

health authorities, so that the Government of Peru may fulfil its national and international responsibilities with regard to drug control, improve the quality of its reporting to the Board and offer better health care to its population.

381. The Board notes with appreciation that drug abuse prevention programmes carried out by the Ministry of Education of Peru are well structured. The Board expects that assistance will be provided to ensure their continuity and expansion to rural areas. Peru requires increased international assistance to ensure the sustainability of alternative development efforts and to combat drug trafficking and related crime.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

382. In East and South-East Asia, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation continued to decline in 2003. As in the previous year, a reduction in illicit opium production was seen in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. As a result of the Government's continued efforts, in Myanmar, the world's second largest producer of illicit opium and heroin after Afghanistan, opium poppy cultivation has declined by almost two thirds since 1996. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is the third largest producer of illicit opium in the world. Due to the Government's successful opium elimination programme, the total area under illicit opium cultivation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic has decreased by about 55 per cent since its peak in 1998. In Thailand and Viet Nam, the level of opium poppy cultivation has remained insignificant.

383. The illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants remains a major concern in East and South-East Asia. Judging from the demand for treatment, amphetamine-type stimulants, especially methamphetamine, have continued to be the main drug abuse problem in East and South-East Asia in recent years. The manufacture continues to take place mainly in China and Myanmar, and trafficking routes have developed considerably, reaching illicit markets in almost all countries in the region. There was

a significant decline in seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants in 2002 in China and Myanmar, where significant quantities used to be seized. In Thailand, more than 8 tons of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in both 2001 and 2002. In Japan, seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants reached their peak in 1999, when approximately 2 tons were seized; however, such seizures have been declining since then, approximately 442 kg having been seized in 2002. The Board notes the dismantling of significant clandestine laboratories in the Philippines, where, in 2003, more than 4,000 kg of ephedrine were seized in only two laboratories. There appears to be a partial shift from ephedrine to 1-phenyl-2-propanone for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine and the Board wishes to alert all Governments to monitor orders of phenylacetic acid, an immediate precursor of 1-phenyl-2-propanone. Increases in trafficking in and abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) have been noted in South-East Asia.

384. Countries in South-East Asia continue to have a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection as a result of injecting drug abuse and the sharing of injection needles.

Treaty adherence

385. Of the 16 States in East and South-East Asia, 12 are parties to all three of the international drug control treaties. The Board notes that Cambodia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste have not yet become parties to any of the treaties. The Board, however, commends Cambodia on having completed the preparations for its ratification of the three international drug control treaties and calls on Cambodia to ratify those treaties as soon as possible. The Board also notes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in the process of reviewing its national legislation with a view to becoming a party to the international drug control treaties.

386. The Board welcomes the accession of Mongolia to the 1988 Convention in June 2003 and the accession of Myanmar to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention in August 2003.

387. The Board is concerned that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has not yet acceded to the 1988 Convention. The Board calls on that State to become a party to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention without further delay.

Regional cooperation

388. The Board commends the sustained cooperation of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) with China. Under the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Plan of Action, ASEAN member States and China have been meeting regularly to exchange experiences and to adopt and coordinate specific drug control measures. The six signatories to the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control between the countries in the Mekong area (Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) reconfirmed in September 2003 their agreement to strengthen subregional cooperation across borders in addressing the growing problems of the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and HIV transmission among injecting drug abusers in the subregion. Drug control authorities from China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand agreed to establish a network among their ports along the Mekong in order to reinforce their national campaigns against drug traffickers. In July 2003, ministers responsible for drug control from China, Cambodia, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand agreed to intensify their cooperation for effective control of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Malaysia has launched a joint police initiative with Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Thailand to combat drug trafficking.

389. The Board welcomes the continued bilateral efforts to combat illicit drug production and trafficking. In May 2003, the border liaison offices of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand pledged to strengthen cross-border law enforcement, particularly along the Mekong. Among the countries in the subregion, China and Thailand provided technical and financial assistance to alternative development initiatives in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. Cambodia and the Russian Federation signed an agreement to share information on drug-related transnational crime; the agreement provided for visits of experts.

390. The Board notes with satisfaction that such joint efforts are resulting in significant seizures of illicit drugs. The police in China and Myanmar joined forces

to dismantle a major drug and arms manufacturing plant in Myanmar in April 2003. Law enforcement agencies from China and the United States worked together to dismantle one of the world's largest heroin trafficking networks based in Fujian Province of China. Australian and Malaysian police dismantled a trafficking network smuggling MDMA (Ecstasy), mainly out of the Netherlands and into Australia.

391. The Board notes that cooperation in East Asia needs to be further developed in order to prevent, in particular, methamphetamine trafficking and to facilitate the investigation of drug seizure cases, and the existing good cooperation in the field of law enforcement must be extended to other areas of drug control.

National legislation, policy and action

392. The Board notes that the Drug Addict Rehabilitation Act was adopted in March 2003 by Thailand, introducing by law a compulsory treatment and rehabilitation programme.

393. In the Philippines, a revision of the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 was signed in March 2003; the Board encourages the Government to implement the new legislation as soon as possible. Indonesia and Myanmar, together with the Philippines, have been on the list of countries and territories that the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering considers uncooperative in efforts to counter money-laundering. The Board underlines the importance for each country to implement appropriate legislation against money-laundering in order to enhance the fight against drug trafficking.

394. A bill on the administration of narcotic drugs was adopted by the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in August 2003 and the Government has requested legal assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on appropriate implementation.

395. Thailand carried out an intensive campaign from February to April 2003 to address the problem of illicit drug trade. The Board notes that, while the Government states that the campaign was successful in curbing the drug problem, its unintended side effects have been widely criticized. The Board has requested the Government to be informed of the results of the campaign, which, it is hoped, would be sustainable.

396. As part of the follow-up to its previous Five-Year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy, Japan adopted, in July 2003, a new five-year strategy with a view to targeting issues such as drug abuse among young persons, increasing penalties for drug abusers, strengthening international cooperation to combat illicit crop cultivation and providing treatment and rehabilitation for drug addicts and support for their families. At a meeting held in Amoy, China, in August 2003, Chinese government agencies involved in drug and customs control agreed to launch a five-year drug control programme covering the period 2003-2007 that included a national crackdown on the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in drugs.

