

III. Analysis of the world situation

A. Africa

1. Major developments

290. Cocaine consignments destined mainly for illicit markets in Europe are increasingly being smuggled through Africa. An increasing number of cocaine seizures have been effected on the high seas of the Gulf of Guinea and on the African mainland, which indicates that West Africa has become one of the world's major hubs for smuggling cocaine from South America into Europe. Reports point to increasing levels of abuse of cocaine in some countries affected by such trafficking. Reports also indicate the spread of cocaine trafficking through landlocked countries in the Sahel area. The Board is seriously concerned about those developments and welcomes the Security Council's interest in the problem, which poses a serious threat to stability and development in that subregion, in particular in countries emerging from conflict and civil strife.

291. Cannabis production, trafficking and abuse continue to represent major challenges in Africa. Cannabis is the main drug of abuse in Africa: it is estimated that the substance is abused by over 42 million people in the region. Cannabis is illicitly cultivated and is then smuggled within Africa and beyond, mainly into Europe and North America. Africa accounts for an estimated 26 per cent of global cannabis production. While cannabis herb is illicitly produced in countries throughout Africa, Morocco has remained one of the world's largest producers of cannabis resin.

292. East Africa is the major conduit for smuggling heroin from South-West Asia into Africa, mainly through the major airports of Addis Ababa and Nairobi. From East Africa, the heroin is smuggled into Europe and North America, either directly or indirectly through countries in West Africa (especially Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria) and, to a lesser extent, through countries in North Africa. The abuse of heroin has become a matter of concern in some East and Southern African countries, in particular Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia.

293. Illicitly manufactured pharmaceutical preparations or prescription drugs containing narcotic

drugs and psychotropic substances that had been diverted from licit distribution channels continue to be available on the unregulated markets in many countries in Africa. The situation remains unresolved because of the inadequate legislative frameworks, ineffective administrative mechanisms and insufficient resources for the proper enforcement of controls such as licensing and the inspection of distribution channels.

294. In recent years, Africa has emerged as a major area targeted for the diversion of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine to be used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in the Americas and elsewhere. During 2008, numerous suspicious shipments of those precursors were stopped en route to Africa and almost 30 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were prevented from being diverted to or through Africa.

2. Regional cooperation

295. Drug control issues continue to remain high on the agenda of the African Union. In December 2007, the Ministerial Conference of the African Union endorsed the Revised African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012), which was subsequently adopted at the meeting of the Heads of State of the African Union held in Addis Ababa from 30 January to 2 February 2008. A number of priority areas were identified in the Revised Plan of Action, including enhanced and effective policy formulation, coordination and collaboration in drug control to address drug trafficking, organized crime and corruption at the regional, subregional and national levels; institutional capacity-building for law enforcement, criminal justice and forensic service systems on drug control and crime prevention; mainstreaming drug and crime concerns into development strategies; and capacity-building and human resource development for the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers. The Board encourages the Governments of African countries to take all the steps necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the Revised Plan of Action.

296. The Board notes that the threats posed by the rapidly increasing transit traffic in drugs through some countries in West Africa are becoming a matter of concern to the international community. In June 2008,

the Security Council voiced concern at the major threat posed by drug trafficking and organized crime to the consolidation of peace in Guinea-Bissau and warned of the danger that the illicit drug trade posed for a country struggling to make political and economic progress. The Board welcomes the call by the Council to the international community to continue to provide assistance to Guinea-Bissau. The Board urges all Governments to extend their support to that country to enable it to meet its obligations under the international drug control treaties (see also paragraph 247 above).

297. Within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Governments of West African countries are involved in joint efforts to combat the rapidly increasing transit traffic in drugs, in particular cocaine from Latin America passing through West Africa to Europe. During the seventeenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in April 2008, a special informal meeting of the ministers of justice, the interior and security of Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo, as well as representatives of Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, was held to pave the way for a high-level conference on cocaine trafficking through West Africa that would develop a concerted approach to improving the responses of national security sectors to the new threats of drug trafficking by transnational organized criminal groups (see also paragraph 247 above).

