mission to Venezuela. The Board notes the important and effective role of the Comisión Nacional contra el Uso Ilícito de las Drogas (CONACUID) in the overall coordination of all drug control activities in Venezuela. The Board trusts that the several legislative, judicial and administrative reforms, including the restructuring of several institutions involved in drug control, will strengthen the national drug control system.

374. The Board appreciates that the Government of Venezuela will review the practices that may prevent easier access to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes while efficiently preventing their diversion into illicit channels by streamlining distribution channels and control procedures. The Board notes with satisfaction the active role played by the Venezuelan authorities in cooperating in the area of drug control with their counterparts in other countries in South America and in other regions.

375. In May 2001, the Board reviewed action taken by the Government of Argentina pursuant to recommendations by the Board after its mission to that country in September 1998. The Board is satisfied that most of its recommendations have been implemented. While recognizing the economic difficulties that the country is currently facing, the Board wishes to underline the importance of maintaining the ability of the Secretariat for Planning the Prevention of Drug Abuse and the Fight against Drug Trafficking (SEDRONAR) to effectively coordinate drug control activities in the country and the ability of the National Administration for Medicaments, Food and Medical Technology (ANMAT) to control all licit activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

376. Eradication efforts by the Government of Myanmar and ongoing alternative development activities resulted in illicit opium poppy cultivation decreasing by one third from 1996 to 2000; however, there are indications that such cultivation increased again in 2001. Myanmar accounted for most of the world's illicit opium poppy cultivation in 2001, taking into consideration the results of the ban on such cultivation in the areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban and the prolonged drought in that country. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, there was a reduction in the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation. Opium poppy cultivation in Thailand remains at negligible levels. In Viet Nam, illicit opium poppy cultivation, which is concentrated in the mountainous areas in the north-west part of the country, has been significantly reduced in the past decade.

377. In some countries in East and South-East Asia, illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants appear to have become matters of greater concern than illicit activities related to opiates. A number of countries in the region, including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan and Thailand, have reported that the abuse of opiates such as raw opium, codeine and heroin has declined while the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants has increased. The spread of HIV infection is closely

linked to injecting drug abuse. However, many new drug abusers are increasingly choosing to abuse drugs through other forms of administration. The wide availability of and increasing illicit demand for amphetamine-type stimulants have been confirmed by seizure figures, which have increased sharply in the region since the end of the 1990s. The Board is particularly concerned that MDMA (Ecstasy), which was virtually unknown in the region about a decade ago, continues to gain in popularity among youth.

378. The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in East and South-East Asia is no longer affecting only countries in the region, as evidenced by seizures of methamphetamine in Switzerland and the arrest of more than 100 members of a methamphetamine trafficking group operating between countries in East and South-East Asia and Switzerland.

Treaty adherence

379. Of the 15 States in East and South-East Asia, 9 are parties to all of the international drug control treaties. Cambodia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to be the only two States in the region that have not yet become parties to any of the international drug control treaties.

380. Although the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar are parties to the 1961 Convention, those States are not yet parties to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Thailand have yet to accede to the 1988 Convention.

381. The Board is concerned about the fact that Viet Nam continues to maintain reservations on the extradition provisions of the 1988 Convention. The Board wishes to emphasize that extradition is an important element of the 1988 Convention and is a valuable tool used by Governments worldwide to combat criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking and other illicit activities and therefore urges the Government of Viet Nam to re-examine its position.

Regional cooperation

382. The main mechanisms for multilateral drug control cooperation in East and South-East Asia continue to be the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control between the countries in the Mekong⁶¹

area (Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and UNDCP. Meetings continue to provide important opportunities for countries in the region to update each other on developments, to take stock of progress made in reducing the problems of drug abuse, illicit crop cultivation and illicit drug trafficking and manufacture, to discuss modalities for increased cooperation and to consider new projects.

383. East Asian countries, including Japan and the Republic of Korea, participate in and support, in various ways, drug control efforts throughout the region of East and South-East Asia.

384. Significant bilateral efforts are being made, for example, by Myanmar and Thailand, which intend to exchange drug liaison officers, to improve contact between drug control officers along their common border and to cooperate in combating drug trafficking at the international airports of Bangkok and Yangon. The Board welcomes that development, as it views such cooperation as an essential element in efforts to curb the substantial flow of illicit drugs between those two countries. Significant results such as the arrest of top-level drug traffickers have been achieved because of improved cross-border cooperation between China and Myanmar.

385. Cambodia and Thailand have made arrangements for increased bilateral cooperation against a number of illicit activities, including drug trafficking. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the Governments of those countries in July 2001.

National legislation, policy and action

386. The Board takes note that, in September 2001, the legislature of the Republic of Korea adopted measures to strengthen the country's ability to deal with money-laundering by, inter alia, providing for the establishment of a financial intelligence unit. The Board is concerned, however, that, in 2001, a number of jurisdictions in East and South-East Asia, including Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines, were classified by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering as non-cooperative. The Board notes with appreciation the adoption in September 2001 of a bill against money-laundering in the Philippines and urges countries that have not done so to enact as soon as possible comprehensive legislation against money-laundering, as envisaged in the 1988 Convention.

387. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation has become a national priority, the Prime Minister issued an order in November 2000 calling for, inter alia, local authorities to develop a five-year plan to eliminate such cultivation using annual targets; the progress of the five-year plan will be monitored by the Government.

388. The Government of Mongolia began undertaking in 2001 a rapid situation assessment to ascertain the extent of problems related to injecting drug abuse and HIV prevalence in the country and to propose potential intervention strategies to prevent the spread of HIV.

