

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

354. In South-East Asia illicit opium poppy production continued to decline. In 2004, illicit opium poppy cultivation was significantly reduced in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. The average yield of illicit opium production was also reduced. Thailand is no longer a major source of illicit opium and heroin. Some small-scale opium poppy cultivation took place in the remote and mountainous areas in the northern part of Thailand. There was no opium production reported in Viet Nam.

355. The illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially methamphetamine, remain a major concern in East and South-East Asia. Large quantities of crystallized methamphetamine were seized in Japan, Myanmar and the Philippines. Thailand also reported large seizures of methamphetamine, mainly in the form of tablets. The majority of countries in the region reported a significant increase in seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) in 2003.

356. In several countries in East and South-East Asia, namely Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, the abuse of opiates appears to have shifted away from opium and towards heroin. In Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, data on admissions to drug abuse treatment centres show that heroin is the primary reason that drug abusers are receiving treatment. Heroin is also the main drug used by injecting drug abusers, raising concern about HIV/AIDS transmission in many countries in the region.

357. Injecting drug abusers who share syringes continue to account for the largest percentage of new HIV/AIDS cases in China and Viet Nam. The rate for sharing syringes has been reported to be as high as 50 per cent in parts of Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand. The Board notes with satisfaction that Governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations have shown a sustained commitment to addressing the issue. The XV International AIDS Conference was held in Bangkok from 11 to 16 July 2004. The theme of the

Conference was access to education, information and medication for all infected and affected groups. The Board encourages the relevant countries to continue to strengthen their efforts to deal with the double epidemic of injecting drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Treaty adherence

358. In East and South-East Asia, Cambodia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have not yet become parties to any of the international drug control treaties. The Board calls on those States to ratify the treaties without further delay. The Board also encourages Timor-Leste to ratify the treaties as soon as possible.

359. The Board welcomes the accession of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the 1988 Convention in October 2004. The Board calls on that State to become a party to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention without further delay.

Regional cooperation

360. The Board notes that a number of regional meetings on precursor control have recently been held in Thailand. The first Senior Officials Meeting and first Ministerial Meeting of Pentalateral Cooperation on Drug Control among China, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand were held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, in July 2003, and the Second Senior Officials Meeting of Pentalateral Cooperation on Drug Control among China, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand was held in Pattaya, Thailand, in April 2004.

361. The Board welcomes the continued cooperation of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China under the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Plan of Action. In January 2004, a memorandum of understanding was signed by ASEAN and China to develop practical strategies for combating transnational crime, including drug trafficking, terrorism and money-laundering. Under the memorandum of understanding, the States agreed to exchange information, conduct personnel exchange and training, cooperate in the field of law enforcement and conduct joint research. They also agreed to hold an annual meeting to review the implementation of the memorandum of understanding and discuss future plans. At the first ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN plus

China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, held in Bangkok on 19 January 2004, views were exchanged on joint efforts to tackle regional political and security issues such as terrorism, which has been associated with other forms of transnational crime such as drug trafficking and money-laundering.

362. The Board notes that the annual meeting of senior officials of the signatories of 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) was held in Krabi, Thailand, from 17 to 19 May 2004. The meeting agreed to continue strengthening regional cooperation and establishing institutional links in order to share innovative approaches and best practices in the areas of community-based alternative development and the elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation. The meeting also endorsed stronger measures to deal with the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and HIV vulnerability in custodial and community settings, as well as judicial and prosecutorial capacity-building. The Board commends the signatory States of the memorandum of understanding for contributing financially to the project "Support for MOU partnership in East Asia".

363. The Board commends the various bilateral efforts in East and South-East Asia to combat illicit drug production and trafficking.

National legislation, policy and action

364. In April 2004, China launched a five-month campaign against drug trafficking, focusing mainly on Yunnan Province, from where it is suspected that most of the drugs from the Golden Triangle are smuggled into the country. Over the past three years, seizures in Yunnan Province of heroin reportedly originating in Myanmar have accounted for 80 per cent of all seizures of heroin in China. A total of 8,000 kg of heroin was seized in Yunnan Province in 2003. Following the success of its first five-year drug elimination plan, covering the period 1999-2004 Myanmar has launched a second five-year drug elimination plan, covering the period 2004-2009. The Board notes the progress made in Myanmar thus far and encourages the Government to continue its efforts.

365. The Board notes with concern that Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines remain on the list of countries and territories considered by FATF to be "non-cooperative" in efforts to counter money-laundering or having critical deficiencies in their systems for countering money-laundering. However, the Board notes the progress made in those countries in addressing weaknesses in their systems and encourages them to continue their efforts. The Board reiterates that it is important for each country to implement relevant legislation to prevent money-laundering as an integral part of the fight against drug trafficking.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

366. Cannabis continued to be cultivated throughout East and South-East Asia. Most countries and areas in the region, namely the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar and the Republic of Korea, reported a large decrease in seizures of cannabis in 2003 compared with the previous year. However, a significant increase in such seizures was reported by a few countries, including Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Malaysia.

367. Cannabis continues to be abused in many countries in East and South-East Asia, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

368. As in the previous year, a significant reduction in illicit opium poppy production was seen in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in 2004. As a result of continued government efforts to eliminate opium poppy production in the Lao People's Democratic Republic the total area under such cultivation in the country declined by a further 45 per cent, from 12,000 hectares in 2003 to 6,600 hectares in 2004. In Myanmar, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation was reduced by 28 per cent, from 62,200 hectares in 2003 to 44,200 hectares in 2004. Compared with the previous year, total production of raw opium in 2004 was reduced by approximately 64 per cent in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and by 54 per cent in Myanmar.

369. Seizures of opium were reported in several countries in East and South-East Asia, including Japan,

the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam. In 2003, seven clandestine heroin laboratories were dismantled in Myanmar and three were dismantled in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China.

370. Opiates are the most often abused drugs in East and South-East Asia. The highest prevalence of abuse of opiates has been reported in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea reported increased abuse of opium in 2003. In the same year, 70 per cent of registered drug addicts in China were registered for heroin abuse. Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam have reported increased abuse of heroin.

371. Increased cocaine abuse has been reported in a few countries in East and South-East Asia; in the region as a whole, however, cocaine trafficking and abuse continue to be limited.

Psychotropic substances

372. A significant amount of amphetamine-type stimulants appears to be illicitly manufactured in the border areas of Myanmar; the chemicals required to manufacture those synthetic drugs are being smuggled into Myanmar from its neighbouring countries. The Board encourages the Governments concerned to continue their close cross-border cooperation and strengthened control on precursors in those areas.

373. Most of the countries in East and South-East Asia, including China, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, reported a significant increase in the total amount of amphetamine-type stimulants seized in 2003, compared with 2002. In 2003, 11 clandestine laboratories used to manufacture amphetamine-type stimulants were dismantled in the Philippines and 6 were dismantled in Indonesia. Although a total of 490 kg of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in Japan in 2003, a figure slightly higher than in the previous year, when 446 kg were seized, seizures of such stimulants have generally been declining in that country since 1999.

