

preparations containing pseudoephedrine were reported in Peru. In July 2008, the Argentine authorities identified a case involving the diversion of ephedrine on a large scale and destroyed a methamphetamine laboratory in their country. The Board requests the Governments of all countries in South America to continue monitoring the licit trade in precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants, including ephedrine and pseudoephedrine traded as raw material or in the form of pharmaceutical preparations, in order to prevent the diversion of those precursors from licit channels.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

1. Major developments

534. The Board noted the large-scale smuggling of illicit drugs into East and South-East Asia from outside the region, mainly from Canada and countries in West Asia. In 2007, Japanese law enforcement authorities reported a number of seizures involving consignments of drugs, including cannabis, methamphetamine and MDMA, hidden in sea and air freight originating in Canada. In October 2007, China reported its largest single seizure of drugs from West Asia, and law enforcement authorities in the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang seized heroin and cannabis that had been concealed in a shipment originating in Kazakhstan and destined for Canada. Also in 2007, Thailand reported that the amount of heroin from West Asia exceeded the amount from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. In March and April 2008, customs officers at Hong Kong International Airport seized a significant amount of heroin purportedly originating in West Asia, part of which was seized from passengers arriving from the Philippines and part of which was seized from passengers arriving from India and the United Arab Emirates.

535. The Board notes that Governments of States in East and South-East Asia have continued to strengthen national drug control legislation and improved the provision of treatment and rehabilitation services for drug abusers. In particular, China has adopted a law that includes provisions on voluntary community-based treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers.

536. The unsafe practice of sharing needles among drug abusers remains one of the main causes of HIV transmission in many countries in South-East Asia. The Australian Agency for International Development launched the HIV/AIDS Asia Regional Program in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in April 2008, to help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in South-East Asia through advocacy, knowledge-sharing and strategic partnerships. The Program, which is expected to last eight years, involves Governments, regional agencies, civil society organizations and drug abuse prevention networks in controlling the spread of HIV transmission associated with drug abuse in Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

537. National authorities of countries in East and South-East Asia continued to report significant seizures of drugs smuggled through the postal system. Large amounts of benzodiazepines and cannabis were seized, but the most often seized drug was methamphetamine. In particular, in 2007, it was noted that illicit drugs from Thailand were being smuggled through the postal system into the United Kingdom. Traffickers also smuggled drugs from Canada, China and the United States into the Republic of Korea through the postal system.

538. While heroin continued to be the most widely abused drug in China (including in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)), Malaysia and Viet Nam, a significant increase in the abuse of non-controlled substances was also reported. Ketamine was reported to be the most commonly abused psychotropic substance in China (including in the Hong Kong SAR). In the Hong Kong SAR of China, ketamine is the drug of choice for 73 per cent of drug abusers under the age of 21.

2. Regional cooperation

539. The Board notes with satisfaction that the countries in East and South-East Asia continued to cooperate in the field of drug control through bilateral, multilateral and regional organizations.

540. During the thirteenth Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), held in Singapore in November 2007, ASEAN member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam)

signed the ASEAN Charter, in order, inter alia, to strengthen regional cooperation in building a safe, secure and drug-free environment for the peoples of ASEAN. The Sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, in November 2007. Participants agreed to enhance border control systems; to establish a dedicated national focal point and maximize the use of existing mechanisms for better coordination in combating transnational crime issues; and to enhance capacity-building, including by providing training in English and computer skills for law enforcement officials. The Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Fact-Finding Committee to Combat the Drug Menace was held in Singapore from 22 to 25 June 2008. The participants agreed to continue to exchange information and cooperate to address common threats related to drug control. The eighth ministerial meeting of Signatory Countries of the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control was held in Vientiane in June 2008. The participants agreed to continue to exchange information on regional drug demand reduction activities and the link between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. At the fifteenth ASEAN Regional Forum, held in Singapore on 24 July 2008, participants adopted the Statement Promoting Collaboration on the Prevention of Diversion of Precursors into Illicit Drug Manufacture. In the Statement, the competent national authorities of the ASEAN Regional Forum were urged to work in cooperation with each other and with existing mechanisms to strengthen the control of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. In the framework of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Knowledge-Transfer Programme on Narcotic Crimes, launched in 2007, the Lao People's Democratic Republic became the first country to receive drug control assistance from the Republic of Korea. The purpose of the assistance is to strengthen the drug law enforcement capacity of the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision through the transfer of technology and provision of relevant equipment.

541. The Twenty-eighth ASEAN Chiefs of Police Conference was held in Bandar Seri Begawan from 25 to 29 May 2008. The participants resolved to enhance the exchange of information on syndicates involved in the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including information on their trafficking routes and modus

operandi, in order to facilitate coordinated operations and investigations. Participants also resolved to enhance the exchange of information on the movement of precursor chemicals and to enhance capacity in regulating precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs with a view to preventing the diversion of those chemicals. Participants further resolved to strengthen coordination, cooperation and collaboration through sharing intelligence in order to facilitate the identification, tracing, freezing, forfeiture or confiscation of assets derived from the proceeds of drug trafficking, in accordance with national law. Participants further resolved to enhance cooperation in regional training, sharing of best practices, personnel exchange programmes and other capacity-building efforts related to drug control.

542. In Guangzhou, China, the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific of the World Customs Organization and Chinese customs authorities jointly organized in September 2007 a regional seminar on fighting drug trafficking. Participants discussed the drug trafficking situation in the region, cooperative regional drug law enforcement efforts, trends in drug smuggling, exchange of information and intelligence, specific cases and techniques for detecting suspicious shipments and cross-border cooperation.

543. The Regional Amphetamine-Type Stimulants Forum was held in Manila from 29 to 31 August 2007. Representatives from ASEAN member States and China, as well as representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, INTERPOL, WHO, the Australian National Council on Drugs and the Australian Federal Police, attended the Forum. The main objective of the Forum was to enable participants to identify options for responding to the problems of the illicit supply of and demand for amphetamine-type stimulants in East Asia. Participants discussed the latest regional data and examined examples of how data on the illicit supply and demand of such stimulants could be used for policymaking. The participants identified areas of priority, including: initiating measures to improve the sharing of forensic information and data on precursor seizures using existing mechanisms; expanding technical assistance for forensic capacity and improved information sharing; conducting impact studies on existing treatment and demand reduction programmes and developing mechanisms for integrating results into national policies; and initiating and expanding

technical assistance for carrying out prevalence studies and rapid assessments.

544. The seventh meeting of drug control officials from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in December 2007. At the meeting, representatives of the three States agreed to cooperate in preventing the diversion of sassafras oil. Viet Nam agreed to assist in training law enforcement authorities in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic during 2008 and to build a centre for the treatment of drug abusers in Cambodia. The Third Thailand-Viet Nam Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation was held in Da Nang, Viet Nam, in May 2008. At the meeting, the two States agreed to cooperate in promoting the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and in combating drug-related crime.

545. In November 2007, customs authorities from the Hong Kong SAR of China and the Republic of Korea reaffirmed their commitment to combating transnational offences, including drug trafficking, concerning customs authorities. Pursuant to the agreement, the two States will strengthen cooperation for the exchange of expertise and the organization of training courses. The customs authorities of the Hong Kong SAR of China and Japan signed similar agreements in January 2008, as did the authorities of the Macao SAR of China and Thailand. Myanmar and Thailand signed a memorandum of understanding in February 2008 to cooperate in eradicating illicit opium poppy crops and introducing an opium poppy crop-substitution project in Myanmar. In March 2008, Cambodia and Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding against transnational crime. The signature of that agreement signals closer bilateral cooperation between the two States with regard to the exchange of expertise and information on a number of areas, such as countering drug trafficking.

546. States in East and South-East Asia continued to share expertise by providing assistance in drug control. The Republic of Korea launched an eight-month project in 2008 to assist Viet Nam in raising public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

547. In January 2008, customs authorities in the Hong Kong SAR of China launched the Drug Seizure Immediate Notification System, for East and South-East Asia. Participating States include Cambodia, China (including the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao

SAR), Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. The System allows participating States to exchange information on drug trafficking on the basis of cases of such trafficking detected at their airports. The System will be reviewed after the first six months of its operation.

548. Regional initiatives, including meetings and training courses, to promote precursor control continued to provide opportunities for States to share expertise. The joint meeting of the International Forum on Control of Precursors for Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and the Asian Collaborative Group on Local Precursor Control was held in Tokyo in February 2008. At the meeting, the participants identified the main diversion threats, gaps and vulnerabilities in precursor control and the responses in East and South-East Asia. The participants endorsed a project proposal for a baseline study on non-controlled substances used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. A course on clandestine laboratory investigations was conducted by the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok in January and February 2008. During the course, participants from 11 States in East and South-East Asia were introduced to methods of handling chemicals found at clandestine laboratories.