389. The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand, covering the period 2002-2006, is the first development plan in that country to include a section on drug control strategies. The Ministry of Education of Thailand has instructed schools nationwide to set up drug control committees with a view to preventing the spread of drug abuse. In order to curb the abuse of drugs and the commission of other illegal acts by youth, Thailand has started to ensure that night-time entertainment areas, where illicit substances are widely abused, are located away from temples, schools and residential areas. Licence fees for operating an entertainment establishment will be introduced to fund the Government's drug control operations. The Board urges the Government to take further actions to ensure that such entertainment establishments are becoming free from drug abuse and trafficking.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

390. In East and South-East Asia, cannabis is illicitly cultivated mainly in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Thailand. In Indonesia, a marked increase in the illicit cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis was reported; in that country, cannabis is illicitly cultivated mainly on the islands of Java and Sumatra. Illicit cannabis cultivation is believed to contribute considerably to the flow of cash into Cambodia. Since 1996, significant quantities of Cambodian cannabis have been seized in Australia, the United States and countries in Europe. The level of cannabis abuse varies from country to

country but is low in most of the countries in East and South-East Asia.

391. Significant illicit opium poppy cultivation continues to occur in Myanmar and, to a lesser extent, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Opium poppy is also illicitly cultivated in Thailand and Viet Nam to a more limited extent. Efforts are being made by the Governments of all of those countries to eradicate opium poppies illicitly cultivated within their borders and to provide the persons affected by those operations with opportunities for alternative development. In Myanmar, significant illicit opium poppy cultivation continues in difficult-to-access mountainous areas that are controlled by armed groups. Major trafficking routes for heroin manufactured mainly in the border areas of Myanmar include corridors that lead through Yunnan Province of China, then further east to points along that country's coast and through the Lao People's Democratic Republic to coastal areas in Cambodia and Viet Nam. From the coastal areas, the heroin is shipped to illicit markets in Australia, Canada, the United States and countries in Europe. Acetic anhydride, which is necessary for the manufacture of heroin, is smuggled into Myanmar mainly out of China and India.

392. While the abuse of opiates is declining in a number of countries in East and South-East Asia, statistics on drug injection and HIV/AIDS prevalence show that injection is now the most common mode of transmitting HIV in a number of countries in the region, including China, Malaysia and Viet Nam. The Board encourages the Governments of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam to continue to work towards the elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation, to provide alternative income-generating activities for persons living in areas under illicit cultivation, such as the hilltribe areas, and to deal with the problem of opium addiction.

393. Although the abuse of cocaine in East and South-East Asia as a whole is very limited, seizure data indicate that drug traffickers are using islands in the Philippines and other Pacific islands as transit points for shipping cocaine to illicit markets in Australia. The Board is concerned that in East and South-East Asia there have been an increasing number of attempted diversions of potassium permanganate possibly destined for South America, to be used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine.

Psychotropic substances

394. Amphetamine-type substances, which have long been the most popular drugs of abuse in Japan and the Republic of Korea, have now become the most popular drugs abused also in several other countries in East and South-East Asia, including the Philippines and Thailand. Law enforcement authorities in the region continue to make significant seizures of ephedrine, a substance used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.

395. Seizure data indicate that methamphetamine is being illicitly manufactured on a large scale along Myanmar's border with Thailand. There are signs that the Lao People's Democratic Republic is also being used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. In Thailand, the alarming series of sharp year-to-year increases in methamphetamine seizures that began in 1996 continued in 2000. There is evidence that, in addition to land routes, boats on rivers are used to transport illicit consignments of methamphetamine to points in Thailand. From there, the drug is distributed to large illicit markets in urban areas of Thailand or other countries throughout East and South-East Asia. A large seizure in the Andaman Sea in January 2001 indicates that ocean routes are also being used to transport methamphetamine. In addition, Cambodia and Viet Nam continue to be used as key transit routes for smuggling methamphetamine.

396. Laboratories seized in 2001 by law enforcement authorities in China and the Philippines indicate that methamphetamine hydrochloride (commonly called "ice" or "shabu") is also illicitly manufactured in those countries. Methamphetamine hydrochloride is being smuggled into countries throughout East and South-East Asia and elsewhere, including Australia and, to a lesser extent, the western part of the United States. Seizure data indicate that the volume of methamphetamine hydrochloride being smuggled out of China and into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan and the Republic of Korea is increasing significantly. While drug abuse in general is thought to be relatively low in Brunei Darussalam, a sharp increase in the abuse of methamphetamine hydrochloride was reported in that country in 2000.

397. The Board is concerned that MDMA (Ecstasy) is also becoming more widely available in East and South-East Asia. The MDMA (Ecstasy) available in the region appears to be illicitly manufactured in western

European countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands, as evidenced by seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) and arrests of couriers carrying the substance through the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. There were also seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) and arrests of couriers carrying the substance from mainland China, which is the main manufacturer of one of the precursors most frequently used in the illicit manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy). Illicit demand for MDMA (Ecstasy) appears to have increased in many large cities in East and South-East Asia, particularly among club patrons in urban areas of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Japan. Therefore, the Board calls on all Governments in the region to increase their efforts to prevent drug abuse and to remain vigilant in order to prevent the local manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy) from taking root by carefully monitoring its precursors.

Other substances

398. The Board is concerned that ketamine, a hallucinogenic sedative, is increasingly being abused at dance clubs in large metropolitan areas in East and South-East Asia, such as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Singapore. At the end of 2000, police in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region discovered a facility for the illicit manufacture of ketamine.

Missions

399. In May 2001, the Board reviewed the progress of the Government of Myanmar on recommendations made by the Board pursuant to its 1998 mission to that country. Because of the need to confirm the extent to which progress had actually been made with respect to the Board's recommendations and because the country accounts for a large proportion of the world's illicit opium as well as for significant illicit methamphetamine manufacture, the Board decided to send a follow-up mission to Myanmar.

400. In September 2001, the Board sent a mission to Myanmar. The Board found that continuous efforts were being made to implement its recommendations following its mission to Myanmar in 1998.

401. Although the widespread opium poppy cultivation remains a serious problem in Myanmar, illicit opium poppy cultivation and opium production have

decreased, drug seizures have increased and “opium-free zones” have been established over the last few years. The Board notes that the Government of Myanmar has been fully committed to the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country and that continuous efforts have been made to deal with the situation regarding drug abuse and illicit trafficking, as evidenced by the initiation in 1999 of a 15-year plan to eliminate illicit drugs in the country.