374. Asia accounts for over two thirds of the world's amphetamine abusers, and East and South-East Asia accounts for approximately 95 per cent of the

amphetamine abusers in Asia. In East and South-East Asia, only opiates are abused more than amphetamine-type stimulants. The highest prevalence of abuse of such stimulants was reported in Thailand, followed by the Philippines and the Macao Special Administrative Region of China. In 2003, Viet Nam reported a large increase in the total amount of amphetamine-type stimulants seized and in the abuse of such stimulants.

375. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is emerging as an important transit country for traffickers of amphetamine-type stimulants illicitly manufactured in the border areas of Myanmar and destined for Thailand. Cambodia is also increasingly being used as a transit country by traffickers of drugs illicitly manufactured in East and South-East Asia.

376. Methamphetamine continues to be illicitly manufactured in China, Myanmar and, to a lesser extent, the Philippines.

377. Nearly 90 per cent of all methamphetamine seizures in the world take place in East and South-East Asia. In 2002, a total of 13,760 kg of methamphetamine were seized in the region. China seized 5,830 kg of crystallized methamphetamine in 2003, considerably more than in 2002, when 3,190 kg of that substance were seized. In February 2004, police in Japan seized a large amount of crystallized methamphetamine that had been smuggled out of Taiwan Province of China. While methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in Myanmar is mostly in tablet form, one clandestine laboratory manufacturing crystallized methamphetamine was also dismantled in that country in 2003.

378. Several countries in East and South-East Asia appear to be major sources of 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone and safrole, two precursors used in the illicit manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy).

379. A significant increase in the total amount of MDMA (Ecstasy) seized was reported in the majority of countries and areas in East and South-East Asia in 2003, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. One clandestine MDMA (Ecstasy) laboratory was reported to have been dismantled in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China in 2003.

380. While the prevalence of abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) has remained relatively low compared with that of methamphetamine, increased abuse of MDMA

(Ecstasy) has been reported in several countries in East and South-East Asia, namely Cambodia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam.

381. The abuse of ketamine, especially among youth, which is a recent phenomenon in East and South-East Asia, has remained low. Its abuse has been reported in a few countries and areas in the region, namely Cambodia, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

382. Authorities in South-East Asia have made notable progress in addressing the trafficking in ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the region, where the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine is of major concern. More importantly, analysis of seizure data indicates that Governments are now working in a coordinated manner to seek practical solutions to the common problem of chemical diversion. Successes have been noted in South-East Asia, where, during the past few years, illicit methamphetamine manufacture in Myanmar has been fuelled by ephedrine diverted from domestic distribution channels in China and subsequently smuggled into Myanmar. In addition to the control mechanisms that China has in place to prevent diversions from domestic distribution channels, regional efforts have helped the Governments concerned to identify practical working mechanisms for preventing cross-border trafficking in precursors. The Board trusts that those Governments will continue with their working-level tripartite meetings and that further successes will be reported in those regions.

383. A decrease in the total amount of precursors seized in 2003 was reported in most countries in East and South-East Asia, including China and Myanmar; the exception was the Philippines, which reported a major increase in the amount of precursors seized. The precursor of amphetamine-type stimulants most often seized in the region continued to be ephedrine, followed by phenylacetic acid. In 2003, 300 kg of ephedrine were seized in Myanmar. In China, the amount of ephedrine seized has been increasing over the past few years; that trend continued in 2003, when 5,800 kg of ephedrine were seized in that country. In 2004, 5,650 kg of ephedrine and 1,500 kg of pseudoephedrine were seized in three clandestine laboratories in the Philippines. In April 2004, over 400,000 tablets of pseudoephedrine, another precursor

of amphetamine-type stimulants, were seized in Australia; the tablets had been transported from Malaysia. In response to more effective controls over ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, traffickers are attempting to divert other chemicals for use in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, with phenylacetic acid and 1-phenyl-2-propanone being the chemicals of choice. The Board therefore notes with satisfaction that Governments of countries in South-East Asia have introduced appropriate control mechanisms for those substances and, as a result, have identified attempts to divert phenylacetic acid from China to India, as well as attempts to divert 1-phenyl-2-propanone from China, via the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, to Viet Nam in 2004.

Missions

384. A mission of the Board visited Indonesia in March 2004. The Board notes with appreciation the commitment of the Government of Indonesia to tackling drug abuse and trafficking and welcomes the special measures taken by the authorities to strengthen the current legal framework for the control of precursors. The Board trusts that taking the adequate legislative and administrative measures will enable the authorities to better comply with the provisions of the 1988 Convention.

385. However, the Board notes that the continued lack of reporting by Indonesia on issues related to the seizure of illicit drugs may be the result of a lack of coordination between the National Narcotics Board and the National Agency for Food and Drug Control of Indonesia. The Board is of the opinion that the Government should initiate, as soon as possible, consultations among relevant departments involved in drug control activities, in particular the National Narcotics Board and the National Agency for Food and Drug Control, with a view to introducing the necessary revisions in the current working mechanisms, clearly defining the respective functions and establishing and/or reinforcing the necessary links between those departments. The Board believes that, by doing so, the Government will ensure that in future, internal coordination will be improved, its reports to the Board will be as complete as possible and that all the necessary information will be included.

386. While drug abuse and trafficking have increased in Indonesia, the Government has taken significant

measures to reinforce facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers; the Board appreciates, in particular, the considerable efforts being made by the Indonesian authorities to combat the alarming incidence of HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users.

387. Finally, the Board notes that the Government of Indonesia is taking measures to comply with international money-laundering standards. The Board welcomes the establishment of the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre. The Board encourages the Government to provide the Centre with the resources necessary for it to achieve the expected results.

388. The Board sent a mission to Thailand in May 2004, mainly to assess the efforts of the Government during the “war on drugs”, an ongoing nationwide campaign against drug trafficking and abuse. In particular, the Board had noted reports that killings had taken place during the “war on drugs” and it wished to gather comprehensive information regarding the campaign and the measures and action that had subsequently been taken. The mission received detailed information from the Government regarding special committees established to investigate those cases and was informed that certain cases had already been the subject of judicial procedures. In addition, the mission was informed that criminal proceedings had been initiated against a significant number of government officials accused of corruption. The Board appreciates those efforts and trusts that the Government will continue to provide information to it regarding the progress of those investigations.

389. The Board was also informed that, subsequent to the “war on drugs”, the problem of methamphetamine abuse had been reduced. The Board received detailed information on the treatment of drug addicts in Thailand. The Board notes the efforts of the Government and urges it to undertake sustainable measures to address the drug abuse problem in Thailand.

