

as possible the measures necessary to control precursor chemicals.

299. Cannabis plants continue to be illicitly cultivated throughout Zambia, despite efforts by law enforcement officials. The Board encourages the Government to strengthen its efforts to eradicate the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants and to introduce alternative development programmes in cooperation with other countries in the region and international donors. The Board notes with concern that there are currently no treatment facilities in Zambia for drug abusers and encourages the Government to establish such facilities as soon as possible. The Board also encourages the Government to provide the drug law enforcement and pharmaceutical regulatory bodies in Zambia with adequate resources to enable them to carry out their functions properly.

300. As there is a particularly high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia, the Board is concerned that the current situation could be further exacerbated by insufficient drug abuse prevention programmes and urges the Governments concerned to take appropriate preventive measures to address those problems.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

Major developments

301. The region of Central America and the Caribbean continues to be used as a major trans-shipment point for consignments of drugs, mainly cocaine, originating in South America and destined for the United States and countries in Europe. While extensive coastal areas and difficult terrain may to some extent explain the situation, persistent negative social factors, such as high unemployment and institutional weaknesses, have played a major role as well. It is estimated that a large part of the 300 tons of cocaine entering the United States each year has passed through Central America and the Caribbean.

302. Several countries in Central America and the Caribbean have signed the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), a free trade agreement with the United States that would liberalize interregional commerce and remove barriers to trade in most goods.

The Board urges the Governments concerned not to weaken existing controls over drugs once CAFTA enters into force.

303. In its report for 2004, the Board expressed its concern over the link between drug trafficking and organized crime perpetrated by youth gangs in several Central American and Caribbean countries.⁴⁰ The Board welcomes the Meeting on Transnational Criminal Youth Gangs: Characteristics, Importance and Public Policies, organized in Tapachula, Mexico, in June 2005 by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States. The Board urges the Governments concerned to step up their efforts to fight that problem, while maintaining respect for human rights.

Treaty adherence

304. All States in Central America and the Caribbean are parties to the 1961 Convention and the 1988 Convention and, with the exception of Haiti, to the 1971 Convention. The Board calls on Haiti to accede to the 1971 Convention without delay. The Board welcomes the ratification by Nicaragua of the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention and the ratification by Honduras of the 1971 Convention.

Regional cooperation

305. In 2004, the CICAD Group of Experts on Pharmaceutical Products developed the Model Reference Guide for Health Professionals: Prevention and Detection of Abuse of Narcotics and Controlled Substances and Their Diversion to Illicit Channels and the Model Guide for Manufacturers to Control Pharmaceutical Products. The Group also analysed different mechanisms to enhance inspections, control measures and coordination, including with regard to the sale of pharmaceutical products on the Internet.

306. In October 2004, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), with the support of UNODC and CICAD, established drug information networks to guide the development of efforts to reduce illicit drug supply and demand in the Caribbean.

307. CICAD is working together with the Inter-American Development Bank to create and/or strengthen financial intelligence units throughout Central America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and the Financial Action

Task Force of South America against Money Laundering (GAFISUD) are also providing support in that endeavour.

308. An operation involving the cooperation of law enforcement agencies in Central America and the Caribbean and in the United States has resulted in 354 arrests and the seizure of a total of 26.5 tons of cocaine and about US\$ 86 million in currency and other assets. The operation was terminated at the end of 2004.

309. In October 2004, Operation Escandalo, conducted by United States law enforcement agencies, successfully dismantled an important cocaine smuggling network in Haiti involving several high-level officials of the previous Government.

310. The Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City from 11 to 15 October 2004, recommended that central law enforcement databases and standardized reporting should be encouraged and that Governments should consider the posting of judicial liaison officers in their diplomatic missions to ensure proper adherence to required legal procedures and the speedy gathering of prosecution evidence (see para. 399 below).

National legislation, policy and action

311. Almost all of the countries in Central America and the Caribbean have designed national plans to deal with the drug problem; at the same time, however, almost all of those countries have experienced difficulties in implementing the plans, mainly because of lack of human and financial resources.

312. Most countries in Central America and the Caribbean have no epidemiological studies on drug abuse among the general population, which makes it difficult to estimate the prevalence of the abuse of psychoactive substances at the national level, to determine trends in drug abuse and to assess the effectiveness of policies to reduce illicit drug supply and demand.

313. Measures for the control of pharmaceutical preparations, including rules regarding the prescription, distribution and sale of such products, need to be enhanced in Central America and the Caribbean. The need for stringent control measures has increased as pharmaceuticals, including substances

such as pseudoephedrine, amphetamine-type stimulants, phentermine, hydrocodone and oxycodone, are being sold over the Internet.

314. To deal with the growing problem of youth gangs in El Salvador, the Government is implementing the Super Mano Dura plan (super heavy hand plan) and the Mano Amiga plan (friendly hand plan). The Super Mano Dura plan established punitive measures against gang members, while the second plan established rehabilitation assistance for former gang members. The Super Mano Dura plan has been criticized by civil society and has led to protests and riots in prisons in El Salvador. Prison inmates have demanded more rehabilitation programmes to replace the severe penalties provided for in current legislation.

315. In Honduras, the implementation of drug control legislation by the judicial system appears to be hampered by, among other things, corrupt practices. The National Assembly in that country has not yet adopted legislation that would remove the immunity privileges of high-level officials, thereby allowing for them to be prosecuted (the Constitution was amended in 2004 to make that possible). The National Assembly has yet to adopt legislation to reform the statute that covers illegal drugs and to make money-laundering a crime.

316. In Costa Rica, the Government has promulgated decree No. 31684, aimed at strengthening drug control in the country. Costa Rica is the depositary of the multilateral Agreement concerning cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area, which was signed in 2003. The Board urges the parties to the Agreement to ratify it without delay.

317. In Cuba, operations Coraza Popular and Aché III resulted in a reduction in smuggling of narcotic drugs in 2004. In addition, Interpol has resumed its operations in Cuba.

318. In June 2004, the Government of the Bahamas signed a comprehensive maritime agreement that would provide law enforcement officers with a comprehensive framework for their work in the area of fighting maritime drug trafficking. The Government also launched its first national drug control plan. The Board notes, however, that national legislation to

improve the control of substances in the schedules of the 1988 Convention has not yet been approved.

319. In 2004, the Government of Jamaica launched Operation Kingfish, which targets the increasing drug-related crime and violence in that country (see also para. 598 below). That has led to disruption of the cocaine traffic; at the same time, however, other crimes have increased, as drug traffickers have turned to other sources of income. The Government has drafted several new laws to deal with the situation. The Board is concerned that illegal use of Ecstasy (MDMA), which is regulated by the Food and Drugs Act of Jamaica, is subject to light penalties. The Board encourages the Government of Jamaica to pursue its efforts to include Ecstasy in the list of drugs covered in the Dangerous Drugs Act, so that applying stricter penalties would apply in cases involving the use of that drug.