402. The Board further notes that the limited resources and the low level of external assistance provided to Myanmar have had a negative impact on the Government’s ability to achieve the goals set out in its eradication programme and to consolidate the gains already made. The Board therefore calls upon the international community to provide the necessary assistance to Myanmar as long as its efforts to fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking are sustained.

403. The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine remains a serious problem in border areas of Myanmar. The Board calls on the Government to continue to cooperate with the Governments of neighbouring countries in law enforcement activities and, in particular, to make additional efforts to identify sources and routes of seized precursor chemicals and to share such information with those Governments. The Board notes the ministerial meeting on drug control cooperation between China, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand held in Beijing on 28 August 2001 and hopes that the drug problems in East and South-East Asia will be dealt with in a more effective way through coordinated subregional and regional mechanisms.

404. In April 2001, the Board sent a mission to Thailand. Drug control issues have a high priority in the Government’s policies and activities. The Office of the Narcotics Control Board, which coordinates drug control among the various competent authorities, is functioning well.

405. The Board is nevertheless concerned about reports that certain psychotropic substances, including phentermine and diazepam, as well as combination products, have been diverted and misused in Thailand and smuggled into and out of the country. The Board requests the Thai authorities to give further attention to controls over psychotropic substances, especially stimulants, with a view to preventing their diversion into the illicit traffic.

406. Methamphetamine currently poses the most serious drug trafficking and abuse problems in Thailand. Further practical means of cooperating with neighbouring countries should be explored in order to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement activities, particularly at the borders, including the real-time exchange of intelligence and other information. At the same time, more comprehensive nationwide assessments of the drug abuse situation need to be made at regular intervals in order to monitor trends. The Board notes that the Government is establishing programmes to strengthen, in particular, primary prevention efforts in communities and schools and to develop strategies to address addiction to amphetamine-type stimulants.

407. In addition, appropriate controls applied to precursor chemicals in Thailand should be extended to include potassium permanganate, especially in view of the recently uncovered attempts in South-East Asia to divert that substance into the illicit traffic. The Board trusts that the Government has given priority to its efforts to enable Thailand to accede to the 1988 Convention as swiftly as possible.

South Asia

Major developments

408. As South Asia is situated between the world’s two main opiate-producing areas, the region’s drug trafficking and drug abuse problems are mostly related to transit traffic. Additionally, illicit opium poppy cultivation and heroin manufacture have increased for several years, and illicit cannabis cultivation and abuse continue unabated. In almost all countries in the region heroin abuse has spread and there has been a shift from smoking and inhalation of heroin to injecting drug abuse.

409. There has been an increase in polydrug abuse involving, in addition to illicitly manufactured drugs, a range of pharmaceutical products containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In India, the first national rapid assessment survey of drug addiction indicates that prescription drug abuse has increased in almost every major city in the country. On average, about 10 per cent of all drug abuse in India involves prescription drugs. The main reasons for this

development are the low cost of prescription drugs and deficiencies in the drug control system.

410. Southern parts of West Asia continue to supply most of the heroin smuggled into and through India and Nepal. New Delhi has become a major transit point for heroin trafficking; most of the heroin is smuggled into countries in Europe and North America, occasionally through Sri Lanka. To a much lesser extent, heroin is smuggled out of Myanmar and into the north-eastern states of India and Bangladesh, mostly in small quantities, to be abused by the local population. Myanmar is also the source of illicitly manufactured methamphetamine smuggled into India and, most likely, Bangladesh. Intelligence reports suggest that the smuggling of methamphetamine and heroin from Myanmar may be organized by the same drug trafficking group and that the total quantity of methamphetamine being trafficked may exceed that of heroin.

411. Efforts to fight drug trafficking groups in South Asia are hampered by insurgencies and political instability, by the difficult terrain in most of the countries in the region and, sometimes, by the involvement of local politicians and law enforcement officers in drug trafficking activities. It is claimed in some countries in the region that organized crime, terrorist activities and drug trafficking are related. The Board welcomes the establishment by the Governments of India and the United Kingdom of a joint working group on international terrorism and drug trafficking.

412. Countries in South Asia are responding to these developments by adapting their laws, administrative regulations and control systems. The Board welcomes preventive measures adopted in Bhutan and Maldives.

Treaty adherence

413. Of the six States in South Asia, five are parties to the 1961 Convention, four are parties to the 1971 Convention and all six are parties to the 1988 Convention. The Board notes with regret that, despite its recurrent appeals, Bhutan is still not a party to the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention and Nepal is still not a party to the 1971 Convention.

Regional cooperation

414. The Board welcomes ongoing bilateral and multilateral efforts to combat drug trafficking in South

Asia, including activities involving both countries in South Asia and countries in other regions. A number of bilateral agreements have been signed; for example, Bangladesh and Myanmar have signed an agreement on efforts to combat illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, and India and Tajikistan have signed an agreement on the reduction of illicit drug demand and the prevention of trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. India has also signed similar agreements with other States.

415. The Board notes with appreciation the relaunching of the activities of the regional precursor control project for member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). A regional workshop on precursor control was held in Kathmandu at the beginning of 2001 for persons from SAARC member States. The workshop focused on the improvement of precursor control laws in the region, training and law enforcement. Also at the beginning of 2001, the Government of India organized in New Delhi a training course on precursor control for drug control officers from Central Asian countries.

416. The Board notes the ongoing bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan involving high-level talks on matters related to drug law enforcement, as well as quarterly meetings on operational matters.

National legislation, policy and action

417. The Board is expecting that the Parliament of Bangladesh will, without further delay, approve the revision of the Narcotics Control Act, 1990, which is not consistent with the Code of Criminal Procedure and does not contain certain provisions required by the 1988 Convention. The revised act will include provisions on precursor control, money-laundering offences, punishment of drug traffickers and the use of controlled delivery.