397. Most countries in East and South-East Asia launch, on a regular basis, campaigns against the abuse of drugs, especially methamphetamine and heroin, among schoolchildren and youth in urban areas.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

398. The Philippines has reported a significant reduction in cannabis cultivation, attributing the success to its ongoing illicit crop eradication campaign. Cannabis also continues to be cultivated in and smuggled out of Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. Information from customs authorities suggest that Indonesia and Thailand are also sources of cannabis resin.

399. In all of the countries in East and South-East Asia except Cambodia, the Philippines and Viet Nam, cannabis appears not to be the main drug of abuse, although it continues to be widely abused in many of the countries in the region. Cannabis abuse has been declining in countries such as Malaysia and Thailand, where abusers of cannabis have shifted to other drugs, mainly methamphetamine and other stimulants. Cannabis abuse remains limited in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

400. The two major opium poppy producers in East and South-East Asia recorded further reductions in the total area under opium poppy cultivation. In Myanmar, the total area under opium poppy cultivation was reduced by 24 per cent, to 62,200 hectares in 2003, compared with 81,400 hectares in 2002. A significant decline in the total area under opium poppy cultivation

was also recorded in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Under the opium elimination programme launched by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, pursuant to the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex), the total area under opium poppy cultivation declined by 15 per cent, to 12,000 hectares in 2003, compared with 14,100 hectares in 2002. The negotiation of voluntary and agreed eradication campaigns in low-income production areas appears to be leading to more sustainable results and is socially and economically more appropriate than forced eradication. In Thailand and Viet Nam, the other two countries where illicit opium poppy cultivation occurs, levels have remained insignificant.

401. Opium continues to be abused in countries where illicit opium poppy cultivation takes place, but the number of opium abusers appears to be decreasing. Many opium addicts have turned to heroin, and there are now serious heroin abuse problems in those countries. The abuse of drugs, primarily heroin, by injection has been a major factor contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in South-East Asian countries and in China. The number of registered addicts in China is increasing, though heroin remains the drug of choice. Heroin also continued to be the main drug of abuse in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China.

402. There is very little cocaine trafficking and abuse in East and South-East Asia.

Psychotropic substances

403. Methamphetamine continues to be mainly manufactured in China, Myanmar and, to a lesser extent, in the Philippines. The Board notes that both the number and quantities of seizures of methamphetamine in East and South-East Asia have declined since 2001.

404. Over two thirds of global seizures of methamphetamine take place in East and South-East Asia. The largest seizures of methamphetamine were reported in China, Myanmar and Thailand. Over the past few years, half of all methamphetamine seizures in the region have taken place in China. Illicit manufacture of methamphetamine is taking place mainly in China and Myanmar, but more recently also in the Philippines. Most of the clandestine laboratories were

detected by the Chinese authorities in the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. Of the 19 laboratories dismantled in the Philippines since 1996, 4 were detected in 2002 and 8 were detected in the first nine months of 2003. Precursors for methamphetamine continue to be smuggled into Myanmar and the Philippines out of China and India.

405. Over the past few years the abuse of methamphetamine has increased in most parts of East and South-East Asia. Methamphetamine is the most widely abused drug in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. The methamphetamine problem in Thailand has increased significantly during the past few years, the widespread abuse of that substance having been reported among school-aged children. A recent survey in Cambodia suggests an increase in the abuse of amphetamines among homeless children. While Japan continues to seize, on a regular basis, large amounts of such stimulants, overall annual seizures have been declining since 1999.

406. There has been a rise in the abuse of certain other amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly MDMA (Ecstasy). MDMA (Ecstasy) manufactured in Western Europe continues to be trafficked in East and South-East Asia, while there are indications that the substance has also been manufactured in the region itself. Seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) in the region were reported mainly by China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Japan. In Thailand, phentermine and a number of benzodiazepines continue to be diverted at the wholesale and retail levels and, to some extent, are smuggled into other countries in the region.

407. The illicit trade in precursor chemicals continues to be a major concern in the region. Traffickers are using increasingly diverse means to smuggle precursor chemicals for the manufacture of heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants. As a result of action taken by the Government of China to detect and prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals, a total of 119 cases involving illegal transactions and the smuggling of precursor chemicals were uncovered and over 300 tons of precursor chemicals were seized in that country in 2002.

Missions

408. The Board sent a mission to Cambodia in April 2003. The Board acknowledges the progress made by

the Government following its mission to that country in 1997, particularly in developing and updating the national drug control legislation, strengthening the national drug control administration and moving towards the ratification of the three international drug control treaties.

409. The Board, however, notes that the 1997 drug control law as amended is still in draft form, awaiting adoption by the National Assembly. The Board urges the Government of Cambodia to take concrete steps to ensure that amendments to that law and the various decrees for the implementation of the law are adopted as soon as possible.

410. The Board is concerned that the abuse of a variety of drugs, particularly methamphetamine and heroin, has increased rapidly in Cambodia within the past few years, mainly among the young members of the population. The increase in injecting drug abuse may contribute to the spread of HIV infection and, therefore, must be addressed in conjunction with the HIV prevention programme.

411. The Government of Cambodia should develop a national drug control master plan, comprising all aspects of drug control, including the strengthening of the judicial sector, in order to address more effectively major drug-related crimes, and the strengthening of the health sector, in order to address the smuggling of psychotropic substances. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government is considering enacting a bill against corruption, so as to ensure more adequate functioning of the judicial and law enforcement system in combating drug trafficking.

412. A mission of the Board visited the Lao People's Democratic Republic in March 2003. The Board notes with appreciation the consistent efforts of the Government to address the situation of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the country. The opium elimination programme has led to a significant decline in illicit opium poppy cultivation since 1998. The Board urges the Government to take the measures necessary to ensure that the decline continues to be sustained, thus achieving its goal of complete elimination of such cultivation.

413. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has enhanced its national drug legislation, with a view to increasing its capacity to combat drug-related crime, in particular drug trafficking. As a result

of enhanced law enforcement measures in some neighbouring countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been increasingly targeted by drug traffickers, which has also led to increased drug abuse. In addition to the large number of opium addicts in the country, the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants has become a growing problem.

414. The Board encourages the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to develop the national drug control master plan so that it can be adopted. The national demand reduction strategy and the opium elimination strategy already adopted in 2000 constitute important components of the master plan and will have to be complemented by a new law enforcement strategy that is being developed. The Government should consider establishing a monitoring system in order to determine new trends and define counter-measures at the earliest possible stage. The Board hopes that the international community will enhance its assistance to ensure further progress in opium elimination and ensure the sustainability of the achievements made so far.

