

assessment of the nature, extent and patterns of drug abuse in that country. The Government should therefore give priority to conducting a rapid assessment of drug abuse in the country. Such an assessment is essential to the development of policy and the designing of appropriate programmes for the prevention of drug abuse and treatment and rehabilitation of the drug abusers.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

Major developments

332. The region of Central America and the Caribbean continues to be used as a transit and trans-shipment area for consignments of illicit drugs, primarily cocaine from countries in South America, mainly Colombia, bound for the United States and Europe. It is estimated that 88 per cent of the cocaine entering the United States has passed through Central America, while about 40 per cent of the cocaine entering Europe has passed through the Caribbean. In some countries in the region, the involvement of international and national criminal groups in drug trafficking is increasing and the rule of law is being undermined. The existence of youth gangs, or *maras*, involved and often in control of the street-level distribution of cocaine hydrochloride and “crack” cocaine, continues to be a problem in countries in the region such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

333. Most illicit drugs are transported through Caribbean and Pacific waters, usually using fast boats in the Caribbean and larger craft in the Pacific. Despite the huge amount of cocaine passing through Central America and the Caribbean, the level of drug abuse in the region remains relatively low. However, the increasing quantities of drugs being trans-shipped through the countries in the region can, in the longer term, lead to growing illicit markets and increasing drug abuse levels in the transit countries.

334. While the production of cannabis for the illicit markets in North America and Europe has decreased, cannabis abuse and trafficking within Central America and the Caribbean continue to pose problems. The significant increase in seizures of MDMA reflects the

intensified use of the region as a transit area and the related problem of growing drug abuse.

335. The control of precursor chemicals in Central America and the Caribbean appears weak. The Board encourages countries in the region to put in place an adequate system for the control of precursors, in order to prevent the region from being used for the diversion and smuggling of precursor chemicals into other regions, for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.

Regional cooperation

336. Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) are using the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism to monitor and evaluate individual and collective efforts in addressing the drug problem. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission (CICAD) employs the results of the evaluation to make periodic recommendations to member States on improving their capacity to control illicit drug trafficking and abuse and enhance multilateral cooperation. Although not all recommendations have been fully implemented, substantial progress has been made. Through the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, three evaluations have been conducted and recommendations have been made to Governments. The responses from Governments have been very positive: 76 per cent of recommendations had been implemented by Governments in the first round, 85 per cent in the second round and 81 per cent in the third round.

337. Drug control efforts of countries in Central America and the Caribbean are often hampered by lack of funding. The Secretary-General of OAS invited the States in the region to adopt laws that would, on a regular and permanent basis, allocate up to 1 per cent of the drug-related assets seized to drug control programmes and organizations. Recognizing the important role that sea transport plays in drug trafficking in the region, the Board encourages the Governments of countries in the region to follow the recommendation of OAS on implementing measures to deter, thwart and dismantle criminal organizations using the sea to transport narcotic drugs, arms and materials used in processing drugs.

338. Drug abuse prevention programmes continue to expand in the region. Such programmes include a programme on school drug abuse prevention guidelines, training teachers under the sponsorship of

CICAD and life skills programmes. In addition, the University of the West Indies launched in 2007 an online programme in the Caribbean for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse. The online programme marks the conclusion of a two-year partnership between CICAD and the University of the West Indies, undertaken at the request of national drug control commissions of Caribbean countries.

339. OAS and the Commission of the European Union launched an initiative in February 2007 to link cities in Europe with cities in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to create associations to improve, at the municipal level, the rehabilitation and treatment of drug abusers. Furthermore, the Governments of Canada, France, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States provided assistance in combating drug trafficking activities.

340. The Regional Security System of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States has among its main objectives the prevention and interdiction of trafficking in illicit narcotic drugs. The countries that are members of the Regional Security System (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) continued in 2006 to support efforts to counteract the smuggling of drugs through the eastern part of the Caribbean.

341. A seminar was held in Mexico City in May 2006 to provide training for police, customs and officials from the ministries of health of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama in improving the current system for the control of precursors in those countries. The training focused on bringing national legal frameworks in line with the international drug control treaties, on diversion techniques and on the implementation of UNODC electronic tools for drug control. Similar training was offered for police, customs and Government officials from Belize, Costa Rica and Honduras in October 2007.

342. The Board would welcome the disruption, as a result of the ongoing cooperation among countries in the region, of operations involving trafficking in drugs and precursor chemicals.

National legislation, policy and action

343. In Belize, the National Coast Guard Service, with full responsibility for law enforcement and safety at

sea, was established in 2006 to deter trans-shipping of narcotic drugs. The National Coast Guard Service patrols the Belizean coastline and conducts operations to combat drug trafficking.

344. In 2006, the Costa Rican Institute on Drugs enhanced its coordination efforts in the areas of intelligence-gathering, demand reduction, the seizure of assets and the licensing of precursor chemicals. In 2006, Costa Rica also adopted legislation against illicit enrichment and reported the results of the evaluation of several drug abuse prevention programmes. Programmes targeting universities, adults, the workplace and prison inmates are included in the strategy "Promoting Healthy Lifestyles". The Board encourages the Government of Costa Rica to ratify the multilateral Agreement concerning Cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area.

345. In El Salvador, the Anti-Narcotics Division of the National Police is responsible for preventing drug trafficking by land, sea and air. It is also responsible for preventing the smuggling of drugs using mail delivery services. With regard to drug abuse prevention efforts, the Government of El Salvador is working with the Anti-Drugs Foundation of El Salvador (FUNDASALVA), a non-governmental organization, to increase public awareness of substance abuse and to provide counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration services (including job training) for drug-dependent persons. In 2007, UNODC, in collaboration with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted studies on the prevalence of drug abuse by injection, high-risk behaviour and HIV/AIDS in treatment centres in El Salvador and Guatemala. UNODC provided to El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama support in publishing and promoting recently approved or revised minimum standards for the treatment of drug abusers.

346. In 2006, Guatemala enacted a law against organized crime, authorizing wiretaps, undercover operations and controlled deliveries. The Executive Secretariat of the Commission against Addictions and Illicit Drug Trafficking of Guatemala continues to implement the Comprehensive National Program on Prevention Education. Using the "train-the-trainer" concept, the Government of Guatemala trained a sufficient number of teachers so that courses on drug

abuse prevention could be taught in schools. Corruption remains a problem in Guatemala, despite efforts by the Government of Guatemala and the enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy on corruption in the National Police.

347. In 2006, Honduras adopted the Law on Transparency and Access to Information, giving public access to information about activities of the Government, in particular its ministries and agencies. Congress is expected to adopt in 2007 a plan to revise the police law and to reorganize the national police and law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking. In order to improve the work of the national police, plans are being made to increase the number of police officers and to reorganize the police command.

348. While Panama is not a major producer or consumer of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, there are reports that significant quantities of chemicals pass through the Colón Free Zone to other countries. Legislation to strengthen the chemical control regime in Panama was adopted in April 2005. In 2006, emphasis was placed on building capacity to implement the new legislation, for example by creating a chemical control unit at the Joint Intelligence Coordination Center.

349. The Information Advisory Committee of the National Drug Council of Antigua and Barbuda has started to evaluate currently used methods for data collection and analysis. With technical assistance from CICAD, Antigua and Barbuda has carried out a national survey in secondary schools to determine the nature and extent of drug use in secondary schools and the attitudes of youth towards the use of drugs.

350. In Barbados, the National Council on Substance Abuse, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, carries out drug abuse prevention and education programmes, such as the Drugs and Decisions programme in 45 primary schools, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programme and the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education programme.

351. In Cuba, rehabilitation programmes for drug-dependent persons are carried out by State-run organizations ensuring the implementation of minimum care standards. In order to prevent the diversion of pharmaceuticals containing internationally controlled substances, only one port and one airport are

authorized to function as gateways for the import and export for controlled substances.

352. The Ministry of Health of Dominica has established a series of community-based prevention programmes, including the DARE programme. The Board encourages Dominica to adopt the principle of minimum standards of care in drug dependency treatment as defined by CICAD.

353. The Dominican Republic has strengthened domestic law enforcement and has identified activities against money-laundering that are to be given priority. Corruption continues to undermine drug control activities, despite efforts by the Government to deal with that problem.

354. The Board notes that in Grenada the 2005 draft precursor chemical bill has not yet been adopted. The Board encourages the Government of Grenada to adopt legislation on precursor control that is in conformity with the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

355. The Observatoire haïtien des drogues (Haitian drug monitoring centre) is not functioning properly because of lack of human resources and equipment. The national police reached an agreement in August 2006 with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) on procedures for checking all police officers for criminal records. In 2006, 500 officers were dismissed for misconduct. Corruption is so prevalent in the country that it often hinders drug and crime control efforts. Anti-corruption measures introduced by the Government have met with limited success. The Board requests the Government to curb the influence of organized crime on Government activities and to fight corruption at all levels. The Board is concerned that the lack of resources to adequately patrol the borders and coast of Haiti has resulted in the country becoming a major drug trafficking hub in Central America and the Caribbean.