390. The Board also received information from the Government of Thailand regarding the growing problem of ketamine abuse in the country. The Board shares the concern of the Government regarding that development; the Board notes that increasing ketamine abuse can be observed elsewhere, both within and outside the region of East and South-East Asia. The Board encourages the international community to give

serious consideration to initiating the procedure, outlined in the 1971 Convention, for placing ketamine under international control.

391. In March 2004, the Board made a technical visit to Timor-Leste, which is not yet a party to any of the three international drug control treaties. The objective of the technical visit was to introduce the Board and its work in promoting the implementation of the international drug control treaties and to obtain information on the drug control situation in Timor-Leste, assessing existing mechanisms and structures for the prevention of drug trafficking.

392. The Board is concerned that the geographical situation of Timor-Leste and the insufficient protection of its borders and coasts could lead to it being regarded by drug traffickers as an ideal transit country. The authorities have acknowledged that drug abuse and trafficking exist in Timor-Leste but on a very low scale. While the current situation in Timor-Leste with regard to drug trafficking and abuse may not be comparable to that of its neighbouring countries, little else is known about that situation; therefore, the Board encourages the authorities of Timor-Leste to consider initiating a national survey to evaluate the extent of drug abuse and trafficking and to consider preventive action.

393. The Board notes with satisfaction that the authorities of Timor-Leste are initiating the drafting of comprehensive legislation for the control of medical supplies, including narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and encourages the authorities to draft such regulations in accordance with the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

394. Finally, the Board notes the efforts of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) in providing assistance to core administrative structures and assist in the development of various services in Timor-Leste.

South Asia

Major developments

395. South Asia continues to experience increased drug availability and abuse because of its proximity to the major opiate production areas, the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle, widespread domestic

cultivation of cannabis and increasing diversion of pharmaceutical products.

396. The flow of heroin from Afghanistan, the world's largest illicit opium producer and heroin manufacturer, towards South Asian countries continues to increase. One concern of Indian law enforcement officials has been the recent discovery of areas under illicit opium poppy cultivation in the south of India, close to the heroin trafficking routes leading to Maldives, Sri Lanka and countries in West Asia. Licitly manufactured but diverted pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are smuggled out of India and into Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Maritime drug trafficking routes leading from India to Sri Lanka and from Pakistan to India have been partially replaced by air and land routes.

397. The Board notes that India carried out its first national survey on the extent, patterns and trends of drug abuse. In the survey, the high rate of abuse of opiates and, in particular, the increasing popularity of injecting drug use were identified as major areas of concern. The survey also revealed an increase in the abuse of various pharmaceutical products, ranging from codeine-based cough syrups to anxiolytics in tablet form and injectable analgesics.

398. HIV infection associated with injecting drug use is increasing as a result of a shift from opium abuse to heroin abuse, most notably in India and Nepal, and the increasing abuse of injectable analgesics such as buprenorphine and propoxyphene. Indian authorities have noted with concern the re-emergence of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methaqualone and, quite recently, limited abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy).

Treaty adherence

399. All six States in South Asia are parties to the 1988 Convention. Bhutan is not yet a party to the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention, and Nepal is not yet a party to the 1971 Convention. The Board urges both of those States to take speedy action to remedy the situation.

Regional cooperation

400. The "Roadmap for Peace" outlined by the Government of India calls for renewed cooperation and dialogue between India and Pakistan on terrorism and

other forms of cross-border crime such as trafficking in narcotic drugs. To that end, the authorities of India and Pakistan have identified focal points for sharing information and operational intelligence on drug trafficking. Senior-level customs officers from India and Sri Lanka have adopted operational-level strategies to combat drug smuggling. As part of activities undertaken within the framework of a bilateral agreement on customs cooperation between India and Maldives, senior-level customs officials from both of those countries held a meeting in Male in May 2004. The officials at the meeting decided to establish contact points for law enforcement activities to prevent various types of crime, including drug smuggling. The customs authorities of India also agreed to assist their counterparts in Maldives in drug law enforcement training.

401. At its twenty-fourth session, held in Islamabad in January 2004, the Council of Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) established high-level working groups, one of which relates to health and population activities, including drug-related matters. In May 2004, a memorandum of understanding between SAARC and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was signed to support South Asian countries in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The Board welcomes the initiative to enable the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk in the regional precursor control project for SAARC member States to play a more active role in the management of information relating to precursor control in South Asia. The Board notes with appreciation the strengthened cooperation between Bhutan and the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, especially in drug prevention activities. A workshop on drug abuse prevention, organized with the support of the Government of Bhutan, recommended the development of policies and programmes aimed at schools, health care, the workplace, the community, law enforcement and other relevant areas.

National legislation, policy and action

402. In Sri Lanka, draft legislation that would allow limited and controlled cultivation of cannabis for use by the estimated 16,000 locally registered Ayurvedic practitioners is currently under discussion. At present, the practitioners use powdered cannabis processed

from seized cannabis and sold to them by the Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation. As the use of powdered cannabis does not conform to traditional methods, the proposed legislation would allow the Commissioner of Ayurveda of the Department of Ayurveda of Sri Lanka to grow cannabis in one central location, after having estimated the quantities required and taking into account the necessary protection and control measures. The Board trusts that, if the draft legislation is adopted, all provisions of the 1961 Convention (including those of articles 23 and 28) will be fully adhered to.

403. The National Assembly of Bhutan is considering the introduction of draft legislation that would include a listing of drugs termed “illicit” and would determine sanctions for the abuse of and trafficking in those drugs. In addition, the Assembly has recommended the identification of a central focal point to coordinate drug control activities.

404. From the reports submitted by India it is clear that control over imports and exports of internationally controlled substances is well implemented. 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 control of domestic distribution channels for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances needs to be strengthened as controlled drugs are easily available in India. The Board calls on the Government of India to step up its law enforcement activities, especially at the retail level, and to carry out education and information campaigns to increase the awareness of pharmacists and the general public regarding the abuse liability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Government’s plan to include information on drug abuse in the school curriculum, in addition to existing awareness-raising programmes conducted by non-governmental organizations on the prevention of drug abuse, is a positive development.

405. In Sri Lanka, a national volunteer project aimed at formulating a long-term action plan for the prevention of substance abuse and the rehabilitation of substance abusers has been set up under the government programme for the control of crime and drug-related offences. Under the project, officials from civil society and the Government will participate in

prevention activities and awareness-raising programmes. The officials include representatives from the police, government departments, schools, health-care institutes (including doctors and nurses), Grama Niladharis (government officials familiar with certain village areas and people), Samurdhi officials (officials responsible for alleviating poverty by promoting prosperity) and religious dignitaries.

406. In Maldives, the first national awareness-raising campaign was launched in April 2004. In addition, teachers and members of clubs are trained in order to provide awareness-raising programmes for students and youths.