320. Despite the efforts of the United Nations, the situation in Haiti remains precarious, which means that the conditions are ideal for organized criminal activities, including drug trafficking, money-laundering and gang violence. However, some improvements appear to have been made. For example, a joint information coordination centre, a Maritime Interdiction Task Force and an anti corruption unit have been established. The Board encourages the interim Government to make full use of those bodies to fight drug trafficking.

321. The Government of the Dominican Republic implemented the revised criminal procedural code in 2004 that modified the country's penal system. The new system is expected to improve the administration of justice in the country. In addition, a new guideline on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse was issued. The new guideline is based on a CICAD recommendation.

322. The Government of Barbados has not yet placed under national control all the substances listed in the 1988 Convention. There are also some weaknesses in the national control measures; for example, no special licences or permits are required to prescribe certain drugs. The Board urges the Government to completely fulfil its international obligations and to strengthen control measures in the country.

323. Drug traffickers are taking advantage of the dire unemployment situation in Nicaragua by paying

members of the local population to illegally distribute drugs. The situation appears to have led to an increase in the number of addicts among the population.

324. The government of the Netherlands Antilles enacted two ministerial decrees on 28 January 2005 classifying as controlled substances all psychotropic substances in the schedules of the 1971 Convention. With the enactment of the new legislation, the government has complied with the provisions of the 1971 Convention. The requirement of import authorizations for substances in Schedules III and IV went into effect on 1 April 2005. Legislation on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention is still waiting to be enacted by the parliament.

325. In December 2004, the Government of Belize enacted new legislation concerning the coast guard and implemented measures to strengthen drug abuse prevention programmes at all levels of the school system in order to deal with the growing drug problem and the problems associated with it, including drug-related criminal activities. The Government, however, lacks funding to implement its programmes.

326. In Costa Rica, a 2004 study on drug-related crime, showed that 33 per cent of the crimes committed in the country were linked to some violation of the Law on Psychotropic Substances; furthermore, 34 per cent of the persons interviewed in the study admitted that they had committed crimes while under the influence of drugs and 22 per cent reported that they had committed crimes in order to obtain drugs.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

327. The total amount of cocaine seized in Central America and the Caribbean each year continues to be high (about 30 tons). Panama continued to account for the largest total quantity of cocaine seized in the region (7 tons). The most significant increase in total cocaine seizures was registered in Nicaragua (6.2 tons seized in 2004, compared with 1.1 tons in the previous year). Total cocaine seizures also increased in Belize, Costa Rica and El Salvador. The total amount of cocaine seized was reported to have decreased in Guatemala and Honduras.

328. Cocaine traffickers appear to be targeting countries in Central America more than countries in the

Caribbean, as reflected in seizure data for 2004. There are indications that new routes are being used to transport consignments of drugs, mainly cocaine, to Europe, for the most part through Western Africa but also through South America.

329. The total volume of cannabis seized has increased in Central America but declined in the Caribbean. In 2004, the largest total volume of cannabis seized (1,700 tons) was reported by Trinidad and Tobago.

330. Cannabis is produced in Central America and the Caribbean but on a small scale, mainly for local consumption. Jamaica continues to be the main country in the region that is producing and exporting cannabis on a larger scale.

331. To deal with the problem of opium poppy cultivation in Guatemala, the Government implemented during 2004 a successful eradication programme, eliminating more than 5.4 million opium poppy plants. Pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs have been diverted from licit distribution channels in Guatemala for illicit use; in addition, significant quantities of pharmaceutical preparations from El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico have been smuggled into Guatemala. In El Salvador and Guatemala, the trafficking in heroin appears to be on the increase.

332. Although the rate of cocaine abuse is low in Central America and the Caribbean as a whole, the abuse of cocaine and crack is reported to have increased in Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua. Cannabis abuse has continued to rise in the region.

Psychotropic substances

333. In 2004, cases involving Ecstasy from the Netherlands were reported in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic; in the Dominican Republic, about 50 per cent of the Ecstasy was seized while it was on its way to the United States.

North America

Major developments

334. The abuse of, trafficking in and illicit manufacture of drugs are major problems in North America, which is comprised of Canada, Mexico and

the United States. The Governments of all three of the countries in the region remain committed to the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking. All three countries devote substantial resources to counteracting the drug problem within and beyond their borders. The excellent regional cooperation, particularly in the area of law enforcement, has yielded significant results mostly with regard to dismantling major drug trafficking operations.

335. The abuse of prescription drugs is a major problem in all three countries in North America, in particular the United States, where the abuse of prescription drugs is increasing despite numerous initiatives by the Government and is reported to be taking place among persons in all age groups, including schoolchildren. The sale of controlled drugs from illegally operating Internet pharmacies is part of the problem.

336. Because of its geographical position, Mexico has long been used as a major transit country for illicit drug consignments destined for the United States. That has been one of the main areas of emphasis of its drug control efforts. The transit traffic has had a spillover effect: Mexico is no longer only a transit country but has also become a consumer country for illicit drugs and even a producer country for drugs such as cannabis, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants. Should that trend continue, Mexico could become a major source country for illicit drugs. The Board acknowledges the efforts of the Government of Mexico in countering drug trafficking and illicit drug production and in fighting corruption and encourages the Government to pursue the implementation of its policies in those areas.

337. The Board is concerned that in Canada draft legislation on cannabis (Bill C-17), which would provide for the issuing of a ticket for possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis and the imposing of an administrative penalty instead of imprisonment for cannabis plant cultivation, may send the wrong message, particularly in view of the increase in cannabis abuse in the country.

338. The Board notes that the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in June 2005 that all use of cannabis, including its use for medical purposes, was illegal throughout the territory of the United States.

Treaty adherence

339. All three States in North America are parties to the three international drug control treaties.

Regional cooperation

340. The excellent cooperation between the three countries in North America has continued, resulting in a number of effective measures being implemented against drug trafficking and organized crime.

341. The Canada-United States Cross-Border Crime Forum is the principal bilateral cooperative initiative between the two countries in the area of fighting cross-border crime. The Forum announced in October 2004 the establishment of four new intelligence exchange sites to support the International Border Enforcement Team programme.

342. The Governments of Mexico and the United States have further improved cooperation in law enforcement matters. Anti-corruption initiatives and institutional reforms in Mexico have contributed to the sharing of information, the conducting of joint investigations and the extradition of fugitives to the United States.

343. A number of joint law enforcement operations have been successfully conducted by law enforcement authorities of Canada, Mexico and the United States. In January 2005, Operation Candy Box, a two-year operation involving cooperation between Canada and the United States and targeting a criminal organization illicitly manufacturing MDMA and supplying 15 per cent of the Ecstasy on the illicit market in the United States, culminated in the extradition of the organization's kingpin to the United States. In April 2005, Operation Cyber Chase, a one-year investigation targeting international Internet pharmaceutical traffickers, was successfully concluded; using more than 200 websites, the traffickers involved had, since July 2003, distributed each month approximately 2.5 million dosage units of controlled substances, including hydrocodone (a narcotic analgesic sold under the brand name Vicodin), anabolic steroids and amphetamines.