3. National legislation, policy and action

549. In China, the Narcotics Control Law entered into force on 1 June 2008. The new law reaffirms that the China National Narcotics Control Commission is the body responsible for organizing, coordinating and guiding drug control efforts in the country. The law contains provisions on the role of preventive education, the importance of strengthening activities to facilitate the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers and to prevent illicit crop cultivation, as well as illicit drug manufacture, trafficking and abuse. The law also includes provisions on systems for licensing and inspecting the research, manufacture, delivery, use, storage and transportation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as on a system for licensing the manufacture of, trade in and shipment of precursor chemicals.

550. In 2008, China strengthened controls over pharmaceutical preparations containing precursor chemicals by introducing the requirement of a prescription for nasal drops containing ephedrine hydrochloride.

551. China also strengthened its controls on online drug sales in 2008. The State Food and Drug Administration has made cracking down on false advertising of drug products online a priority for 2008 and aims to increase its supervision of major Internet sites suspected of being involved in the false advertising (which includes the use of exaggerated or misleading information regarding the benefits of the drugs) or the mailing of counterfeit drugs to customers.

552. In 2008, Japan launched its latest Five-Year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy, covering the period 2008-2013. The main objectives of the strategy are to reduce drug abuse among young people through awareness-raising, to prevent relapse through the provision of treatment and rehabilitation, to take measures against organized crime and to strengthen border interdiction efforts and international cooperation.

553. A decree was signed by the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2008 to promulgate a new law on drugs that had been adopted by the National Assembly in 2007. The new drug law comprises 80 articles and will complement the existing criminal penal code. The new drug law further defines principles, regulations and measures related to drug control.

554. In 2008, a law amending and supplementing the Law on Narcotic Drug Prevention and Suppression was promulgated by the Government of Viet Nam. The new law provides a detailed description of the responsibilities of relevant authorities, including police, maritime police, border authorities and customs authorities, with regard to drug abuse prevention and drug control. In particular, it modifies the procedures and terms of administrative detention for compulsory drug detoxification and management and includes provisions for opiate substitution therapy.

555. The Macao SAR of China introduced a new bill in 2008 related to the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The bill calls for increasing from 12 to 15 years the maximum sentence of imprisonment for those convicted of illicitly producing or smuggling drugs and for criminalizing the manufacture and possession of equipment and materials used in illicit drug manufacture.

556. In 2008, China focused its efforts on combating drug abuse among youth. It launched a campaign to

inform people about the abuse of psychotropic substances, foster a drug-free culture among youth and mobilize the community to prevent drug abuse. During 2007, 6,900 drug abusers were rehabilitated in treatment and rehabilitation centres in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In 2008, the Government has continued to make the provision of treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers a priority and has provided financial assistance to treatment and rehabilitation centres in 10 provinces.

557. In 2007, law enforcement authorities in the Hong Kong SAR of China conducted a three-month operation targeting cross-border drug trafficking. The operation resulted in the seizure of cannabis, cocaine, heroin, ketamine and methamphetamine.

558. In Thailand, the Independent Commission for Study and Analysis of the Formation and Implementation of Drug Suppression Policy released a report in 2008 on the findings of its six subcommittees regarding the "war on drugs". According to the report, 55 law enforcement officers were prosecuted as a result of the investigations (see also paragraphs 212-215 above).

559. HIV transmission in East and South-East Asia is driven by high-risk behaviour, such as needle-sharing among persons who abuse drugs by injection. Several States in East and South-East Asia, including China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam, provide sterilized needles and opioid substitution therapy, for example, methadone to people who abuse heroin by injection. However, most of the programmes offering such services reach only a fraction of the people who require the services. In the Hong Kong SAR of China, a large-scale drug abuse programme has, for many years, helped to keep at a low level HIV prevalence among persons who abuse drugs by injection.

560. According to the information contained in a report by the Commission on AIDS in Asia,⁸¹ drug abuse is illegal in many countries in East and South-East Asia and drug abusers are often jailed, not only for their drug abuse, but also for crimes committed to finance their addictions. The challenges faced by countries such as Indonesia and Thailand in preventing the spread of HIV infection in prisons highlight the

⁸¹ Commission on AIDS in Asia, *Redefining AIDS in Asia: Crafting an Effective Response* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2008).

importance of effective drug abuse prevention and treatment programmes in prisons to help limit the spread of HIV.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

561. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plants has continued in countries in East and South-East Asia, including in Indonesia and Thailand. Viet Nam reported an increase in the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants in some northern and southern provinces during 2007 and 2008.

562. States in East and South-East Asia continued to report significant seizures of cannabis. In 2007, the Lao People's Democratic Republic seized 2.2 tons of cannabis, the highest amount reported in recent years. Thailand reported having seized 1.1 tons of cannabis in 14 incidents in 2007; in most cases, the cannabis originated in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and had been concealed in motor vehicles. In February and March 2007, 33 kg of cannabis were seized in the Hong Kong SAR of China in two incidents. In both cases, customs officers at Hong Kong International Airport seized the cannabis from passengers arriving from Johannesburg. Customs authorities of the Republic of Korea seized cannabis concealed in express delivery cargo at Incheon International Airport in May 2007. In July 2007, customs officers at the post office in Guangzhou, China, seized 4.2 kg of cannabis in four separate incidents; in two of the incidents, the parcels originated in Nigeria. In August 2007, Japanese customs authorities at the seaport at Osaka seized 279 kg of cannabis from sea cargo originating in Vancouver, Canada. The Philippines also reported significant seizures of cannabis during 2007. In January 2008, customs authorities at Beungkam, Thailand, seized 242 kg of cannabis. In May 2008, law enforcement authorities in Viet Nam reported having seized 8.8 tons of cannabis concealed in a truck in Quang Ninh province; the consignment had originated in the Middle East and was en route to China.

563. Preliminary data on the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar indicate a slight increase in that area, from 27,700 ha in 2007 to 28,500 ha in 2008. In 2007, authorities in Myanmar eradicated 3,598 of the 27,700 ha under illicit opium poppy cultivation. In the Lao People's Democratic

Republic, 779 of the 1,500 ha under illicit opium poppy cultivation were eradicated. The total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Thailand was estimated at 231 ha; most of the illicit cultivation occurred in remote areas in northern Thailand. In 2007, illicitly cultivated opium poppy was also eradicated in Thailand (220 ha) and Viet Nam (38 ha). The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported having seized 14.2 kg of opium during 2007.

564. China reported having seized 4.6 tons of heroin in 2007, much less than the 11 tons seized in 2004, as the decreasing trend in seizures of the substance in that country continued. The decrease in the availability of heroin in the illicit market was largely attributed to the efforts made by the drug control authorities in China. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 23.8 kg of heroin were seized in 2007.

565. In July 2007, customs officers in the Hong Kong SAR of China seized 160 kg of cocaine that had been concealed in vessels from Panama purportedly containing purified water.

566. In February 2008, law enforcement authorities in China and the United States cooperated with one another to uncover a drug trafficking operation involving the shipment of express mail parcels from South America to China. In Jiangsu, China, cocaine was found in an express mail parcel originating in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

567. Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines reported the highest annual prevalence of abuse of cannabis in East and South-East Asia. Cannabis was the second most commonly abused substance (after solvents) among persons aged 15 and older in Japan. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported a decrease in opium abuse in 2007 compared with 2006. The reported number of opium abusers in the 10 northern provinces of that country was 7,706, a decrease of 31 per cent compared with 2006. The proportion of opium abusers in that country remained stable, at 0.75 per cent of the total adult population. In China, Malaysia and Viet Nam, heroin continued to be the most commonly abused drug. In 2007, there were 749,000 registered heroin abusers in China. In Viet Nam, there are over 170,000 drug abusers, 83 per cent of whom reportedly abuse heroin. In November 2007, drug abuse by injection and heroin abuse among ethnic minorities living in villages in remote areas were reported.

Psychotropic substances

568. An increase in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants was reported in countries in East and South-East Asia, in particular in China and Indonesia. In 2007, 75 laboratories illicitly manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants were dismantled in China (compared with 53 in 2006), and 7 such laboratories were dismantled in Indonesia (compared with 1 in 2006). The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine continued to be reported in countries in East and South-East Asia, including China, Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines. In 2007, nine laboratories involved in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine were dismantled in the Philippines; precursor chemicals, including acetone, ephedrine and hydrochloric acid, were seized at those laboratories. In the Philippines four laboratories involved in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine were dismantled in 2006. In Myanmar, five clandestine facilities for processing methamphetamine were dismantled in 2007; all of the facilities were located in the eastern and northern parts of Shan State and in the Wa region, bordering China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand. In Myanmar, eight laboratories involved in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine were dismantled in 2006. In some countries in East and South-East Asia, laboratories involved in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine and MDMA were recently dismantled.

569. In February 2008, a clandestine methamphetamine laboratory with an estimated monthly manufacturing capacity of 1 ton was dismantled in Zamboanga City, the Philippines. The laboratory had purportedly been operated by an international drug trafficking syndicate for an extended period of time and some of the methamphetamine manufactured in the laboratory may have been exported to Malaysia. In February 2008, Vietnamese police uncovered a clandestine laboratory in Hai Phong City, where 70,714 MDMA tablets and some ketamine were seized, as well as binding equipment and colouring substances.