298. That high-level conference, the ECOWAS Conference on Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat to West Africa, was convened jointly by ECOWAS, UNODC and the United Nations Office for West Africa in Praia in October 2008. Participants included the ministers of justice and the ministers of the interior of the 15 member States of ECOWAS, and representatives of major international development partners and of major Latin American partners in the drug control effort, such as Austria, Brazil, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Important international entities participated as well, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and other United Nations entities, the African Union, the European Commission, the European Police Office (Europol), INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. The Conference adopted two documents

to be endorsed by Heads of States in December 2008, namely, a political declaration on the prevention of drug abuse, drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa and a regional action plan listing regional initiatives to be undertaken by the ECOWAS Commission with the aim of complementing national drug control plans, strategies and programmes of action, including specific commitments for assistance by external partners.

299. The Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, was hosted by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in Yamoussoukro in September 2008. The Meeting was attended by representatives of national drug law enforcement agencies from 25 African countries, as well as by 10 observers. The participants examined the current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking and developed strategies to address trafficking in cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants and precursor chemicals in Africa.

300. To assist the Governments of countries in West Africa in their efforts to combat the smuggling of drugs through their territory, UNODC in 2007 launched a two-year programme on law enforcement and intelligence cooperation against cocaine trafficking between West Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The programme, which is financed by the European Commission, aims at enhancing the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement agencies in the two areas by providing an electronic communications platform, training and mentoring on the collection, collation and analysis of intelligence. The countries participating in the programme are: in West Africa, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Togo; and, in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

301. An expert round-table meeting for East Africa was organized in Nairobi in September 2008 in the framework of the Paris Pact Initiative, a UNODC-led international partnership to counter traffic in and abuse of Afghan opiates. The meeting brought together senior experts on drug law enforcement and drug demand reduction from East Africa and neighbouring countries, as well as from Paris Pact partners in the subregion. The objective of the meeting was to assess the drug

abuse situation in East Africa, with particular emphasis on the abuse of opiates, to identify good practices, current challenges, priority actions and targets in the field of drug demand reduction and to develop appropriate measures at the national and regional levels to counter the smuggling of Afghan opiates into and through East Africa.

302. Cooperation in drug control matters among countries in the subregion of Southern Africa is organized in the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO). In April 2008, the Government of Malawi hosted a regional SADC workshop on drug trafficking and the cultivation, production and eradication of cannabis plants. The workshop, attended by senior officials of the drug control police from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as by representatives of INTERPOL, agreed on an operational strategy on drug interdiction in the subregion, cross-border operations and new initiatives to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals. Also, SARPCCO heads of forensic science institutions held a meeting in Livingstone, Zambia, in April 2008 to improve technical cooperation activities in the subregion and to develop a subregional network of forensic laboratories. In August 2008, the thirteenth annual general meeting of SARPCCO was held in Windhoek. The meeting, which was hosted by the Government of Namibia, adopted measures for building the capacity of police and forensic services in Southern Africa and joint cross-border initiatives against transnational crime.

303. The Board notes that a number of African States have undertaken additional initiatives against drug trafficking and money-laundering. In November 2007, the Arab Regional Symposium on Countering Drug Trafficking and Money-Laundering using the Mail, held in Tripoli, adopted the Tripoli Action Plan on Countering Drug Trafficking and Money-Laundering using the Mail. The Action Plan foresees measures to combat drug trafficking and money-laundering through the international mail, such as cooperation and information-sharing, developing human resources, awareness-raising and the role of the media in combating drug trafficking through the mail. The symposium was attended by representatives of the League of Arab States, UPU, INTERPOL and UNODC,

as well as by representatives of entities in the private sector dealing with mail services (see also paragraph 272 above).