356. In 2006, the Government of Jamaica announced security and legislative and policy initiatives to combat drug trafficking, corruption and trafficking in humans. The initiatives called for measures such as forfeiture, port security and digital fingerprinting measures. However, the legislation did not go beyond the initial stages. The adoption of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which would facilitate seizures and forfeitures, was stalled in Parliament. Legislation to criminalize the

manufacture, sale, transport and possession of “ecstasy”, methamphetamine and precursors of those drugs was drafted in 2006 and scheduled to be presented to Parliament in 2007. The Board urges the Government of Jamaica to adopt the two laws as soon as possible.

357. In 2006, the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago enhanced the capacities of the Special Anti-Crime Unit, which carries out operations to counter drug trafficking and kidnapping. In 2006, crime control and law enforcement bills were passed in Trinidad and Tobago, streamlining the police service and holding it more accountable, in addition to increasing the penalties for certain offences, including offences related to drug trafficking.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

358. The region of Central America and the Caribbean is used by drug traffickers as a major transit and trans-shipment area. Cooperation increased between criminal groups in the region, and more complex cooperation mechanisms have been established between criminal groups. Drug trafficking accounts for a large part of the organized criminal activities in the region. Some countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica, are major hubs for drug trafficking groups shipping drugs to the United States and countries in Europe. In 2005, about 10 tons of cocaine were transported through Jamaica, and 20 tons of cocaine passed through the Dominican Republic or Haiti. The Caribbean islands continue to form part of the main routes used for smuggling cocaine into Europe: the Netherlands Antilles is used for shipments to the Netherlands, Jamaica for shipments to the United Kingdom and French-speaking Caribbean islands are used for shipments to France. The authorities in the Netherlands believe that the 100 per cent control strategy for passengers flying from the Netherlands Antilles, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) to the Netherlands has significantly reduced the flow of illicit drugs through Schiphol airport, near Amsterdam.

359. While the Caribbean route is preferred by Colombian drug traffickers, Mexican criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking prefer the Central American corridor. As the Mexican criminal groups

have replaced Colombian drug trafficking groups in the United States (see paragraph 397 below), part of the transit traffic in illicit drugs appears to have shifted to Central America. Some less policed areas in Central America, such as the national park Laguna del Tigre in Guatemala, Mosquitia in Honduras and the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, are used by drug traffickers for refuelling planes and vessels and for repackaging and storing drugs. The share of cocaine shipments accounted for by Central American countries and Mexico increased from about 50 per cent in 1999 to 88 per cent in 2005. Guatemala is used as a landing area for private aircraft smuggling cocaine from Colombia into the United States. Guatemala is also used as a trans-shipment area for cocaine consignments transported by sea to Europe. Because of its extensive unpatrolled areas, drug traffickers are also using Guatemala as a storage area for drugs being transported to Mexico.

360. During 2006, joint operations of Costa Rican and United States authorities led to the seizure of more than 25 tons of cocaine. One growing problem is the use of Costa Rican fishing vessels for smuggling narcotic drugs and refuelling “go-fast” boats transporting drugs. In 2006, over 36 tons of cocaine were seized in Panama.

361. In Central America and the Caribbean, the level of abuse of narcotic drugs is relatively low. For example, the annual prevalence of abuse of narcotic drugs appears to range from 0.1 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 1.3 per cent in Aruba; the majority of countries have an annual prevalence rate of less than 1 per cent.

362. In the Caribbean, Jamaica continues to be the main producer of cannabis and the only significant exporter of cannabis to other regions, but its cannabis production has decreased. There is substantial cannabis production in Central American countries, mostly for domestic use or trafficking within the region. Jamaica has the highest annual prevalence of cannabis abuse, with 10 per cent of all persons aged 15-64 abusing cannabis. In all countries in Central America except Belize and Guatemala the annual prevalence is less than 5 per cent. The cannabis abuse level is higher in most countries in the Caribbean but still significantly lower than in Jamaica, ranging from 1.9 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 7.3 per cent in Barbados.

363. Substantial amounts of heroin originating in Colombia and Mexico have been seized in countries in the Caribbean (Aruba, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago) and in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama). Guatemala has reported large seizures of opium poppy capsules but only sporadic seizures of heroin. In September 2006, the Government of Guatemala reported having eradicated 27 million opium poppy plants, indicating an increase in illicit opium poppy cultivation to its previous peak level.

364. The annual prevalence rate of abuse of opiates is low in most countries in the region, ranging from 0.04 per cent in Honduras to 0.3 per cent in El Salvador.

Psychotropic substances

365. The transit traffic in psychotropic substances appears to be increasing in the Caribbean. In 2006, the authorities in the Dominican Republic seized 363,434 tablets of MDMA (“ecstasy”). A large part of the seized drugs were destined for the illicit market in North America. Increasing trafficking is contributing to a rise in the abuse of psychotropic substances such as MDMA in the Dominican Republic. According to authorities, about half of all the MDMA trafficked in the Dominican Republic is abused in the country. In Jamaica, there is evidence that MDMA from the Netherlands is increasingly becoming available on the illicit markets, mostly for tourists. The annual prevalence of abuse of amphetamines is highest in El Salvador (3 per cent), followed by the Dominican Republic (1.1 per cent). Synthetic drugs also originate in the region, although to a lesser extent. A laboratory manufacturing LSD was dismantled on the island of St. Maarten.

Precursors

366. Because of improved control over imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, in Mexico, there have been fewer attempts to illegally import those substances into that country and drug traffickers have therefore found a new route for smuggling ephedrine and pseudoephedrine through Central American countries to clandestine laboratories in Mexico. In 2006, Indian authorities stopped the shipment of 5 tons of ephedrine and 2.5 tons of pseudoephedrine to

Belize. Attempts to divert large quantities of pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were prevented in Costa Rica and El Salvador.

North America

Major developments

367. The increasing influence that organized criminal groups gained over and through drug trafficking is the major drug threat in the region of North America. Organized crime is controlling drug trafficking in Mexico. The role of criminal organizations in drug trafficking in Canada and the United States has expanded, providing them with financial gains that increase their illicit drug manufacturing capacities even further. Despite strong efforts by the Government of Mexico and bilateral efforts in cooperation with the United States, organized crime is engaged in open warfare against the authorities in order to maintain Mexico’s position as the primary transit corridor for most of the cocaine consignments destined for the United States while maintaining their share of the profits derived from the trafficking in heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis found on the United States market.

368. In Canada, apart from motorcycle gangs involved in drug trafficking, various ethnic criminal groups engage in the large-scale illicit production of cannabis and illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine and MDMA. In the United States, criminal groups originating in Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Mexico play a major role in illicit drug manufacture and trafficking. The Board, recognizing that national authorities in all of those countries are attempting to counteract those developments by increasing cooperation and joint operations, encourages the national authorities to intensify those efforts in order to adequately respond to those challenges.

369. In Canada, the supply of “safer crack kits”, including the mouthpiece and screen components of pipes for smoking “crack”, has been authorized by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, in contravention of article 13 of the 1988 Convention. Several other cities in Canada, such as Ottawa and Toronto, have also approved programmes for the distribution of drug

paraphernalia, including crack pipes, to chronic drug users. The Board calls upon the Government of Canada to eliminate those programmes, as well as existing programmes providing drug injection sites, which are in violation of the international drug control treaties, to which Canada is a party.

370. After years of apparent stability in the drug trade, significant and sustained increases in cocaine and methamphetamine prices occurred in the illicit drug market in the United States during 2007. At the same time, a drop in purity at the retail level was observed. Contributing causes of those positive developments seem to be: an increase in the flow of cocaine towards Europe; eradication campaigns in Colombia; and intensified efforts by the Government of Mexico, which have disrupted the operating environment of drug traffickers.

371. As a result of those developments, the abuse of cocaine and “crack” in the United States has significantly decreased, but the abuse of prescription drugs has become a major problem. Illegal Internet pharmacies constitute a large part of that problem by providing prescription drugs without the required controls. The particularly high rates for the abuse of prescription drugs, the consequences of which can be fatal, are affecting a larger proportion of young people than in previous years.

372. The United States has nearly reached its goal of reducing the abuse of cannabis, heroin and MDMA among youth by 25 per cent within five years. However, the decrease in the abuse of cannabis among youth in the United States may be offset by an increase in the abuse of prescription drugs. The Board, therefore, encourages the authorities of the United States to vigorously address the problem of the illegal sale and abuse of prescription drugs.