418. The Board notes that the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill 2000 was passed by the Parliament of India. The Bill incorporates statutory provisions relating to the use of controlled delivery, confers powers of entry, search and seizure and provides for the tracing, freezing, seizing and forfeiture of illegally acquired property. Rationalization of the sentencing structure will ensure deterrent sentences for traffickers dealing in significant

quantities of drugs and less severe sentences for drug addicts committing minor offences.

419. The Board welcomes the efforts of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board of Sri Lanka in the preparation of comprehensive amendments to and the consolidation of the Poisons, Opium and Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. The amendments will take into account the provisions of the 1988 Convention relating to money-laundering, extradition and mutual legal assistance and will also include provisions on the treatment and rehabilitation of drug-dependent persons.

420. The Board notes that the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of Nepal are not adequate to deal with financial crime such as money-laundering and the investigation of proceeds suspected of being derived from drug-related offences. The Board expects that legislation to cover those areas will be adopted in the near future. The Board also notes that there is no regulation on the control of precursor chemicals in Nepal. The Board hopes that initiatives will soon be taken to remedy the situation.

421. The governments of seven states in India have amended the 1985 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Rules in order to increase the availability of morphine for terminally ill cancer patients. However, while the availability of morphine in India has increased, the number of cancer patients receiving adequate treatment for the alleviation of pain is still low in some states.

422. Countries in South Asia are increasingly attaching importance to activities for drug abuse prevention, including the collection and analysis of data on drug abuse. In India, a national survey of the extent of, patterns of and trends in drug abuse and a rapid assessment survey have been carried out. The Government of Maldives is planning to carry out a rapid assessment study on the extent of drug abuse in that country; the assessment will provide essential input for the formulation of a comprehensive national master plan to combat the drug problem. Information on the extent of drug abuse in Bhutan is limited; however, the Government of Bhutan has initiated a campaign to increase public awareness of substance abuse. In Nepal, authorities have developed educational material on drug abuse prevention for the formal and non-formal educational system.

423. The Board welcomes the fact that in countries in South Asia there is increasing recognition of the significant role of non-governmental organizations in the field of drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The Government of India supports more than 300 non-governmental organizations engaged in the reduction of illicit drug demand and has established a national centre for training and capacity-building in that field. In Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, non-governmental organizations have established national federations for drug abuse prevention.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

424. Cannabis is the most widely abused drug in South Asia. In all countries in the region except Bhutan and Maldives, there have been reports of cannabis growing wild or being illicitly cultivated. Nepal has long been a source of both cannabis herb and cannabis resin, which are sold locally or smuggled into other countries in the region, such as India, and in western Europe. Cannabis grows wild in the high hilly areas of the central and western parts of Nepal, where illicit crop eradication is difficult and expensive because of the topography. In the southern part of Nepal, where the terrain is easier to patrol, illicit crops are detected and destroyed by law enforcement officers every year.

425. In Bangladesh, illicit crop cultivation in areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts is increasing, and it has been reported that cannabis is being produced in and smuggled out of the southern district of Rangamati. No systematic programme for illicit crop eradication is being carried out in Bangladesh. Cannabis is being cultivated on a large scale in the provinces of eastern and southern Sri Lanka, and campaigns have been launched to curtail that activity. In Sri Lanka, seizures have been made of cannabis smuggled out of neighbouring countries.

426. In India, illicit cannabis cultivation continues in several states. Illicit drug consignments, each containing tons of cannabis resin, mainly from Nepal, have recently been seized, indicating that that substance is being smuggled through India on a large scale. In addition, courier facilities in India are increasingly being misused to smuggle cannabis into other countries.

427. Cocaine abuse remains very limited in South Asia. In the last few years, however, it has been reported that the number of seizures of cocaine has increased, particularly in India, where cocaine is increasingly being abused by affluent members of the population.

428. The Board is concerned about the increasing incidence of heroin injection in countries in South Asia, in particular, in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. In Maldives and Sri Lanka, the most common methods used to administer heroin continue to be smoking and inhalation. In India, illicit opium poppy cultivation and opium abuse continue to pose problems in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, where plans for alternative development and income substitution projects will soon be realized. In Bangladesh, there are illicit opium poppy cultivation sites in the remote areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the movement of security forces is restricted. That problem has re-emerged in the area of Bandarban.

429. India, one of the world's main licit producers of opium, has designed an elaborate system to prevent the diversion of licitly produced opium into illicit channels. The system includes maintaining control of licensing, demanding minimum qualifying yields, maintaining the government monopoly on purchasing, and meeting strict monitoring requirements. Despite the strict controls, government officials believe that limited quantities of the licitly produced opium may have been diverted into illicit channels. Laboratories manufacturing heroin have been detected in and around Indian states licitly producing opium. The Government of India is urged to increase its vigilance in order to prevent such diversions.

430. Most of the heroin smuggled out of south-west Asia into South Asia is destined for countries in western Europe and for the United States. Heroin consignments are smuggled either directly out of India or along the maritime route leading from the coast of Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka and Maldives, mostly to be shipped further. Ports in southern India are increasingly being used for smuggling drugs, as evidenced by the sharp increase in the number of seizures made of consignments of narcotic drugs being smuggled by sea along routes leading from India to Sri Lanka. Indian authorities suspect that the same routes used for smuggling narcotic drugs out of India are also

used for smuggling counterfeit money, arms, ammunition and explosives into the country.

431. India is an important producer of chemicals, such as acetic anhydride, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, anthranilic acid and *N*-acetylanthranilic acid. The Government of India has introduced a number of regulatory and control measures and its progressively improving precursor control regime has become an important barrier to the diversion of precursor chemicals. Because of those strict controls and the cooperation of manufacturing companies, the diversion of precursor chemicals, mainly acetic anhydride, into countries in Central Asia and into Afghanistan has been significantly reduced.

432. Seizures of acetic anhydride revealed that traffickers had tried to use Nepal as a transit country, in order to divert that substance into Pakistan. The Board therefore welcomes the fact that, in Nepal, an interdepartmental coordination committee on precursor control has been established and that regulatory measures and controls have been introduced for all substances in Table I of the 1988 Convention and for seven substances in Table II.