407. The Governments of a number of countries in South Asia are paying more attention to the treatment of drug addicts. The national survey carried out in India has revealed that enrolment in drug abuse treatment facilities is low because of the poor quality of the treatment services and the paucity of information on the services available. The Government of India has developed minimum service standards for programmes for the prevention of alcoholism and substance abuse. The standards are to serve as guidelines for improving the quality of services delivered by non-governmental organizations. The Government has also established the National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention and eight regional resource training centres to enhance the technical capabilities of service providers in the area of drug demand reduction.

408. In Nepal, a project office established by the Government implements the sectoral plans for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and other demand reduction activities envisaged in the national master plan for drug abuse control. The Government of Maldives has established a scheme for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts facing trial because of substance abuse.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

409. Cannabis continues to be produced and abused in large quantities in South Asia. Bangladesh and India are important source countries for cannabis herb. Nepal is a major source country for cannabis resin, which is smuggled into countries in Asia and the Pacific and Europe, as well as to the United States. The largest

seizures of cannabis resin from Nepal have been reported in India; cannabis resin in India is sold locally on the illicit market or smuggled into Europe.

410. In India, certain quantities of licitly produced opium continue to be diverted into illicit channels despite intensified law enforcement activities. Most seizures of opium are made within the opium poppy cultivation and opium production areas. The diverted opium is abused locally or processed into heroin in clandestine laboratories, to be sold on illicit markets outside the production areas. The Board is pleased to note that a survey of licit opium poppy cultivation was undertaken jointly by the Governments of India and the United States; the results of the survey are to be used to determine the minimum-qualifying yield, a measure to support the efforts required from the government to eliminate diversion of licitly produced opium.

411. Indian officials have continued to detect and destroy illicitly produced opium, as well as to prosecute those engaged in illicit opium production in northern and north-eastern states.

412. In India, opium is processed into heroin in clandestine laboratories; the laboratories generally produce a low-quality heroin base known as "brown sugar" that is sold locally on the illicit market or smuggled into Maldives and Sri Lanka. The total amount of heroin seized in India has been decreasing since 2001, averaging less than 1 ton per year.

413. The international airports at Mumbai, New Delhi, Trivandrum, Cochin and Chennai continue to be used by trafficking groups to ship heroin to countries in Eastern and Western Africa, West Asia and Europe, as well as to Sri Lanka. However, in recent years there has been a decrease in heroin trafficking along the air route from India to Sri Lanka; the majority of the heroin seizures are now made along the sea route leading from southern India to Sri Lanka. Heroin from Pakistan is smuggled into Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.

414. There is widespread trafficking in pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs in South Asia. In Bangladesh, the number of seizures of codeine-based cough syrups from India is equal to the number of seizures of cannabis herb. An individual seizure often consists of several hundreds of litres of such cough syrup. The abuse of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, such as codeine, remains widespread in

the region. In addition, because of its lower price and easy availability, the abuse of propoxyphene by injection in India is as prevalent as heroin abuse by injection.

415. India's large chemical industry manufactures a wide variety of precursors and essential chemicals, including acetic anhydride and potassium permanganate. In India, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Regulation of Controlled Substances) Order, 1993, provide for stringent controls over notified precursors and essential chemicals. Acetic anhydride as well as methyl ethyl ketone and potassium permanganate, are subject to import-export controls. India also follows a policy of sending pre-export notifications with regard to the export of all the 23 chemicals scheduled in the 1988 Convention.

416. There are 11 manufacturers of acetic anhydride in India with an annual output of 30,000 to 40,000 tons for various industrial and pharmaceutical uses. Acetic anhydride is subject to a special customs regime, according to which its storage and transportation within 100 km of the Indo-Myanmar border and 50 km of the Indo-Pakistan border are subject to special controls. Traffickers have tried alternative methods such as exporting acetic anhydride in misdeclared sea cargo consignments using Dubai as a trans-shipment point. Acetic anhydride has continued to be seized by local law enforcement authorities. The acetic anhydride seized had been intended for use mainly in the illicit manufacture of low-grade heroin in India.

Psychotropic substances

417. Pharmaceutical preparations containing psychotropic substances, notably benzodiazepines and analgesics, are diverted from licit distribution channels, transported through South Asia and smuggled into countries outside the region, such as the Russian Federation and Scandinavian countries. Pharmacies in India are identified as supply sources for such trafficking and for their local abuse. The abuse of analgesics, anxiolytics and sedative hypnotics has increased in the region. Because of the lower price and easy availability of pharmaceutical preparations and needles and syringes, the abuse of buprenorphine in injectable form has increased significantly in India.

418. There are indications of the abuse of and trafficking in MDMA (Ecstasy) in an emerging “rave” culture in New Delhi.

419. India is the world’s largest illicit manufacturer of methaqualone (Mandrax); South Africa is the principal destination of the methaqualone illicitly manufactured in India. Illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methaqualone had become less significant following a series of successful law enforcement operations. Recently, however, the methaqualone problem has re-emerged. Illicit drug manufacturing units are controlled and funded by criminal groups based outside of India.

420. India manufactures a wide variety of precursor chemicals, including ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, *N*-acetylanthranilic acid, ergotomine, methylendioxy-phenyl-2-propanone and phenyl acetone. So far *N*-acetylanthranilic acid, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and anthranilic acid have been placed under special controls under the NDPS Act.

421. Laboratories illicitly manufacturing methaqualone are also used for the illicit manufacture of other psychotropic substances, notably MDMA (Ecstasy) and amphetamines. Small consignments of amphetamine enter India through its border with Myanmar.

422. Almost all ephedrine seized in India is destined to be smuggled across the Indo-Myanmar border to Myanmar, where significant illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants occurs. Arrangements already exist for cooperation between drug law enforcement agencies in India and Myanmar at various levels. The Board encourages these quick exchanges of information, coordinated enforcement action and coordinated joint investigations as an efficient means to curb illicit drug manufacture in the region.

Substances not under international control

423. The abuse of ketamine, an anaesthetic, has been noted in India in the tourist area of Goa. Although ketamine should be sold only with a prescription, it has been bought freely in Goa at pharmacies and, reportedly, in beach bars. Indian authorities have actively tried to curb this illicit trade in Goa by raiding unauthorized suppliers and searching European tourists. The abuse of inhalants by the poorer segments of society and street children is widespread in the region.

West Asia

Major developments

424. Opium production in Afghanistan and its impact on peace and security remain the central elements of the drug situation in West Asia. In Afghanistan itself, illicit drug production and related activities reached an unprecedented level in 2004 and are threatening the stability of the country. In other countries in the region, drug trafficking and abuse are rapidly increasing, undermining social and economic stability. In Central Asia, injecting drug abuse is becoming the main factor contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

425. Despite efforts made by the Government of Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, the drug control situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate in 2004. Widespread cultivation of opium poppy and the processing of and trafficking in opiates have transformed Afghanistan into a country in which the economy, the culture and the political life are dominated by the illicit drug trade, which is threatening reconstruction efforts and undermining legitimate economic activities and the establishment of the rule of law. The Board calls upon the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to continue to accord drug control the highest priority and to strengthen efforts to address the drug problem in a comprehensive manner, within the framework of overall development plans and programmes to establish law and order throughout the country and make alternative development in areas under drug crop cultivation more effective. The Board notes that the President-elect of Afghanistan has expressed his strong commitment to the implementation of drug control measures.