Regional cooperation

373. Regional cooperation for drug control matters is well established in North America. A large number of bilateral investigative activities and joint operations have been carried out in the region, some of them covering the whole range of drug trafficking activities such as Operation All Inclusive 2005-1 and Operation All Inclusive 2006-1. Those two operations focused on South American source areas, the eastern Pacific and western Caribbean parts of the transit areas in Mexico and Central America, and mainland areas of Mexico

and Central America, in order to target in a combined effort the flow of drugs, money and chemicals within those areas. Numerous other joint operations have targeted trafficking in specific drugs, including cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

374. United States law enforcement agencies provide the Federal Investigative Agency of Mexico with basic equipment and advanced contraband detection training. Training in the detection and dismantling of clandestine laboratories is also provided to law enforcement personnel to raise the capacity at the local level to bring to justice manufacturers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, particularly methamphetamine. A matter of major concern to Mexico is the use of proceeds from drug trafficking to acquire weapons in the United States for use in Mexico by criminal organizations.

375. The weak control of the financial system of Mexico is exploited by drug traffickers to launder money derived from drug trafficking. That has resulted in an increase in the number of money-laundering cases investigated in 2006 by the financial crime unit of the office of the Deputy Attorney General against organized crimes. In 2006, Mexico became a member of the Financial Action Task Force of South America against Money Laundering (GAFISUD).

376. Two successful examples of cooperation between Canada and the United States are Project North Star, a mechanism for law enforcement coordination, and the joint Integrated Border Enforcement Team initiative. Canada is also cooperating with the United States against illicit drug trafficking along the route leading from South America to North America and has deployed “Maritime Patrol Assets” in support of the Joint Interagency Task Force South. The Integrated Marine Security Operations programme known as Shiprider facilitates effective maritime law enforcement. It allows law enforcement officers from one country to operate from the vessels or aircraft of another country, so that a single vessel can patrol both Canadian and United States waters and pursue suspect vessels.

National legislation, policy and action

377. In the United States, demand reduction strategies targeting youth continue to be monitored in the annual survey “Monitoring the Future”. There has been a reduction in the demand for drugs that has been

attributed to the increasing perception of the risks of drug abuse by youth, strong parental disapproval and effective prevention messages delivered in schools. The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign uses television, radio, printed matter and online communications to enhance young people's ability to perceive the harm caused by drug abuse.

378. The growing problem of abuse of prescription drugs in the United States is being addressed through the cooperation of government offices, research institutes, pharmaceutical companies, medical associations, schools and communities. Activities include educational outreach strategies covering a wide range of groups (including physicians, pharmacists and patients), as well as education, screening, intervention and treatment for persons who abuse prescription drugs, the surveillance of distribution chain integrity and research by the private and public sectors. In spite of those activities, the purchase and abuse of Vicodin[®] (containing hydrocodone) and OxyContin[®] (containing oxycodone), particularly by youth, and the illegal sale of those and other drugs over the Internet have become major problems in the United States.

379. In the United States, the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 became fully effective in September 2006. The Act establishes a nationwide standard for precursor control and provides for severe penalties for precursor-related offences and provisions for enhanced international enforcement of laws to prevent the diversion of chemicals. Efforts are being carried out at the national and state levels to regulate more closely the sale of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in retail outlets.

380. In response to the smuggling of drugs across the border with Mexico, the United States Administration has developed the National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy and Implementation Plan, which was adopted by Congress in December 2006. The Implementation Plan has identified the major goals and objectives and resource requirements for closing gaps in drug control capabilities along the south-west border of the United States.

381. The President of Mexico has identified the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime as the most important tasks of his Government. The Government of Mexico has initiated plans to introduce innovations in law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking, through the reform of the justice system,

the creation of a unified federal police force under a single command and the establishment of a unified criminal information system. The Government has also improved the investigative and analytical capabilities of the Federal Investigative Agency of Mexico and the National Centre for Analysis, Planning and Intelligence against Organized Crime of the Attorney General's Office of Mexico. While progress appears to have been achieved during 2007 in the fight against drug traffickers and corruption, the Government has confirmed its commitment to adopting further countermeasures. The presidential veto of the planned changes to the national law, which would have allowed personal possession of drugs, was approved in April 2007 by the commissions of justice, health and legislative studies of the Senate.

382. In Mexico, the clandestine manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine have increased in the past few years. Legislative and administrative measures in Mexico have significantly reduced imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, substances required for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine (see also the 2007 report of the International Narcotics Control Board on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention).⁸⁹ Criminal organizations have reacted to that development by smuggling ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from Central American countries into Mexico, to compensate for the reduced availability of those precursors on the Mexican market.

383. The Board encourages the Government of Canada to implement as soon as possible the new National Anti-Drug Strategy, for combating illicit drug production, preventing illicit drug use and treating illicit drug dependence. The Board notes that the Meth Watch Program, implemented by the Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada, includes the training of retailers to identify suspicious orders for precursors of methamphetamine.

384. In Canada, a bill that received final parliamentary approval in December 2006 will make the national legislation against money-laundering consistent with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering by expanding the

⁸⁹ *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2007 ...*

coverage of the legislation to include lawyers and dealers in precious metal and stones.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

385. North America is one of the main regions used for the production of cannabis. The United States, Mexico and Canada produce about 5,000 tons, 4,000 tons and 800 tons of cannabis, respectively. Some of the cannabis produced in the United States is grown under hydroponic conditions, so as to increase the yield and the potency.

386. The illicit market for cannabis in Canada is mostly supplied by domestic production. Canadian cannabis with high potency is grown indoors on a large scale under laboratory conditions using specialized equipment and fertilizers. The large-scale illicit cultivation of cannabis in Canada appears to be driven by the lack of strict punishment for cannabis growers.

387. In the United States, efforts to eradicate cannabis have increased in recent years; in 2006, a record level of about 6 million cannabis plants were eradicated. The eradication of illicit crops remains a priority of the Mexican army, which eradicated nearly 30,000 hectares of cannabis in 2006 (at least 80 per cent of the total cannabis crop).

388. Cannabis is the most common illicitly used drug in the region. The prevalence of lifetime cannabis users is 40.1 per cent in the United States (according to the 2005 national survey on drug use and health) and 44.5 per cent in Canada (according to the 2004 report on the drug situation). The last survey of prevalence of lifetime cannabis users in Mexico (conducted in 2003) showed a much lower number of cannabis users (prevalence of 4.7 per cent).

389. The sharp increase in cannabis potency in the region is a cause for serious concern. The increase has been attributed to the production of high-potency cannabis in Canada and the United States by criminal groups. The average potency of samples of seized cannabis nearly doubled from 2000 to 2005. Compared with the average tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content of cannabis in the 1960s, the potency of cannabis has increased by nearly 10-fold. Mexican criminal groups have also started to produce higher-potency cannabis,

derived from cannabis cultivated on outdoor plots on the western coast of the United States.

390. According to the Potency Monitoring Project of the University of Mississippi, cannabis with higher potency accounts for an increasing percentage of samples of seized cannabis in the United States. The percentage of samples containing higher-potency cannabis (THC content of at least 5.0 per cent) increased from 15.8 per cent in 1989 to 60 per cent in 2005. The highest THC content in an analysed sample was 32.3 per cent. According to the Treatment Episode Data Set, 20.1 per cent of drug abusers admitted for treatment in 2005 reported cannabis to be their primary drug of abuse (compared with 6 per cent in 1992).

391. About 1.5 per cent of the population of the United States and 0.9 per cent of the population of Canada reported having abused heroin at least once in their lifetime. While heroin abuse in Mexico still seems to be concentrated in areas along that country's border with the United States, recent surveys indicate that heroin abuse has expanded to other areas in Mexico though the prevalence rate is still quite low. In the United States, heroin abuse among youth has decreased only slightly, and no significant changes in the rate of heroin abuse and the number of first-time heroin abusers have been observed among the general population.

392. Most of the heroin abused in the United States comes from Colombia and Mexico. While South American "white heroin" remains the predominant heroin in use in the United States, Mexican drug trafficking organizations have introduced "black tar" and "brown powder" heroin from Mexico in some of the south-eastern states, as well as in the Midwest, in the United States. A mixture of "black tar" heroin and Tylenol[®] PM (paracetamol) is increasingly being abused in some parts of the United States, where more than a dozen deaths have been reported from such abuse.

393. In 2006, the Government of Mexico reported having eradicated opium poppy covering over 16,831 hectares, less than the more than 20,000 hectares reported for two of the previous three years.

394. Each year, between 1 and 2 tons of heroin are smuggled into Canada, mostly from South-East Asia and South-West Asia and, to a lesser extent, Latin

America. According to a report from Canada, a mixture of heroin and ketamine is being smuggled into Victoria, Canada. The Board requests the Government of Canada to verify the authenticity of that report.

395. In Mexico, cocaine is the second most commonly abused drug; lifetime prevalence of cocaine abuse (use of cocaine at least once in a person's lifetime) is currently 1.45 per cent in that country. In Canada, cocaine is reported to be the third most widely abused drug, according to a 2004 survey; lifetime prevalence of cocaine abuse is 10.6 per cent in that country. In the United States, lifetime prevalence of cocaine abuse is reported to be 13.8 per cent, according to a 2005 survey.