433. The Board notes with concern that, in almost all countries in South Asia, there has been an increase in the abuse of prescription drugs that have been either diverted from domestic distribution channels or smuggled out of neighbouring countries. The abuse of the pharmaceuticals in question constitutes a serious health risk.

Psychotropic substances

434. The Board notes with appreciation that the dismantling of facilities for the illicit manufacture of methaqualone in India had a significant impact on the smuggling of that substance into Africa. In most cases, the raided facilities were misused laboratories on the premises of chemical or pharmaceutical companies.

435. India is an important manufacturer and trader of pharmaceuticals, including a number of widely used psychotropic substances. The Board notes with appreciation that Indian authorities have established an effective system of control over international trade in psychotropic substances and have introduced additional measures to control domestic distribution channels. However, information on the abuse of licitly manufactured psychotropic substances indicates that

India continues to encounter problems in monitoring the compliance of domestic distributors with the law and that Indian states do not uniformly apply the law. A number of psychotropic substances, including benzodiazepines such as alprazolam and diazepam and analgesics such as buprenorphine, may be obtained without medical prescription, contrary to Indian laws and regulations. The diverted substances are then sold on the local market in India or are smuggled by land into neighbouring countries such as Nepal or by air into countries in Central Asia. In India, the growing abuse of psychotropic substances is also one of the reasons for the increase in polydrug abuse involving psychotropic substances in combination with other pharmaceuticals (opiates and non-opiates), illicit drugs and alcohol.

436. In Nepal, many abusers of opiates may have reverted to the abuse of pharmaceutical products containing nitrazepam, diazepam and buprenorphine due to their easy availability and low prices. The Board shares the concern of the Nepalese authorities about the increased injecting drug abuse and polydrug abuse involving psychotropic substances in combination with heroin and alcohol. Benzodiazepines are also abused in Maldives, mostly by polydrug abusers (in combination with cannabis or heroin). The Board notes with concern that, in Sri Lanka, controlled substances requiring a prescription are being illegally sold in pharmacies as over-the-counter drugs. This may be a sign that an illicit market for psychotropic substances is developing in that country.

437. In Bangladesh, mainly the availability of buprenorphine in the illicit market is causing the increase in the number of persons who abuse drugs by injection. In addition, the abuse of tranquillizers, such as benzodiazepines, is reported to be widespread in Bangladesh.

438. Methamphetamine from Myanmar is smuggled into India. Some of the ephedrine used for its illicit manufacture continues to be smuggled out of India and into Myanmar; however, because of the efforts made by both law enforcement authorities and manufacturing companies in India, the quantities being smuggled are decreasing. The Board notes with appreciation that India and Myanmar have begun cooperating in the investigation of cases involving the diversion of ephedrine.

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439. A visit to India took place in April 2001. The Board welcomes the additional efforts that have been made to strengthen, in particular, measures at the Neemuch Opium and Alkaloid Factory, in line with the recommendations made by the Board following its previous missions to that country. The Board remains concerned about leakages from licit opium production and expects that the Government of India will continue efforts to prevent diversion both at the farm gate and at the factory.

440. The Board notes, however, that in India there is still no adequate system for collecting the required information and that there is insufficient coordination among government agencies responsible for reporting. The Board urges the Government to take the steps necessary to ensure that all data required under the international drug control treaties are submitted to the Board accurately and in a timely manner.

West Asia

Major developments

441. In Afghanistan, as a result of the prolonged drought and the ban on opium poppy cultivation issued in July 2000 for the implementation of provisions of a drug control law promulgated in 1998 by the Taliban, such cultivation was significantly reduced in the areas controlled by the Taliban. Political and military events after September 2001 may result in the situation changing during the coming year. Illicit opium poppy cultivation has increased in the parts of Afghanistan controlled by the Northern Alliance. Opiates originating in Afghanistan continue to be smuggled into and through the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. There has been a significant increase in the quantity of drugs from Afghanistan seized in some countries in Central Asia. For example, the quantity of heroin seized in Tajikistan in the first six months of 2001 is equal to the quantity seized in that country in the entire year 2000. The situation in Kyrgyzstan is similar. That development may also reflect in part the increased interdiction efforts in those countries.

442. Because of the recent political and military events, there is concern that illicit opium poppy cultivation may emerge elsewhere in West Asia. Governments of countries in the region should remain extremely vigilant in order to prevent such a

development. The smuggling of opiates in West Asia has become more organized, profitable and violent and is jeopardizing the economic and social stability of some countries in the region. Therefore, the fight against drug and chemical trafficking has to continue to be a priority for Governments in the region.

443. In Afghanistan, the harvest in the crop year 2000/2001 is estimated to be less than one tenth of the harvest in the previous crop year. As a result of the implementation of the ban, opium and morphine had become much less available on illicit markets in West Asia; however, in response to the military events after September 2001, large quantities of opiates were made available from illicit stocks. The availability of heroin originating in Afghanistan remained high in the region, even following the ban. No effects on the availability of heroin have been observed in countries outside of the region.

444. As a result of the implementation of the ban, prices of opiates in West Asia increased considerably, although prices of heroin on illicit markets were not affected in the same manner. As at 1 November 2001, no conclusions could be drawn on the development of prices in the region as a result of the recent military events.

445. Most countries in West Asia are used as transit points for smuggling opiates into Europe and other regions. Precursors and chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of heroin continue to flow from outside the region into countries in West Asia where such manufacture is taking place. Seizure statistics for countries throughout West Asia show that opium had been increasingly processed into other opiates in Afghanistan.

446. Illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking activities in West Asia continue to have a considerable impact on the extent of drug abuse in the region. Opiate addiction rates in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan continue to be among the highest in the world. Opium addicts are increasingly abusing heroin because it has become more available than opium. There has been a significant increase in the abuse of opiates in Central Asia. The Board is concerned that, throughout West Asia, heroin abuse and HIV infection resulting from the sharing of needles are spreading.