426. In Central Asia, concerns continue to be raised over trafficking in and abuse of Afghan opiates, as well as the illicit movement of acetic anhydride, a chemical used in the manufacture of heroin. It is estimated that one third of Afghanistan’s opium crop in 2004 will pass through countries in the region, in particular Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The large quantities of Afghan heroin being transported towards the Russian Federation and other countries in Europe are rapidly escalating the illicit drug problems in that subregion.

427. Countries on the Arabian peninsula are more frequently used as transit points for heroin and cannabis destined for Europe, while precursors are

smuggled in the opposite direction. The abuse of opiates, especially heroin, is increasing, as is the already widespread abuse of synthetic drugs.

428. The Board is concerned that the drug situation in Iraq may deteriorate further because of the disintegration of the drug control structure in the country, given its geographical location and the current political and economic instability in the country. The complex interlinkage of terrorism, organized crime, corruption and drug trafficking poses an unprecedented threat, raising concerns that the overall situation may worsen.

Treaty adherence

429. All of the 24 States in West Asia are parties to the 1961 Convention, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention. As for the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention, Afghanistan remains the only State that has not yet become a party to that instrument. The Board encourages the authorities of Afghanistan to take appropriate action to accede to the 1972 Protocol.

Regional cooperation

430. During the past year, numerous agreements, cooperative mechanisms and joint law enforcement operations were among the activities undertaken or approved by Governments of countries in West Asia to promote regional cooperation efforts to fight drug trafficking and related criminal activities. The Board welcomes those initiatives and encourages all countries in the region to participate in future cooperative efforts.

431. At the Berlin Conference on Afghanistan, held on 31 March and 1 April 2004, the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan and its six neighbouring countries, namely China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, adopted the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics within the Framework of the Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, which provided, among other things, for increased collaboration in the fight against narcotics and the establishment of a security belt around Afghanistan. In particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan proposed to train Afghan experts in countering trafficking in narcotic drugs.

432. In April 2004, senior law enforcement officers from Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Kuwait, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates at the Regional Gulf Cooperation Meeting held in Pakistan agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the fight against criminal organizations engaged in illicit drug trafficking and cross-border organized crime. The countries decided to nominate national focal points and exchange operational staff with a view to improve the sharing of information and joint operations.

433. In July 2004, representatives of Afghanistan participated for the first time in the Intergovernmental Technical Committee meeting, a forum for the exchange of drug law enforcement information in the region. The meeting, held in Islamabad, was also attended by representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The Committee agreed to revise the existing memorandum of understanding, in order to admit Afghanistan as a regular member of the Intergovernmental Technical Committee meetings and to establish a committee for the analysis of intelligence and the exchange of information on narcotics that would meet every six months.

434. On 3 and 4 August 2004, the Government of Pakistan hosted a seminar in Islamabad for SAARC member States to review progress made towards achieving the goals related to precursor control set in 1988 by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. The participants shared information with regard to legislative developments in precursor control and agreed to facilitate the rapid exchange of information on precursor transactions and monitoring measures (see para. 401 above).

435. Two workshops organized under the auspices of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) to discuss drug supply reduction issues were held in Dushanbe in August 2004 and in Ankara in February 2004. In addition, a network of drug demand reduction experts was established to promote regular exchange of information among ECO member States. Furthermore, at a conference held in Kish, Islamic Republic of Iran, in October 2004, all ECO member States except Turkmenistan exchanged information on the consequences of drug abuse, evidenced-based strategies for the reduction of illicit drug demand and harm reduction practices.

436. Officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan held a meeting in

Antalya, Turkey, from 23 to 25 February 2004 to discuss measures to promote international cooperation against terrorism and transnational organized crime. Participants stressed the need to share information and exchange governmental experts in order to share experiences in the development of legislation and the implementation of activities against terrorism and transnational organized crime.

437. The consultative mechanism known as the Paris Pact,⁴¹ initiated in 2003 for countries affected by trafficking in opiates originating in Afghanistan, held several expert round-table meetings at the regional level in 2003 and 2004 to discuss the situation regarding drug trafficking through Central Asian countries, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Balkan countries. A meeting of the Paris Pact policy group was held in Vienna in October 2004 to discuss the outcome of previous regional meetings. The Board notes that the meeting recommended the establishment of a task force on precursors. The Board wishes to encourage the group to take full advantage of the task forces with similar objectives that are currently operating under Operation Topaz, Operation Purple and Project Prism. Those task forces, whose members include countries participating in the Paris Pact, are functioning well. The Board urges the group to make full use of existing task forces in order to make the best use of resources and avoid duplication of efforts. The Board notes the pivotal role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as catalyst of the Paris Pact initiative and encourages the countries involved in that consultative mechanism to continue their cooperation aimed at the elimination of the threat posed by Afghan opiates.

438. The Board notes with satisfaction that all countries neighbouring Afghanistan, including Turkmenistan, are now participating in Operation Topaz, an international operation to prevent diversions of acetic anhydride. The Board trusts that the Government of Turkmenistan will take vigorous action against drug trafficking through Turkmen territory and will give high priority to participating actively in other international events aimed at promoting regional cooperation in drug and precursor control.

439. Within the framework of the Organization of Central Asian Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Southern Caucasus Anti-Drug

Programme (a joint project of the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Azerbaijan), bilateral and multilateral agreements were adopted by the Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with a view to intensifying cooperation between national drug control agencies, promoting joint law enforcement operations, harmonizing national drug control legislation and building capacities.

440. Central Asian States continue to receive international assistance to combat illicit drug trafficking and abuse. In 2004, international assistance was directed towards local and regional initiatives to strengthen border controls, improving the collection and sharing of data and addressing the health consequences of injecting drug use. One beneficiary of international assistance was the Drug Control Agency of Kyrgyzstan. In another development, the Board notes that cooperation involving the deployment in Tajikistan of border guards from the Russian Federation, which has proved to be a success, will cease in 2005. The Board urges the Governments of countries in the region to work out mutually beneficial arrangements that guarantee effective border control in countries in Central Asia.

441. At a seminar on precursor control organized jointly by the Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Amman from 29 to 31 August 2004, representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates agreed to set up a network for the exchange of information and to promote inter-agency cooperation, in order to prevent the diversion of precursors. It was the first time that representatives of most of the countries on the Arabian peninsula discussed precursor control at the regional level.