344. Operation Cold Remedy and Operation Aztec Flu, conducted in cooperation with law enforcement agencies of Mexico and the United States, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, resulted in the seizure of 67.26 million

pseudoephedrine tablets between September 2003 and December 2004. Operation Money Clip, a one-year investigation ending in December 2004, resulted in the dismantling of a money-laundering and poly-drug trafficking organization based in Mexico, the arrests of 90 persons involved and the seizure of US\$ 5.2 million, in addition to significant seizures of cocaine, methamphetamine, cannabis and heroin.

345. Operation United Eagles, an ongoing effort to apprehend Consolidated Priority Organization Targets, is being carried out by a "fugitive apprehension team" comprising Mexican and United States law enforcement officers. A number of other initiatives are being carried out jointly by Mexico and the United States at the south-west border of the United States to disrupt and dismantle poly-drug trafficking organizations based in Mexico, as well as their associates based in Colombia. However, a number of obstacles have been encountered during such operations because of legal provisions in Mexico. The requirement of approval of the Attorney General of Mexico for undercover operations complicates the implementation of such operations. Moreover, the Government of Mexico has not yet established a reliable routine procedure for seeking and obtaining court authorization for undercover operations. Furthermore, controlled deliveries are not permitted by Mexican law. The Board urges the Government of Mexico to take appropriate steps to remedy the situation.

346. All three countries in North America are members of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and of CICAD.

National legislation, policy and action

347. The Government of Mexico is currently involved in efforts to introduce legal reforms relating to the smuggling of small quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; the amendment of the federal law against organized crime; and the reform of laws related to national security and penal justice. Legal reform to strengthen measures aimed at preventing and punishing money-laundering was undertaken in 2004 and new laws have been adopted by the Government of Mexico and five states in that country. The laws are in compliance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force.

348. The National Drug Control Strategy of the United States Administration includes plans for increased drug abuse prevention and treatment efforts, such as support for student drug-testing programmes, assistance to local educational agencies for drug abuse prevention and school safety programmes, support for community coalitions' civic action for preventive efforts and increased drug abuse treatment resources through the Access to Recovery voucher programme and the Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment initiative, which emphasizes early intervention aimed at non-dependent drug users.

349. Other priorities of the National Drug Control Strategy of the United States include support for drug court programmes. The total number of drug courts in the country increased significantly during the past year to 1,621. The Strategy also addresses the abuse of prescription drugs, which ranks second only to cannabis abuse in the United States. Prescription drug monitoring programmes at the state level have taken a leading role in detecting and deterring the diversion of popular prescription drugs.

350. In the United States, the Drug Intelligence Fusion Center, under the programme of the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces, provides member agencies with a comprehensive data warehouse with access to investigative drug and related financial information. One highly successful investigation conducted by the Task Forces, Operation Cotton Candy, focused on the illegal distribution of pain medication containing controlled substances, including oxycodone, by 60-80 doctors, pharmacists and patients. One of the main traffickers involved, a doctor who had prescribed up to 1,600 oxycodone tablets each day that were subsequently trafficked, was sentenced in April 2005 to 25 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$1 million after having been convicted on charges of illegal drug distribution.

351. Canada is faced with a similar problem with regard to the abuse of prescription drugs. A task force in Atlantic Canada found that a small number of physicians were responsible for writing prescriptions for large quantities of OxyContin, an oxycodone-based drug, and other controlled substances such as benzodiazepines. The electronic monitoring and tracking of prescriptions are considered to be promising tools for reducing the abuse of prescription drugs. To date, five Canadian provinces have

implemented programmes for tracking multiple-copy prescriptions in an effort to reduce the diversion of drugs that are at a high risk of being diverted and abused.

352. The Board notes that Canada published in November 2004 the Canadian Addiction Survey, initiated in December 2003 to provide information about prevalence rates and trends in drug abuse. Since the renewal of its Drug Strategy in May 2004, Canada has established an accountability and evaluation framework to enable the progress made in achieving the objective of the Strategy to be monitored, documented and evaluated. In April 2005, the Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund was launched to provide funds for conducting activities for the reduction of illicit drug demand and the prevention of drug abuse.

353. The Government of Canada has recently initiated consultations with federal, provincial and municipal law enforcement agencies to discuss and develop a collaborative and strategic approach to enforcement of the Precursor Control Regulations. The consultations led to the identification of a collaborative action plan to improve the controls related to precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

354. In accordance with a recommendation made by the Board in 1996, the Government of Mexico has increased the resources to be set aside for control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Measures to interdict the illicit sale of controlled substances through Internet pharmacies will be carried out in cooperation with relevant agencies at the national level, such as consumer protection services, and with the Governments of the United States and other countries concerned.

355. In Mexico, a pilot project to study the use of remote sensing technology to assess the extent of illicit crop cultivation and to estimate illicit production from the identified cultivation is being planned with the help of UNODC. A satellite monitoring system is under way and preliminary results are expected to be available by December 2005. The Board welcomes that initiative of the Government of Mexico, as reliable data on the extent of illicit drug crop cultivation in Mexico are urgently needed and long overdue.

356. In addition to eradicating illicit crop cultivation, seizing illicit drugs and arresting the criminals

involved, the Government of Mexico has also been fighting corruption at all levels. Almost 30,000 persons, including high-ranking officials, have been arrested for corruption since 2003. Additional efforts will be required to further fight corruption, including in the area of law enforcement and in the correction system. Of particular concern are reports of drug gang violence and violent challenges to police efforts to deal with drug trafficking in several cities in northern Mexico.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

357. The Board notes the declining rates of abuse of cannabis, cocaine and Ecstasy in the United States, particularly among adolescents and youth. However, that positive development is partly counteracted by an increase in the abuse of prescription drugs, in particular painkillers, among young adults and an increase in the abuse of inhalants among youth. The Board is also concerned about reports that methamphetamine manufacture, trafficking and abuse seem to be on the rise, particularly in rural areas. The Board notes the recent announcement of an anti-methamphetamine initiative by the Government of the United States in response to this trend.

358. In the United States, a little less than 8 per cent of the population aged 12 and above are current (past month) users of illicit drugs; the main drug of abuse is cannabis, followed by prescription drugs and cocaine. The prescription drugs that are abused are, to a large extent, diverted from domestic distribution channels or illegally operating Internet pharmacies. Most of the cocaine and much of the heroin, cannabis and methamphetamine available on the illicit drug markets in the United States are smuggled into the country over the Mexican border in the south-west. Despite concerted efforts by the Government of Mexico to counter illicit drug manufacture and trafficking, Mexico continues to be the primary transit country for the cocaine and one of the main manufacturers of the heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis found on illicit markets in the United States.

359. The smuggling of drugs over the border between Canada and the United States has declined considerably; however, cannabis and methamphetamine continue to be smuggled into the United States, while heroin and cocaine continue to be

smuggled into Canada. Trafficking in and use of controlled synthetic drugs have become firmly entrenched in the drug culture in Canada. While the rave phenomenon served as the primary vehicle for the proliferation of Ecstasy trafficking and use, it also led to the introduction of other drugs associated with clubs and the resurgence of the abuse of established illicit synthetic drugs, notably methamphetamine. The illicit market for synthetic drugs has evolved from a relatively small market to a huge profit-making opportunity, enticing major organized crime networks to participate in the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in such drugs.