415. The Board sent a mission to Viet Nam in March 2003 to review the drug control situation in Viet Nam and the progress made by the Government following its mission to that country in 1997. The Government has made significant progress in drug control in recent years, in particular in the strengthening of the national drug control legislation and drug control institutions, the implementation of the national drug control master plan and the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation. The Board welcomes the steps taken by the Government to implement the Law on Narcotic Drugs Prevention and Suppression and urges the Government to finalize all the decrees as planned for implementation by the respective government ministries.

416. In view of the fact that Viet Nam is increasingly being used as a transit country for illicit drug trafficking and is a potential target for money-laundering, the Government should take measures to exercise control over financial institutions and enact a law against money-laundering. The growing availability of illicit drugs, in particular heroin and increasingly amphetamine-type stimulants, has led to a significant increase in illicit drug demand in the country over the past few years, especially among urban youth. Since there is a close link between the needle-sharing practice of drug abusers and the

transmission of HIV/AIDS, the Board wishes to underline the necessity to undertake urgent measures to reduce the health and social consequences of that type of drug abuse.

417. The Board welcomes the preparation of the National Action Plan for Strengthening Precursor Control and expects that the Action Plan will soon be adopted by the Government of Viet Nam.

South Asia

Major developments

418. South Asian countries continue to be used by drug traffickers as transit countries because of their proximity to the world's most prolific opiate production areas in South-East Asia and South-West Asia. Cannabis continues to be illicitly cultivated in the region. India is a major licit manufacturer of precursor chemicals. Despite significant controls in South Asia, substances are diverted for use in illicit drug manufacture, both within and outside the region.

419. South Asia is facing increasing abuse of pharmaceutical products containing controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. There is also a significant shift towards drug abuse by injection. Heroin, buprenorphine, dextropropoxyphene, diazepam, morphine, pentazocine and pethidine are the commonly injected drugs.

420. Drug trafficking routes have not changed significantly. Heroin from Afghanistan or Pakistan enters India, mostly for transit, from the north-west; and heroin from Myanmar passes through the north-eastern states of India and Bangladesh. Considering the recent bumper crops of opium poppy in Afghanistan, Indian authorities fear a sharp increase in the smuggling of narcotic drugs.

421. Governments of countries in South Asia assume that drug trafficking is one of the major sources of funds for terrorist groups. Terrorism along national borders is considered a serious issue, as insurgent groups are relying on trafficking in narcotic drugs as a prime source of finances used to procure arms.

Treaty adherence

422. 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. Despite recurrent appeals by the Board, 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. The Board reiterates its appeal to Bhutan and Nepal to become parties to those conventions without further delay.

Regional cooperation

423. Bangladesh has signed a bilateral agreement with Myanmar for combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as precursors. India has concluded two additional bilateral agreements on combating trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and 17 bilateral agreements or memorandums of understanding are at different levels of negotiation.

424. India holds regular cross-border meetings with Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A joint working group is discussing drug-related issues with Bangladesh, which has also maintained cooperation with India through drug liaison officers in New Delhi. India has hosted international, regional and bilateral exchange programmes under the aegis of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan has continued extensive training programmes for the prevention of drug abuse and the rehabilitation of drug abusers.

National legislation, policy and action

425. In Bangladesh, provisions on money-laundering offences, as well as all precursor chemicals listed in the 1988 Convention, have been taken into account in the revision of the Narcotics Control Act, 1990. Rules relating to licensing of companies dealing with precursor chemicals have been adopted.

426. In India, a comprehensive bill against money-laundering has been passed by both houses of Parliament and is awaiting presidential assent.

427. In Nepal, legislative action on mutual legal assistance and witness protection was stalled in 2002. The Board notes that legislation on precursor control has been drafted and urges the Government of Nepal to adopt such legislation without delay. In addition, no

action has been taken in Nepal to amend current provisions under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1982, which are not adequate to deal with money-laundering and to promote the investigation of drug proceeds. Sri Lanka has not yet finalized its new comprehensive drug control legislation, which would enable that State to implement fully the provisions of the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention. The import and distribution of psychotropic substances, therefore, continue to take place in Sri Lanka without adequate control. The Board urges the Governments of Nepal and Sri Lanka to ensure that legislative action is taken as quickly as possible so that they may fully comply with the international drug control treaties.

428. The Narcotics Control Bureau of India has been transferred from the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue, to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Internal Security, to ensure better coordination with intelligence agencies. The Board hopes that reforms will also contribute to improved coordination between the Narcotics Commissioner of India, responsible for control of licitly manufactured drugs, and the Narcotics Control Bureau.

429. The Government of Bhutan is considering the establishment of a board consisting of all responsible agencies in order to better coordinate drug control. The Government of Nepal has taken measures to strengthen customs and border control along that country's borders with China and India.

430. In India, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is in the process of drafting a national policy and study for drug demand reduction to address the spread of drug abuse. Sri Lanka maintains a strong nationwide demand reduction programme, including a national public education campaign and the provision of training in prevention techniques.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

431. Cannabis is illicitly cultivated in all countries in South Asia except Maldives. In Bangladesh, scattered but increasing illicit cannabis cultivation has been reported in the Hill Tract area and the north and north-western parts of the country; cannabis eradication campaigns have been carried out, although not in a systematic manner. Cannabis continues to be smuggled

out of India and Nepal. While most of the cannabis herb smuggled into Bangladesh is destined for illicit markets in that country, cannabis resin originating in India and Pakistan is transiting Bangladesh on its way to Europe.

432. The north-west of India has emerged as a significant source of cannabis resin. Cannabis resin from Nepal is also smuggled into India by land in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, from where it proceeds to Delhi and Mumbai.

433. Cannabis grows wild in the high hills of the central, mid-western and far western parts of Nepal, where illicit crop eradication is expensive due to the difficult terrain. In the southern part of Nepal, cannabis cultivation has increased; most of the cannabis grown there is destined for the illicit market in India. Law enforcement agencies in Nepal have been carrying out eradication campaigns and have intercepted consignments of locally produced cannabis resin en route to India, the larger consignments weighing as much as several hundred kilograms. The abuse of both locally grown and wild cannabis remains widespread.

434. Cannabis illicitly cultivated in Sri Lanka is predominantly destined for illicit markets in the country. Most of the illicit cannabis cultivation occurs in hard-to-reach areas in the south-eastern part of the island, adjacent to former areas of conflict. Cannabis eradication campaigns are regularly carried out by law enforcement authorities.