442. In June 2004, the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed a regional cooperation agreement aimed at preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. Countries agreed on joint activities, including activities aimed at raising awareness of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

National legislation, policy and action

443. The Board continues to be concerned about the unstable political situation in Afghanistan, which

hampered efforts by the Government to secure power throughout the country. The lack of control, especially at the provincial level, has been a major obstacle to implementing country-wide drug control regulations. The drug control situation in the country has further deteriorated, despite efforts made by the Afghan authorities with the support of the international community. The United Kingdom continues to hold the coordination role for counter-narcotics in Afghanistan, and other donor countries and international organizations have also become involved in providing support in drug control matters. The Board calls upon all parties involved to continue their cooperation and provision of technical and financial support in a well-coordinated manner, in order to establish law and order throughout the country and find sustainable solutions for drug control in Afghanistan. In view of the magnitude of the problem, greater determination is necessary to make a significant impact on efforts targeting illicit crop cultivation and illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse.

444. The Board notes that there have been a number of developments in Afghanistan to improve drug control capacities. Based on the national drug control strategy, which was approved by the Government in 2003, activities have been initiated in the areas of institution-building and advocacy, judicial reform, law enforcement, alternative livelihoods and demand reduction.

445. In continuing efforts at institution-building, the Counter-Narcotics Steering Group, chaired by the National Security Adviser and run by the Counter-Narcotics Directorate, the national drug control coordinating body, was established in May 2004. To implement law enforcement operations, several bodies were created. The Central Eradication Planning Cell and the Central Poppy Eradication Force were established in 2004 within the Ministry of the Interior to plan and launch opium poppy eradication campaigns. Based on targeted and uncompensated eradication, the campaigns were only marginally effective (see para. 455 below). The establishment of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan and the Special Narcotics Force, responsible for conducting interdiction operations, have resulted in the destruction of clandestine laboratories and the seizure of opiates and cannabis resin. Progress has also been made in the development of the judicial system in Afghanistan. To facilitate the implementation of the drug control law

approved in 2003, legal workshops were conducted in May 2004 with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Board. Consultations resulted in the classification of drugs and the establishment of a framework for licit drug control, as well as the definition of penal provisions and procedures. The law does not yet cover money-laundering offences. However, the preparation of new legislation against money-laundering has been initiated.

446. The development of alternative livelihoods in opium-producing areas in Afghanistan continues to lack long-term and sustainable solutions. The Board emphasizes the need to address that situation in a comprehensive manner, with support from the international community, providing alternative development in opium-producing areas and mainstreaming drug control issues into overall development assistance. The implementation of demand reduction activities has been initiated in some provinces and there are plans to expand those activities to include other provinces. Programmes have focused on the provision of resources and training to partner agencies and organizations involved in health care, education and social services. Activities have continued in the area of monitoring opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. The annual opium poppy survey was conducted with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the results have been published, providing data on the extent and location of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and monitoring the expansion of cultivation into new areas. The collection of additional drug-related statistics has also started. Though information remains fragmented, some data have become available on the illicit drug supply, including data on seizures, arrests, prices and the destruction of clandestine drug laboratories, as well as on the illicit drug demand, including data on drug abuse among certain population groups.

447. Pakistan, which has built up a comprehensive law enforcement system in recent years, has continued its narcotics control activities. Legislation against money-laundering, drafted in 2003, has been presented to the relevant authorities for approval. The drug control master plan for the period ending in 2003 is being extended to 2007, providing an operational framework for drug control activities. To counteract the resurgence of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan in 2003, intensive eradication efforts were made in 2004. The

Board notes the commitment by the Government to eradicate opium poppy cultivation and appreciates the activities carried out in the fight against drug trafficking. However, the Board continues to be concerned about the lack of control for prohibited goods entering Pakistan via the port of Karachi and passing through the country towards Afghanistan.

448. Demand reduction activities in Pakistan are the responsibility of the Anti-Narcotics Force, the coordinating body for drug law enforcement. According to government authorities, the success of community-based awareness-raising campaigns and far-reaching drug abuse prevention programmes is reflected in the decreased level of heroin abuse in the country. In addition, 73 drug treatment centres have been set up throughout the country in recent years, many of which are run through a network in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The decentralization of demand reduction activities to the district level is, for the most part, working well. With regard to the collection of data on drug abuse, the Board encourages the Government of Pakistan to ensure the continuation of the monitoring mechanism set up pursuant to the national survey carried out in 2000.

449. The Islamic Republic of Iran remains a major transit country for drugs originating in Afghanistan and continues to be committed to combating the illicit drug transit traffic and drug trafficking in general. It also has increasingly recognized the dangers posed by domestic consumption. In addition to the intensified efforts made in the area of drug law enforcement, demand reduction activities have recently been initiated, including the assessment of drug abuse trends and the establishment of a national institute for drug abuse research and training. Furthermore, on the basis of studies undertaken in recent years, amendments on controlled delivery, mutual judicial cooperation and extradition have been proposed. The list of illicit drugs and other controlled substances has also been reviewed and updated in the draft amendment, taking into account the relevant provisions of the international instruments and the latest available scientific data. In addition, a bill against money-laundering has been prepared and is awaiting final approval. The Board welcomes those initiatives and stresses the need to continue to enhance activities in the field of demand reduction, with particular emphasis on strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations. It is

hoped that comprehensive legislation against money-laundering will be adopted and institutional structures will be established to counter money-laundering effectively.

450. Drug control activities in Turkey focus on combating illicit drug transit traffic and drug trafficking in general. Law enforcement training conducted by the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) continued. TADOC, established in 2000 with the cooperation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has conducted more than 50 training courses related to drug control at the national level and about 20 at the regional level. The findings of a national drug abuse assessment study, carried out in 2003, were published in a report⁴² in 2004 (see para. 486 below).

451. A number of countries in West Asia, including Israel, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have continued their efforts to combat money-laundering. Recent initiatives in this area include the development of a system for monitoring and following up money transactions, the introduction of a regulatory structure for the system of informal overseas money transfers known as *hawala*, the establishment of special financial intelligence units and the introduction of new laws against the financing of terrorism. The Board encourages the Governments of all countries in the region that have not yet done so to ensure the adoption of comprehensive legislation against money-laundering that fully complies with international standards and norms and to put in place the necessary institutional framework and mechanisms for its implementation.

452. While the system of law enforcement has been well developed in many countries in West Asia over the past decade, the Board appreciates the increased attention given by some Governments to drug abuse and demand reduction in recent years. The knowledge and information about the nature and extent of drug abuse, though still fragmented, has improved in several countries as a result of a number of surveys and assessment studies conducted in recent years. In addition, efforts have been made in some countries to introduce drug abuse prevention programmes and establish drug abuse treatment facilities. The Board strongly encourages all countries in the region to strengthen their efforts to develop drug abuse monitoring systems and to expand their demand

reduction activities. It is noted that the adoption of relevant legislation, the allocation of sufficient resources and the participation of local communities, as well as cooperation with non-governmental organizations, continue to be lacking in many countries in the region.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

453. Cannabis continues to be the most widely available drug in West Asia. Cannabis is illicitly cultivated in several countries in the region; however, cannabis also continues to grow wild in some countries, including Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. Cannabis continues to be widely abused in West Asia. Given the widespread growth of cannabis with a high THC content in Kazakhstan, the Government of that country has continued to develop new strategies to deal with the issue of preventing the illegal harvesting of cannabis, including the massive industrial use of wild-growing hemp from the Chu valley.