570. In East and South-East Asia, China (including the Hong Kong SAR), Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam continued to report significant seizures of methamphetamine. During 2007, law enforcement authorities in Thailand seized

155,949 methamphetamine tablets; most of the seized tablets were from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, followed by Myanmar and Cambodia. In 2007, Brunei Darussalam also reported methamphetamine seizures. In March 2007, customs authorities in Japan and the Republic of Korea reported a series of seizures of methamphetamine originating in China. In July 2008, about 800,000 methamphetamine tablets originating in the Lao People's Democratic Republic were seized in Quang Binh province, Viet Nam.

571. During 2007, there was an increase in seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants, mainly methamphetamine originating in China (including the Hong Kong SAR of China) and destined for Indonesia. In the first five months of 2007, 10 cases involving 26 kg were reported. In May 2007, customs authorities in the Hong Kong SAR of China reported a series of seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants, mainly methamphetamine and MDMA, at Hong Kong International Airport. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 1,272,815 tablets of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in 2007.

572. In August 2007, Japanese customs officers at the seaport of Osaka seized 154 kg of methamphetamine from a sea cargo shipment originating in Vancouver, Canada. In March 2008, law enforcement officers from Liaoning Province and Yunnan Province of China cooperated with their counterparts in Myanmar in the seizure of 2 kg of methamphetamine that had been smuggled on a route leading from Myanmar to China. In May 2008, 7 kg of methamphetamine from Japan were seized by law enforcement authorities in Fujian Province of China; the methamphetamine had been smuggled by sea.

573. In East and South-East Asia, China (including the Hong Kong SAR), Japan and the Republic of Korea continued to report seizures of MDMA. In July 2007, law enforcement officers at Narita International Airport in Japan seized 18,290 MDMA tablets concealed in air freight originating in Canada. In August 2007, Japanese customs officers at Osaka seaport seized 208 kg of MDMA from a sea cargo shipment originating in Vancouver, Canada. Later that same month, customs officers at Narita International Airport seized 2,013 MDMA tablets concealed in air freight originating in Canada. In November 2007, customs officers at Incheon International Airport in the

Republic of Korea seized a small amount of MDMA tablets found in an express mail package originating in the United States. In May 2008, law enforcement authorities in Fujian Province of China seized 4 kg of MDMA smuggled by sea from Japan. Singapore and Thailand also reported having seized MDMA in 2007.

574. Thailand seized 124 kg of diazepam during 2007, most of which had been smuggled through the postal system and had been destined for Denmark or the United Kingdom. In August 2007, Thai customs authorities at a mail sorting centre reported having seized 8,000 diazepam tablets from a package destined for the United Kingdom.

575. According to UNODC, the Philippines has the highest annual prevalence of abuse of amphetamines in the world (6 per cent). A number of other countries in East and South-East Asia, including Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Thailand, also have a high rate of abuse of such substances. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 5,780 abusers of amphetamines were identified in the province of Vientiane in 2008. Methamphetamine is the most commonly abused drug in Brunei Darussalam.

Precursors

576. Countries in East and South-East Asia continued to report seizures of significant amounts of precursor chemicals. In October 2007, law enforcement authorities at Narita International Airport in Japan seized 131 kg of pseudoephedrine tablets from passengers arriving from the Hong Kong SAR of China; the passengers were attempting to smuggle the tablets into Mexico. In October 2007, law enforcement officers in Thailand seized 50 tons of sassafras oil at Laem Chabang seaport; the sassafras oil originated in Cambodia and had been destined for China and the United States. China reported having seized large amounts of precursor chemicals in 2007, including 5.7 tons of acetic anhydride and 5.8 tons of ephedrine. During 2007, customs officers in the Philippines seized a shipment of acetone and toluene that was purportedly to be used in the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine. In April 2008, Cambodian law enforcement authorities destroyed 33 tons of saffrole-rich oil.

Substances not under international control

577. The illicit manufacture of ketamine was identified as a growing problem in China. In March 2008, law enforcement authorities in Sichuan Province of China, dismantled a laboratory for the illicit manufacture of ketamine and seized 196 kg of ketamine and some equipment. In June 2008, four clandestine ketamine laboratories were dismantled and 400 kg of ketamine were seized in Guangdong Province of China. The Hong Kong SAR of China, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Taiwan Province of China continued to report significant seizures of ketamine. In 2007, 3,038 people were reported to have abused ketamine, 58.5 per cent of whom were under the age of 21. Ketamine trafficking and seizures were also reported in Viet Nam. The abuse of ketamine was reported in several provinces in Cambodia in 2008.

5. Missions

578. The Board sent a mission to Japan in October 2008. The Board observed that in Japan the regulatory controls implemented for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and the monitoring of the movement of controlled substances were in line with the provisions of the international drug control system. The Government of Japan is committed to drug control, complies with the provisions of the three international drug control treaties and has an effective and comprehensive national drug policy. Efforts to prevent drug abuse have been particularly successful. According to the drug abuse surveys conducted regularly by the Government, the prevalence rates for substance abuse in Japan are among the lowest in the world. The Board invites the Government to share with the international community the measures carried out by governmental and non-governmental entities to prevent drug abuse, as well as the impact those measures have had on the population in Japan. At the same time, the Board calls upon the Government to remain vigilant and monitor all types of substance abuse, including the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances, and recommends that the Government expand the services for treatment of drug abusers to cover all segments of the population for which such services might be needed, with a view to facilitating rehabilitation and social reintegration.

579. Law enforcement activities in Japan appear to be well coordinated, and the Government's cooperation with many other Governments is functioning well. However, in view of the growing involvement of international criminal organizations in drug trafficking in Japan, collaboration with the national law enforcement agencies of other countries should be strengthened.

South Asia

1. Major developments

580. There are signs of increased trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursor chemicals throughout South Asia. Large seizures made in the region in recent years point to the emergence of an illicit market for those substances; however, those seizures could also indicate that South Asian countries are being used as transit areas between manufacturing hubs in East Asia and the rapidly growing illicit markets on the Arabian peninsula. There are fears that the widespread availability of amphetamine-type stimulants may fuel an increase in the abuse of those substances in South Asia.

581. Recent survey data from several South Asian countries indicate that the HIV transmission rate is still high among persons who abuse drugs by injection. In India, the prevalence of HIV infection among such drug abusers in 2006 was estimated at a national average of 8.71 per cent, compared with 0.36 per cent in the general adult population. In Bangladesh, HIV prevalence among such drug abusers in the region of Dhaka rose from 1.4 per cent in 2000 to 7 per cent in 2006. In Nepal, HIV prevalence among such drug abusers in Kathmandu in 2007 was still high, at 34 per cent, but had decreased from the peak of 68 per cent reported in 2003.

2. Regional cooperation

582. Bangladesh, India and Nepal participated in the inter-country consultation on preventing HIV among persons abusing drugs by injection held in Kolkata, India, in April 2007. The aim of the consultation was to assist countries in intensifying the efforts to prevent the spread of HIV among drug abusers. Emphasis was placed on the need for regional cooperation in view of the cross-border nature of drug abuse and trafficking.

Participants agreed that coverage of opioid substitution therapy was low within the region and needed to be improved.

583. Treatment specialists from all six South Asian countries attended the Second Regional Training Programme on Drug Treatment, Rehabilitation and Aftercare, organized by the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan with funding from the United States Department of State, in Bangkok from 10 to 21 September 2007. The training provided participants with an overview of the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and avenues for improving services. Participants reviewed the current status of their treatment and rehabilitation programmes to identify major shortcomings and common solutions.

584. The second meeting of ministers of the interior of the member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was held in New Delhi from 23 to 25 October 2007. Participants recognized the importance of improving information exchange among member States in order to combat cross-border crime. To that end, India committed itself to providing resources to strengthen the capacity of the Drug Offences Monitoring Desk of SAARC, located in Sri Lanka. A proposal to set up a regional police force was brought up for consideration, but a decision on the subject was deferred to give member States more time to examine the proposal.

585. Representatives of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka attended the Thirty-First Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in November 2007. The three main topics on the agenda were the regional response to trafficking heroin, the growing significance of problems involving amphetamine-type stimulants in the region and inter-agency cooperation to combat drug trafficking. The meeting recommended that Governments strengthen national legislative and procedural controls over precursor chemicals so as to counteract their diversion, develop capacity to safely dismantle clandestine laboratories manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants and promote cooperation and coordination between key agencies responsible for drug law enforcement.