396. According to a 2005 survey, the rate of past-month abuse of cocaine among youth in the United States has been stable in recent years, at about 0.6 per cent, which is significantly below the peak level of 1.9 per cent in 1982. Cocaine abuse among the general population in the United States has also been stable. About 2.4 million persons have abused cocaine in the past month.

397. Most of the cocaine transported to the United States is from countries in South America, particularly Colombia, which supplies about 90 per cent of the cocaine entering the United States, using routes that pass through the Mexico-Central America corridor. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of cocaine in the United States. Mexican authorities seized more than 48 tons of cocaine between 1 December 2006, when the new Administration took office, and late October 2007. That is more than double the amount of cocaine seized in the previous year.

398. It is estimated that 15-25 tons of cocaine enter Canada every year; Colombia continues to be the predominant source country. Cocaine enters Canada largely through that country's border with the United States or in shipments from the Caribbean. Canadian criminal organizations are involved in large-scale international networks facilitating the importation of cocaine into Canada and other countries.

399. The abuse of prescription drugs in the United States is higher than the abuse of heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine and second only to the abuse of cannabis. Approximately 6.4 million people in the United States abuse prescription drugs containing

controlled substances, mostly pain relievers (4.7 million). Nearly 10 per cent of students in their final year of secondary school (17-18 years old) reported having abused prescription drugs in the past year (9.7 per cent abused Vicodin[®] and 4.3 per cent abused OxyContin[®]). One third of all new abusers of prescription drugs in that country are 12-17 years old, and prescription drugs are the drug of choice among persons 12-13 years old. The Board is concerned about those developments.

400. In some states in the United States, the abuse of prescription drugs is considered to represent a serious threat to the health and safety of the population. In Maryland, the number of deaths caused by methadone abuse increased by more than 25 per cent between 2005 and 2006. Moreover, the cases involving fentanyl overdose and death increased significantly in 2006. Most of the cases involving death were not related to the abuse of diverted licitly manufactured fentanyl preparations but to the abuse of heroin or cocaine that had been mixed with clandestinely manufactured or diverted fentanyl. In May 2006, a laboratory in Mexico used for the clandestine manufacture of fentanyl was seized after having been identified as one of the main sources for the fentanyl that had been used as an adulterant for the heroin involved in the drug-related deaths in Maryland.

401. The diversion and abuse of OxyContin[®] continue to take place in Canada, particularly in Nova Scotia and Ontario, where an increase in the number of deaths linked to the abuse of that drug has been noted. The increase in trafficking in OxyContin[®] is reflected in the increase in the samples of OxyContin[®] seized and analysed by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

402. The increasing abuse of prescription drugs in the region is the result of several developments, including the sharply increased legitimate sale, availability and accessibility of such drugs, for example through illegally operating Internet pharmacies. From 2000 to 2004, the sale of pharmaceuticals increased by 109 per cent (the sale of drugs containing oxycodone increased by nearly 90 per cent and the sale of drugs containing hydrocodone increased by nearly 70 per cent). In 2006, 34 known or suspected illegal Internet pharmacies dispensed 98,566,711 dosage units of drug products containing hydrocodone. Individuals ordering from illegal Internet pharmacies have been able to obtain 100-200 prescription drug tablets per order, much

larger orders than they would be able to obtain legally, and that has contributed significantly to the increased availability of prescription drugs for abuse.

Psychotropic substances

403. In the United States, the rate of abuse of methamphetamine among persons aged 12 and above declined from 0.7 per cent in 2002 to 0.5 per cent in 2005. The decline was even more pronounced among schoolchildren aged 13-18: from 4.2 per cent in 1999 to 2.4 per cent in 2005 and 2.0 per cent in 2006. Thus, the number of first-time abusers of methamphetamine among youth in that country also decreased in 2005, compared with the three previous years. In Mexico, however, methamphetamine abuse has been rising, particularly along the border of that country with the United States. In Canada, there has also been a resurgence in the popularity of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine tablets also continue to be one of the main ingredients in tablets marketed as "ecstasy". It is also used by traffickers to enhance the effects of cannabis, cocaine, heroin and ketamine (a substance not under international control), possibly to accelerate addiction among persons abusing those substances.

404. Reduced illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in the United States has been partially offset by increased manufacture of the drug in Mexico. About 80 per cent of the methamphetamine in the United States is from larger laboratories, increasingly in Mexico, while the remaining 20 per cent comes from small home laboratories. Mexican criminal groups are also the main wholesale distributors in the United States of methamphetamine, including powder methamphetamine and, increasingly, "crystal" methamphetamine (commonly known as "ice").

405. Methamphetamine seizures at the border between Mexico and the United States increased from 777 kg in 2000 to 2,790 kg in 2006. In 2006, Mexican authorities seized four clandestine laboratories capable of manufacturing 0.6 ton of methamphetamine. Seizure data indicate that extensive infrastructure for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine is in place in Mexico and that the number of methamphetamine laboratories dismantled and the quantities of methamphetamine seized may reflect only a fraction of the actual illicit activity involving that drug.

406. In Canada, methamphetamine is illicitly manufactured mainly in clandestine laboratories in that

country. The involvement of organized crime in methamphetamine trafficking has increased the number of methamphetamine "super labs", laboratories capable of manufacturing 5 kg or more in one 24-hour manufacturing cycle.⁹⁰ While the quantities of methamphetamine smuggled out of Canada into the United States are considerably lower than the quantities of "ecstasy" smuggled in that direction, United States authorities fear an increase in the flow of methamphetamine from Canada. One growing problem is the smuggling of methamphetamine from Canada into countries overseas, mostly Japan. Seizures of methamphetamine of Canadian origin have also been reported in Australia and the Republic of Korea.

407. In the United States, the abuse of LSD and MDMA by the teenage population has been declining since 2001, the level of abuse of MDMA decreasing by one half and that of LSD by nearly two thirds in the period 2005-2006.

408. In Canada, illicit drug manufacturers and traffickers are marketing as "ecstasy" a mixture of MDMA and methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) in tablet, capsule or powder form. The tablets also contain methamphetamine, ketamine, caffeine, pseudoephedrine and ephedrine.

Substances not under international control

409. The abuse of inhalants by young persons remains a problem in Mexico and the United States. In Mexico, inhalants, which are the third most commonly abused group of substances, continue to be the preferred substance of abuse among child workers. In the United States, adolescents represent the main group of inhalant abusers: the average age at first use of inhalants among recent initiates is 16 years.

410. United States authorities are concerned about the growing abuse by adolescents of dextromethorphan, a substance commonly found in over-the-counter cough and cold remedies. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network, adolescents accounted for nearly one half of all emergency room visits related to the abuse of that substance.

411. In Canada, ketamine and GHB continue to be abused at rave parties and clubs, sometimes in

⁹⁰ *Ecstasy and Amphetamines: Global Survey 2003* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XI.15), p. 89.

combination with other illicit synthetic drugs. Ketamine found on the illicit market is obtained through either domestic or international channels of diversion. Clandestine manufacture supplies the Canadian market for GHB. GBL, required for the manufacture of GHB, is obtained from domestic or foreign sources in "GHB manufacturing kits" ordered via the Internet.

412. Khat is smuggled mainly through the United Kingdom into Canada, where its abuse is mostly limited to groups with origins in the eastern part of Africa.

413. A recently discovered drug of abuse in Canada has BZP as its active ingredient. The drug called "funk pills" has effects similar to MDMA and amphetamine. The Board requests the authorities of Canada to provide any information they may have about the abuse potential and prevalence of abuse of BZP to WHO, as that substance is under consideration for future review.

South America

Major developments

414. The region of South America is suffering from the illicit cultivation, on a large scale, of coca bush, opium poppy and cannabis plant, as well as the manufacture and production of and trafficking in the illicit drugs stemming from that cultivation. During the past four years, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in South America was stable. In 2006, that total area decreased slightly compared with the previous year, to 156,900 hectares. In 2006, Colombia was the world's leader in illicit coca bush cultivation, accounting for 50 per cent of global coca bush cultivation; it was followed by Peru (33 per cent) and Bolivia (17 per cent). Contrary to the situation in 2005, the decreased illicit cultivation of coca bush in Colombia in 2006 was partly offset by increased illicit cultivation in Bolivia and Peru. Areas under illicit coca bush cultivation measuring less than 100 hectares were found in Ecuador. Marginal illicit coca bush cultivation was also detected in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

415. The total area of illicit coca bush cultivation eradicated in the three main countries producing coca leaf increased by 23 per cent to 231,313 hectares in 2006, compared with 2005. In Colombia alone, the

total area eradicated in 2006 (213,555 hectares) was almost three times the total area under coca bush cultivation (78,000 hectares), which is a reflection of the intensity of the eradication activity in that country. Priority was also given to eradicating illicit opium poppy cultivation. In 2006, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Colombia decreased to 1,023 hectares, 48 per cent less than the level of the previous year and about 18 times less than the level of 15 years ago.