304. In April 2008, a subregional seminar on combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism was held for member States of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Economic Community of Central African States in Gabon. About 30 officials from Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe attended the seminar. The participants adopted recommendations on strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, on asset forfeiture mechanisms and on inter-agency and international cooperation.

305. In August 2008, at the eighth meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group,⁷² held in Mombasa, Kenya, the second three-year strategic plan, covering the period April 2009-March 2012, was adopted. The plan sets out nine strategic objectives to combat money-laundering and financing of terrorism, including policy formulation, regional cooperation, capacity-building, training, awareness-raising and advisory services to member States.

3. National legislation, policy and action

306. In response to the urgent problems confronting the Government of Guinea-Bissau in combating cocaine trafficking through its territory, UNODC and the Ministry of Justice of Guinea-Bissau have prepared an integrated multidisciplinary programme aimed at combating drug trafficking and organized crime in that country (see also paragraph 247 above). The programme, which began in April 2008, will support the Government of Guinea-Bissau in its efforts to reform its security sector, to stabilize the peace process and protect the social development of the country, with activities in the fields of law enforcement

⁷² The Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group is a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body for East and Southern Africa established in 1999. Current members are Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

capacity-building, institutional reform and nationwide training. The programme will allow a more effective response to recommendations made by the Security Council on Guinea-Bissau. Similar programmes are planned by UNODC for other countries in the subregion, including Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Sierra Leone.

307. A new law adopted by the parliament of Senegal in December 2007 provides for a significantly increased penalty for drug trafficking: 10-20 years of hard labour, which is double the previous penalty. Senegal has recently been targeted by massive smuggling of cocaine from Latin America into Europe, as illustrated by two major seizures of cocaine in that country in June 2007. In Nigeria, draft legislation is before parliament that will provide for stricter and more effective penalties for major drug traffickers. Furthermore, updated drug control legislation is being drafted in Sierra Leone, with the assistance of UNODC.

308. The Government of Ghana has taken a number of legislative and administrative measures to address the increase in drug trafficking through its territory. Legislation to control maritime activities are being updated, a national drug control strategy for the period 2008-2010 has been developed and the Narcotics Control Board of Ghana has been restructured and provided with additional resources. With technical cooperation from the Government of the United Kingdom, security at the international airport at Accra has been strengthened. The Joint Port Control Unit, comprising police and customs and established in Ghana in 2007 under the UNODC-World Customs Organization Global Container Project, continues to operate at the port of Tema.

309. The Government of Ethiopia has taken steps to address drug trafficking through the international airport at Addis Ababa. With technical cooperation from UNODC, a joint airport control team was established at the airport in 2007. The strategic geographical location of Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and the extensive flight routes of Ethiopian airlines have made the airport at Addis Ababa one of the major hubs for drug trafficking in Africa, especially for smuggling heroin from Asia into West Africa and Europe.

310. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria has strengthened its control measures at

several airports, including those at Lagos and Kano, which provide direct international flights to European and West Asian countries. The Agency has also introduced a visa clearance programme to curb drug trafficking by Nigerian nationals abroad. That programme, voluntarily supported by Governments with embassies in Nigeria, makes it an additional requirement for visa applicants to obtain a certificate of drug trafficking reporting clearance from the Agency.

311. The Board notes the efforts of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) of Nigeria in combating counterfeit drugs in that country. In recent years, NAFDAC has strengthened the regulatory framework, improved the drug registration processes and closed down many companies importing counterfeit medicines destined for unregulated markets in Nigeria and beyond. In May 2008, NAFDAC seized a 20-foot container containing counterfeit pharmaceutical products on a vessel in Lagos. Since 2005, NAFDAC has been spearheading the work of the West African Drug Regulatory Agencies Network, a platform for interacting and exchanging strategies against counterfeit medicines.

312. In April 2008, the Government of South Africa strengthened its precursor control legislation by including ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in its Medicines and Related Substances Act of 1965. The South African parliament is currently considering new legislation on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse. The Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Bill, which replaces the Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act of 1992, will regulate the establishment, registration and management of treatment centres, inpatient and outpatient services and community-based services and will define the mandate of the Central Drug Authority, whose responsibility it is to monitor and oversee the implementation of the national drug control master plan.