Treaty adherence

447. Of the 24 States in West Asia, 22 are now parties to the 1961 Convention in its amended form and 2 continue to be parties to the 1961 Convention in its unamended form. All States in the region are parties to the 1971 Convention and 23 are parties to the 1988 Convention. The Board urges Israel, the only State in the region that is not a party to the 1988 Convention, to accede to that Convention.

448. The Board notes with satisfaction that Turkey has acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention and that Kuwait has acceded to the 1988 Convention. The Board notes that the Islamic Republic of Iran is taking steps to accede to the 1972 Protocol.

Regional cooperation

449. The Board notes the extensive regional cooperation activities related to drug control in West Asia.

450. The "Six plus Two" group, comprising China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, plus the Russian Federation and the United States, was determined, inter alia, to deal with the illicit drug supply from Afghanistan and in the subregion as a whole. The Board is of the opinion that the countries neighbouring Afghanistan and the international community should cooperate with the future authorities in Afghanistan to prevent the resumption of illicit opium poppy cultivation and related production of and trafficking in opiates in West Asia (see paragraphs 231-234 above).

451. The Board notes the cooperation that has taken place within the framework of the memorandum of understanding on drug control cooperation in Central Asia, involving Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as UNDCP and the Aga Khan Development Network. The Board notes with appreciation that, in September 2001, Azerbaijan joined the group of signatories to the memorandum of understanding.

452. The Board also notes that, in 2001, the European Union adopted a Central Asian action plan on drugs, which is aimed at, inter alia, providing assistance in the areas of drug law enforcement and gathering drug-related information.

453. Several meetings were held in 2001 in Central Asia with a view to strengthening cooperation in combating drug trafficking and crime. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established by the heads of State of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at a summit held in Shanghai in June 2001. Numerous security issues, including the fight against drug trafficking, were discussed. At the meeting of the Council of Interior Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) held in Erevan in June 2001, participants agreed to carry out a large-scale operation called "Channel" targeting drug smuggling in CIS member States; in previous years, such operations had led to significant drug seizures.

454. The Economic Cooperation Organization continues to foster cooperation among its member States through its drug control coordination unit. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime, established in June 2000, has organized two training courses for law enforcement personnel from its member States.

455. Training for precursor control for member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) was provided in the United Arab Emirates in April 2001. GCC is planning to offer more general training for law enforcement personnel in 2002.

456. The Board welcomes the agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey to strengthen drug control cooperation and the continued close cooperation between law enforcement agencies from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The Board also welcomes the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has assisted farmers in Afghanistan who have stopped illicit opium poppy cultivation.

457. The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the League of Arab States continue to promote regional and international cooperation and harmonization of drug control efforts by Arab countries. The Organization of the Islamic Conference is also actively assisting its member States in harmonizing drug control laws.

458. The Board notes with appreciation that, as a result of closer cooperation between the Governments of countries in West Asia, law enforcement authorities in those countries are in a better position to combat drug trafficking organizations, as evidenced by the

many drug-related arrests and seizures in the region. For example, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in cooperation with the Governments of Pakistan and Turkey and those of countries outside of the region, dismantled a large international drug trafficking ring in February 2001. While noting the deteriorated political situation and the difficulties of the peace process in the Near East, the Board is concerned that lack of cooperation between the competent authorities of Israel and their counterparts in the Palestinian Autonomous Areas has had a negative effect on drug control, resulting in increased drug trafficking and drug abuse.

National legislation, policy and action

459. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government of Lebanon adopted a law on the control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors in February 2001.

460. The Board notes with appreciation that all five countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) have made progress in establishing legislative and administrative mechanisms necessary for efficient drug control and crime prevention. In June 2001, Turkmenistan adopted a national action plan for combating illicit drug trafficking and for providing assistance to drug addicts for the period 2001-2005. All of the countries in Central Asia except Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have now adopted comprehensive national drug control plans. The Board encourages the Governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to adopt national drug control strategies as soon as possible. Each of the countries in Central Asia has established a national entity for drug control coordination. However, effective systems for the collection, analysis and use of criminal intelligence have not yet been established, and cooperation among the various agencies involved in drug control should be strengthened. There continues to be a need to provide training for prosecutors and judges dealing with drug-related cases.

461. In view of the increased smuggling of drugs through Kyrgyzstan in recent years, the Government initiated in June 2001 a new programme aimed at preventing drug addiction and stepping up the fight against drug traffickers and drug-related crime.

462. The Board notes that the Government of Pakistan has tightened controls at that country's border with

Afghanistan to curb smuggling in general, which should also result in better detection of drug smuggling. The Board also notes that the Government has established, in five major cities, special courts for cases related to drug trafficking. In view of the persistent backlog of drug-related cases in Pakistan, the Board encourages the Government to continue upgrading its judicial system and to take steps to proceed with those cases in a more expeditious manner.

463. The Board urges Governments to continue their efforts to assess the nature and extent of drug abuse. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Jordan is undertaking such an assessment and that in Lebanon an assessment of patterns of and trends in drug abuse is being finalized. The Board also welcomes the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has established the National Drug Abuse Institute, which is expected to function as the main centre for monitoring programmes for the reduction of illicit drug demand. The Board further welcomes a draft regulation currently before the Turkish parliament that would allow the setting up of councils for surveillance in cases involving substance abuse.

464. The Board continues to be concerned about the lack of adequate treatment centres in a number of the countries in West Asia most affected by drug abuse; in some instances, due to economic reasons, treatment for drug abuse is limited to emergency care or detoxification. The Board is further concerned that, in many countries in the region, the treatment of female drug addicts is particularly inadequate. Similarly, the treatment of drug addicts in prisons is often inadequate. Detoxification and rehabilitation programmes are largely insufficient to deal with the growing drug abuse problem in Central Asia. The Board encourages all the Governments concerned to continue to review current treatment and rehabilitation activities for drug addicts and to provide proper guidance to non-governmental organizations involved in such activities.