416. The continued positive developments in the eradication of illicit coca bush cultivation in the region were offset by the growers' improved cultivation techniques, the planting of new varieties of coca bush and increased efficiency in clandestine laboratories processing coca leaf. As a result, potential manufacture of cocaine in South America remained at 800-1,000 tons annually in the period 1997-2006. In 2006, potential manufacture of cocaine in the region was 984 tons, about the same as in 2005.

417. Although virtually all of the illicit manufacture of cocaine occurs in the three main countries in which coca bush is cultivated, all countries in South America are affected by trafficking in those drugs. The strengthened cooperation and the sharing of intelligence among law enforcement authorities contributed to an improvement of the global cocaine interception rate, which had risen sharply in previous years. According to the latest data provided by Governments, the amount of cocaine seized represents about 40 per cent of global cocaine manufacture. More than half of the cocaine seized worldwide was seized in South America.

418. The nexus between drug trafficking, drug-related organized crime and violence continued to plague several South American countries. For example, in Brazil, drug-related organized crime has in recent years resulted in increased gang violence and murder in large urban areas.

419. The primary drugs of abuse among persons treated for drug problems in South America are cocaine-type drugs (accounting for almost 50 per cent), followed by cannabis (26 per cent). The demand for treatment for the abuse of ATS and opiates is lower, accounting for about 1 per cent of those seeking treatment for abuse. Cocaine abuse continued to rise in all the countries covered in the latest surveys.

Regional cooperation

420. Representatives of 10 countries and territories, including Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and six international organizations participated in the International Anti-Narcotics Conference held in Paramaribo in October 2006. The Conference adopted the Paramaribo Declaration, which contains measures aimed at strengthening coordination and cooperation among participating countries in efforts to fight drug and precursor trafficking and small arms trafficking and the criminal organizations associated with those activities.

421. The sustainability and further improvement of the regional and international cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence services, as well as judicial authorities, of South American countries continued to be discussed at various meetings in South America. In October 2006, South American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), as well as member States of the European Union, Europol and Interpol were among those represented at the European Union-Latin American and Caribbean Drugs Intelligence Sharing Working Group, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participants reported on progress made in exchange programmes for law enforcement officers and presented results of recent joint operations. States were invited to participate in the Europol Cocaine Logo System, aimed at identifying links between the drugs seized and the organized crime networks involved.

422. Representatives at the Sixteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires in October 2006, reported on regional cooperation, including the exchange of information on the movement of small vessels at the international level, which has proved to be an effective measure against maritime trafficking in cocaine and other illicit drugs. The Meeting recommended that Governments organizing campaigns to eradicate illicit coca bush cultivation should ensure that those campaigns are accompanied by programmes offering viable commercial alternative livelihoods to assist rural communities in supporting themselves without having to return to illicit crop cultivation.

423. At the fortieth regular session of CICAD, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 29 November to 1 December 2006, experts reported on issues of common interest, including the control of precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations, the use of the Internet to sell drugs and money-laundering. Representatives of participating countries reported on drug policy issues, including new drug control legislation (Brazil), national policy on the eradication of illicit crop cultivation (Colombia) and the strategy against drug trafficking and for the evaluation of coca leaf, covering the period 2007-2010 (Bolivia).

424. During the Third Ibero-American Meeting of National Drug Observatories, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in December 2006, the subregional system for drug abuse information and investigation, linking Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, as well as CICAD and UNODC, was presented as an example of best practice in the region.

425. In 2006, Paraguay built an operational base at its border with Brazil to respond to an increase in organized criminal activities and the presence of drug trafficking groups in the area. During 2006, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the United States launched the seventh phase of the operation Seis Fronteras, a regional initiative to control chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine and heroine.

426. In February 2007, Colombia hosted the extraordinary meeting of the European Union/Latin America and the Caribbean Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs. The meeting recommended the promotion and financing of initiatives, including preventive alternative development programmes, to assist in generating profitable and long-lasting structural changes in areas affected by illicit drug crop cultivation.

427. In 2007, under the Subregional System for Drug Abuse Information and Investigation, an epidemiological study on the extent of drug abuse among the population was conducted simultaneously in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, with a view to obtaining information to be used in support of public policies and drug demand reduction programmes. The countries participating in the study reviewed the progress made at the Technical Meeting

of the Subregional System for Drug Abuse Information and Investigation, held in Lima in March 2007.

428. In May 2007, CICAD approved *The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) Achievements: 1997-2007*, a report evaluating the main accomplishments in the Americas in the area of drug control. According to CICAD, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services for drug abusers in many countries in the region need to be further improved. In 2007, OAS and the European Commission launched an initiative to pair up cities in Europe with cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, forming partnerships to improve the treatment and rehabilitation of problematic drug abusers and address other aspects of drug dependency at the municipal level. The initiative will bring together mayors, medical and treatment personnel and judges from cities in both regions in a sustained program of exchanges aimed at sharing best practices, establishing long-term partnerships and developing new approaches to improving the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

429. The Board noted that in 2007 the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru participated in Operation Crystal Flow, which focused on the trade in ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two key precursors of ATS.

National legislation, policy and action

430. In December 2006, the Government of Bolivia approved the new drug policy, the strategy against drug trafficking and for the evaluation of coca leaf, covering the period 2007-2010. The goals of the strategy include: to reform the present legislative framework through the introduction of two new legal instruments, the regime applicable to coca and the regime applicable to controlled substances; to increase up to 20,000 hectares the total area under coca bush cultivation permitted by Bolivian law; to industrialize coca leaf; and to strengthen the interdiction capacity and efficacy of measures to fight the drug problem.

431. In December 2006, the Government of Bolivia, in line with its drug control strategy, opened one of the three plants envisaged for the production of coca leaf for industrial purposes. The Board notes with concern that the use of coca leaf for industrial purposes, such as the production of coca tea or flour, is in breach of the international drug control conventions. The Board reminds the Government of Bolivia and the

Governments of the other countries concerned that the use and the importation of coca leaf, from which cocaine has not been extracted, for purposes other than those allowed under the 1961 Convention violates the provisions of the international drug control conventions.

432. According to the Government of Bolivia, the abuse of illicit drugs in the country increased between 1992 and 2005. The new drug control strategy includes a number of remedial measures, such as programmes for the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment of drug abusers.

433. In Brazil, there has been an increase in drug trafficking and in criminal acts committed in combination with other serious types of crime, including kidnapping, extortion and arms trafficking organized by criminal groups, mainly in large cities. To tackle those serious problems, the Government of Brazil prepared in 2007 a new plan against crime and violence, focusing on the social security of police officers and the integration of traditional law enforcement action with current social policies. For example, in Brazil, the State of Rio de Janeiro has launched activities to reduce drug trafficking and related crime in slum areas, with a view to making public places safer and providing health services, education and safety for the local population. The private sector has joined forces with the local public institutions in Brazil to prevent drug abuse in the family and the community.

434. In late 2006, Brazil promulgated decree 5.912, which further defines competencies of the national system of public policy on drugs. In Chile, a number of drug-related legislative instruments were adopted during 2006, including supreme decree No. 539 of 18 May 2006, the regulation on the distribution of the Ministry of the Interior's special fund to finance programmes for the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. In addition, the special register of users of controlled chemical substances, which will assist in further strengthening the control of precursor chemicals in the country, became operational in April 2007.

435. In 2007, the Government of Colombia launched the Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development 2007-2013, also known as Plan Colombia Phase II, aimed at consolidating the results achieved during the completed Plan Colombia.

The Plan foresees maintaining supply reduction components and also emphasizes the importance of including social elements.

436. In 2006, Colombia adopted resolution 15 of 12 May 2006, establishing further measures to control fast boats and fishing boats in order to prevent such boats from being used in maritime drug trafficking. Following the entry into force of ministerial resolution 1478/2006 of 10 May 2006, Colombia modified regulations to improve systems for the control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. The regulation extended the medical prescription of opioids for 30 days to facilitate the treatment of chronic pain. In addition, a national survey on the availability of opioids has been carried out and a programme to train doctors in palliative care has been launched.

437. Following the positive results achieved by a joint customs and police port control unit in Guayaquil, Ecuador, that became operational in March 2006, a similar unit was established in Manta. The abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances is considered to be a major problem in Ecuador. In November 2006, the Government of Ecuador enacted a regulation defining procedures for trading in and selling pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances.