454. The Board notes with great concern that in Afghanistan the illicit cultivation of opium poppy continues unabated. In 2003, Afghanistan experienced its second largest opium harvest since 1999, estimated at 3,600 tons of opium, accounting for more than three quarters of the world's illicit opium production. Despite efforts made to counter the trend, opium production in 2004 reached 4,200 tons. The total area under opium poppy cultivation increased from 80,000 hectares in 2003 to over 130,000 hectares in 2004. Illicit opium poppy cultivation has spread to inaccessible areas. Opium prices in Afghanistan decreased considerably during 2003 and 2004, which is seen as a positive development in terms of providing less incentive for farmers to grow opium poppy. However, prices for opium are still above US\$ 100 per kilogram, compared with an average range of about US\$ 50-70 per kilogram during the late 1990s. In addition, prices for opiates in neighbouring countries remained stable, thus increasing the profit margin for traffickers.

455. Opium poppy eradication in Afghanistan, which was planned by the Central Eradication Planning Cell within the Ministry of the Interior, was initially implemented through provincial governors but with

limited success. When the Central Poppy Eradication Force joined those activities, much of the opium poppy had already been harvested. Thus, the eradication remained limited; it took place in only one province. The Board urges the Government of Afghanistan to enforce the ban on opium poppy cultivation and ensure the effectiveness of eradication efforts, in coordination with alternative development activities.

456. The Board is concerned about the fact that illicit cultivation of opium poppy continued in Pakistan throughout 2004. Illicit opium poppy cultivation had been reduced to almost nil during the late 1990s, when it had been eradicated from the last traditional poppy-growing areas of the Dir district and other districts in the North-West Frontier Province. However, opium poppy cultivation re-emerged in Pakistan in 2003 and continued in 2004. The total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation has been estimated at approximately 6,700 hectares. Most of the illicit opium poppy cultivation occurred in non-traditional growing areas, such as the Khyber Agency within the North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan Province. Both provinces are on Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. About 78 per cent of the illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan was eradicated in 2004.

457. Though small-scale cultivation of opium poppy is also taking place in Central Asia, annual eradication campaigns have virtually eliminated the risk of such cultivation proliferating in the subregion. The Board encourages the Governments of Central Asian countries to continue their efforts aimed at identifying and eradicating illicitly cultivated drugs.

458. The processing of opium into heroin has continued on a large scale in many countries in West Asia, including, to an increasingly large extent, in Afghanistan, the main producer country. Large quantities of the precursor acetic anhydride are smuggled into Afghanistan from East and South Asia, as well as from Europe. A number of countries in West Asia have recorded seizures of acetic anhydride in recent years. Pakistan, however, reported that no significant seizures of acetic anhydride have been made since 1999 and no laboratories for heroin manufacture have been found in that country since the late 1990s. Nevertheless, it is assumed that precursor chemicals are smuggled into Pakistan via the seaport of Karachi, to be transported into Afghanistan. Although countries in Central Asia have not reported any

detection of illicit manufacturing activities in their territories, precursors reportedly continue to be smuggled through that subregion in large quantities. Furthermore, Turkey has regularly reported the detection of clandestine heroin laboratories in recent years. Law enforcement authorities in West Asian countries need to address the flow of precursors, in particular acetic anhydride, which is used for processing opium into heroin. The Board is concerned about the extent of precursor smuggling in West Asia and stresses the importance of international cooperation initiatives such as Operation Topaz.

459. Trafficking in opiates from Afghanistan, as well as cannabis resin originating in various countries in West Asia, to (or through) other countries in the region and to Europe, continues on a large scale. Synthetic drugs and precursors are frequently smuggled in the opposite direction. The main transit countries continue to be the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The use of the southern border area between Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan (in particular, Baluchistan Province), which has always been used as a major transit area for illicit drug consignments, has intensified further. Another route, which has been increasingly used in recent years, is through countries in Central Asia. Tajikistan, for example, ranks third in global heroin seizures. In addition, countries in the area of the Persian Gulf, namely Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, are being used more frequently as transit countries for drug trafficking. Furthermore, Turkey continues to be used as a transit country because it is situated between Western Europe and South-West Asia.

460. Drug seizures continue to reflect trafficking routes and patterns. In Pakistan, opium seizures have been decreasing in recent years, while seizures of morphine and heroin have been increasing considerably. That is related to the increasing manufacturing capacities in Afghanistan, which allows traffickers to smuggle morphine or heroin instead of larger quantities of opium, thus limiting the risks. The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to record enormous seizures of opiates, though its seizure figures in recent years have been lower than during the late 1990s, particularly the figures for opium and morphine seizures. Those trends may also be related partly to increased manufacturing activities in Afghanistan and partly to the shift in trafficking routes through Central Asia. However, since 2003, seizures in the Islamic

Republic of Iran have been rising again. Afghanistan has submitted seizure data since 2003, but the quantities of drugs seized in that country continue to be much lower than those reported by its neighbouring countries. Some countries on the Arabian peninsula that are increasingly being used as drug trafficking hubs have reported an increase in seizures of cannabis resin, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants.

461. Seizures of opium, heroin and cannabis resin in Central Asia reflect a deteriorating situation with respect to illicit drug trafficking. Partly due to improved interdiction capacities, seizures of opium in Tajikistan increased in 2003 by 45 per cent, grew 14-fold in Kazakhstan and doubled in Uzbekistan. Seizures of cannabis resin also grew significantly. Similar increases were observed with respect to heroin seizures, which increased by 44 per cent in Tajikistan, 29 per cent in Uzbekistan and more than four times in Kazakhstan. That trend continued in 2004. The Board urges the Governments concerned to reinforce their border control and interdiction capacity, especially along the borders with Afghanistan and the Russian Federation.

462. Drug abuse has become a serious concern in many countries in West Asia. For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran reported an increase in heroin consumption, including injecting drug use; opium remains the most widely used drug in that country. Pakistan continues to have one of the highest prevalence rates for heroin abuse in the world, though the trend has reportedly been decreasing recently. Cannabis continues to be widely abused in Pakistan. Both countries also reported an increase in HIV/AIDS among drug users. Drug abuse has also risen in Afghanistan in recent years, where an increase has also been noted in injecting drug use among heroin abusers.

463. The recently published national assessment on drug abuse, conducted in 2003 and based on studies conducted in six major cities, confirmed that the prevalence of drug abuse in Turkey is lower than in other countries in West Asia, though an increasing trend was noted. Cannabis and inhalants are the most commonly abused substances. In addition, heroin and MDMA are increasingly being abused. The results further suggest a relatively young population of drug users. A sizeable percentage of drug abusers also reported having recently injected drugs. Heroin was the main substance associated with injecting drug use.