Narcotic drugs

360. Cannabis continues to be the most abused drug in all three countries in North America. In Canada and Mexico cannabis abuse is still increasing, while in the United States the rate for cannabis use in the past year for almost all age groups, in particular for adolescents, has been declining since the late 1990s.

361. Despite this positive trend, cannabis is readily available throughout the United States, and varieties of cannabis with higher potency have become more prevalent over the last 10 years. Domestic cannabis production appears to be increasing in part because of large-scale cannabis production by criminal groups. Tentative estimates indicate that approximately 10,000 tons of cannabis are produced each year in the United States.

362. Mexican cannabis is the principal type of foreign-produced cannabis available in the United States. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plants in Mexico is concentrated in the least developed parts of the country, predominately in the west.

363. While Canada is not a primary source of cannabis in the United States, exportation of cannabis to the United States has continued: Canada is the source of approximately 2 per cent of all cannabis seized on United States borders. In Canada, cannabis plant cultivation has continued to spread throughout the country due to the significant demand for cannabis, particularly among youth. For the last five years, Canadian law enforcement agencies have seized each year an average of 1.1 million cannabis plants, a sixfold increase since 1993. Operations with thousands of cannabis plants are no longer uncommon.

364. In the United States, it is estimated that 2.3 million persons are current users of cocaine. The Board considers it to be encouraging that, among adolescents, the overall trend in cocaine abuse, like that of cannabis abuse, has been downward since 1999. In Canada, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse increased during the period 1994-2004 from 0.7 to 1.9 per cent. Cocaine is the second most widely abused illicit drug in Canada and Mexico.

365. In the past, of the cocaine found in the United States, more than 70 per cent had entered the country through the corridor of Central America and Mexico, less than 30 per cent had entered the country through the Caribbean and about 1 per cent had been imported directly from the source country. Recently, the volume of cocaine passing through the corridor of Central America and Mexico to the United States has increased, accounting for 92 per cent of the total volume of cocaine entering the United States.

366. Most of the cocaine available on the illicit market in Canada is supplied by commercial trucks passing through the United States. There is a close relationship between the smuggling of cocaine from the United States into Canada and the smuggling of Canadian cannabis to the United States.

367. In the United States, current users of heroin represent 0.1 per cent of the population. The rate for heroin use in the past year appears to be relatively stable in the United States, but the rate for heroin use among adolescents is below the peak rates of the late 1990s. The most prevalent types of heroin in the United States continue to be Colombian and Mexican heroin, although the share of the heroin market accounted for by South-West Asian heroin may be increasing.

368. Despite the relatively small share of global opium production that it accounts for (less than 5 per cent), Mexico is currently the second largest supplier of heroin to the illicit market in the United States. About 60 per cent of the trafficked heroin is reportedly smuggled out of Colombia through Mexico, the remainder being manufactured in Mexico itself. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy in Mexico (like the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant) is concentrated in the least developed parts of the country, largely in the west. The Government of Mexico estimates that about 80 per cent of the illicit opium cultivation in the country has been eradicated.

369. While most of the heroin available on the illicit market in Canada continues to originate in South-East Asia and South-West Asia, heroin of Latin American origin is being encountered more frequently. South-East Asian, South-West Asian and other criminal organizations continue to be largely responsible for heroin importation and heroin trafficking activities in Canada.

370. All three countries in North America have experienced a significant increase in the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs. In Mexico, the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations is nearly as frequent as cocaine abuse. In Canada, an illegal street market for many prescription drugs has been confirmed, reportedly with large profit margins in the street value of various drugs.

371. In the United States, the results of national surveys indicate that the non-medical use of all major groups of prescription drugs has been increasing over the past 10 years and now rivals the abuse of all other drugs except cannabis. Most pharmaceuticals abused in the United States are diverted through forged prescriptions, theft or "doctor shopping" (individuals obtaining considerably more prescriptions than clinically necessary in the course of a year). Law enforcement agencies report that illegal sale of prescription drugs via the Internet, often through Internet-based pharmacies, has increased sharply since the late 1990s.

372. In 2004, approximately one out of five teenagers (18 per cent) in the United States was reported to have abused Vicodin (hydrocodone) in the past year and one out of 10 teenagers was reported to have abused OxyContin (oxycodone) in the past year; that represents a significant increase compared with the figures for 2002. A task force in Atlantic Canada found that a growing number of young people were abusing OxyContin.

373. In the United States, transdermal patches containing a slow-release dose of fentanyl are increasingly being used for recreational purposes. As a result, there has been an increase in overdoses: 115 deaths by overdose were attributed to the fentanyl patch in 2004. Some of the victims had removed the entire three-day supply of the drug from the patch and then injected, ingested or smoked it; others had used several patches at once.

Psychotropic substances

374. In the United States, it is estimated that there are over 3 million persons abusing prescription drugs containing psychotropic substances, mostly tranquillizers, stimulants and, to a lesser extent, sedatives. The rate of abuse of those drugs has remained fairly stable during the past two years. The abuse of sedatives among adolescents increased for a decade before levelling for the first time in 2003, a development welcomed by the authorities. Due to the high prescription level of stimulants used for the treatment of ADD (called attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the United States), the preparations are also found on the illicit market. One out of 10 teenagers has used prescription stimulants (Ritalin® and/or Adderall®) without a doctor's prescription.

375. In Mexico, the abuse of tranquillizers is higher and is growing faster among women than among men. There continue to be cases in which flunitrazepam is diverted not to be abused but to be used to commit "date rape" (drug-facilitated sexual assault); consequently, the substance has been reclassified in order to strengthen control over it.

376. GHB has become a matter of particular concern to United States law enforcement and public health agencies because of its increasing availability, the sharp increase in the frequency with which it was mentioned in emergency room cases since the mid-1990s and its use in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assault. In Canada, GHB has become a prominent law enforcement problem. Organized criminal groups in Quebec and Ontario engage in cross-border trafficking in GHB kits (including the precursor chemical GBL), selling the kits over the Internet and mailing them to customers in the United States and other countries throughout the world. Clandestine GHB laboratories, particularly in western Canada, provide supplies for traffickers.

377. In Mexico, the seizure of a total of 30.6 million tablets of psychotropic substances in the period 2000-2004 and the fact that the abuse of such substances is reflected in various surveys are indications that the problem is growing. In 2004 alone, over 40 tons of stolen medicaments were seized in Mexico, including some psychotropic substances, mainly in the form of medical samples, indicating that there is a sizeable illicit market for such products in that country.

378. In the United States, the availability of MDMA has decreased nationwide. Moreover, data on illicit drug demand show that the rate of use of MDMA in the past year peaked for most age groups in 2001 and has declined significantly since then. A considerable increase in the perceived risks involved in using Ecstasy no doubt accounts for most of the turnaround.