438. In Peru, there were continued resistance and attacks by groups of guerrillas, as well as armed drug traffickers and coca growers, at the end of 2006, following the announcement by the Government of its intention to carry out a peace and development plan aimed at combating the remaining guerrillas and eradicating illicit coca bush cultivation. The Government responded to the attacks by expanding its presence in coca-growing areas. In March 2007, the protests against coca bush eradication efforts led to a controversial agreement with the coca growers on a temporary suspension of eradication until the growers registered with the national coca enterprise. The Board is concerned that that development may lead to a further increase in the number of the registered coca leaf producers in the country.

439. On 22 November 2006, Peru promulgated supreme decree No. 84-2006-PCM to regulate the use of chemicals and certain finished products by retailers. In addition, law No. 28305 entered into force in March 2007, providing measures for the monitoring and

control of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

440. In Peru, in December 2006, the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) presented the rapid impact plan 2007, aimed at strengthening drug control activities in the country. The plan is a part of the national strategy for combating drugs covering the period 2007-2011, the goals of which include a reduction of 40 per cent in the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation, an increase in the seizures of illicit drugs and a decrease of 10 per cent in the rate of drug abuse (past-year prevalence of) among the school-age population.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

441. Cannabis production takes place in practically all countries in South America. The largest producer in the region is Paraguay, followed (at a much lower level) by Colombia and Brazil. Decreases in cannabis production in Colombia in recent years appear to have been offset by increases in cannabis production in other countries in the region, notably Paraguay.

442. Although Brazil is an important producer of cannabis, it does not produce enough to meet the demand on its illicit markets. In Brazil, most of the cultivation of cannabis plants takes place in fields resembling the fields of plantations. The Brazilian authorities estimate that 60 per cent of cannabis abused in the country is from Paraguay. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the total amount of cannabis seized increased gradually after 2003, reaching over 21 tons in 2006. The total amount of cannabis seized in 2006 increased in Ecuador and Peru, but decreased in Chile. Almost 60 per cent of the 5 tons of cannabis seized in Chile originated in Paraguay.

443. The annual prevalence of cannabis abuse among the general population in South America was estimated at 2.3 per cent, which is less than the global average. The results of a recent comparative study of drug abuse confirm that cannabis is the illicit drug of choice among students in secondary schools in all countries in South America, except Brazil, where inhalants are the most widely abused substance. The highest past-year prevalence for cannabis abuse was found in Chile (12.7 per cent), followed by Uruguay (8.5 per cent). In

those two countries, more than 60 per cent of students abuse only cannabis. The lowest abuse rates were found among students in Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru.

444. In 2006, the total area under coca bush cultivation in South America was 156,900 hectares, 29 per cent less than the total in 2000, which was the highest level in the previous 10 years. Potential illicit production of cocaine in 2006 was 984 tons, about the same amount as a year earlier.

445. In Bolivia, the total area under coca bush cultivation in 2006 increased by 8 per cent, compared with 2005, to 27,500 hectares. In the same year, the total cultivated area in which coca bush was eradicated in that country decreased by 17 per cent, to 5,070 hectares. That represents the smallest area eradicated in the previous 10 years. Due to increased coca bush cultivation, in particular in the Chapare area, where the coca leaf yields are higher than in the Yungas area, in the department of La Paz, potential production of cocaine hydrochloride in Bolivia increased in 2006 over the previous year by 14 tons, to 94 tons.

446. In Colombia, the estimated total area under illicit coca bush cultivation decreased in 2006 to 78,000 hectares, which is about half of the peak level of 163,000 hectares reached in 2000. However, in the departments of Nariño and Putumayo, in a belt about 10 km wide along the border of Colombia with Ecuador, total area under illicit coca bush cultivation increased by about 70 per cent in 2006, compared with 2005. A record total of 213,555 hectares of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated in Colombia in 2006 (41,530 hectares manually and 172,025 hectares by aerial spraying), 26 per cent more than in 2005.

447. According to recent estimates, about half of the total area in Colombia in which coca bush was eradicated has been replanted. Improved cultivation methods and intensified use of a variety of agrochemical products developed by growers over the years have contributed to a significant increase in coca leaf yields. In some areas, coca leaf can be harvested up to eight times per year. A recent coca leaf survey revealed that coca bush farmers in Colombia process three quarters of the total coca leaf production into coca paste or cocaine base.

448. According to the Government of Peru, approximately 90 per cent of the coca leaf produced in

the country is destined for illicit markets. After 1999, the total area under coca bush cultivation increased in Peru from a minimum of 38,700 hectares to 51,400 hectares in 2006. The Apurimac-Ene area was among the areas mostly affected by the increased cultivation. In addition, a new coca bush cultivation area was identified between Brazil, Colombia and Peru in the Amazon basin. Based on the results of a survey on coca leaf and cocaine yields conducted in Peru in 2006, potential cocaine production was estimated to be 280 tons.

449. In Peru, 10,136 hectares of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated in 2006 through forced eradication programmes and an additional 2,550 hectares of coca bush were eradicated as part of a voluntary programme. The eradication process in that country has been hampered by the activities of drug traffickers, who ambushed law enforcement officers and hid explosives among illicit crops to deter eradication efforts. The governments of the various regions in Peru are preparing an intervention strategy to address social instability, subversive action and crime, which have increased in recent years.

450. According to a national illicit crop monitoring system, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in Ecuador was estimated at less than 100 hectares in 2006. The illicit coca bush cultivation sites, each covering less than a hectare, were located mainly in the provinces of Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos, in the north of the country, not far from illicit coca bush cultivation areas in neighbouring Colombia. In the past five years, the illicit crops in the affected areas have been manually eradicated. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 40 hectares of coca bush were eradicated and 18 clandestine laboratories were destroyed during Operation Sierra XVII.

451. In 2006, cocaine seizures increased in Bolivia, Chile, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay and decreased in Colombia and Ecuador.

452. In 2006, the amounts of cocaine hydrochloride and cocaine base seized in Bolivia increased by 22 per cent, to 14.1 tons. According to UNODC, between January and August 2007, the amount of drugs and precursors seized, as well as the number of destroyed laboratories illicitly manufacturing drugs, has increased, supposedly as a result of intensified drug control activities and increased illicit production of drugs in the country. The total area of illicitly

cultivated coca bush eradicated during the first eight months of 2007 was 25 per cent larger than the total area eradicated during the same period in 2006.

453. The National Police of Peru reported a sharp increase in the total amount of coca paste and cocaine hydrochloride seized in 2006. The total amount of seized cocaine hydrochloride increased from 2.1 tons in 2005 to 14.7 tons in 2006. In Ecuador, a decline in the total amount of cocaine hydrochloride seized in 2006 was partly offset by an increase in the total amount of coca paste seized.

454. In 2006, Colombia seized 170.1 tons of cocaine hydrochloride and cocaine base. Though the total amount of those drugs seized was significantly lower than the amount seized in 2005, it was nevertheless higher than the average for the five-year period 2001-2005. According to the Colombian authorities, the decline in the total amount of cocaine seized in 2006 could be attributed to changes in trafficking patterns: in 2005, over 40 per cent of the cocaine seizures were made at sea; in 2006, however, cocaine traffickers in Colombia made increased use of land routes leading to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ecuador and from there to countries in the Southern Cone, and Central America and the Caribbean, using different trafficking methods, before the cocaine consignments reached their final destination, mainly the United States and countries in Europe.

455. Illicit cocaine shipments leaving the coasts of South American and Central American countries were also stockpiled in West African countries and trafficked through Africa by land before being smuggled on small airplanes or boats from North Africa into countries in Europe, in particular Spain. Commercial sea containers continue to be one of the main means of transport used to smuggle drugs. In the past few years, traffickers have also used submersible and semi-submersible vessels, constructed using the latest technology available in naval engineering to enable them to carry large cocaine consignments.

456. In 2007, the Colombian police carried out a number of successful operations against drug traffickers. In January 2007, in Operation Mercaderes, the national police dismantled a major criminal organization, responsible for smuggling cocaine and heroin from Colombia into the United States, through Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

Members of the organizations were arrested in Colombia and other countries in the Americas. During 2007, cooperation among the law enforcement agencies in the region resulted in the capture, in Brazil and Colombia, of the two most wanted Colombian drug traffickers.

457. The trafficking organizations supplying the growing illicit drug market in Brazil continued taking advantage of the geographical position of the country, as well as sparsely inhabited areas of the Amazon forest, to transport coca paste and cocaine from the Andean subregion through the territory of Brazil to Africa, Europe and North America. In particular, the smuggling of coca paste from Bolivia through Brazil increased significantly in 2006, while the smuggling of heroin of Colombian origin through Suriname decreased. The Brazilian authorities estimate that 70 per cent of the cocaine manufactured in Bolivia is smuggled through the Brazilian border.

458. Although cocaine seizures declined in Ecuador in 2006, that country continued to be used as an important storage and trans-shipment area for multi-ton consignments of cocaine destined for illicit markets in Europe and North America. Cocaine and heroin are smuggled by sea, on fishing vessels flying the flag of Ecuador, as well as by air, using couriers on board flights passing through the international airports in Ecuador.