435. India is a traditional producer of opium for medical and scientific purposes; the opium poppy is grown in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh under a stringent licensing policy controlled by the Central Bureau of Narcotics. The use of satellite surveys was initiated in 2001; that practice was refined in 2002 in an effort to monitor licit opium poppy cultivation, in order to ensure that the allotted areas were not being exceeded, as well as to detect possible illicit opium poppy cultivation within the country.

436. Although an elaborate system of regulatory and preventive controls has been established, in India, diversion of opium to illicit channels still occurs. In recent years, Indian authorities have been increasingly seizing, particularly in large urban centres, locally manufactured white heroin intended to be shipped through Sri Lanka to Europe.

437. In India, the bulk of the illicit opium poppy cultivation is confined to the most remote north-eastern states. The production of opium, not only to be abused locally but also for sale to heroin manufacturers across the border with Myanmar, appears to be rising. The Government of India is carrying out eradication campaigns and has initiated a special project to explore income-substitution and alternative development programmes aimed at the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation.

438. Illicit laboratories throughout India continue to manufacture low-quality brown heroin base known as "brown sugar". Most of the illicitly cultivated opium poppy in India is destined for local abusers, but "brown sugar" heroin from India is available in neighbouring countries.

439. Most of the heroin originating in Afghanistan and smuggled through the border between India and Pakistan is in transit, passing through the southern states of India and destined for Europe. Significant heroin seizures in the southern part of India, in particular in Tamil Nadu, confirm that heroin from India continues to be smuggled into Sri Lanka by sea.

440. In Bangladesh, a large number of abusers of phensedyl (codeine-based cough syrup) are changing to heroin because of the high price of phensedyl and the increased availability of heroin in the country. Most of the heroin abused in Bangladesh reportedly originated in India. The illicit cultivation of small amounts of opium poppy was detected in the Hill Tract area of Bangladesh, adjacent to that country's border with Myanmar. Eradication efforts by the military resulted in a sharp decrease in illicit opium poppy cultivation in Bangladesh.

441. In Nepal, the smuggling and abuse of heroin from South-West Asia and South-East Asia are on the rise. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy occurs on a small scale, but it is increasing. It is difficult to detect illicit crops since they are interspersed among licit crops.

442. Sri Lanka continues to be used as a transit point for shipments of heroin from Asia bound for Europe and other parts of the world. The percentage of injecting drug abusers has remained low. Significant increases in street prices for brown heroin resulted in peddlers resorting to the use of adulterants and diluents such as caffeine, diazepam, sucrose, lactose and paracetamol. Opium abuse has become insignificant.

443. In most countries in South Asia, licitly manufactured narcotic drugs are diverted to the illicit markets. The abuse of cough syrup, smuggled out of India, has been reported in Bangladesh and Nepal.

444. India, a large manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, has stringent laws to control their manufacture and distribution. However, improvements are needed in the monitoring of compliance with the law, particularly with regard to prescription requirements. Codeine-based cough syrups, such as phensedyl, are sold without medical prescription and their sales, according to surveys of pharmacists, are among the highest compared with other pharmaceuticals.

445. In countries in South Asia, cases of cocaine abuse are rarely encountered; in most cases the cocaine is abused by members of the more affluent segments of society.

Psychotropic substances

446. India manufactures a wide range of precursor chemicals, including acetic anhydride and ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. All manufacturers, traders and users of such chemicals are required to maintain records and comply with other control measures under the Narcotics Control and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, in line with requirements of the international drug control conventions.

447. Despite those strict controls and periodically conducted training programmes on precursor control for law enforcement officials, diversion of such precursors from licit channels occurs in India. In a recent joint action, drug law enforcement agencies in China, India and the United States arrested a total of 37 traffickers as they were to embark on a large-scale trafficking operation involving amphetamine-type stimulants. For the first time, law enforcement agencies in India foiled an attempt to set up a laboratory for illicit methamphetamine manufacture. The Board requests the Government of India to maintain its vigilance, since this case might indicate a new trend in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in India, one of the world's largest licit manufacturers of precursors for such stimulants.

448. In India, which is a major manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, lack of uniformity among states in monitoring compliance with the law concerning domestic distribution contributes to the increasing

abuse of psychotropic substances. Pharmaceuticals containing psychotropic substances are easily obtainable, even without prescriptions, as chemists, poorly informed about the abuse liability of the drugs, believe that commonly prescribed substances such as some of the benzodiazepines are generally harmless and therefore dispense them without prescription.

449. The most commonly abused benzodiazepines are alprazolam, diazepam and nitrazepam. These benzodiazepines are also abused in conjunction with heroin to enhance its effects. A substantial percentage of patients admitted to addiction treatment centres had previously abused psychotropic substances by injection. Bangladesh and Nepal have also reported the abuse of diverted diazepam and nitrazepam, mainly of Indian origin. Benzodiazepines are also abused in Sri Lanka, where they are diverted from retail trade.

450. While the Board notes the continuous efforts of the Indian authorities to maintain effective control over international trade in psychotropic substances, it urges the Government of India to enforce laws more effectively at the retail level in order to prevent illicit sales of psychotropic substances. Efforts should focus on building the awareness of and educating pharmacists, as well as the general public, about the abuse liability of psychotropic substances.

451. In India, controls over licit distribution of buprenorphine have been strengthened considerably over the last few years. Despite the fact that buprenorphine is not easily available because of the requirement of a triplicate prescription, the diversion of buprenorphine still occurs, as evidenced by the availability of the substance on illicit markets in India and the smuggling of the substance into neighbouring countries. Indian authorities should investigate and address the reasons.

452. The smuggling of methaqualone of Indian origin into Southern and Eastern Africa continues. In 2002, seizures of methaqualone in India totalled more than 11 tons, the highest level since the mid-1990s. The main chemicals used for the manufacture of methaqualone are controlled in India. However, traffickers may still have obtained those chemicals or are using substitute chemicals for such illicit manufacture. Indian authorities are urged to investigate those developments, which are most disturbing considering that the illicit manufacture of

methaqualone had almost ceased at the end of the 1990s.

453. Methaqualone from India is smuggled into Nepal to be abused in that country or trans-shipped to other countries. Methaqualone is also available in powder form in local markets in Nepal, where it is sold under the fake name "Brown Sugar".

454. Trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants are growing concerns for Indian authorities. While precursors for amphetamine-type stimulants are smuggled out of India and into Myanmar, where significant illicit manufacture of such stimulants occurs, amphetamines from Myanmar are smuggled, though in small quantities, into India.

Missions

455. A mission of the Board visited India in May 2003. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government is committed to combat illicit drug activities and commends it for having introduced changes in the drug control legislation to better combat drug trafficking. Licit production and processing of opiates in India is well regulated and the Government continues to tighten controls to make diversion of licitly produced opium more difficult. India is the main exporter of licitly produced opium in the world and the Government cooperates well with the Board in ensuring a lasting balance between the supply of and demand for opium worldwide. Law enforcement successes have been achieved by identifying and eradicating illicit cultivation of opium poppy and in dismantling international and national syndicates trafficking in heroin and diverting precursors. Similar success is needed in identifying and dismantling trafficking rings involving cannabis and methaqualone.

456. In India, control over precursors is well implemented, as is the control over imports and exports of controlled substances. However, controls over the licit manufacture of, trade in and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in India have been found to be inadequate, as evidenced by the Government's incomplete reporting to the Board and the diversion of pharmaceutical products manufactured in India. The Board urges the Government to take the necessary steps to monitor the domestic distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to identify and sanction persons or enterprises facilitating the diversion of drugs. In this connection the Board

recommends that the Government streamline the administrative structure for drug control at the national level.

457. The Board commends the Government of India for investigating the extent and patterns of drug abuse and for improving treatment services for drug addicts, despite the limited resources available. The Board trusts that the Government will continue to expand its demand reduction activities and to extend those activities to other segments of the population.

West Asia

Major developments

458. Despite the armed intervention and political change in Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism, illicit cultivation of and trafficking in opiates has expanded, resulting in more political instability. The Board is of the opinion that, unless the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan, with the full support of the international community (which is indispensable), makes progress in drug control efforts, any successes in the construction of that nation in the areas of peace and development and in other areas, including the fight against terrorism, will not be sustainable. The fight against drugs has to be among the highest priorities of the Transitional Authority.

459. Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan continued on an even larger scale in 2003, after having reached a low level in 2001 due to the ban on such cultivation issued by the Taliban. The extent to which the laudable drug control plans and initiatives of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan will be implemented country-wide remains a major concern. Drug crop cultivation has also resumed in Pakistan, mainly in non-traditional poppy-growing areas.

460. In 2003, seizures of opiates, mainly heroin and morphine, increased throughout West Asia. Particularly large increases were noted in Central Asia. The purity level of heroin also appears to have increased. Facilities within Afghanistan for processing opium into other opiates continue to exist. Precursor chemicals used in manufacturing processes continue to flow into the region along the same routes used for smuggling opiates but in the opposite direction.

461. The drug problem remains a major challenge for most countries in West Asia, undermining the social and economic stability of some countries and jeopardizing peace and security in the region as a whole. Corruption linked to drug trafficking also remains a serious problem throughout the region. The Board is pleased to note that many national and regional cooperation activities focusing on law enforcement and border control have been carried out in countries in the region as part of efforts to combat drug trafficking. As emphasized by the Board in the past, addressing the drug problem must remain high on the agenda of regional security consultations.

462. In a number of countries in West Asia, initiatives were taken to assess the extent of drug abuse and establish demand reduction activities. Some of those assessments revealed worrying levels of drug abuse and an increase in drug abuse by injection. The main drugs of abuse remain cannabis and opiates. In addition, amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular MDMA (Ecstasy), have become increasingly available in the region. Finally, the abuse of other psychotropic substances, including benzodiazepines, appears to be at a relatively high level in some countries in the region, especially among women.

Treaty adherence

463. The Board notes with satisfaction that all of the 24 States in West Asia are parties to the 1961 Convention, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention. Afghanistan remains the only State in the region that has not become party to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention. The Board encourages the authorities of Afghanistan to take appropriate action to accede to the 1972 Protocol.

Regional cooperation

464. The Board notes with appreciation the continued commitment to drug control of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).⁴⁹ Initiatives have begun for an operational mandate on drug control and related security issues within the ECO secretariat, to enhance drug control cooperation among the ECO member States.

465. The Board welcomes the fact that during 2003 Afghanistan participated in a number of meetings and other activities at the regional level, such as the fourth meeting of drug liaison officers, hosted by the Islamic

Republic of Iran, in March 2003, and the Intergovernmental Technical Committee meetings, a forum for the exchange of drug law enforcement information in the region.

466. The Third Anti-Narcotics Regional Training Exercise was held in Tehran in December 2002. The participating police and customs officers were from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia (except Turkmenistan). During 2003, several countries continued to cooperate within the framework of memorandums of understanding by exchanging information and participating in joint political and technical meetings on drug control issues. At the Conference on Drug Routes from Central Asia to Europe, held in Paris in May 2003, possible ways for strengthening cooperation in stemming the illicit production of and trade in heroin and opium from Afghanistan to Central Asia were discussed (see para. 517 below).

467. The Board welcomes the regional initiatives on demand reduction in Central Asia. Representatives from all Central Asian countries met in Tashkent in February 2003 to discuss the establishment of a Central Asian drug epidemiology network. In June 2003, national focal points and other key experts from the region met in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, for the diversification of HIV prevention and drug treatment services for injecting drug abusers.

468. A seminar on measures of national and international control over the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in August 2003. At the seminar, which was organized jointly by the Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the competent authorities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan discussed the current drug control situation in their countries and the possible harmonization of control measures and joint action in the future. The Board regrets that the authorities of Turkmenistan did not participate in the seminar.

469. Other meetings dealing with issues of terrorism, organized crime and money-laundering in West Asia, held within or outside the region, also served to strengthen drug control cooperation.

470. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) continues to serve as a national and regional training centre for law enforcement. Training is also provided to law enforcement officers from Afghanistan. The Board welcomes the regional focus of TADOC, which, in addition to training activities, facilitates regional cooperation.

471. The Board notes with satisfaction that regional and subregional cooperation, especially in the field of drug law enforcement, is well developed in West Asia. Steps have been taken to integrate Afghanistan in regional law enforcement activities. A number of cooperative activities continue to be carried out between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also cooperated, for example, with Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan on the exchange of specialized law enforcement expertise. In addition, numerous joint law enforcement operations continue to be carried out by countries in Central Asia. The system for exchanging intelligence and other information among law enforcement agencies in the region and beyond is mostly working well. The Board encourages all countries in the region to cooperate and strengthen further collaboration and information exchange with all other countries. The Board in particular urges Turkmenistan to strengthen its regional cooperation efforts and to join the international community in the fight against drugs. The Board further encourages all countries in the region to cooperate in the field of drug demand reduction, in particular regarding exchange of information and expertise.