586. The Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East held its forty-second session in Agra, India, in December 2007. The session was attended by representatives of the

23 member States, by observers for Australia, the United States and European countries, and by observers for INTERPOL and relevant United Nations bodies. Participants shared their experiences in regional and subregional collaborative efforts to tackle the problem of drug trafficking, with emphasis on specific operational and practical problems encountered by drug law enforcement authorities in the region. Governments were encouraged to engage in international cooperation in law enforcement operations aimed at countering cannabis production and trafficking, to support partnerships between law enforcement authorities and community-based organizations in implementing demand reduction strategies and to facilitate international law enforcement initiatives focusing on both illicit drugs and precursors.

587. From 23 to 31 January 2008, the First Asian Consultation on the Prevention of HIV Related to Drug Use was held in Goa, India. The Consultation focused on various issues related to drug abuse in Asia, such as HIV prevention and treatment among persons abusing drugs by injection. By bringing together key stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations throughout the region, the Consultation aimed at promoting collaborative efforts in developing and implementing strategies that had proved successful in the region. Recommendations from the meeting stressed the need to expand access to HIV treatment and prevention to at least 60 per cent of drug abusers and to enhance significantly the availability of opioid substitution treatment to address the AIDS epidemic effectively. Attention was also drawn to the importance of developing specific approaches to tackling the difficulties faced by female drug abusers in obtaining assistance and to the high rate of transmission of hepatitis C among persons abusing drugs by injection.

588. The Sixth Asian Youth Congress, organized by the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan in collaboration with the competent authorities of Indonesia, was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 4 to 7 August 2008. The Congress was a drug demand reduction initiative of the Advisory Programme intended to create a forum for young leaders in Asia to learn from their peers about drug abuse prevention. Besides learning about the consequences of illicit drug abuse among youth, participants shared information about peer-led activities aimed at reducing drug abuse in schools and on campuses and worked together to

identify community-based strategies to tackle drug abuse problems among young people.

589. At the fifteenth summit meeting of SAARC, held in Colombo in August 2008, Heads of State and Government recognized the interlinkages between terrorism and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and reiterated their commitment to fostering regional cooperation to combat those problems.

3. National legislation, policy and action

590. A report entitled "Rapid Situation and Response Assessment (RSRA) on drugs and HIV in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka" was issued by UNODC in June 2008. The study was conducted in 2005 in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and in 2006 in Bhutan by UNODC, in partnership with governmental and non-governmental agencies working in the drug and HIV sectors. Its objective was to assess the extent and nature of drug use in the target countries, with emphasis on drug abuse by injection. The report recommended that future programmes should also target drug abusers who do not inject drugs so as to prevent any switch-over to the abuse of opioids by injection. It also highlighted the need to increase the availability of treatment for drug dependence and to stem the increasing problem of abuse of pharmaceuticals in the region.

591. The Second National Training Programme on HIV Prevention among Incarcerated Substance Users was conducted by UNODC in collaboration with the Department of Narcotics Control of the Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh in Dhaka in January 2008. The Programme was attended by prison officers, police and staff of national drug control agencies, who received training in reducing HIV vulnerability among prison inmates. Similar training was given in Pokhara, Nepal, earlier in the year and in Maldives in December 2007.

592. The Bhutan Narcotic Control Agency launched its website on 26 June 2008 to provide information on the implementation of the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Substance Abuse Act of 2005. The website also features information about offices and organizations providing assistance to persons with drug abuse problems.

593. "Wake Up", a national public awareness campaign aimed at preventing drug abuse and promoting recovery from drug addiction, was launched in Maldives in December 2007. Young people and parents were the targets of the sensitization campaign in a country where persons under 18 years of age account for the majority of arrests in drug-related cases. A website created as part of the campaign provides both advice on drug abuse to parents and resources to assist in recovery from drug abuse.

594. In March 2008, the Government of Maldives launched a four-year drug control master plan that will address both the demand and supply sides of the drug abuse problem. Planned strategies should increase awareness, promote coordination among key stakeholders from government and the community and improve the quality of treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers. More resources will be directed at strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to control points of entry into Maldives.

595. Law enforcement personnel from the southern and western parts of India attended a training programme on precursor chemicals organized by UNODC in Mumbai in May 2008. The programme set out to sensitize law enforcement officers to the problem of trafficking in precursor chemicals in India and the control regime in place to prevent it. Participants also learned about methods for identifying precursor chemicals and discussed intelligence-gathering techniques that could facilitate investigations.

596. A bill to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940 is under consideration in the Parliament of India. It aims to curb the manufacture of and trade in fake and adulterated drugs by significantly increasing the penalties for related offences. An important provision of the proposed amendment is the creation of a central drug authority with sole responsibility for granting drug manufacturing licences. By centralizing licensing for the manufacture and sale of drugs, currently under the control of individual state governments, the new measure should reduce the countrywide variance in surveillance and law enforcement that allows drug counterfeiting to thrive in India.

597. In November 2007, the Parliament of Sri Lanka approved the Drug-Dependent Persons (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act, No. 54, of 2007. The Act provides for the designation and establishment of licensed

treatment centres under the administration of the National Dangerous Drug Control Board. It also includes provisions for the compulsory admission to those centres of persons identified as drug-dependent by a government medical officer. Under the new legislation, 12 prisons were declared designated treatment centres in 2007.

598. Sri Lanka enacted the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act No. 1 of 2008 on 23 January 2008. The Act incorporates the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and the Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances adopted by SAARC in 1990. A key provision of the new law is the establishment of a precursor control authority responsible for administering internationally controlled substances.

599. Sri Lanka launched the "I decide" public awareness campaign on 26 June 2008. The campaign was designed to provide information on drug abuse that would allow youth and communities to make informed choices and decisions.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

600. Pharmaceutical preparations diverted from licit manufacture in India continue to feed the widespread abuse of such products in South Asia. Drugs smuggled into countries neighbouring India include pethidine and codeine-based cough syrups. In 2007 drug control authorities in Bangladesh made a record seizure of more than 70,000 tablets containing codeine. Seizures of codeine-based cough syrup under the brand name Phensidyl, smuggled into Bangladesh out of India, decreased by 50 per cent, to about 146 litres, in 2007 compared with 2006.

601. The number of patients undergoing treatment for drug abuse in Bangladesh decreased from 13,300 in 2004 to 4,878 in 2007. During that period, the majority of patients (68-80 per cent) reported heroin to be their primary drug of abuse. The percentage of patients reporting cannabis as the primary drug of abuse doubled from about 7.5 per cent in 2004 to 15 per cent in 2007. A rapid assessment survey of about 1,000 drug users conducted by UNODC in 2005 indicated the

following lifetime prevalence rates for the abuse of drugs: 96 per cent for abuse of cannabis, 97 per cent for heroin, 13 per cent for opium and 28 per cent for buprenorphine.

602. Every year, Indian counter-narcotics forces eradicate areas in which opium poppy grows wild or is illicitly cultivated. On average, about 2,000 kg of opium derived from illicitly cultivated opium poppy are seized annually in India. However, the proportion of the seized opium that is of Indian origin is unclear, since opium is still smuggled out of neighbouring countries where opium poppy is illicitly cultivated. The Board encourages the Government of India to continue its efforts to eradicate opium poppy in areas where it grows wild or is illicitly cultivated.

603. Heroin and morphine continue to be among the substances most commonly abused in India. Significant seizures of heroin, each averaging about 1,000 kg, are made each year in that country. A significant portion of the heroin seized in India originates in its neighbouring countries in South-West Asia in which opium poppy is illicitly cultivated. In contrast to the stability in the average size of heroin seizures in India, the total quantity of morphine seizures declined steadily, from about 100 kg in 2003 to 43 kg in 2007.

604. India is one of the largest illicit producers of cannabis and cannabis resin in South Asia. Although law enforcement authorities in India regularly eradicate large areas of illicitly cultivated cannabis plants, a significant amount of cannabis still finds its way onto the illicit market in that country. In 2007, about 284 ha of cannabis plants were destroyed. Seizures of cannabis in India have averaged about 150 tons over the three-year period 2004-2006, and about 108 tons of cannabis herb were reported seized in 2007. Since 2003, the total amount of cannabis resin seized in India each year has averaged about 4 tons.

605. In recent years, there have been reports of small quantities of cocaine being smuggled into India. In 2007, some 8 kg of cocaine were seized in that country. Investigations into seizures made in 2008 suggest that the cocaine entering India is still being smuggled out of West Africa.

606. According to UNODC, the prevalence of abuse of cannabis in India was 3.2 per cent in 2000 and the prevalence of abuse of opiates was 0.4 per cent in 2001. More recent information can be found in reports

of patterns of drug use among patients undergoing treatment for drug abuse in 2004 and 2005; of about 82,000 patients, 61 per cent underwent treatment for the abuse of opiates, 15.5 per cent for cannabis abuse and 1.5 per cent for cocaine abuse. However, the Board notes the lack of up-to-date information on nationwide patterns of drug abuse in India. The Board encourages the Government of India to regularly monitor countrywide patterns of drug abuse as it represents an important element of an effective drug abuse prevention strategy.