313. The Board is concerned about the alarming increase in Côte d'Ivoire in the number of facilities, locally dubbed *fumoirs*, where drugs obtained from illicit sources are abused. The Board acknowledges the efforts of the Ivorian law enforcement authorities, which led to the successful dismantling of 29 such facilities during 2007 and the seizure of substantial

quantities of cannabis, heroin, cocaine and psychotropic substances from those facilities, and encourages the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to continue to accord priority to combating drug abuse in its country.

314. The Board is pleased to note that a major awareness-raising campaign against drug abuse among youth was conducted jointly by UNODC, the police of United Arab Emirates and Right Start International Foundation in a number of countries and areas in North Africa and West Asia⁷³ during March and April 2008. The campaign was organized in schools, universities, youth clubs and public places popular among youth. In the course of the five-week campaign, 5,000 events, including concerts, school conferences and programmes on satellite channels, took place. Also, train-the-trainer sessions were conducted for 1,800 volunteers. A total of 7,390 drug abusers registered for treatment and rehabilitation, of whom 1,592 were actually admitted to treatment centres.

315. The Board also notes the efforts made by some Governments of African countries with regard to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers. In Algeria, preparations are under way for the launch, in 2009, of a national network of facilities for providing treatment and aftercare for drug abusers. The facilities will include 15 new detoxification centres, 53 outpatient centres and 185 reception and orientation units for drug addicts. In Kenya, an outreach and treatment programme established in 2005 has provided treatment to over 3,100 patients in Nairobi and Mombasa. Programmes for the treatment of drug dependence are also being run in other countries, such as Seychelles and Uganda. An opiate substitution treatment programme has been operating successfully in Mauritius since 2007.

316. The Board welcomes the steps being taken by a number of Governments of African countries to counter money-laundering. Since November 2007, new legislation to counter money-laundering has been passed in Burundi, Ghana, Lesotho and Rwanda. In 2008, the Government of Namibia adopted regulations for enforcing the country's Financial Intelligence Act of 2007. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a financial intelligence unit has been established under

the Ministry of Finance, and a similar unit is expected to be set up soon in Rwanda. The Government of Kenya has recently submitted to parliament draft legislation to counter money-laundering, and a comprehensive law against money-laundering is being drafted in Ethiopia, for submission to parliament in 2008. The Comoros has become an observer to the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which enacted legislation against money-laundering in 2004, is now also seeking admission as an observer to the Group.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

317. Africa remains the world's second largest producer of cannabis herb after the Americas, accounting for 22 per cent (or 8,900 tons) of global cannabis production in 2006.⁷⁴ Cannabis herb is illicitly produced in many countries throughout Africa. The largest producer countries include: in Southern Africa, South Africa, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in that order; in West Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Togo; in North Africa, Egypt and Morocco; and, in East Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania. Most of the cannabis herb produced in Africa is abused locally. However, cannabis herb produced in a limited number of African countries, mainly Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa, is also smuggled to destinations outside of Africa, notably in Europe and, to a lesser extent, East Asia. In 2006, 1,217 tons of cannabis herb were seized in Africa, as the region accounted for 23 per cent of global cannabis herb seizures in that year. The largest seizures were reported in South Africa (359 tons, or 7 per cent of global seizures), Malawi (272 tons), the United Republic of Tanzania (225 tons), Nigeria (192 tons) and Egypt (101 tons).

318. According to UNODC data,⁷⁵ Morocco remains the world's largest producer of cannabis resin, supplying the illicit markets in Western Europe and

⁷³ Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine.

⁷⁴ The year 2006 is the latest year for which aggregate UNODC data on global production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse are available.

⁷⁵ *World Drug Report 2008* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.XI.1), p. 99.