National legislation, policy and action

472. The Board notes the adoption of a new law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Armenia in December 2002. In Georgia, a new law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, precursors and narcological aid was also adopted in December 2002.

473. In the field of drug law enforcement, the Board acknowledges the challenging situation for countries in West Asia and appreciates the active role that Governments have played in that field.

474. While, in Afghanistan, for the time being, the United Kingdom maintains the lead coordination role for counter-narcotics, Germany for police reform, Italy for judicial matters and the United States for the security sector, the Board understands that the

Transitional Authority of Afghanistan will take over as soon as possible the overall coordination and monitoring role on drug control matters. The establishment of a Counter-Narcotics Directorate to coordinate all government actions and of a Counter-Narcotics Unit within the Ministry of the Interior are positive steps in that direction.

475. The National Security Council of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, prepared a national drug control strategy that was endorsed by the President in May 2003. The strategy serves as a framework for the implementation of drug control activities and addresses all areas, including institution-building, legal and judicial reform, drug law enforcement, alternative livelihoods, demand reduction and monitoring and assessment. The Counter-Narcotics Unit, with its investigation and intelligence functions, is being expanded to cover the various provinces as well. Capacity is being built to enable the monitoring of illicit crop cultivation and carrying out of an annual survey. It is anticipated that more responsibilities currently being undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will be taken over by the Afghan authorities in future.

476. As a first step to put in place the necessary legal framework, a new Afghan drug control law was adopted in 2003. The key issue will be to ensure its effective implementation. Training of legal authorities is scheduled, especially in areas outside Kabul. The Board emphasizes that further development of the legal framework, as well as a strong commitment to its implementation by the Afghan authorities throughout the country, is of the utmost importance for drug control in Afghanistan.

477. The Board noted with great concern that in Afghanistan the political will and commitment to drug control expressed by the government authorities of the Transitional Administration is not being fully followed throughout the country, due to lack of nationwide control and insufficient support by or even opposition from provincial authorities. Furthermore, it appears that short-term interventions, especially in the area of elimination of opium poppy cultivation, are not sufficiently complemented by long-term, sustainable development strategies.

478. In Pakistan, the preparation of a new drug control master plan is being planned. A pilot initiative has been

proposed to strengthen maritime export control of containerized cargo from Karachi to prevent heroin and other drugs, including psychotropic substances, from being smuggled into Africa and other regions. The Board urges the Government of Pakistan to devise similar control mechanisms for goods passing through the country towards Afghanistan. It can be suspected that chemicals needed for the illicit manufacture of heroin might pass through the port of Karachi. A ministry for the control of narcotics has been established in Pakistan in order to strengthen overall drug control measures.

479. Initiatives have been undertaken in the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to legislative changes aimed at introducing less severe punishments for minor drug-related offences to facilitate drug abuse treatment. That puts the law enforcement authorities also in a better position to focus on large-scale drug trafficking operations.

480. The Board welcomes the initiatives in drug law enforcement undertaken in Central Asia. Activities in Kyrgyzstan have focused on the establishment of the Drug Control Agency, similar to the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, which has been in existence for a few years. Law enforcement efforts in Tajikistan continue to be aimed at strengthening drug trafficking interdiction along the Tajik-Afghan border. Similar activities have been undertaken by Kazakhstan, which has reinforced controls on its border with the Russian Federation and along its southern border. Initiatives in Uzbekistan focused on improving the sharing of information between national drug law enforcement bodies, strengthening law enforcement capacities and reinforcing interdiction at the most vulnerable border points with Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The Board notes with satisfaction that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are participating in Operation Topaz.

481. In the area of drug abuse and demand reduction, the Board notes that information about the nature and extent of drug abuse in most countries in West Asia remains fragmented and that activities in demand reduction appear to receive less priority than those in supply reduction. The Board, however, welcomes a number of important initiatives in that area.

482. Drug abuse assessment studies have been carried out in several countries in West Asia. National surveys have been undertaken in Pakistan and Turkey. In

Afghanistan, an assessment has been carried out on the prevalence of drug abuse in Kabul, in addition to earlier studies which focused on specific drug problems or at-risk groups such as refugees. Data on identifying the extent and specific problems of drug abuse have also been collected in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furthermore, rapid situation assessment studies, focusing on limited target groups and/or specific subject areas, were conducted in Jordan and Lebanon and demand reduction activities were initiated aiming at prevention of drug abuse and drug-related HIV/AIDS infection. In Pakistan, demand reduction activities have been integrated into a process of decentralizing drug abuse control to the district level. District drug abuse prevention committees have been established in eight target districts.

483. Demand reduction activities in Afghanistan were aimed at the provision of drug prevention training to a wide range of organizations, as well as the establishment of detoxification and treatment services for drug addicts in Kabul. Efforts have also been increased in the Islamic Republic of Iran to expand treatment and rehabilitation and to provide assistance for drug abusers and their families. A national strategic plan against HIV/AIDS is addressing the concerns over the high prevalence of injecting drug abuse among persons infected with HIV/AIDS. A five-year programme was launched in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan aimed at reducing drug demand by treating drug addiction and raising public awareness. Draft action programmes on HIV prevention and the establishment of drug treatment services for injecting drug abusers have been prepared in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

484. TADOC has assumed the role of focal point for Turkey, when joining the European information exchange network of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

485. The Board strongly encourages all countries in West Asia to strengthen their efforts to develop drug abuse assessment systems and to expand demand reduction activities.

486. In tackling money-laundering, various international activities in West Asia have been initiated and linked to the fight against terrorism and organized crime. A seminar was held in Bahrain on combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, promoting international "best practices" and stressing

the country's commitment to maintain an effective regime against money-laundering and terrorist financing. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a national conference on combating money-laundering was held in Tehran in May 2003 and a new bill against money-laundering is expected to be approved by the parliament.