607. Maldives has witnessed an increase in the amount of heroin smuggled into the country in recent years. Heroin in quantities of up to 1 kg was intercepted by the Customs Service each year in 2004 and 2005. In contrast, in 2006, seizures of heroin totalling 8.9 kg were reported; the majority of that heroin was seized at the airport from passengers entering the country, in most cases from India. In 2007, a passenger was arrested at the airport while trying to smuggle 7.8 kg of heroin into Maldives. The increase in the quantity of heroin seized may indicate that the country is becoming an important transit area for drug smuggling operations.

608. Nepal is the most important producer of cannabis resin in South Asia. The increase in seizures of cannabis resin in Nepal accounted for the fact that the amount of cannabis resin seized in the entire region of South Asia in 2006 was twice the amount seized in 2003. In addition to being abused locally, cannabis resin in Nepal is smuggled into other countries in Asia and the Pacific. The main destination of cannabis resin from Nepal appears to be India, where 40-50 per cent of the cannabis resin seized in recent years originated in Nepal. Seizures of cannabis resin from Nepal are also regularly reported in China, the Hong Kong SAR of China, Japan and Thailand.

609. Cannabis remains the most widely abused drug in Sri Lanka and is illicitly cultivated in the eastern and southern provinces of the country. In 2003, about 74 tons of cannabis were seized in Sri Lanka. From 2004 to 2007, the quantity of cannabis seized annually fluctuated between 30 and 40 tons.

610. Heroin continues to be widely abused in Sri Lanka. Heroin is not manufactured locally but is brought into the country from India and Pakistan. Small quantities of heroin are smuggled into Sri Lanka from India by airline passengers and on fishing boats

coming from the west coast of India. In the period 2003-2006, the quantity of heroin seized in Sri Lanka fluctuated between 50 and 80 kg. In 2007, about 30 kg of heroin were seized in the country.

611. In Sri Lanka, cannabis currently accounts for the majority of drug-related arrests. The number of cannabis-related arrests increased steadily from 9,566 cases in 2003 to 33,848 cases in 2007, corresponding to 43 per cent and 78 per cent of the total number of drug-related arrests, respectively. The number of prison admissions related to cannabis also increased; in 2003, about 13 per cent of drug-related prison admissions were related to cannabis (1,307 cases) compared with 44 per cent (5,065 cases) in 2007.

612. In Sri Lanka, the number of drug-related arrests linked to heroin decreased from 12,488 cases in 2003 to 9,428 cases in 2007, corresponding to 57 per cent and 21 per cent of the total number of drug-related arrests, respectively. In the same period, the number of prison admissions related to heroin also decreased; in 2003, about 87 per cent of drug-related prison admissions were related to heroin (9,076 cases), compared with 56 per cent (6,386 cases) in 2007.

613. In Sri Lanka, the vast majority of people arrested for drug-related offences are male; in 2006, about 4 per cent of the 47,298 people arrested for such offences were female. This gender difference is also reflected in the proportion of men and women imprisoned for narcotic-related offences; in 2006, about 2 per cent of the 10,384 detainees were women. Furthermore, of the 2,738 patients treated for drug abuse in 2006, only 5 were women. The Board notes that under the Sri Lanka National Policy for the Prevention and Control of Drug Abuse, treatment providers are encouraged to exercise gender balance in providing their services to patients. The Board encourages the Government of Sri Lanka to focus more attention on this issue in the light of the severe disparity between the proportion of men and women receiving treatment for drug abuse.

Psychotropic substances

614. A popular form of methamphetamine abused in Asia is a tablet known as "yaba", containing a mixture of caffeine and about 30 per cent methamphetamine. Increasingly large seizures of "yaba" tablets have been reported in Bangladesh, where the drug has gained popularity among young people. Most of the "yaba"

circulating in Bangladesh is smuggled out of neighbouring countries such as Myanmar. According to UNODC, 1.2 million methamphetamine tablets originating in Myanmar were seized in Bangladesh in 2007.

615. Several seizures of LSD were reported in India in 2007. The largest amount was seized in December 2007 from a tourist in Goa who was arrested for possession of about 2,000 units of LSD, weighing about 35 grams.

616. Since the start of 2008, several seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants have been made in India. In March 2008, customs officers seized about 3,700 tablets of methamphetamine, purported to originate in Myanmar, from an airline passenger, while about 70 kg of amphetamine was reported to have been seized in June 2008.

617. In recent years, 0.2 per cent of patients undergoing drug-related treatment in India were admitted for the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants. There are fears, however, that such abuse is increasing, facilitated by the fact that amphetamine-type stimulants are illicitly manufactured in India and smuggled into the country from South-East Asia. The Board encourages the authorities concerned to develop strategies to monitor the prevalence of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants in the country.

618. In spite of efforts by law enforcement authorities to curb the clandestine manufacture of methaqualone in India, seizures of the drug are reported every year. The total quantity of methaqualone seized each year fluctuates greatly: in 2006 about 4,500 kg were seized, compared with 1 kg in 2007. The seizure in February 2008 of about 230 kg of tablets containing methaqualone underscores the persistent problem of clandestine manufacture of that drug in India. South Africa, where methaqualone is widely abused, continues to be a frequent destination of consignments of Indian methaqualone (see paragraph 333 above).

619. According to UNODC, in June 2008, 1.8 kg of crystalline methamphetamine were seized at the international airport of Kathmandu. The shipment was bound for Doha and could be an indication that Nepal is being used as a new transit area for consignments of amphetamine-type stimulants destined for the increasingly lucrative illicit markets in countries on the Arabian peninsula.

620. Nepal remains a common destination for consignments of pharmaceutical preparations smuggled out of India. In 2007, law enforcement authorities seized more than 90,000 injections containing psychotropic substances such as buprenorphine and diazepam, a 10-fold increase over 2005. A rapid assessment survey carried out in Nepal by UNODC in 2005 revealed that the lifetime prevalence of abuse of buprenorphine was 77 per cent among the 1,322 drug users surveyed.

Precursor chemicals

621. A survey of the trade in chemicals that could be used as precursors in the illicit manufacture of narcotic and psychotropic drugs was carried out by the competent national authorities of Bhutan in 2008. Only six of the precursor chemicals under international control are imported into Bhutan, and they are used mainly in industry for laboratory tests and in educational institutions for teaching purposes. There has been no reported theft or diversion of such precursor chemicals in the country in the last three years.

622. Some of the acetic anhydride licitly produced on an industrial scale in India is subject to diversion for the illicit manufacture of methaqualone and heroin. Since 2005, seizures of acetic anhydride of less than 300 kg have been reported every year. In 2008, there was a sharp increase in seizures of acetic anhydride: over 1,500 kg of the chemical had been seized by the middle of the year.

623. The diversion of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and norephedrine, precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, is a matter of concern in India, the world's third largest manufacturer of such precursor chemicals. In December 2007, law enforcement authorities uncovered a clandestine laboratory in Mumbai, India, equipped to extract pseudoephedrine from licit pharmaceuticals. About 290 kg of pseudoephedrine were seized in the operation. The pseudoephedrine was intended for export to Australia for use in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. In India, about 400 kg of ephedrine were seized in 2007 and about 820 kg of norephedrine were seized in June 2008.

West Asia

1. Major developments

624. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community have made some progress in addressing the problem of illicit opium poppy cultivation in that country. Illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan dropped from its record level of 193,000 ha in 2007 to 157,000 ha in 2008. The number of provinces free of opium poppy also increased, from 13 to 18. About 98 per cent of the illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country takes place in just seven provinces.

625. Despite those successes, Afghanistan continues to account for by far the largest share of the world's illicit opium poppy cultivation. Due to the higher crop yield, actual opium production dropped by only 6 per cent, from 8,200 tons in 2007 to 7,700 tons in 2008. The lack of security in Afghanistan has severely hampered Government efforts to eradicate illicit opium poppy: a total of 78 persons involved in those eradication efforts lost their lives in 2008, a sixfold increase over the previous year. The increase in the illicit cultivation of cannabis in Afghanistan is also a worrying development. The Board urges the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to continue their efforts to implement the international drug control treaties and to ensure that farming communities involved in illicit crop cultivation are provided with sustainable, legitimate livelihoods.

626. The Security Council, in its resolution 1817 (2008), called upon all Member States to increase cooperation in order to counter illicit drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan, including by strengthening the monitoring of the international trade in precursor chemicals, notably but not limited to acetic anhydride. In the same resolution, the Council, acknowledging the leading role played by the Board in the implementation of the international drug control conventions and the international control of precursors, invited all Member States, in particular those producing precursor chemicals, Afghanistan, neighbouring countries and all countries on the trafficking routes, to increase their cooperation with the Board.