North Africa. In 2005, the available data had suggested a decline in the country's cannabis production, and the extent of cannabis cultivation was reported to have been reduced to 76,400 ha during that year. Those developments were attributed to an intensified campaign by the Government of Morocco to eradicate the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants, which was corroborated by a decline in reported seizures of cannabis resin and cannabis herb. In 2007, however, owing to intensified interdiction efforts by the Government, seizures of both cannabis resin and cannabis herb increased again, with cannabis resin seizures increasing from 89 tons in 2006 to 118 tons in 2007 and cannabis herb seizures increasing from 60 tons in 2006 to 209 tons in 2007. The seizures continued to increase during the first half of 2008, as several multi-ton seizures of cannabis resin and cannabis herb were made by Moroccan authorities. No further survey on the extent of illicit cannabis cultivation has been undertaken in Morocco since 2005. However, accurate data on the actual extent of illicit cannabis cultivation are essential for effective measures to be taken against such cultivation. The Board therefore encourages the Government of Morocco to update the data on the extent of illicit cannabis cultivation on its territory within the framework of its ongoing discussions with UNODC.

319. North Africa accounted for 12 per cent of the 1,025 tons of cannabis resin seized globally in 2006. Most of the cannabis resin from Morocco destined for Europe is trafficked through Spain, as well as France and Italy. In addition, cannabis resin destined to Europe or West Asia passes through Mauritania, Mali, the Niger, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Chad to Egypt. In addition to Morocco, large seizures were reported for 2006 in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (14.8 tons), Algeria (10 tons), Senegal (8.4 tons) and Egypt (5.1 tons). It is likely that the growing trafficking in cannabis through North Africa will foster the development of illicit markets in the countries affected by such trafficking.

320. According to UNODC estimates, about 42 million people in Africa abuse cannabis. The annual prevalence rate for cannabis abuse among persons aged 15-64 years in Africa is 8 per cent. The highest annual prevalence rates for cannabis abuse in Africa are found in West and Central Africa (12.6 per cent), where States have reported large increases in such abuse, followed by Southern Africa, where the annual

prevalence rate is 8.4 per cent. In 2006 as in previous years, most of the demand for drug-related treatment in Africa (63 per cent) continued to be associated with cannabis abuse.

321. Although cocaine is not manufactured in Africa, the rapid increase in seizures of cocaine in the region in the past few years, especially in West Africa, shows that Africa is becoming an important transit and stockpiling area for cocaine consignments from Latin America destined for Europe (see paragraphs 242-246 above and 512 below). Prior to 2005, the total amount of cocaine seized in Africa was barely 1 ton. Between 2005 and 2007, however, at least 33 tons of cocaine were seized en route to Europe from West Africa, especially off the coast of the Canary Islands, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, as well as in various countries along the Gulf of Guinea, including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and, further west, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. According to UNODC estimates, about 27 per cent (or 40 tons) of the cocaine abused annually in Europe has passed through West Africa.

322. Cocaine trafficking through Africa continued unabated in 2008, with significant seizures of cocaine being made in the first 10 months of the year. In Ghana, 399 kg of cocaine were seized in a motor vehicle coming from Guinea. In Sierra Leone, 700 kg of cocaine were seized on an aircraft arriving from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Furthermore, the French navy seized 2.5 tons of cocaine on board a Liberian fishing vessel off the coast of Liberia in January 2008 and 3 tons of cocaine on a Panamanian vessel en route from Brazil to Algeria in February 2008.

323. Cocaine is mostly transported to West Africa in large quantities on board sea vessels, often concealed in containers. In West Africa, the cocaine is stockpiled, repackaged into smaller consignments and transported to countries in Europe and to the United States, usually by air couriers swallowing and carrying as much as 1 kg in their stomachs, or through checked-in luggage containing very large quantities of cocaine. Drug trafficking organizations have begun using what is called the "shotgun approach", whereby a large number of couriers are dispatched on the same flight, thereby making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to identify and arrest all couriers on the same flight.