465. There has been no systematic approach followed in activities aimed at reducing illicit drug demand in Central Asia. In Turkmenistan, the Government has started to set up specialized clinics in Ashgabat in which addicts may receive treatment anonymously; but Turkmenistan, like other countries in the region, still lacks a comprehensive strategy for the reduction of illicit drug demand. The Board also encourages the

countries in Central Asia to continue to review existing activities for the prevention of drug abuse, based on the current patterns and extent of drug abuse. All Governments in West Asia should also pay particular attention to cannabis abuse and to the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations diverted from licit channels.

466. The Board continues to be concerned that many countries in West Asia have not yet adopted measures against money-laundering. The Board welcomes the fact that, in January 2001, the Government of Bahrain adopted a law to combat money-laundering. The Board notes that Lebanon promulgated a regulation in May 2001 that addresses some major concerns of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering with regard to bank secrecy. At the same time, the Board continues to be concerned that Lebanon is not taking steps to withdraw its reservation on the provisions against money-laundering in the 1988 Convention.

467. Privatization and the rapid expansion in the private banking sector, together with the lack of adequate control over those processes, make the five Central Asian States particularly vulnerable to money-laundering activities. As those States have not yet adopted legislation on combating money-laundering and confiscating the proceeds of criminal offences, including drug-related offences, the Board invites them to prepare and establish the necessary legislative and administrative controls without further delay.

468. Legislation on precursors has been enacted in all the countries in Central Asia except Turkmenistan, and in Turkmenistan such legislation is before the parliament; however, there are difficulties in the implementation of that legislation. The Board is satisfied that the voluntary agreements reached under Operation Topaz have led to more effective control over acetic anhydride in Central Asia. The Board trusts that the successes achieved in Operation Topaz have demonstrated to the countries involved the need to tighten controls over chemicals used for illicit drug manufacture and that those countries will now take the necessary steps. The Board urges all Governments not participating in Operation Topaz to review existing controls over chemicals used for illicit drug manufacture and to strengthen those controls if necessary.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse*Narcotic drugs*

469. Cannabis continues to be the most widely abused substance in West Asia. Huge quantities of cannabis continue to be illicitly cultivated or grow wild in Afghanistan and, to a lesser degree, in Pakistan. Cannabis resin continues to be smuggled into other countries in West Asia and Europe. The total amount of cannabis and cannabis resin seized in most countries in West Asia increased in 2000 and in the first half of 2001. There is some concern that criminal groups that were previously smuggling opiates are now increasingly becoming involved in smuggling cannabis. Seizures in 2001 and the results of annual eradication campaigns confirmed that cannabis continues to grow wild on extensive areas in Kazakhstan.

470. The Board is concerned about the fact that in Lebanon illicit cannabis cultivation, which had been eradicated in the early 1990s, resumed in 2001. The Government of Lebanon did not carry out a campaign to eradicate illicit cannabis cultivation, as it had done in previous years. The Board urges the Government to take the necessary measures to prevent illicit cannabis cultivation in its territory.

471. In Afghanistan, the ban on opium poppy cultivation introduced by the Taliban in July 2000 was successfully implemented, as such cultivation virtually disappeared in the areas under its control. Opium production in Afghanistan is estimated to be less than 200 tons in 2001, which is comparable to the amount of opium produced in that country in the mid-1980s. However, there is evidence that opium poppy cultivation has expanded in other districts, many of which are close to the northern border of Afghanistan.

472. In Pakistan, only isolated cases involving illicit opium poppy cultivation in the Khyber Agency continue to be identified. In Turkey, poppy straw from licit cultivation continues to be used for the extraction of alkaloids. No diversion of opiates into illicit markets has been reported in that country.

473. Small-scale illicit opium poppy cultivation in Central Asia, limited to remote areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, has been reported.

474. In Afghanistan, the Taliban reported in 2000 the destruction of 25 clandestine heroin laboratories. In

Turkey, clandestine heroin laboratories continue to be detected and dismantled. In Lebanon, the small-scale processing of opium into heroin continues. There have been no more reports of the processing of heroin in Pakistan.

475. There is no evidence of processing of opium or morphine into heroin in any of the countries in Central Asia. Attempts at smuggling opium on a large scale out of Afghanistan and into Tajikistan (there was a record seizure of 2.2 tons of raw poppy products along the Afghan-Tajik border in July 2001) may indicate the existence of opium-processing facilities on the territory of Tajikistan, although no such facilities have been discovered.

476. In West Asia, key chemicals used in the manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine are produced. In addition, many countries in the region are used as transit points for the diversion of those chemicals, which continue to be imported from or smuggled out of China, India and countries in Europe. Since 2000, in particular, suspicion has been confirmed that countries in the eastern Mediterranean area that were previously not being used by traffickers for the diversion of chemicals (the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic) are being used to divert acetic anhydride for the illicit manufacture of heroin. Countries in Central Asia continue to be used as transit points for smuggling into Afghanistan chemicals used in the manufacture of heroin. The Board is concerned that, despite steps to tighten control over chemicals used in the manufacture of heroin, such chemicals are still readily available.

477. Since the Taliban banned opium poppy cultivation in the areas under its control, the total amount of opiates from Afghanistan seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran has decreased and the purity of heroin has declined until the events of September 2001. In Pakistan, trends in seizures of opiates have been less recognizable since the Taliban banned opium poppy cultivation. When the recent military action started in Afghanistan, the influx of opiates from Afghanistan into Pakistan increased significantly.

478. Despite the banning of opium poppy cultivation in the areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban, it appears that, in the countries in Central Asia, the flow of illicit drugs, in particular heroin, from Afghanistan increased in 2001, marking a continuation of the trend

in 2000. In addition, drug dealers have reportedly established storage and trans-shipment points in Kyrgyzstan along the trafficking route leading from Afghanistan to the Russian Federation, as evidenced by the seizure in June 2001 of large amounts of opium hidden in farms in Osh, Kyrgyzstan.

479. As in recent years, while a significant portion of the opiates produced in West Asia is destined for illicit markets in Europe and, to a lesser degree, Africa, East Asia and South Asia, a considerable amount of those opiates remains in West Asia. In some countries in West Asia, drug addiction is one of the main social problems and drug-related crime is the main reason for being arrested.