627. Afghan opiates are smuggled mainly through Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and countries in

Central Asia into countries in Eastern and Western Europe (such as the Russian Federation). That large-scale smuggling of Afghan opiates has resulted in a wide range of social ills, including organized crime, corruption and high illicit demand for opiates. For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran has, for a number of years, had the highest rate of abuse of opiates in the world. In the countries in Central Asia, the rate of abuse of opiates continues to increase and HIV/AIDS transmission through the sharing of needles among persons who abuse drugs by injection continues to be a problem. The countries in the southern Caucasus are increasingly being used as trans-shipment areas for illicit consignments of drugs, mainly opiates from Afghanistan, and drug abuse continues to increase in those countries as well.

628. Despite the fact that trafficking through Central Asia remains at a high level, cooperation among the Governments of Central Asian countries is improving, with more joint efforts against trafficking taking place on both a bilateral and multilateral basis. The Board urges the Governments of countries in Central Asia to continue strengthening their coordination efforts, including through the establishment of the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre.

629. Illicit opium poppy cultivation also takes place in Pakistan, though on a much smaller scale than in Afghanistan (1,698 ha of opium poppy were illicitly cultivated in Pakistan in 2007). Cannabis is illicitly cultivated in many countries in Central Asia. The illicit cultivation of both cannabis and opium poppy appears to be increasing in the Bekaa valley of Lebanon.

630. New routes for trafficking in drugs, including heroin from countries outside of West Asia, appear to be opening through countries on the Arabian peninsula. The new routes lead through countries such as Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates.

631. Many countries on the Arabian peninsula also continue to be faced with a longstanding problem of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular counterfeit Captagon tablets. Captagon was originally the trade name of a pharmaceutical preparation containing fenetylline, but drug traffickers have now resorted to producing counterfeit Captagon tablets containing mainly amphetamine. The world's largest seizures of counterfeit Captagon take place in Saudi Arabia, where 12.3 tons of the substance were seized in

2006, accounting for 28 per cent of global amphetamine seizures. Captagon seizures in Saudi Arabia increased further in 2007, to 13.9 tons.

632. Cocaine trafficking is spreading in West Asia. Seizures of the drug in Turkey totalled only 3 kg in 2003 but increased to 40 kg in 2005, 77 kg in 2006 and 114 kg in 2007. In May 2008, Israeli police authorities conducted a large-scale law enforcement operation in which they seized 104 kg of cocaine in the northern port of Haifa.

2. Regional cooperation

633. The international community continued to provide support and assistance to Afghanistan under the umbrella of the Afghanistan Compact,⁸² adopted at the conclusion of the London Conference on Afghanistan, held from 29 January to 1 February 2006. The Compact expresses the shared commitment of the Government and the international community to build a democratic State that provides security and livelihood opportunities to all citizens. Recognizing the interdependence of security, governance and development challenges, the Compact focuses on three mutually reinforcing pillars: security; governance, the rule of law and human rights; and economic development. The Compact includes benchmarks to be used to measure achievement over five years, aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and covering all aspects of the State-building process.

634. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy was finalized in April 2008, and was submitted to international financial institutions as a poverty reduction strategy paper. The Strategy covers the five-year period 2008-2013 and outlines the steps to be taken by the Government to achieve the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks regarding security, governance and development. The Strategy was presented to the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, held in Paris on 12 June 2008. The Board hopes that the international community will provide the Government of Afghanistan with adequate assistance, including but not limited to financial assistance, for the tasks required.

⁸² "Letter dated 9 February 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council" (S/2006/90), annex.

635. Governments of countries in West Asia have continued to take joint measures against drug trafficking. In particular, Governments of countries in Central Asia have increased their bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas such as reduction of illicit drug supply and demand, precursor control, border management, countering the spread of HIV/AIDS and fighting organized crime and money-laundering. They have also participated in various regional projects and international operations under the auspices of the Board, UNODC, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the 1996 Memorandum of Understanding on Subregional Drug Control Cooperation.

636. Joint efforts to counter drug trafficking have produced some results. For example, in February 2008, law enforcement agencies of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan launched Operation Typhoon, a joint operation targeting one of the largest drug trafficking groups in Central Asia. As a result of that operation, more than 800 kg of heroin and 100 kg of opium were seized in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan. Operation Channel, conducted under the auspices of CSTO since 2003, has also contributed to efforts to counter drug trafficking in West Asia. Operation Channel resulted in the seizing of over 28 tons of drugs and precursors in 2007. CSTO member States actively involve States from outside the region, as well as international organizations, in their operations, adding to their effectiveness. In 2007, the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan held 53 joint operations with law enforcement agencies in other CIS member States, as well as Afghanistan and China, resulting in significant seizures of drugs. (For more information on joint operations undertaken under the CSTO umbrella, see paragraph 694 below.)

637. Notwithstanding the above, greater collaboration is needed for more sustained results. The Board is concerned that the lack of coordination and information-sharing among the various actors is at least partially responsible for the inability of the Government of Afghanistan to achieve its goals on the eradication of illicitly cultivated opium poppy. The Board calls on the Government and on the international community to give the highest priority to cooperation and intelligence-sharing, in order to ensure the

effectiveness of joint efforts against drug trafficking in Afghanistan.

638. The Governments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan continued to cooperate towards the establishment of the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre. The pilot phase of the institution has already contributed to the improvement of coordination, the sharing of information and the strengthening of the capacity of Governments of countries in Central Asia. The Board urges the Governments involved, in particular the Government of the Russian Federation, the only State that has not yet ratified the agreement on the establishment of the Centre, to establish the Centre as soon as possible. The Board also urges the Governments involved to consider including in that initiative Governments of other countries in West Asia and the Caucasus, in order to ensure greater cooperation in collecting, exchanging and analysing drug-related intelligence, organizing and coordinating joint international operations and carrying out other supply reduction efforts and training in West Asia.

639. Countries in West Asia are working to establish the Gulf Centre for Criminal Intelligence in Doha. The Centre will serve as a focal point for international cooperation in the collection of information and development of intelligence to counter drug trafficking and other serious forms of organized crime.

640. In a meeting held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the heads of drug control agencies from countries on the Arabian peninsula, as well as the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, adopted the Dubai statement on strategic planning and cooperation in the field of drug control, in which they expressed their commitment to more effective cooperation and coordination of drug control activities.

641. Representatives of Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, the three countries of the Triangular Initiative, a framework for stopping drug trafficking from Afghanistan, held a meeting in Tehran in May 2008. The participants agreed to appoint border liaison officers on each of their countries' borders to plan joint operations targeting the smuggling of opiates out of Afghanistan. The participants also announced that they would strengthen efforts to counter the illicit trade in precursor chemicals used in processing opium in and around Afghanistan.

642. Representatives of countries on the Arabian peninsula and in other subregions adopted the Tripoli action plan on combating trafficking in drugs and money-laundering through the mail. The action plan includes joint measures taken to combat drug trafficking and money-laundering through the international mail, as well as to develop human resources, awareness-raising and the role of the media in combating drug trafficking through the mail. Cooperation in carrying out the action plan was sought from private companies dealing with mail services. (For more information on this action plan, see paragraph 303 above.)

643. With the assistance of UNODC, Israeli and Palestinian officials continued to explore methods of improving cooperation. A series of meetings of policymakers was held to review possibilities for cooperation within the framework of a declaration agreed upon in Cairo at the end of 2005. Arrangements and procedures have been established for strengthening joint efforts in the investigation of drug trafficking and related crimes.

644. A meeting hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan led to the initiation of two international projects against drug trafficking in West Asia: the Caspian Sea initiative and the Turkmen border initiative. In particular, the Caspian Sea initiative aims to involve the entire region of West Asia in regional and international efforts focusing on strengthening analytical capacity, intelligence-sharing and information exchange in the region.

645. Though most regional cooperation focused on law enforcement, there have been some important initiatives in demand reduction in West Asia. Demand reduction authorities from several countries in West Asia met with their counterparts from countries in Europe, WHO and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, to develop a network linking national institutions to European centres of best practices in demand reduction. Within that framework, national workplans on drug abuse prevention, the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, substitution treatment for opioid dependence, and drug abuse and HIV prevention and care in prison settings are being developed. UNODC organized study tours to enable authorities from Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon and several countries from outside of West Asia to view

prevention services in prisons in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. National legislation, policy and action

646. In March 2008, the Afghan parliament confirmed the appointment of a new Minister of Counter Narcotics, a post that had been vacant for seven months.

647. Efforts to eradicate illicitly cultivated opium poppy in Afghanistan have continued to encounter difficulties. The main obstacle has been the lack of security. A total of 78 persons involved in the eradication efforts lost their lives during the harvesting season 2007/2008, a sixfold increase over the previous figure. The harvest season 2007/2008 also differed from previous ones in that most of the violence was caused by insurgent forces instead of farmers. In 2008, over 98 per cent of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan took place in the southern and south-western provinces, over which the Government has little control. In 2007, the figure was 85 per cent. However, though cultivation is limited to a small number of areas, the illicit drug trade is a nationwide scourge in Afghanistan.