324. The emergence of West Africa as a transit area for cocaine trafficking may have several causes. The geographical location of West Africa makes it an ideal staging post for trans-shipping cocaine consignments from Latin America to the growing cocaine markets in Europe. By using West Africa for their transit posts, the traffickers try to circumvent the increased surveillance and effective interdiction units put in place along the classic smuggling routes by the national law enforcement agencies of the United States and countries in Europe. Traffickers also exploit loopholes in law enforcement in many West African countries.

325. Cocaine consignments transiting West Africa are also smuggled through East Africa, as indicated by seizures effected in some ports and airports in East Africa and on flights to Europe and elsewhere originating in East Africa. The airport at Addis Ababa has recently emerged as a transit point for cocaine consignments destined for Turkey. In 2008, five seizures of cocaine totalling 6 kg were made at the airport at Istanbul and in all cases the cocaine had been smuggled by West African nationals arriving by air from Addis Ababa. There is also evidence that cocaine is being transported by both land and air from West Africa to North Africa before being smuggled into Europe by sea or air. In addition, some cocaine continues to be smuggled into countries in Southern Africa, mainly through Angola into South Africa. South Africa remains the only African country reporting a relatively high level of annual cocaine seizures.

326. The increase in cocaine trafficking in Africa has resulted in increased abuse of the drug in the region, which is particularly noticeable in the countries in West and Southern Africa and along the Atlantic coast of North Africa. According to current UNODC estimates, about 1.1 million people in Africa abuse cocaine, and the annual prevalence rate for persons aged 15-64 years is 0.2 per cent, which is below the global average of 0.37 per cent. Increasing abuse of cocaine and/or crack cocaine has been reported in some Southern African countries, such as Namibia and South Africa. South Africa has reported demand for treatment for cocaine abuse at a level considerably higher than the African average. Cocaine abuse may soon spread rapidly in West Africa if the problem of transit trafficking through the subregion is not addressed decisively.

327. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy continues on the Sinai peninsula in Egypt. In 2007, there was a considerable increase in the eradication of illicitly cultivated opium poppy in Egypt, the total area eradicated being 98 ha, almost twice the area eradicated in 2006 (51 ha). The opium derived from that cultivation is reportedly consumed locally and not used for the illicit manufacture of heroin. The Government of Algeria has reported that, as a result of intensified law enforcement and interdiction measures, it eradicated illicitly cultivated opium poppy in small areas in the north of the country: over 74,000 poppy seedlings were eradicated in 2007, and almost 80,000 were eradicated in the first nine months of 2008. The Board notes the efforts of the Government of Algeria and encourages it to continue identifying and eradicating any illicit opium poppy cultivation in its territory.

328. Heroin from South-West Asia continues to enter the African region through East Africa. The strategic location of East Africa, on a long and established trading route between Europe and South-West Asia, and the extensive flight routes of Kenyan and Ethiopian airlines linking East Africa to the principal heroin source countries in Asia, as well as West Africa and Europe, have created favourable conditions for smuggling heroin from Asia into West Africa and Europe. The international airports at Addis Ababa and Nairobi have emerged as major entry and transit points for the whole of Africa and beyond. From East Africa, large quantities of heroin are transported across the continent to countries in West Africa, especially Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, and from there to countries in Europe and to the United States. Seizures of heroin continue to be made in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania. Most of the heroin is smuggled using air couriers, but commercial air cargo and express courier mail services are also increasingly being used for heroin trafficking. In addition, heroin trafficking through Tripoli has increased recently. Some of the heroin trafficked and temporarily stored in East Africa has spilled over into the local illicit market. Heroin from East Africa is also smuggled into countries in Southern Africa, notably Mauritius and South Africa, where it is abused.

329. According to UNODC statistics, about 1.4 million people in Africa (or 0.3 per cent of persons aged 15-64 years) are abusing opiates, mostly heroin.