487. Israel has launched new activities against money-laundering, focusing, inter alia, on the installation of a computerized system linking various relevant institutions. In Pakistan, new legislation against money-laundering is under review. Amendments proposed to the Anti-Terrorism Act should help to cut off financial supply lines that may be used for channelling illicit funds. In a move to curb illegal money transactions, Saudi Arabia has taken measures to ensure the authenticity of licensed firms and the legitimacy of all financial transfers. The United Arab Emirates has made progress in regulating the system of informal overseas money transfers known as *hawala*. Yemen endorsed a new law against money-laundering in April 2003, which should help in fighting corruption and restrict funding sources for terrorists.

488. The Board notes that in Georgia the law on the prevention of legalization of illicit income adopted in June 2003 will come into force on 1 January 2004. Since 2002, when its name was removed from the list of countries and territories considered by the Financial Action Task Force Against Money Laundering to be uncooperative in efforts to counter money-laundering, Lebanon has intensified its campaign against suspects and criminal activities. A report issued in March 2003 indicated that banking secrecy was lifted in 79 out of 138 pending cases. The Board expects that Lebanon is now in a position to withdraw its reservation on the provisions against money-laundering in the 1988 Convention.

489. The Board draws the attention of countries in West Asia to the specific risks of and their vulnerability to money-laundering in the region and urges those Governments which have not yet done so to develop appropriate legislative measures and ensure their implementation.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

490. Cannabis continues to be the most widely grown and abused drug in West Asia. Illicit cannabis cultivation takes place in several countries in the region. Cannabis also continues to grow wild in countries in the region, including in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. Some cannabis cultivation was destroyed in Tajikistan and, in connection with that action, a few cases of opium poppy cultivation were discovered. Cannabis continues to be widely abused in the region and smuggled in large quantities, mainly in the form of cannabis resin, out of South-West Asia and into Europe. In Lebanon, illicit cultivation of both cannabis and opium poppy has re-emerged in the Bekaa valley in recent years. The recurrence of illicit crop cultivation in that area is linked to its economically deprived status. The Government of Lebanon has carried out regular eradication campaigns.

491. The Board notes with great concern that in Afghanistan the cultivation of opium poppy, which had re-emerged on a large scale in 2002, has further spread in 2003, amounting to 80,000 hectares. Opium poppy has been cultivated in the traditional growing areas and its cultivation has also spread to several new districts. Opium poppy cultivation has been found in 28 out of 32 provinces. Farmers tend to grow opium poppy increasingly in remote and inaccessible areas. Production of opium increased to 3,600 tons, compared with 3,400 tons in 2002. This overall increase occurred despite significant reductions, due to eradication, in some traditional cultivation areas such as Helmand and Kandahar. Increases in opium production were noticeable mainly in the province of Badakhshan, where no eradication campaign took place.

492. Farm-gate prices for opium, an important indicator used to assess the incentive for farmers to grow opium, decreased during 2003. Following the relatively high price levels in 2002, prices for opium in Afghanistan started to decline in January 2003 and have been falling since then.

493. The Board notes with great concern the resurgence of opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan in 2003, after it was reduced to almost nil during the late 1990s through intensive eradication programmes. By then, opium poppy had been eradicated from the last

traditional poppy-growing areas of the Dir and other districts. However, in 2003, a total of 6,700 hectares of poppy cultivation, mostly in non-traditional poppy-growing areas, was reported, of which more than 60 per cent has been eradicated.

494. Manufacture of heroin in West Asia continues on a large scale, primarily in Afghanistan, although hardly any laboratories have been detected in Afghanistan in recent years. Only Turkey regularly reports the confiscation of clandestine heroin laboratories. In recent years, no such laboratories have been reported to have been detected in Pakistan or countries in Central Asia.

495. Opiates from Afghanistan continue to be smuggled on a large scale into other countries in West Asia, destined for Europe and other regions, as well as for abuse in West Asia. The so-called Balkan route (through the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and Balkan countries) as well as, increasingly, more recent alternative routes through Central Asia and the Russian Federation, continue to be used. Pakistan and countries on the Arabian peninsula are also affected by transit trafficking. The Board notes with concern that links between drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism have allegedly become more prominent in recent years.

496. Seizures of opiates increased considerably in 2003 in many countries in West Asia. It appears that such seizures are made in Afghanistan but not in the significant quantities recorded in its neighbouring countries. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, seizures of opiates have increased again after declines were recorded in 2001 and 2002. Tajikistan noted a huge increase in heroin seizures in 2003, along with a significant increase in the purity of that drug. Other countries in the region, including Pakistan, Turkey and several member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), recorded increased seizures of opiates in 2003.

497. Although drug trafficking has not yet been reported as a serious problem in Iraq, given its geographical location and current political and economic instability, the Board is concerned about a possible increase in drug trafficking to and through that country.

498. Drug abuse assessment studies, which have been carried out in several countries in West Asia, revealed

some alarming trends. In Pakistan, the findings from the national survey, published at the end of 2002, indicated high rates of drug abuse, not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Cannabis-type drugs (mainly cannabis resin and "charas"), followed by heroin, psychotropic substances and alcohol, were the substances most commonly abused. Additionally, drug abuse by injection was found to be very high, and there was a shift from inhaling and smoking drugs to injecting drugs. In June 2003, for the first time, an increase in HIV cases was reported among injecting drug abusers in Pakistan.

499. So far limited drug abuse assessments in Afghanistan have revealed that the substance most commonly abused is cannabis resin, followed by pharmaceutical drugs, opium, heroin and alcohol. One major concern is the reported rate of drug injection. In Turkey, the prevalence of drug abuse is estimated to be relatively low but increasing. In particular, increasing trends have been noted in adolescents seeking treatment for drug-related problems. The three main substances showing a steady increase are opioids (mainly heroin), cannabis and inhalants. Another alarming trend has been the increase in injecting drug abuse. Rising drug abuse, including drug abuse by injection and the spread of HIV, was also noted in countries in Central Asia. The subregion has a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection related to injecting drug abuse.

500. The Board continues to be concerned about the high level of drug abuse in West Asia. The increasing trend with regard to injecting drug abuse is particularly worrying.

Psychotropic substances

501. Trafficking in and abuse of illicitly manufactured stimulants (often reported as Captagon) continue to be of concern in the eastern Mediterranean area and on the Arabian peninsula. Eastern Europe continues to be the main source of such drugs, but the clandestine manufacture of such drugs has also been detected in Turkey. Several countries in West Asia continue to make seizures of Captagon.