648. Corruption continues to be a serious problem in Afghanistan, hampering efforts to eradicate illicit opium poppy cultivation and to combat the illicit drug trade in general. The Government ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption⁸³ in December 2007, and a new governmental body to oversee the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy has been created. Some members of the Afghan security forces have been arrested for drug-related offences. There continue to be reports that even senior officials in the Government may be involved in the illicit drug trade. The Board urges the Government to take strong measures to fight corruption.

649. The Board notes with concern that the operation of the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund, which was created to conduct development programmes in provinces free of opium poppy or provinces in which opium poppy cultivation has decreased, remains problematic. The Board urges the Government and the international community to ensure that there is an adequate mechanism for funding the provision of

⁸³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

alternative, legitimate livelihoods for farming communities.

650. The Government of Afghanistan has strengthened drug abuse prevention efforts, conducting awareness, motivation and counselling programmes for drug abusers and the general public. Drug abuse messages have also been incorporated into the curricula of schools, even primary schools. The Government, with the support of a number of organizations, has established 40 centres specialized in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers in seven provinces. In spite of those efforts, illicit drugs are widely available and, as a result, drug abuse is on the rise. Strengthened, more concentrated efforts are necessary.

651. The Islamic Republic of Iran, one of the countries most affected by the illicit trade in Afghan opiates, increased by nearly 50 percent the resources available for drug control in the year starting on 20 March 2008 and, in particular, increased nearly fourfold the resources appropriated for drug abuse prevention. The Government has also continued to strengthen border control through the deployment of additional personnel and the erection of barriers and other border structures.

652. The Governments of other countries in West Asia have also continued to strengthen their drug control efforts through the adoption of comprehensive plans and new legislation. The Government of Pakistan adopted a new drug control master plan covering the period 2008-2012. The master plan takes into account the impact of the worsening drug situation in Afghanistan and outlines both supply and demand reduction measures to be taken. On 30 November 2007, the Government of Tajikistan approved a new national programme against drug abuse and trafficking, covering the period 2008-2012. The programme was developed by the Tajik Drug Control Agency together with other relevant Government ministries and agencies. On 30 April 2008, the National Assembly of Armenia adopted amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, with a view to increasing the ability of law enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking.

653. A task force on demand reduction was established in Jordan, ensuring involvement of all the ministerial offices involved in formulating the community-based treatment and rehabilitation strategy in the country. The task force has secured a long-term commitment to

the development and implementation of a national action plan and strategy to improve the capacity of community services and facilitated a mechanism for ensuring full coordination and participation of the relevant authorities and sectors. A national task force on opiate substitution therapy has also been established by the Government of Lebanon.

654. The Government of Turkmenistan established the State Drug Control Service, a specialized drug control agency, in January 2008. The Board welcomes that move, which is in response to one of the recommendations of the Board following its last mission to that country in 2003. Turkmenistan was also granted observer status (a first step towards full membership) with the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering in late 2007.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

655. There is a strong link between security conditions and illicit opium poppy cultivation. In the southern provinces of Afghanistan, security is weak and the overwhelming majority of villages are involved in illicit opium poppy cultivation. UNODC estimates that the Taliban armed opposition group has an annual revenue of between US\$ 200 million and 300 million from a surcharge levied on the illicit drug trade.

656. The eradication efforts in Afghanistan are being hampered by lack of security, poor planning and inadequate equipment and funding. Though the initial target for eradication had been set at 50,000 ha, the Government remained unable to provide adequate security for eradication efforts and eventually only 5,480 ha were eradicated. Although the lack of security and capacity remain the main reasons for that drop in eradication, there has been an increase in the number of provinces that have become free of opium poppy and there have been more voluntary eradication efforts by farmers.

657. Inadequate security, ineffective Government control and problems in ensuring the rule of law are major factors contributing to illicit crop cultivation in other countries in West Asia as well. Illicit opium poppy cultivation takes place in Pakistan. Though such cultivation in Pakistan is on a much smaller scale than in Afghanistan, it appears to be increasing. The

Government of Pakistan remains determined to eradicate illicit opium poppy cultivation, but most of that cultivation takes place in remote areas near the Afghan border, where the Government has difficulties in enforcing national laws.

658. Illicit opium poppy cultivation in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon is also increasing, at least partly because of the unstable political and security situation that the country has been facing for several years.

659. Another concern of the Board is the situation in West Asia with regard to the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants. Afghanistan is becoming an important producer of illicit cannabis; according to UNODC, 70,000 ha of cannabis were illicitly cultivated in Afghanistan in 2007, compared with 50,000 ha in 2006 and 30,000 ha in 2005. In June 2008, Afghan authorities seized 260 tons of cannabis resin in a single operation in the southern province of Kandahar. Cannabis plants are also illicitly cultivated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and such cultivation appears to be increasing in the Bekaa valley. Cannabis plants are also illicitly cultivated in many countries in Central Asia, and such cultivation is increasing in some countries.

660. Significant drug seizures were made in Afghanistan, though those seizures were small in comparison with the amount of illicit drug production in the country. For example, police in the eastern Nangarhar province confiscated 4.7 tons of opium in a single operation in April 2008, and the Afghan border security agency seized 28 tons of opium in Afghanistan in 2007. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, largely due to the security situation. For example, there is no border police in Helmand province, where most of the drugs are being trafficked.

661. More opiates are seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran than in any other country in the world. Total drug seizures in that country in 2007 increased by 51 per cent compared with 2006. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran estimates that 2,500 tons of opiates enter its territory from Afghanistan each year, 700 tons of which are destined for abuse in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The police manage to seize approximately 500 tons of opiates every year.

662. Pakistan continues to be used as a major transit area for Afghan opiates, though to a lesser extent than the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to the

Government of Pakistan, 35 per cent of opiates of Afghan origin are smuggled through its territory. In February 2008, authorities in Pakistan seized 4 tons of opium in a single operation in a mountainous area of the Pishin district.

663. Official drug seizure data for Central Asian countries for the period 2000-2007 show that the peak in heroin seizures recorded in the period 2003-2004 was followed by a relatively gradual downward trend. In 2007, a total of 3.3 tons of heroin were seized in the Central Asian countries. That constitutes only 3 per cent of the 128 tons believed to have been smuggled through Central Asia. Compared with 2006, total heroin seizures decreased slightly (by 9 per cent) in 2007, in particular because of the significant decrease in heroin seizures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In contrast, in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan heroin seizures increased substantially in 2007, by over 60 per cent compared with 2006 in each country. Seizures of opium have increased significantly in many countries in Central Asia, indicating a possible shift in trafficking patterns.

664. Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are used as trans-shipment points for drug trafficking. Cannabis from Lebanon is smuggled into Jordan, heroin is smuggled through the Syrian Arab Republic and then Jordan on its way to Israel and counterfeit Captagon tablets are smuggled through the Syrian Arab Republic and then Jordan on their way to countries on the Arabian peninsula.

665. It appears that trafficking organizations are increasingly exploiting the situation in Iraq to smuggle drugs, mainly into countries on the Arabian peninsula. Seizures by the Government of Jordan near the Iraqi border have risen significantly in recent years, and there has been an overall increase in the smuggling of cannabis resin and opiates from Afghanistan through Iraq into Jordan. Drug trafficking in Yemen also appears to be increasing, as evidenced by more drug-related offences and seizures of illicit drugs, mainly cannabis. In August 2008, the authorities of the United Arab Emirates seized 202 kg of heroin, in what was the largest seizure of that drug on the Arabian peninsula.

666. Cannabis continues to be the most commonly seized type of drug in Central Asia. This is partly attributable to the fact that cannabis plants grow wild in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. A total of 870 kg of

cannabis resin was seized in Central Asia in 2007, an increase of 30 per cent compared with 2006. The largest total amount of cannabis seized was reported in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

667. Reports indicate that, though cocaine is still abused only in small quantities, cocaine abuse may be making headway among members of the more affluent segments of society in some countries in West Asia. In 2007, the law enforcement authorities in Kazakhstan seized a consignment of 555 grams of cocaine, the largest cocaine seizure ever made in that country. The cocaine had apparently been brought into the country from Germany, Lithuania and Poland via the Russian Federation.

668. The large amount of opiates from Afghanistan in countries in West Asia continues to cause major drug abuse problems in those countries. Nearly all the countries neighbouring Afghanistan have a high rate of drug abuse; the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example, has the world's highest rate of abuse for opiates; in that country, the estimated prevalence of abuse of opiates is 2.8 per cent. Pakistan also has a high rate of abuse for opiates: the estimated prevalence of such abuse among the general population is 0.7 per cent. Many countries in Central Asia have a similar level of drug abuse, heroin abuse having replaced cannabis and opium abuse as the main drug problem.

669. Despite high estimates of drug abuse, the Governments of many countries in West Asia, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, have not collected comprehensive data on drug abuse for some years. The Board encourages those Governments to conduct comprehensive surveys and rapid assessments of the drug abuse situation in their countries and to take effective measures in the area of demand reduction.