379. According to Health Canada, the demand for MDMA in Canada is increasing; the drug appears to be the preferred drug of abuse among adolescents and young adults. The total volume of MDMA seized each year at Canadian ports of entry soared from thousands of tablets in the 1990s to nearly 6 million tablets in 2003. Contributing to that increase was a shift towards the importation of large shipments of MDMA in powder form from Western Europe to be pressed into tablets in Canada. Clandestine synthetic drug laboratories have become larger and more sophisticated.

380. In the United States, the rate of use of phencyclidine (PCP), as well as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), in the past year has decreased to a very low level. In Canada, psilocybine, PCP and LSD continue to be available on the illicit market in small quantities.

381. While the declining abuse of methamphetamine among adolescents in the United States is an encouraging sign, the overall increase in such abuse, particularly in rural areas, remains a matter of grave concern. Moreover, the number of methamphetamine laboratories detected and dismantled in the United States increased from over 9,000 in 2002 to more than 17,000 in 2004. In Canada, the percentage of persons who have used "speed" (methamphetamine) in their lifetime increased from 2.1 per cent in 1994 to 6.4 per cent in 2004.

382. It appears that the illicit drug markets in the United States are increasingly being supplied with methamphetamine manufactured in Mexico, the largest foreign source of the methamphetamine found in the United States. The manufacture and distribution of a form of methamphetamine commonly called "ice" (it has a higher purity level and is therefore more addictive) by Mexican criminal groups have increased sharply over the past two years. Pseudoephedrine was previously diverted mainly in bulk quantities for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine; however, pseudoephedrine obtained from crushed

pharmaceutical preparations (tablets) is now being used for such manufacture. The majority of the clandestine methamphetamine laboratories detected and dismantled in Mexico were in the north of the country, close to the border of the United States.

383. The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine have dramatically increased in Canada and the abuse of that substance is reported to have greatly increased in some parts of the country. The bulk of the methamphetamine available on the illicit market in Canada has been manufactured in that country. Seizure data indicate that illicitly manufactured methamphetamine from Canada is being smuggled into other countries, in particular the United States and, to a small extent, Japan.

384. The Government of Mexico is monitoring the movement of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Pseudoephedrine has been moved to a different schedule to allow stricter control over its sale. Several national training workshops on the control of precursor chemicals have been held in Mexico since 2003 to inform industry of relevant control measures and of the need to remain vigilant with regard to attempts to divert such chemicals.

Substances not under international control

385. Ketamine abuse has been reported in all three countries in North America. The rate of use of ketamine in the past year has declined among adolescents and young adults in the United States. In Canada, ketamine is among the more popular drugs that have been introduced in the “rave” and “clubbing” subcultures. Because of problems in the past involving its diversion and abuse, stricter controls over ketamine have been implemented in Mexico.

386. Inhalants abused in Mexico and the United States are easily accessible in the form of household and office products, including glue, shoe polish, gasoline (petrol), aerosols, butane, paint thinner and nail polish remover. After 1995, there was a long and substantial decline in the abuse of inhalants among adolescents in the United States that was related to a media campaign against the abuse of such substances conducted by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America; then, in 2004, inhalant abuse in that country increased again. The proportion of young people who believe it is dangerous to abuse inhalants has declined over the past three

years, which could explain the resurgence in the abuse of such substances.

387. In the United States, one out of 11 teenagers has abused over-the-counter cough medications containing the active ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM). The recently reported deaths of five teenagers in that country may be associated with the consumption of DXM in capsule form. Though DXM abuse is not a new phenomenon, there has been a disturbing new development involving the sale of pure DXM in powder form. Such pure DXM is often put into capsules by the dealer before being sold on the street.

Missions

388. The Board sent a mission to Mexico in January 2005. The Board notes the significant efforts made by the Government of Mexico in combating illicit drug production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse. However, the Board is concerned that, despite important law enforcement successes, the trafficking organizations remain powerful and continue to strongly impede drug control efforts in Mexico and beyond. The Board urges the Government to curb the influence of organized criminal organizations on the Government and to fight corruption at all levels. With regard to illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and opium poppy, the Board recommends that the Government adopt effective means to prevent the resurgence of such cultivation, for example, by providing legitimate sources of livelihood for the farmers in question, in addition to intensifying law enforcement action.

389. The Board notes the changes of the legislative basis for drug control introduced or planned to be introduced to better combat trafficking in and misuse of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors and encourages the Government of Mexico to ensure concerted action involving the authorities at the federal level and the state level. In view of the continued diversion of psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals in Mexico, the Board requests the Government to investigate all cases of diversion and attempted diversion, with a view to identifying new trends and detecting and arresting the traffickers involved. With respect to demand reduction, the Board notes that the competent authorities ascertain regularly the extent and pattern of drug abuse and have improved the situation with regard to the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug

abusers. Although the extent of drug abuse in Mexico is small compared with the situation in other countries in the region, it has increased in recent years. The Board encourages the Government to continue to expand drug abuse prevention and treatment activities.

South America

Major developments

390. In South America, the level of illicit coca bush cultivation remained significantly lower in 2004 than in the peak year of 2000, although it increased in 2004 compared with 2003. The Board notes that intensified eradication and law enforcement efforts by the Government of Colombia have led to a decrease in illicit coca bush cultivation in that country; however, cultivation is increasing in other countries in the region, in particular in Bolivia and Peru. The Governments of most countries in the region have continued to be successful in their efforts to suppress trafficking in drugs, mainly cocaine, as evidenced by reports of record drug seizures, the dismantling of increased numbers of cocaine laboratories and increases in seizures of precursor chemicals.

391. In 2004, coca bush cultivation in South America increased by 3 per cent compared with 2003 and continued to spread to areas that were previously not affected by such cultivation. Authorities identified extensive areas that had been newly cultivated with coca bush, including areas with high levels of insecurity and violence and in national forests and parks. Coca bush is also illicitly cultivated on small plots of land in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Cocaine manufacture and drug trafficking have continued to spread in the region despite intensified interdiction efforts. The Board notes with concern that the consistently high volume of seizures of cocaine, both in the region and elsewhere, and of coca paste and the precursor chemicals needed to manufacture cocaine have not yet led to a reduction in the availability of cocaine worldwide.

392. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy and trafficking in heroin have not diminished in South America. The abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has increased in most countries in the region. There are signs that the international syndicates involved in drug trafficking in the region are also becoming involved in

trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants and are experimenting with the illicit manufacture of such drugs. Money-laundering and corruption seriously affect most countries in South America and may reduce the impact of drug control efforts in the region.

393. Political and social tension increased in many countries in South America, including in countries that had previously been less affected by it. In Bolivia and Peru, the Governments did not succeed in enforcing the law because of resistance on the part of coca bush growers; in both countries, the total area under coca bush cultivation has increased, although the transitional measures regarding the licit cultivation of coca bush and consumption of coca leaf under the 1961 Convention ended a long time ago and it is a known fact that coca leaf harvested in the areas concerned is used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine. In addition, studies have been undertaken or will be undertaken in Peru and Bolivia, respectively to assess the demand for coca leaf used for local consumption.

394. The Board is concerned that the Governments of some countries in South America, in view of the perceived difficulties in fighting illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking, are considering ways to reduce their efforts in those areas, thereby sending the wrong message to the public. The Board urges all Governments to ensure that the provisions of the 1961 Convention concerning illicit crop cultivation and illicit drug production and trafficking are fully implemented.