459. According to statistics compiled by the Government, between 2003 and 2006, the total amount of cocaine seized in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ranged from 31 to 58 tons. In mid-September 2007, the authorities of that country seized another 17 tons of cocaine. Over 70 per cent of the cocaine consignments seized in 2006 in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were destined for countries in Europe, above all, Spain, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in that order.

460. In recent years, cocaine trafficking has increased in Chile and Uruguay. In Uruguay, the total amount of cocaine seized in 2006 (471 kg) was eight times more than in the previous year; furthermore, by August 2007, the amount of cocaine seized in that country had already exceeded the figure for the entire year 2006. According to the Government of Chile, the northern part of that country, which borders drug-producing countries, continues to be the main point of entry for the cocaine and cocaine base smuggled into the

country, mainly through areas outside the official crossing points.

461. Suriname is used as a transit country for large shipments of cocaine and cannabis smuggled on board small aircraft flying from Colombia and Peru. Large amounts of MDMA (“ecstasy”) are smuggled in cargo from the Netherlands into the United States via Suriname.

462. According to UNODC, between 2004 and 2005, laboratories illicitly manufacturing coca paste and cocaine were found in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In Bolivia, the number of coca paste and cocaine laboratories destroyed in 2006 increased over the previous year by more than 50 per cent, to 4,070; in addition, two precursor laboratories were destroyed in the country. The number of clandestine laboratories processing coca paste from Bolivia also increased in Brazil in 2006.

463. In Colombia, about 2,000 of the over 2,200 clandestine laboratories destroyed in the country in 2006 had been processing coca paste or cocaine base and the rest had been manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride. In 2006, the number of potassium permanganate laboratories destroyed in Colombia (15) was similar to the figure for 2005. The destruction of 11 clandestine laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride and over 700 laboratories processing coca paste and cocaine base was reported in Peru. Eighteen illicit drug laboratories were found during Operation Sierra XVII in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2006. Smaller laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride for personal use were found in Chile.

464. In November 2006, law enforcement authorities in Ecuador dismantled a laboratory estimated to be capable of illicitly manufacturing 2-3 tons of cocaine a month. Ecuador is also an important source of the essential chemicals that sustain illicit drug manufacture in neighbouring Colombia. The Board notes with concern that the theft of petroleum ether (a chemical that can be misused for processing coca leaf into cocaine) from pipelines of the State-owned oil refinery in the northern province of Sucumbíos in Ecuador continued to be on the increase in 2005 and 2006. The Board urges the Government of Ecuador to adopt measures to prevent that negative development.

465. In late 2006, UNODC and the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) of CICAD published the first comparative study of drug abuse in the secondary school student population in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. According to the study, among students 14-17 years old, the past-year prevalence of drug abuse was the highest in Chile for cannabis abuse (12.7 per cent); in Argentina for cocaine abuse (2.5 per cent); in Colombia for MDMA (“ecstasy”) abuse (3 per cent) and in Paraguay for the abuse of benzodiazepine-type tranquilizers (7.1 per cent).

466. The age of initiation of drug abuse decreased in some countries in South America, including Argentina and Brazil. In Argentina, the abuse of “paco” (coca paste), a highly addictive form of cocaine, has increased significantly during the past two years. “Paco” is often abused by young people, including children as young as 8 or 9 years old, in the poor neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires. The municipal authorities of Buenos Aires are planning to establish specialized centres to provide treatment for addicts less than 18 years old. In Brazil, the use of “crack” cocaine has grown, especially among persons with low income in urban areas, contributing to the already high level of drug-related violence and health problems.

467. The abuse of cocaine base in Chile has not changed significantly in the past 12 years. According to an epidemiological study published in July 2007, the abuse of cocaine hydrochloride among the general population in that country has remained stable and is estimated at 1.2 per cent. While the annual prevalence of cannabis abuse increased from 5.3 per cent in 2004 to 7 per cent in 2006, the perception of the risk of such abuse decreased.

468. In Colombia, as a result of the continued decrease in the illicit opium poppy cultivation, opium production decreased in 2006 to 31 tons (equivalent to 1.3 tons of heroin). During that year, law enforcement agencies destroyed seven laboratories manufacturing heroin in the region of Colombia bordering Ecuador and seized over 500 kg of heroin. The price of heroin in Colombia in 2006 was five times higher than that of cocaine hydrochloride. In Ecuador, more than 200 kg of heroin were seized in 2006, about the same amount as in 2005. According to the Government of Peru, illicit opium poppy cultivation in that country in 2006 did not exceed 100 hectares. In 2006, 88 hectares of

illicit opium poppy were eradicated in Peru, 8 per cent less than in 2005. In 2006, a programme for monitoring crops by satellite was used to support Operation Sierra XVII in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, during which 215 hectares of illicit crops, including 154 hectares of opium poppy, were eradicated.

Psychotropic substances

469. The abuse of sedatives and tranquillizers, the most widely abused drugs among the general population in Colombia, increased slightly in that country in 2006. According to a 2006 survey of secondary school students in nine countries in South America, past-year prevalence of the abuse of benzodiazepines, such as diazepam and alprazolam, was highest in Paraguay (7.1 per cent), Bolivia (7.0 per cent) and Colombia (6.4 per cent).

470. In Brazil, the rate of consumption of stimulants, mainly as anorectics, is among the highest in the world. Internationally controlled substances continue to be diverted from licit channels and are available without prescription. Pharmaceutical preparations, including counterfeit preparations from Asian countries, are also smuggled into Brazil, as evidenced by a case involving oxycodone originating in China. In February 2007, the Brazilian authorities dismantled a laboratory used for the illicit production of tablets of phenproporex, a psychotropic substance in Schedule IV of the 1971 Convention. The Board urges the Government of Brazil to expedite the adoption of the planned measures to address the diversion and abuse of controlled substances, in particular stimulants.

471. The latest data indicate that the annual prevalence of the abuse of MDMA ("ecstasy") among the general population in South America, estimated at 0.2 per cent, is among the lowest in the world. The lower seizures of ATS in the region, compared with other types of drugs, corroborate those data. In 2006, the Colombian authorities seized 18 kg of MDMA ("ecstasy"). Amounts smaller than 1 kg were also seized in Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) in 2006. According to the latest UNODC data, no laboratories illicitly manufacturing synthetic drugs were reported in the period 2004-2005 in South America.

472. Between 2001 and 2006, smaller amounts of LSD were seized in Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay. The latest data on seizures of precursors indicate that

the illicit manufacture of LSD in South America cannot be ruled out.

Precursors

473. South American countries have in place legislative and administrative control measures for the control of precursor chemicals, yet their law enforcement agencies continued seizing large amounts of solid and liquid chemicals. Moreover, there is no indication that those chemicals are not reaching clandestine cocaine laboratories. In Colombia alone, 100-170 tons of potassium permanganate were seized annually between 2004 and 2006, whereas about 120-130 tons of the substance is needed for potential annual manufacture of cocaine hydrochloride in the country. That indicates that drug traffickers have found a way to circumvent existing controls. The Board encourages the Governments concerned to initiate regional activities to control precursors, in particular to prevent the smuggling of precursors, as well as the diversion of precursors from licit distribution channels.

Missions

474. In September 2007, a mission of the Board visited Bolivia to review the drug control situation in that country and the Government's compliance with the international drug control treaties.

475. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia has adopted a national drug control strategy covering the period 2007-2010, which marks a significant shift in the political will and commitment of the Government to the objectives of the international drug control treaties. The Board appreciates that the strategy reaffirms the strong stand of the Government against the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in cocaine and the criminal organizations involved. The Board also welcomes the decision of the Government to strengthen the mechanism for the monitoring and control of coca bush cultivation.

476. The Board notes with concern, however, that the strategy addresses the issue of coca leaf chewing in a manner that is not in line with the obligations of Bolivia under the international drug control treaties, to which Bolivia is a party. The Board requests the Government of Bolivia to comply with its treaty obligations by taking measures to prohibit the sale, use and attempts to export coca leaf for purposes which are

considered not in line with the international drug control treaties.

477. The Government of Bolivia may wish to request assistance from its international development partners to put in place alternative development programmes to tackle the problems of poverty and hunger that prevail in the coca-producing areas of the country. The Board calls on Bolivia's development partners to ensure that assistance provided to the Government of Bolivia is always in line with the international drug control treaties.

478. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia has introduced the so-called "social control" policy, whereby coca bush growers are in charge of eradication programmes. The Board notes the relative peaceful environment that prevails in the coca bush growing areas. The Board requests the Government to monitor closely its new policy of getting the farmers to cooperate in voluntary eradication efforts. However, consideration should be given to devising alternative measures where the policy does not succeed.

479. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia has established commissions to review Law 1008, the basic law governing drug control in the country. The commissions are working on two separate laws, one to regulate coca leaf and one to regulate controlled substances. The Board requests the Government to ensure that the laws conform with the international drug control treaties.

480. The Board notes with concern that drug abuse among the general population, as well as among the student population, in Bolivia is on the rise while, at the same time, the age of first use of illicit drugs is declining. The Board requests the Government of Bolivia to formulate and implement education programmes aimed at eliminating coca leaf chewing, as well as other non-medical uses of coca leaf.

481. The short-term objective of such education programmes should be to discourage the practice of coca leaf chewing while preventing the expansion of the practice among students and youth, drivers of public transport vehicles and other vulnerable groups in Bolivia. Such education programmes should be evaluated taking into account the extent and trends of coca leaf chewing, as well as the role that it plays in the progression of drug dependence.

482. The Board notes that the existing mechanism for the monitoring and control of internationally controlled substances is not functioning adequately in Bolivia. The Board requests the Government of Bolivia to take measures to implement the recommendations made during its 2001 mission to that country, including the recommendation on providing adequate resources and trained personnel to all drug regulatory authorities, especially the Ministry of Health, to enable them to perform their control functions.

483. The Board sent a mission to Brazil in December 2006. The Board noted with concern that drug abuse has increased and medical overprescription of stimulants continue despite the recommendations of the Board following its previous mission to Brazil, in 2003. The Board is also concerned about the continued lack of cooperation between agencies at the state level and those at the national level, the low level of resources at the national level, the slowness of the judicial system and reports of corruption in the police and the judiciary. The Board urges the Government to take measures to strengthen interdiction activities in the whole country, particularly in the border areas and to make every effort to ensure the expeditious and fair prosecution of drug-related offences. In view of the involvement of African criminal organizations in drug trafficking in Brazil, cooperation with law enforcement agencies in African countries should be strengthened to enhance the investigation and prosecution of all criminals involved in drug trafficking. The Board notes the efforts of the Government of Brazil in recent years to expand drug demand reduction facilities. Nevertheless, with regard to the new law on drug control, the Board is of the opinion that the provisions related to the treatment of drug abuse cannot be implemented, as services for the treatment of drug abusers are not yet fully available throughout the country. Moreover, the new law may make the investigation and prosecution of illicit drug activities more difficult and may send the message to the public that drug trafficking is being treated more leniently by the Government.

484. The Board urges the Government of Brazil to enhance the inspection of domestic drug distribution channels and the monitoring of transport of precursor chemicals, particularly in areas close to sites used for the illicit manufacture of coca paste or cocaine, and to strengthen the existing control over the licit distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic

substances, in view of the diversions to illicit channels. In addition, the Government should enforce the controls applicable to stimulants and strengthen them further, if necessary, to address overconsumption. The level of consumption of opiates used for the treatment of pain in Brazil continues to be low; however, the abuse of synthetic opioids is high, according to the latest household survey. The Board calls upon the Government of Brazil to take further steps to remove any perceived obstacles to the adequate treatment of pain in the country and to improve the rational use of medicines.

485. The Board sent a mission to Colombia in April 2007. The Board acknowledges the commitment and efforts of the Government of Colombia in the fight against illicit coca bush cultivation, drug trafficking and abuse. The Board notes the significant results achieved in the continued reduction of illicit crops and the significant seizures of controlled substances, laboratories and assets derived from drug trafficking. The Board appreciates that the legal framework currently in force in Colombia covers all areas relating to drug control treaties and that good coordination among the competent authorities concerned has resulted in more effective implementation of drug control strategies.

486. The Board notes the difficulties encountered by the Government of Colombia in combating drug production and drug trafficking by the guerrillas and paramilitary groups that exist in many parts of the country. The Board encourages the Government to continue its efforts to eradicate illicitly cultivated coca bush and effectively introduce alternative sources of legitimate livelihood. In this regard, the Board commends the Government for the policies adopted to protect the forests and national parks and welcomes the "forest-ranger families" initiative, where families voluntarily become involved in the eradication of illicit crops, the production of economic crops and the protection of the forest. The Board is of the opinion that the Government should be assisted in its illicit crop eradication efforts by the international community, with a view to protecting the ecosystem from further deterioration caused by the numerous chemicals used to increase the coca leaf yield, as well as with a view to preventing deforestation, in particular in the Amazon area.

487. While the mechanisms for control over the licit movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are effective, the Government of Colombia needs assistance to gain control over the situation with regard to the smuggling of precursor chemicals into the country. There is a need to improve regional and international cooperation with the Government of Colombia aimed at preventing the smuggling and diversion of chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of cocaine, as well as a need to draw the attention of Governments to the investigation and identification of the sources of the chemicals being smuggled into Colombia and the smuggling routes used. The Board notes that, despite the investment in controlling sea transportation and in aerial surveillance by the Government of Colombia, significant amounts of substitute chemicals continue to reach the country, replacing those currently under control. The Board is of the view that the authorities of Colombia and its neighbouring countries should work together to improve measures to prevent unwanted chemicals from reaching the Andean subregion. In addition, the exchange of information among those countries should be improved.

488. Drug abuse surveys are being conducted and prevention campaigns are being organized regularly in Colombia. The Board encourages the Government of Colombia to continue improving the methodologies used to assess the extent of drug abuse in the country. The Board hopes that a comprehensive demand reduction policy, firmly implemented with a wide range of treatment and rehabilitation programmes, including extensive counselling and psychosocial assistance, will benefit the increasing number of drug abusers in Colombia.

489. The Board sent a mission to Peru in December 2006. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government adopted a comprehensive and balanced national drug policy for the period 2007-2011, with a view to combating drug trafficking and abuse, strengthened control over the licit distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and enacted a new law for the control of precursor chemicals. However, the Board notes with concern that the vast majority of the coca leaf produced in Peru is diverted into illicit manufacture and that the provisions of the 1961 Convention concerning licit cultivation of coca bush and the production and use of coca leaf are not being implemented. The Board wishes to remind

the Government that the only legal uses of coca leaf foreseen in the 1961 Convention are for medical or scientific purposes or for the manufacturing of a flavouring agent from which all alkaloids have been removed. The Board requests the Government of Peru to take steps to abolish as soon as possible activities that are not in line with those provisions.

490. The Board was impressed by the efforts undertaken to address the low availability of analgesics in Peru. The Board notes that mandatory reporting on the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors in Peru has improved. However, the Government should increase its capacity for inspection, in order to prevent the diversion of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from licit sources and improve the control of precursor chemicals further, in view of the continued availability of those substances for the illicit manufacture of drugs. With regard to interdiction efforts, coordination between the agencies involved should be strengthened. The Board encourages the Government to strengthen the cooperation of its national law enforcement agency with its counterparts in Africa and Europe, in view of the current trafficking routes and links with criminal organizations in those regions. With respect to demand reduction, the Board notes with satisfaction the action taken to assess the extent and type of drug abuse, to prevent such abuse and to treat drug abusers and reintegrate them into society. The Government should continue expanding its efforts to reverse the increasing trend in drug abuse, including by offering treatment services to the affected segments of society.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

491. The region of East and South-East Asia is no longer a major source of illicit opium poppy cultivation. However, some illicit manufacture of heroin remains in the region, and several laboratories involved in the clandestine conversion of cocaine hydrochloride to "crack" have been dismantled. Illicit manufacture of and trafficking in ATS is increasing in countries throughout the region, such as Cambodia, China and Myanmar. Large amounts of precursor

chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine have been seized in the region.

492. The abuse of ATS, methamphetamine in particular, is also increasing throughout East and South-East Asia. The increasing rate of abuse of heroin and methamphetamine by injection is contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. In several countries in the region, a large percentage of the HIV infections has been attributed to drug abuse by injection. In order to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS through drug abuse by injection, Governments are taking action at both the national level and the regional level.

Regional cooperation

493. The countries in East and South-East Asia continued to work together in the area of drug control through regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as through bilateral and multilateral channels.

494. The twelfth ASEAN Summit was held in Cebu, Philippines, in January 2007. Participating countries agreed to continue to take collective action to address the challenges posed by regional and international issues such as transnational crime, including drug control.

495. Task Forces of the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) held a number of meetings in 2007: the Task Force on Civic Awareness and the Task Force on Demand Reduction held meetings in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, from 30 July to 1 August; and the Task Force on Law Enforcement and the Task Force on Alternative Development held meetings in Yangon in July. The annual meetings bring together the ASEAN member States and China, as well as UNODC and the ASEAN secretariat, to share information, monitor progress and prioritize areas for future activities.

496. Critical issues addressed at the meetings in 2007 included ways to improve the evaluation of the impact of public awareness campaigns; the emergence of ATS as a major drug of addiction; substitution therapy for opioid addicts; priority issues related to drug abuse by injection and HIV; treatment modalities for ATS abuse as well as regional intelligence-sharing; clandestine