502. Rising trends in West Asia have also been noted in the abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy). In Turkey, seizures of Ecstasy, mainly originating from Western Europe, have increased considerably in 2003. Increasing abuse of Ecstasy, Captagon and inhalants has been noted among young people in Turkey. Israel made several

large Ecstasy seizures in 2002. The availability of Ecstasy may have also increased in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as prices of that drug dropped significantly in early 2003. Other amphetamine-type stimulants originating in South-East Asia seem to have also become available. In several countries in West Asia, the abuse of benzodiazepines appears to be widespread and particularly high among women. Oman reported having seized relatively large quantities of sedatives and tranquillizers in 2002.

Missions

503. A mission of the Board visited the Islamic Republic of Iran in September 2003. The territory of that country continues to be used by drug traffickers as a main conduit for illicit drugs originating in Afghanistan. The majority of the opiates illegally brought into the Islamic Republic of Iran are smuggled out of the country, to be processed and trafficked in Europe and the Middle East. The authorities estimate that about 2 million persons abuse drugs and that the number is increasing. The Government is particularly concerned about a group of 120,000-130,000 addicts, who inject heroin. Drug abuse and the illicit drug traffic create significant economic and social problems for the country.

504. The Board appreciates the continuous strong commitment of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the fight against illicit drug trafficking and acknowledges the significant costs of that struggle borne by the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the high number of losses suffered by the Iranian law enforcement authorities. The Board welcomes the active cooperation of the Government with the other countries in the region and encourages the authorities to further strengthen their cooperation with and support to the authorities in Afghanistan.

505. The Board appreciates that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran recently started to increase its demand reduction efforts. The Board recommends to the Government to carry out continuous studies to allow for the realistic assessment of the extent of drug abuse, including the abuse of pharmaceutical products containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Government could significantly strengthen its treatment capacities by using, for example, the existing primary health-care establishments for drug treatment.

The Board requests the authorities to ensure adequate control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances used in substitution treatment which the Government plans to develop. The Board urges the Government to improve monitoring of private institutions providing treatment of addiction.

506. The Board appreciates the intention of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to modify some penalties foreseen by the national anti-drug legislation to make them more adequate to the respective offences. The Board requests the Government to urgently enact and implement the legislation concerning money-laundering and control of precursor chemicals. The Board trusts that the Government will strengthen its control system over licit activities related to drugs and chemicals and cooperate more closely with other Governments and the Board.

507. In June 2003, the Board sent a mission to Turkey to review developments regarding drug control issues and in particular to assess that country's position as a traditional licit supplier of opiate raw materials. The Board notes with satisfaction that Turkey has made considerable efforts to improve its position as a competitive supplier of opiate raw materials on the world market, while ensuring the implementation of sufficient control measures and achieving a balance between supply and demand.

508. In addition, the Board appreciates the commitment of the Government of Turkey in combating drug trafficking and notes with satisfaction the comprehensive set of measures that have been implemented. In particular, the Board welcomes the activities undertaken by TADOC, which focuses on drug law enforcement training and promotes national and regional cooperation.

509. In the area of drug demand reduction, the Board welcomes the initiatives undertaken in Turkey with regard to establishing epidemiological data collection and improving the health-care system aimed at prevention and treatment. In that context, the Board strongly encourages the Government of Turkey to strengthen efforts in drug demand reduction and ensure the sustainability of the activities initiated in this field.

D. Europe

Major developments

510. Cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug in Europe and is increasingly being cultivated and trafficked in the region. The Board is concerned about the widespread experimental and recreational abuse of cannabis among young people in Europe, particularly in Western Europe, as revealed in several epidemiological studies. A trend towards promoting the drug, through the media, and the significant expansion of drug abuse, particularly in recreational settings, have resulted in the abuse of cannabis being perceived as less risky than it really is, especially among young people.

511. The cocaine market in Europe continues to be one of the world's biggest, second only to that of North America. The volume of cocaine seizures in Europe has constantly increased over the past few years. The abuse of all forms of cocaine, including crack cocaine, has also steadily increased in several countries in Western Europe; however, the abuse of crack cocaine appears to be confined to metropolitan areas of some Western European countries.

512. Heroin abuse has been spreading in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, replacing the abuse of locally produced opiates in most of those countries. As a result of two years of bumper crops of opium poppy in Afghanistan, it is expected that heroin trafficking along the Balkan route and in Central Europe will increase and stocks, which were drastically depleted during the years of reduced opium poppy cultivation, will be replenished. This may also lead to the reversal of the declining trends in the abuse of heroin and the number of heroin-related deaths in Western Europe, in spite of efforts to treat and rehabilitate drug abusers. Law enforcement authorities continue to play an important role in reducing the availability of illicit drugs, while health authorities have focused on drug abuse prevention. The spread of HIV infection among injecting drug abusers remains alarmingly high in the Baltic States, as well as in the Russian Federation and Ukraine; the Board urges those States to increase their efforts aimed at reducing illicit drug demand.

513. Europe remains a major producer of synthetic drugs. The Netherlands continues to be the source of the vast majority of MDMA seized worldwide. The Government of the Netherlands has been implementing measures targeting the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in MDMA and other synthetic drugs; that has resulted in a significant increase in MDMA seizures. As synthetic drugs cannot be manufactured without chemicals, the Board calls on the Governments of all European countries, as well as the European Commission, to strengthen the control of precursors and increase their cooperation with other countries in preventing the shipment of the required chemicals.

514. Ambiguity towards drug abuse is common in countries in Western Europe. Drug abuse prevention campaigns call on young people to refrain from drug abuse; in practice, however, authorities do not take measures against incitement of drug abuse, and drug abuse may even be promoted through certain media or other channels. Drug abuse prevention strategies should therefore take into greater consideration the fact that drug abuse is often, directly or indirectly, willingly or unwittingly, encouraged in the environment of young people and should be aimed at the improvement of critical skills so that young people may learn to take a stand against drug abuse.

Treaty adherence

515. Since the last report of the Board was published, Albania has become a party to the 1971 Convention. Of the 44 States in Europe, 43 are parties to the 1961 Convention, 43 are parties to the 1971 Convention and 41 States and the European Community are parties to the 1988 Convention.

516. Andorra is the only country in Europe that is not a party to the 1961 Convention or to the 1971 Convention.

517. The Board regrets that the Holy See, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have not become parties to the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

518. At the Conference on Drug Routes from Central Asia to Europe, organized by the Government of France in Paris in May 2003, ministers of foreign affairs from 55 countries seriously affected by the traffic in opium and heroin produced in Afghanistan