395. At the same time, the Board believes that measures to alleviate poverty, accompanied by sustained law enforcement efforts to prevent the re-emergence of illicit crop cultivation, are essential to the achievement of a lasting reduction in the production of coca or other narcotic drugs in South America.

Treaty adherence

396. All States in South America are parties to the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

397. South American countries continue to participate actively in multilateral cooperation mechanisms of CICAD for countries in the Americas. CICAD is

assisting those countries in the preparation of reports under the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism and the development of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs. CICAD also carries out, among other things, drug supply reduction and control activities and provides guidance in the development of the integrated drug treatment system. Together with UNODC, CICAD is establishing a drug information network to ensure common standards among countries and comparability of national drug abuse surveys (see para. 409 below). Regional cooperation related to drug control also includes Operation Andes II, a regional tracking initiative for precursors carried out in collaboration with Interpol and the World Customs Organization, and joint activities carried out by the member States (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and associated States (Bolivia and Chile) of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR).

398. In addition, multilateral and bilateral agreements on drug control between States with common geographical traits or shared borders continue to be upheld. For example, an intelligence centre coordinated by the Federal Police of Brazil was created in 2005 in the border area where the borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet. To assist law enforcement agencies of Colombia in establishing connections with their counterparts in the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Office central de répression du trafic illicite des stupéfiants of France, two meetings were organized in Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique, in March and May 2005.

399. The Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2004, recommended that Governments should examine the possibility of sharing the proceeds from the forfeiture of illegally acquired assets upon the conclusion of investigations of drug trafficking activity undertaken in multiple jurisdictions, to facilitate the prosecution of persons involved in illicit activities.

400. Leaders of drug control agencies from 70 countries held a conference in Santiago in April 2005 to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and money-laundering. One of the main issues discussed was the increased use of the Internet by drug traffickers.

401. The United States and countries in Europe continue to provide resources for drug control in South

America through bilateral and multilateral agreements in a variety of areas such as law enforcement, criminal and fiscal investigation and judiciary matters, alternative development assistance, and programmes for drug abuse prevention. Recent examples include the agreement between Colombia and the United States and the agreement between Bolivia and the United States to maintain in 2006 the assistance provided for alternative development, strengthening institutions and creating social infrastructure, as well as the Lima Declaration, on strengthening cooperation between regions to reduce the supply of and demand for illicit drugs, agreed on during the VII High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima in June 2005.

National legislation, policy and action

402. The Government of Argentina approved in January 2005 the Federal Plan for Integral Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking for the period 2005-2007, which provides for reduction of illicit drug demand and supply; control measures; strengthening of institutions; and evaluation programmes. In Brazil, the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress approved in February 2004 a new law amending Act No. 6368 of 21 October 1976, on measures for the prevention and suppression of the illicit traffic in and abuse of narcotic drugs or those substances which cause physical or psychic dependence; the new law is still awaiting approval by the Senate. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a revised law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (including the control of precursor chemicals) is still awaiting approval. The Board urges the Governments of those countries to take all the steps necessary to ensure that the new laws are enacted as soon as possible.

403. In Ecuador, a new national drug strategy for the period 2004-2008 and its implementation plan came into effect in 2004. The Strategy includes provisions to strengthen the legal framework and institutional capacities to address drug trafficking. The first agreement to establish joint customs and police port control in Guayaquil, Ecuador, was achieved under a container control pilot programme aimed at reducing drug trafficking and increasing port safety without hampering legitimate container trade.

404. The Government of Guyana published in June 2005 the long-awaited five-year drug control strategy for the period 2000-2005. The strategy should lead to improvement in coordination by various agencies and a balanced approach to reducing the illicit supply of and demand for drugs; key elements are increased resources for law enforcement and greater bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries, together with training of judges and magistrates on laws relating to drug control, improved facilities for the prosecution of drug cases and a revision of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act of Guyana, to provide for speedier forfeiture of assets related to drug trafficking.

405. A multi-year criminal justice reform project continues to be implemented in Chile. In Colombia, a new criminal prosecution system with adversarial, oral and public trial features was initiated in January 2005, to be implemented gradually until December 2008. In Peru, the new code of criminal procedure will implement a similar accusatory system commencing in early 2006. The Board invites other countries experiencing similar problems with their criminal justice system to take appropriate measures to allow proper sentencing of drug-related crimes. For example, in Ecuador, drug traffickers appeared to operate with impunity following the dismissal of the Supreme Court in December 2004. In several remote regions of Ecuador and Peru, drug-related crimes go unpunished as there is no government presence and no public prosecutors.

406. The Board notes that Colombia continued to strengthen its efforts in the area of law enforcement, in particular against the powerful drug trafficking organizations in that country. In late 2004 and early 2005, Colombia extradited several high-ranking drug traffickers to the United States.

407. New legislation against money-laundering was approved in Uruguay in September 2004. Draft legislation against money-laundering is to be approved in Ecuador and Paraguay (see also para. 432 below) by the congress of each of those countries. The Board urges the Government of Ecuador to expedite the approval and entry into force of the proposed legislation. The Board urges the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to approve the Organized Crime Bill, which has been ready since 2002 and which would address the problems of money-

laundering and corruption and foster judicial cooperation; the Government is reviewing its agreement on drug control cooperation with the United States.

408. In South America, activities aimed at combating the illicit use of chemicals in the manufacture of cocaine and heroin continued under Operation Seis Fronteras, a regional initiative involving Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), as well as the United States. The Parliament of Chile adopted in November 2004 a law that includes strengthened measures for the control of precursor chemicals. In Peru, where a new chemical precursor law was enacted in July 2004, a draft regulation on the implementation of the new law is before the congress. The Board invites Suriname, the only country in the region without legislation on precursor control, to enact such legislation as soon as possible. The Board urges all Governments in the region to strengthen their cooperation with a view to preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals across their borders and to identifying the attempted diversion of such chemicals.

409. The Board welcomes the fact that during 2004 and 2005 a comprehensive survey of drug abuse among school-aged persons was conducted with the assistance of CICAD and UNODC in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay, using common methodologies and procedures to enable comparisons to be made between countries. The Board notes that programmes for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse in some countries in South America appear to be inadequate to deal with the increasing drug abuse in those countries. The Board invites Governments of countries in the region to increase their activities for reducing illicit drug demand and to strengthen their programmes for the treatment and social reintegration of drug abusers, as necessary. Governments should establish appropriate policies in this regard and provide adequate resources for such activities.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

410. Illicit cultivation of cannabis destined mainly for local or regional markets continues to be detected in most countries in South America, as evidenced by increasing seizures of cannabis. For example, cannabis

plants are cultivated in northern and north-eastern Brazil, where eradication efforts are ongoing. Paraguay continues to be the principal source of the cannabis resin found in the region. In Paraguay, the good soil and high prices for cannabis and for cannabis resin on the illicit markets are ideal conditions for the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and trafficking in cannabis. Only 10 per cent of the cannabis cultivated in Paraguay is abused locally; most of the rest is destined for markets in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. More than 5,000 tons of cannabis were destroyed in Paraguay with the assistance of Brazilian authorities. Seizures of cannabis were reported to have increased in 2004 in Bolivia, where they rose by 250 per cent (to over 28 tons) compared with 2003, and in Colombia.

411. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plant, like the illicit cultivation of other drug crops in South America, is concentrated in areas where poverty prevails. Although a small number of countries in the region are experiencing serious problems with illicit cannabis plant cultivation, until now, sustainable legitimate livelihood programmes have been practically non-existent in areas where cannabis plant is cultivated. The Board urges those countries to carry out sustainable legitimate livelihood programmes in conjunction with eradication and other effective law enforcement measures in areas that are already affected and those likely to be affected by illicit cannabis plant cultivation.

412. Cannabis abuse is the driving force behind illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking in South America. A comparative study of drug abuse in Bolivia between 1992 and 2005 showed that cannabis continued to be the most frequently abused narcotic drug and that the abuse of cannabis was growing faster than the abuse of other internationally controlled substances. The Board urges the countries concerned to take cannabis abuse into account when considering measures to reduce the illicit demand for drugs.

413. In 2004, the total area cultivated with coca bush in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, after having decreased for three years, increased by 3 per cent (to 158,000 hectares) over 2003, and coca bush cultivation continued to spread to areas previously not affected by it. Whereas the total area under coca bush cultivation in Colombia continued to decrease, from 86,000 hectares in 2003 to 80,000 hectares in 2004, about 60 per cent of the coca bush fields identified in

that country were new. Significant replanting of coca bush was reported in Colombia at the end of 2004; that has not yet been included in the coca bush cultivation survey for 2004. In 2004, crop spraying reached a record level in Colombia for the fourth consecutive year, contributing to the continued decrease in coca bush cultivation. However, the vegetation cover of some of the sprayed coca bush fields had time to grow back. In addition to crop spraying, manual eradication of coca bush fields is also taking place in Colombia.

414. In Peru, which continues to be a major producer of coca leaf, the total area under coca bush cultivation was estimated in 2004 at 50,300 hectares, an increase of 14 per cent over 2003. More than 10,000 hectares of coca bush were eradicated in 2004 and a further 8,000 hectares are expected to be eradicated in 2005; however, opposition to illicit crop eradication is growing. Almost one quarter of the total area cultivated with coca bush in Peru in 2004 was in national parks and other areas where the conditions are not suitable for agriculture. In 2004, studies on coca leaf yields revealed that field management practices had improved. The many coca bush seedlings and newly prepared fields, in particular in areas with high levels of insecurity and violence, where eradication is difficult, indicate that coca bush cultivation in Peru could increase further in 2005. Moreover, in 2005, several local governments issued ordinances that, in effect, legalized the cultivation of coca bush for traditional purposes, such as chewing and making infusions. Those ordinances have been vigorously rejected by the Government of Peru, as they are deemed to be unconstitutional and in breach of Peru's international drug control commitments and responsibilities. The Board is concerned that that action could serve as a precedent if it is allowed to stand.

415. In Bolivia, political and social tension has severely limited the ability of the Government to deal with the increasing coca bush cultivation; moreover, the eradication policy has been undermined by short-term agreements with coca growers. UNODC estimates that in Bolivia a total of 27,700 hectares were under coca bush cultivation in 2004, which represents an increase of 17 per cent over the total for 2003; 41 per cent of the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation was in national parks. A total of 8,437 hectares of coca bush were eradicated in Bolivia in 2004, less than the amount eradicated in any of the three previous years.⁴¹

The increase in coca bush cultivation in Bolivia took place mainly in Chapare, where coca leaf yields were estimated to be more than twice as high as elsewhere in the country; more than 50 per cent of the increase took place at the expense of forest areas.

416. In addition, the illicit cultivation of coca bush continues to be reported in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), near those countries' borders with Colombia, although it is very limited and sporadic compared with such cultivation in the major producing countries. In both Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) the first surveys of illicit crops were launched in mid-2005, focusing on provinces in those countries adjacent to the Colombian border; the results of those surveys are expected in December 2005. The Board hopes that the Governments of those two countries will take vigorous action against illicit coca bush cultivation so that it can be stopped before it spreads and becomes much more difficult to eliminate.

417. The Board wishes to re-emphasize that the continued success of efforts to reduce illicit crop cultivation, as well as interdiction efforts, will depend on the political will of Governments to enforce a policy of not tolerating illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking even in times of difficult circumstances such as social and political tension. However, that policy should be accompanied by programmes offering sustainable legitimate livelihood to farmers in the producing countries.

418. Based on the estimated total area under coca bush cultivation, the potential total manufacture of cocaine in 2004 was estimated at 687 tons, an increase of 2 per cent compared with the total in 2003 (674 tons). That estimate is less reliable than the estimated total area under coca bush cultivation, in the absence of hard data on agricultural yields and also on the yields from processing coca leaf into cocaine. As noted by the Board already in its report for 2004, there are indications that coca leaf yields in some countries, as well as the assumed cocaine manufacture, might have increased considerably more than estimated, due to improved methods;⁴² moreover, better agricultural techniques, including irrigation, have been used. It is also believed that the manufacture of cocaine from coca leaf has become more effective since the late 1990s, as traffickers have become more experienced in the use of precursor chemicals. The relatively stable prices of coca base and cocaine in South America,

despite the success of efforts to reduce illicit coca bush cultivation, as well as law enforcement efforts, support the view that actual illicit manufacture of cocaine might have been substantially higher than estimated.

419. The bulk of the cocaine in the world continued to be manufactured in Colombia, but the illicit manufacture of cocaine is known to have taken place in recent years also in all other countries in South America except Paraguay (even in countries not previously affected by illicit cocaine manufacture, such as Argentina and Uruguay). For example, in the northern border area of Ecuador, a large laboratory for processing cocaine was found in February 2005. In Colombia, intensified law enforcement efforts resulted in an increase in the volume of detected and dismantled clandestine laboratories for cocaine manufacture during 2003 and 2004, as well as an increase in the total volume of seizures of coca base and cocaine hydrochloride. In May 2005, more than 15 tons of cocaine hydrochloride were seized at an illegal storage location near Tumaco, Colombia, the largest single seizure of that substance ever made in that country; during the same operation, precursor chemicals, speedboats and firearms were also seized and a centre for controlling drug trafficking activities throughout the country was destroyed.

420. Drug traffickers responded to intensified interdiction efforts in Colombia by gradually shifting the illicit manufacture of cocaine to other countries and by using new and diverse trafficking routes. International criminal groups involving Colombian and Mexican nationals are involved in drug trafficking throughout South America. Criminal organizations that previously focused their activities on trafficking only in either cannabis, cocaine or heroin are now trafficking in all of those drugs. There are some new trends in the smuggling of cocaine into Europe: the cocaine shipments involved are increasingly being transported through Southern Africa and, in particular, Western Africa; and the operations are often organized by criminal groups from Western Africa. In Ecuador, international trafficking networks with links to criminal groups in Lebanon and countries in Northern Africa have been identified as being involved in smuggling cocaine and heroin into the United States and have used corrupt airport officials for that purpose.