Furthermore, countries in the eastern Mediterranean area and on the Arabian peninsula have experienced an increase in the abuse of opiates, especially heroin, in addition to widespread abuse of synthetic drugs.

464. As a consequence of large quantities of illicit drugs being trafficked throughout Central Asia, there has been a rising incidence of drug abuse in recent years. The abuse of heroin, opium and cannabis is a serious problem in the subregion, and it is growing in importance. The number of registered drug users in Kazakhstan stood at almost 50,000 people at the start of 2004, which represents an increase of 6 per cent over the previous year. A similar rate of increase was reported in Uzbekistan, with about 22,000 individuals, mostly heroin addicts, registered in treatment and prevention institutions in 2004. In Kyrgyzstan, the number of officially registered drug users (of which 65 per cent were heroin and opium addicts) totalled 5,600 in 2003, an increase of 10 per cent compared with 2002.

465. In Central Asia, the number of HIV/AIDS-infected people continues to increase, fuelled by injecting drug use. The latest estimates of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime suggest a total of 46,000 injecting drug users in this subregion, of whom over 9,000 are HIV-infected. While approximately 10 per cent of HIV/AIDS infections worldwide are caused by injecting drug use, this mode of transmission accounts for 60-90 per cent of new HIV/AIDS cases in Central Asia. In 2004, HIV/AIDS prevalence was highest in Kazakhstan (4,000 persons, or 2.5 per cent of all injecting drug abusers, were reported to be HIV-positive), followed by Kyrgyzstan (1.9 per cent). During the past two years, the number of HIV cases has doubled in Uzbekistan, bringing the total number of persons infected with HIV to 3,600 in 2004. The Board notes with concern the increasing proportion of HIV/AIDS infection among young people, and the reported spread of HIV in the prison systems. Reportedly, two thirds of prison inmates abuse drugs in Kazakhstan. The Board urges the Governments to take measures, with the support of all concerned, to prevent the further spread of HIV among all segments of the population.

Psychotropic substances

466. The Board notes with concern the increasing abuse of psychotropic substances, mainly

benzodiazepines and barbiturates, in tablet form, particularly among women, in West Asia. Such substances are often freely available and obtained without a doctor's prescription. The Board is particularly concerned about the extent of that problem in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey and other countries in the region. The Board urges the Governments of countries in the region to strengthen regulations on drug control, including at the retail level, while ensuring that sufficient controlled medicines are available for medical purposes.

467. Of increasing concern in many countries in West Asia is also the abuse of inhalants, which has been noted in the assessments carried out in Pakistan and Turkey and which is mainly associated with young people and adolescents, especially street children.

468. The abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants continues to be limited in West Asia. However, in the last two years, the availability and increasing use of MDMA (Ecstasy) or party or designer drugs have been noted in several countries in the region, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. Trafficking in and abuse of other illicitly manufactured stimulants (often reported as Captagon) also continues and is of particular concern in countries on the Arabian peninsula.

Missions

469. The Board sent a mission to Pakistan in July 2004 and notes the significant efforts made by the Government of Pakistan in combating illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse. For more than two decades, the country had been heavily affected by drug trafficking and had had a high prevalence of drug abuse. As a result, the law enforcement and demand reduction systems have been built up and considerable expertise has been accumulated in the suppression of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse. The Board welcomes recent initiatives launched to develop legislation against money-laundering and encourages the Government of Pakistan to investigate incidents involving corruption.

470. The Ministry of Narcotics Control of Pakistan was established in 2003 to coordinate drug control activities. The Board hopes that the importance given to drug control within the institutional framework in Pakistan will contribute to the effective coordination of efforts by all authorities involved in the control of licit

and the countering of illicit drug-related activity, including at the federal and provincial levels.

471. The Board notes with concern the resurgence of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan in 2003, which continued in 2004. The Board recognizes the commitment by the Government of Pakistan to eradicate illicit crop cultivation areas. Trafficking in opiates originating in Afghanistan, as well as cannabis, which is also produced throughout Pakistan, continues unabated in Pakistan. The Board encourages the Government of Pakistan to continue to expand its demand reduction activities related to drug abuse prevention and treatment and to periodically investigate the extent and patterns of drug abuse. The abuse of heroin has reportedly been declining recently, but the abuse of some psychotropic substances is rapidly increasing.

472. In Pakistan, control over the licit distribution of pharmaceutical products has been found to be inadequate; that is reflected in the fact that controlled drugs are easily obtained without prescription through pharmacies. The Board is also concerned about incomplete reporting by Pakistan to the Board. The Board urges the Government to take the necessary steps to monitor the domestic manufacture and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, while ensuring sufficient availability of and accessibility to controlled drugs for medical purposes. Finally, the Board encourages the Government of Pakistan to decide as soon as possible about the future of the Opium Alkaloid Factory and, if it is continued, to integrate it into the existing licit drug control mechanism with a view to providing better laboratory and treatment services, as well as improve the reporting to the Board.

473. A mission of the Board visited Turkmenistan in December 2003. Particularly in view of its proximity to Afghanistan, it is important that Turkmenistan complies with all its obligations under the international drug control treaties, takes more vigorous efforts against illicit drug trafficking through its territory and gives high priority to cooperating actively with the international community in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

474. The Government of Turkmenistan has provided only limited information on drug abuse, illicit drug

trafficking and seizures in that country. The Board requests the Government to ensure the systematic collection, analysis and use of information on drug abuse and the illicit drug traffic. The Government should share such information with the relevant international organizations and the Board, in conformity with the requirements of the international drug control treaties. The Board recommends that the Government carry out regular epidemiological studies on drug abuse.

475. In Turkmenistan, the legislative basis for the implementation of several provisions of the international drug control treaties has not yet been established. The Board urgently requests the Government to enact and implement such legislation, including the provisions concerning money-laundering and the control of precursors.

476. The Board encourages law enforcement authorities in Turkmenistan to intensify their efforts to curtail the illicit drug traffic and requests the Government to strengthen the capacity of those authorities to prevent the smuggling of illicit drugs into Turkmenistan as well as the use of the country as a transit area for consignments of illicit drugs and precursors. The Board encourages the Government to closely cooperate with the Governments of its neighbouring countries and to actively participate in regional drug control cooperation efforts. The Government should establish an effective system to monitor the manufacture and distribution of and international trade in precursors and should regularly furnish the required reports to the Board.

477. While data from official sources are not available, there are some reports that the number of drug addicts in Turkmenistan is increasing. The Board invites the Government to ensure that adequate treatment facilities are provided for drug addicts, in line with good medical standards. The Board recommends that the Government promote the rational use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical treatment. The authorities should monitor the consumption levels of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and ensure that they are available in sufficient quantities to those who need them, while enforcing the strict observance of the prescription requirement.