Egypt constitutes the largest market for opiates (some 330,000 people) in Africa. Increased abuse of opiates has been reported in most countries in East and Southern Africa. The annual prevalence rate of such use is highest in Mauritius (2 per cent), followed by Egypt (0.7 per cent). According to the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use, demand for treatment for heroin abuse in South Africa has increased. Recent statistics show that Cape Town is one of the areas in the country with the largest number of heroin abusers (over 15,000). In South Africa, heroin is mostly smoked; injecting heroin abuse is stable or declining.

Psychotropic substances

330. One matter of major concern to the Board is the abuse of pharmaceutical products containing psychotropic substances, which are sold without medical prescription or in the street. That practice has been observed in many countries in West and Central Africa. The Board calls upon the drug regulatory authorities of those countries to address the concerns of the Board in a serious manner. Attempts at diverting psychotropic substances from international trade into illicit channels in order to supply those unregulated markets continue to be made. For instance, in November 2007, an attempted diversion of 25 kg of flunitrazepam from the Netherlands to Guinea-Bissau was prevented with the assistance of the Board.

331. Illicit manufacture of amphetamines occurs in South Africa and, on a small scale, in Egypt. Methcathinone (“cat”) is manufactured clandestinely and is widely available in South Africa. The growing abuse of crystal methamphetamine (locally dubbed “tik”) in the Cape Town area has become a cause for concern for the authorities. It appears that the illicit demand for methamphetamine is met from methamphetamine smuggled into or manufactured in South Africa. During 2007, the South African police dismantled 30 clandestine drug laboratories, most of which manufactured methamphetamine or methcathinone. In August 2008, 54 kg of crystal methamphetamine en route from Lagos were seized at the international airport at Johannesburg.

332. The abuse of amphetamines across Africa has been increasing slowly over the past few years, with much of the growth being fuelled by the increasing methamphetamine abuse in South Africa. The number

of amphetamine abusers in Africa is estimated by UNODC at 2.3 million, accounting for about 9 per cent of the world total. The average annual prevalence rate of abuse of amphetamines in Africa is estimated at 0.4 per cent of the population aged 15-64 years, the highest annual prevalence rates in the region being reported in Nigeria and some other West African countries, Egypt and South Africa.

333. Methaqualone (Mandrax) illicitly manufactured in China or India continues to enter South Africa, mainly through Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Methaqualone is also manufactured in clandestine laboratories in Southern Africa. From South Africa, which is regarded as the largest illicit market for methaqualone in the world, some of the drug is smuggled into countries in the subregion, where it is also abused. Methaqualone is abused mostly in combination with cannabis, a form of drug abuse known as the “white pipe”. The Board notes the successful interception of methaqualone consignments by the South African law enforcement authorities. In February 2008, the South African police detected and seized 1,363 kg of methaqualone during a routine search of a truck at a border crossing between South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Precursors

334. Africa continues to be a major area used for the diversion of certain precursor chemicals, notably ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.⁷⁶ Traffickers have been trying to take advantage of weaknesses in precursor control mechanisms in place in many African countries to divert ephedrine and pseudoephedrine to be used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine elsewhere, notably in the Americas. During the period 2007-2008, numerous suspicious shipments of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine to Africa were identified and stopped. Forged import permits were used for most of the identified diversion attempts. The countries targeted in that period were Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. During that period, a total of 12.5 tons of those precursors were seized in Ethiopia alone.

⁷⁶ See also *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008 ...*

335. Altogether, almost 30 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were prevented from being diverted to or through Africa during the period 2007-2008. That amount represents a sharp decline compared with the period 2006-2007, during which over 75 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were prevented from being diverted to or through African countries, in particular the Democratic Republic of the Congo (23 tons). The Board is concerned that, in spite of those attempted diversions, hardly any seizures of ephedrine or pseudoephedrine have been reported in countries in Africa. For instance, between 2000 and 2008, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine seizures in Africa totalled only 242 kg, with South Africa accounting for most of those seizures.