480. In the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, the relative shortage of opium and opium residue until September 2001 had a large impact on the illicit market for opium. The proportion of drug abusers who are heroin abusers continued to increase, since heroin was more readily available than opium, though the purity of heroin declined. The number of drug-related deaths in the Islamic Republic of Iran was higher in 2001 than in previous years. In both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, drug abuse by injection is still not the most widespread method of administration, though it is becoming more common. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, 70 per cent of HIV-infected patients are reported to be heroin addicts.

481. Data on the extent of drug abuse in Central Asia are limited; however, there are clear indications of a serious increase in the number of drug abusers. In recent years, the most serious drug abuse trend in Central Asia has been the rapid increase in drug abuse by injection, which has contributed to the spreading of HIV infection. In Uzbekistan, the number of injecting drug abusers has doubled over the last three years. In Tajikistan, the number of persons abusing opiates is rapidly growing. In Turkmenistan, health authorities are alarmed by the increasing levels of drug abuse, particularly among women and young people. While 80 per cent of addicts in that country abuse opium, heroin has recently become easier to obtain.

482. A parallel market for pharmaceutical preparations, obtained through overprescription, under-the-counter sales in pharmacies or diversions from licit channels, is reported to exist in some countries in West Asia, in particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and countries in the eastern Mediterranean

area. The Board urges all the countries concerned to take the steps necessary to comply with the provisions of the international drug control treaties and to prevent the diversion of such drugs from licit trade into illicit channels.

483. The extent of cocaine abuse and trafficking in West Asia remains insignificant. However, numerous seizures of small quantities of cocaine were made in countries in the eastern Mediterranean area (in Lebanon and Turkey). In Israel, cocaine appears to be readily available on the illicit market, although that has not been reflected in the seizures effected in recent years.

Psychotropic substances

484. Stimulants continue to be smuggled and abused in West Asia, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean area and on the Arab peninsula. In 2000, there were significant seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) in Israel and Turkey. Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey continue to report seizures of stimulants illicitly manufactured in southern and eastern Europe under the brand name Captagon. The precise composition of most of those stimulants has not been made known by the authorities. The majority of the stimulants seized continue to be destined for countries on the Arab peninsula, although data on the actual extent of abuse of such products in those countries remain scarce.

485. In many countries in West Asia, the abuse of benzodiazepines is widespread, indicating that controls over the licit distribution of such products are weak. The abuse of benzodiazepines in tablet form is assumed to be particularly common among women in countries in the eastern Mediterranean area, where opiate abuse is reported to be less common. In Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, benzodiazepines are often abused in conjunction with opium and heroin and they continue to be added to heroin as adulterants.

486. The abuse of LSD continues to be reported in Israel.

Missions

487. In March 2001, the Board sent a mission to Jordan. The Board notes with satisfaction that the activities planned in the national plan for combating drugs and psychotropic substances for the period

1999-2001 are beginning to be implemented. The Board trusts that the activities will enhance the coordination among all the government authorities concerned.

488. Considering the extent of the desert areas in Jordan, the length of its borders and its increasing trade through the recently established free port of Aqaba, the Board encourages the Government to join efforts with Governments of its neighbouring countries and strengthen the interdiction capacity of national institutions in order to improve border surveillance. The Board noted with appreciation that the Government of Jordan is drafting provisions for the control of precursor chemicals. The Board welcomes the decision of the Government to adopt more comprehensive legislation against money-laundering as part of the ongoing process of amending relevant laws and regulations in the country.

489. While drug abuse does not seem to be, at present, a serious problem in Jordan, the Board welcomes the initiatives taken by the Jordanian authorities on the treatment and prevention of drug abuse, including the establishment of a national centre for the rehabilitation of addicts.

490. In April 2001, the Board sent a mission to Pakistan. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government of Pakistan has attached great importance to tackling the problems of drug abuse and illicit trafficking and has been fully committed to the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country. As a result, the opium-harvesting areas in the Dir district were effectively cleared of illicit opium poppy cultivation in 2000. The Board encourages the Government to continue its law enforcement and alternative development efforts in order to prevent a resurgence of illicit opium poppy cultivation.

491. The Board notes that drug abuse continues to be a serious problem in Pakistan. The Board welcomes the efforts of the Government in reassessing the situation using a rapid situation assessment undertaken in 2000. The Board appreciates that the Government is reviewing the findings of the assessment and trusts that the results will soon be made available. Health and regulatory aspects have to be incorporated into a well-coordinated approach to reducing illicit drug demand, and all parts of the Government, as well as non-governmental organizations should contribute to that effort.

492. The Board continues to be concerned that control of licit activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is inadequate in Pakistan, particularly with respect to the distribution and sale of psychotropic substances at the provincial level. The lack of control and monitoring mechanisms has contributed, to a large extent, to the abuse of psychotropic substances in the country. The Board requests the Government to identify loopholes in the control system and take measures to improve monitoring at the retail level.

493. A mission of the Board visited the Syrian Arab Republic in June 2001. The Government has taken the steps necessary to give effect to the provisions of the international drug control treaties in national law. However, in view of the high consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for licit purposes, the Board encourages the Government to continue monitoring the situation, in order to detect irregularities such as overprescription or possible abuse. The Board also encourages the Government to further strengthen its precursor control system, since it appears that countries in West Asia are being used for the diversion of chemicals.

494. A large amount of synthetic drugs, mostly packaged as Captagon tablets, are seized each year in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Board encourages the Government, together with the Governments of other countries in West Asia, to establish an effective information network in order to address the issue of trafficking in synthetic drugs.

495. Money-laundering has not become an issue in the Syrian Arab Republic since the banking sector is State-controlled. However, with the impending liberalization of the banking sector and the financial sector, the country may well become a target for money-laundering. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government has approved a law on bank secrecy and has begun developing mechanisms to prevent possible fraudulent use of the financial system. The Board encourages the Government to establish an effective framework and procedures for the prevention of money-laundering.