421. In Bolivia, the low prices of coca leaf and other illicit drugs noted in the last few months could have

led to Colombian and Mexican drug gangs being attracted to that country. According to information on law enforcement efforts in Bolivia during 2004 and the first half of 2005 and in Peru during 2004, there continues to be a large volume of seizures of cocaine base and precursor chemicals, as well as a large number of dismantled clandestine laboratories for large-scale cocaine manufacture; despite those successes, the low prices of cocaine in the streets in Peru indicate that cocaine is readily available in that country.

422. Although the abuse of cocaine is a problem in South America, the cocaine that is smuggled in the region continues to be mainly destined for the United States or, increasingly, countries in Europe. Brazil, Ecuador, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) are the countries in the region that are most affected by cocaine trafficking, although other countries, such as Argentina and Chile, have experienced growing transit traffic. In Chile, for example, in the second half of 2004, two consignments of cocaine were seized, each exceeding 1 ton. Other significant seizures of cocaine in 2004 were reported by Brazil, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (7 tons each).

423. Traffickers continue to attempt to circumvent the controls put in place within the framework of Operation Purple, the international tracking programme for the prevention of the diversion of potassium permanganate, the key chemical for the purification of cocaine. In 2004, 19 clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of potassium permanganate were detected and dismantled in Colombia (more than twice the number detected and dismantled in that country in 2003), and 3 clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of precursor chemicals were dismantled in Bolivia. In Colombia, the total volume of seizures of precursor chemicals for the manufacture of cocaine increased in 2004 compared with 2000.

424. The precursor chemicals smuggled in South America continue to be mainly from the region. For example, in Ecuador, law enforcement investigations in 2004 and 2005 confirmed a major incident involving transnational organized crime: the large-scale, systematic diversion through theft of petroleum ether for use as a precursor in Colombia. Progress is being made towards finding effective solutions to prevent

such theft in the future. Strengthened precursor control in Paraguay resulted in the seizure of 10,000 litres of toluene, a solvent used in the manufacture of cocaine, in November 2004. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, theft of precursor chemicals is reported to the Government. The Board urges each Government in the region to remain vigilant and strengthen its controls over the distribution and use of precursors on its territory.

425. The Government of Colombia estimates that almost 4,000 hectares were used for the illicit cultivation of opium poppy in 2004, similar to the total area under such cultivation in that country in 2003. It is assumed that the total area under such cultivation in that country has not changed much in recent years, despite crop spraying. Total potential heroin manufacture in Colombia in 2004 was estimated at 5 tons. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy continues to take place in Peru, where the Government has continued its eradication efforts. According to estimates by the Government of Peru, in 2004, a total of 1,400 hectares were cultivated with opium poppy; that area had the potential of yielding approximately 1 ton of heroin. In 2004, Peru reported the seizure of 450 kilograms of opium.⁴³ In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, opium poppy is illicitly cultivated; there are plans to begin an eradication programme once the results of the survey of the extent of that cultivation are known.

426. Heroin manufacture continues to take place mainly in Colombia and, to a lesser degree, in Peru. Eight clandestine laboratories for heroin manufacture were dismantled in Colombia during 2004. Most of the heroin manufactured in South America is destined for the United States. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, one of the main countries in South America used as a transit country for heroin shipments bound for the United States, cooperated in the dismantling of a heroin smuggling organization in 2004.

427. Cannabis and cocaine, in that order, continue to be the main narcotic drugs abused in South America; however, the extent of the abuse of those drugs varies from country to country. For example, the level of drug abuse is fairly low in Paraguay (see para. 433 below): a survey released in August 2004 revealed that only 0.7 per cent of the surveyed population had tried cocaine in their lifetime. In contrast, surveys undertaken in Peru in 2004 showed that abuse of drugs

had increased among men and women, especially among young people, that the abuse of cocaine base and cannabis had nearly doubled between 2002 and 2004, and that about 4 per cent of the surveyed population over 12 years of age had used cocaine at least once.

428. The abuse of morphine and heroin is not a major problem in South America; however, in Argentina and some Andean countries, the abuse of those drugs is reported to be increasing, especially among youth. The Board urges the Governments concerned to alert their population about the risks associated with the abuse of such drugs.

Psychotropic substances

429. According to reports, the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances in South America remains limited. Seizures of illicitly manufactured stimulants, still smuggled mainly out of Europe, continue to be effected in countries in the region. However, in September 2005, Colombian police dismantled for the first time a clandestine laboratory used for the manufacture of methamphetamine. In Colombia, some of the Ecstasy smuggled out of Europe is pressed into tablets and there are trafficking organizations specializing in Ecstasy. The availability and abuse of Ecstasy are increasing in Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Ecstasy is also becoming more readily available in Ecuador and Peru. In Suriname, the volume of seizures of Ecstasy rose sharply in 2004.

430. The diversion and overprescription of a variety of pharmaceuticals containing psychotropic substances have continued. For example, the latest drug abuse surveys conducted in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay show that the rate of abuse of sedatives (benzodiazepines) is ranked second after cannabis abuse and that the rate of abuse of stimulants (such as femporex) is similar to or even higher than that of cocaine. The Board reiterates its appeal to Governments to strengthen their control over prescriptions for controlled pharmaceuticals and to inspect records on relevant sales (see, for example, the report of the Board for 2003).⁴⁴

Substances not under international control

431. Ketamine, a substance currently under review by WHO to determine whether it should recommend that

it be placed under the control of the 1971 Convention, is readily available in Peru on the illicit market and therefore abused extensively, despite the fact that officially its sale is restricted to hospitals. The abuse of ketamine has also been detected in Uruguay.

Missions

432. The Board sent a mission to Paraguay in April 2005. The Board notes the commitment of the Government of Paraguay in combating illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse. The mission found that in Paraguay the legislative basis for the control of drugs in general and for the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in particular was adequate. Nevertheless, the Board notes that the resources for drug control remain inadequate and coordination and cooperation between the agencies involved are still lacking. The Board recommends that the Government provide more human resources, training and equipment with a view to making more effective the agencies involved in drug control. The Board urges the Government to continue to implement its policy of zero tolerance of corruption and to increase the effectiveness and transparency of the law enforcement and judicial systems by providing appropriate human resources and training. In addition, the Board encourages the Government to take all steps necessary to ensure that changes to be introduced into the national legislation against money-laundering will be implemented as soon as possible.

433. The Board advises the Government of Paraguay to keep a balanced approach in its overall drug control policy, ensuring the reduction of both the demand for and the supply of illicit drugs. The Board notes that the Government has recently undertaken surveys to ascertain the extent and pattern of drug abuse, which have shown that there is relatively little abuse of psychotropic substances and cannabis in the country, and is planning drug abuse prevention activities. The Board notes the measures already taken in Paraguay, as well as those planned to be taken, to suppress the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and trafficking in cannabis and other drugs and encourages the Government to maintain its efforts in those areas.