670. One Government that has recently conducted such a survey is that of Pakistan. The results of the survey, which was conducted with the assistance of UNODC and reflects data collected in 2006, shows that there are some 640,000 persons in Pakistan who regularly abuse opioids (0.7 per cent of the adult population). Of those persons, 484,000, or 77 per cent, are believed to abuse heroin. The Board notes that, despite the massive increase in illicit opium production and heroin manufacture in neighbouring Afghanistan, the rate of abuse of heroin has remained relatively stable in Pakistan. However, that has been offset by the

increase in the abuse of opium and other opiates in the country. The increase in drug abuse by injection is also a matter of concern; there are currently an estimated 130,000 persons abusing drugs by injection in Pakistan, twice the number in 2000. There is an HIV epidemic among persons who abuse drugs by injection, the infection rate being approximately 11 per cent.

671. Drug abuse in the Central Asian countries continues to increase. The prevalence of the abuse of opioids is estimated at 1.03 per cent in Kazakhstan, 0.8 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, 0.6 per cent in Tajikistan and 0.8 per cent in Uzbekistan. Heroin is the main drug of abuse, injection being the main method used. The HIV/AIDS problem in Central Asia is growing faster than anywhere else in the world, needle-sharing among persons abusing drugs by injection being one of the key driving forces of the problem. Drug abuse by injection accounts for more than 60 per cent of total registered HIV cases in Central Asia. Reported HIV prevalence among persons abusing drugs by injection is highest in Uzbekistan (21 per cent), followed by Tajikistan (14.7 per cent), Kazakhstan (9.2 per cent), and Kyrgyzstan (8 per cent).

672. Drug abuse remains a serious concern in Afghanistan, where an estimated 1.4 per cent of the population abuses opioids. The number of drug addicts in at least some provinces in Afghanistan, including provinces where opium poppy is no longer cultivated, continues to rise. Drug abuse by injection is increasing. HIV prevalence among persons abusing drugs by injection is reported to be 3 per cent. The lack of economic opportunities, the volatile security situation and the fact that many returning refugees became addicted to drugs in their host countries (Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan) have contributed to the worsening of the drug abuse situation in Afghanistan.

673. The Government of the United Arab Emirates is strengthening its efforts in treatment, building more centres for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, particularly in the capital city. There are very little data on drug abuse in the United Arab Emirates, but the abuse of cannabis and heroin is an ongoing problem in that country. The Board encourages the Government to collect adequate data on trends in drug abuse and to strengthen its demand reduction efforts.

Psychotropic substances

674. Large amounts of counterfeit Captagon tablets continue to be smuggled into countries on the Arabian peninsula. Seizures of amphetamines have risen sharply in Saudi Arabia, suggesting a surge in the abuse of illicit stimulants in the country. Saudi Arabia accounted for 28 per cent of global seizures of amphetamines (all amphetamine-type stimulants excluding MDMA) in 2006, the latest year for which global data are available.

675. The amount of Captagon seized in Turkey rose significantly in 2007 in comparison with 2005 and 2006. Seizures of MDMA in Turkey decreased by nearly 30 per cent compared with 2006 – though the Government has indicated that the decrease may be partly attributable to inadequate cooperation with law enforcement agencies in neighbouring countries. The Government has reported a slight decrease in the abuse of MDMA in Turkey, largely as a result of information campaigns to increase public awareness of the harmful nature of the drugs.

676. The Board is concerned about information on possible smuggling of methamphetamine through Afghanistan. There have been isolated reports in recent years of Iranian law enforcement authorities seizing methamphetamine near their country's border with Afghanistan. Though there is no evidence yet to suggest that methamphetamine is being illicitly manufactured in Afghanistan, the Board urges the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to be on the alert for indications of such activity.

Precursors

677. It appears that the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan has continued to increase. Authorities in the eastern province of Nangarhar announced in March 2008 that, besides having seized more than 40 tons of opiates in 2007, they had also dismantled 11 laboratories illicitly manufacturing heroin. The Board is seriously concerned that, though recent increases in the price of acetic anhydride on illicit markets in Afghanistan suggest that international precursor control efforts are having some impact, precursor chemicals, acetic anhydride in particular, continue to be available for the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan. All Governments are reminded that Afghanistan has no legitimate need for acetic

anhydride. (For more information on international efforts in this area, see the 2008 report of the Board on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.)

678. More than 3 tons of precursor chemicals used to manufacture heroin, including the chemicals ammonium chloride and sodium carbonate, were seized in Afghanistan in July 2008, within the framework of the UNODC-supported Targeted Anti-trafficking Regional Communication, Expertise and Training initiative. Five tons of acetic anhydride were also seized by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the southern city of Bandar Abbas. In March 2008, Pakistan authorities seized 14 tons of acetic anhydride at Karachi port; that seizure led to the seizure in the Republic of Korea of another 12 tons of the chemical near Seoul in July 2008. In March 2008, over 5,000 kg of sulphuric acid were seized in Kyrgyzstan.

679. The total amount of acetic anhydride seized in Turkey increased nearly threefold in 2007 compared with 2006, though that increase was mainly attributable to a single controlled delivery operation that resulted in the seizure of over 12,000 litres of the substance.

680. The Board is concerned that several countries in West Asia, in particular the United Arab Emirates, have become trans-shipment areas for large consignments of ephedrine destined for Africa and North America. The Board urges the Government of the United Arab Emirates to continue strengthening its efforts to address that problem, in particular by strengthening controls in the free trade zones in the country.

5. Missions

681. The Board sent a mission to the United Arab Emirates in January 2008 to review with the Government its implementation of the international drug control treaties.

682. The Board is concerned that the implementation of controls over drugs and precursor chemicals in the free trade zones in the United Arab Emirates continues to be met with difficulties. The Board reminds the Government of its obligations under the international drug control conventions and urges it to take adequate measures against drug trafficking in all areas under its jurisdiction, including the free trade zones. As the United Arab Emirates is a major exporting and

trans-shipping area for chemicals scheduled under the 1988 Convention, the Government of that country is also encouraged to use the PEN Online system without further delay and to introduce controls over pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine.

683. The Board also notes that there are no comprehensive activities aimed at identifying the drug abuse situation in the United Arab Emirates. The Board recommends that the Government take specific measures to collect data on the extent and nature of the drug problem in the country.

684. The Board appreciates the will of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to fight drug abuse and trafficking, and it notes in particular the progress achieved by the Government in the implementation of some of the recommendations made by the Board after its 1995 mission to that country. The Board encourages the Government to continue its efforts to strengthen drug control.

D. Europe

1. Major developments

685. Cannabis is the most widely abused drug in Europe. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, about 71 million people aged 15-64 years have tried cannabis in their lifetime and about 7 per cent have used it in the past year.

686. Europe remains the second largest market for cocaine in the world. Large consignments of the drug from South America are smuggled into Europe by sea, often through West African countries (see paragraphs 242-246 and 321-326 above). The smuggling of cocaine through Eastern European countries has significantly increased in the past few years. The total amount of cocaine seized in Eastern Europe increased dramatically in 2007, primarily as a result of one major seizure of 480 kg made by customs officers in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The increasing number of shipments of cocaine from South America to countries in Eastern Europe is part of a new development in cocaine trafficking: more and more cocaine arriving in Western Europe is transported to Eastern Europe and then transported back to illicit markets in Western Europe

via the Balkan route, the route traditionally used for trafficking in opiates.

687. The heroin available on illicit markets in Europe originates in Afghanistan and has been smuggled into Europe along one of two major routes: the Balkan route; or the so-called "silk route", via Central Asia into the Russian Federation and from there to countries in Europe. The Balkan route continues to be the main route used for smuggling heroin into Eastern Europe and onwards to Western Europe. The so-called northern Balkan route, passing through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and then Austria, was used more frequently in 2007, as evidenced by the more than 2.5 tons of heroin seized on that route. The so-called southern Balkan route, leading through Greece, Albania and then the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Italy, appears to have been used less often for drug trafficking in 2007 than in previous years.

688. Europe remains the region with the second largest illicit market for opiates. In Eastern Europe, the illicit market for opiates has continued to expand. According to UNODC estimates, there are about 2 million abusers of opiates in Eastern Europe. The abuse of opiates remained stable or declined in Central Europe and Western Europe but was reportedly increasing in the Russian Federation and other countries in Eastern Europe, as well as in countries in South-Eastern Europe along the Balkan route. It appears that the abuse of heroin has become more widespread among younger drug abusers in Western Europe.

689. Treatment for heroin abuse in residential facilities, formerly the predominant treatment for such abuse in many European countries, is less common today. Most treatment for drug abusers takes place on an outpatient basis. The enlargement of outpatient treatment networks has continued in recent years in Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania and Romania. About 53 per cent of the outpatient treatment clients are treated for the abuse of opiates and the rest are treated for the abuse of other drugs, in particular cannabis (22 per cent) and cocaine (16 per cent). The number of people seeking treatment for the abuse of drugs, in particular opiates, is higher in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe.

690. The illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs in Central Europe and Eastern Europe continued to rise. According to UNODC, in 2006 the largest number of