336. The recent decrease in the total amount of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine involved in identified attempts at diverting to Africa could be due to a number of factors, which may include traffickers placing orders for consignments of smaller amounts of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine to avoid suspicion and follow-up investigations by the authorities of exporting and importing countries. The Board therefore calls upon all Governments of exporting and transit countries to verify the legitimacy of all shipments of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine destined for Africa, including shipments of pharmaceutical preparations containing those substances. The Board also calls upon the Governments of all countries in Africa that have not yet done so to establish appropriate mechanisms for control over ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, including preparations containing those substances, that will enable them to respond in a timely manner to pre-export notifications and enquiries of exporting authorities about the legitimacy of any transactions.

Substances not under international control

337. In 2008, the Government of Namibia placed *N*-benzylpiperazine (BZP) under national control and introduced a prescription requirement for it. BZP is a piperazine-derived compound that is currently not under international control.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ In March 2007, the Board requested WHO to consider reviewing piperazine-derived compounds for possible scheduling under the 1971 Convention. Furthermore, the Board in its report for 2007, urged all Governments to provide to WHO and the Board any information on the abuse of and trafficking in such compounds (*Report of*

338. In view of the increasing abuse of khat⁷⁸ in Madagascar, the Government of that country prohibited the cultivation, sale and consumption of khat as of January 2008. Khat is grown mainly in East Africa and on the Arabian peninsula and is abused locally. While khat is currently not under international control, its cultivation has been prohibited in a number of countries in East Africa, including Eritrea, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

339. According to the World Customs Organization, the total amount of khat seized globally has increased significantly in recent years, amounting to almost 44 tons in 889 cases in 2007. The largest seizures in 2007 were made by Canada (13 tons), Germany (7 tons), Sweden (6 tons), Denmark (1.6 tons) and Switzerland (1.4 tons). In those countries, khat is abused mainly by expatriates with origins in East Africa and the Arabian peninsula. The Board notes that seizures of dried khat have risen in recent years, since dried khat no longer has to be shipped and distributed to consumers within 48 hours.

5. Missions

340. A mission of the Board visited Ethiopia in March 2008. The Board appreciates the steps taken by the Government in recent years to increase its capacity to deal with the drug problem, including the creation of the Drug Administration and Control Authority, the strengthening of the drug control capacity of the police and the modification of the Penal Code. The Government has initiated several activities in the area of primary prevention of drug abuse.

the International Narcotics Control Board for 2007..., para. 734, recommendation 22).

⁷⁸ Khat refers to the leaves and young shoots of the plant *Catha edulis*. Khat has been considered and reviewed on two occasions by the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. During the last review, in 2006, the Committee concluded that the potential for abuse and dependence was low and that the level of abuse and threat to public health was not significant enough to warrant international control. Therefore, the Committee did not recommend the scheduling of khat. The Committee recognized that social and some health problems resulted from the excessive use of khat and suggested that national educational campaigns should be adopted to discourage use that might lead to those adverse consequences (*WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence: Thirty-fourth Report*, WHO Technical Report Series, No. 942 (Geneva, 2006), pp. 11-12).

341. The mission examined with the authorities steps against the illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis in Ethiopia. Also discussed were measures against drug trafficking, including the transit traffic through the international airport in Addis Ababa. The Board encourages the Government to carry out periodic studies on the prevalence of drug abuse and to strengthen its capacity for the treatment of drug addicts. The Board invites the Government to promote the rational use of opioid analgesics, in accordance with the guidelines issued on the subject by WHO.

342. The Board sent a mission to Mauritius in October 2008. Mauritius is a party to all of the international drug control treaties and has adopted comprehensive drug control legislation. The Board encourages the Government to set up a mechanism for sharing information, as well as coordinating machinery, involving all bodies, services and agencies involved in drug control activities. With respect to the smuggling of buprenorphine (Subutex®) to Mauritius, the Board invites the Government to continue to cooperate with European countries in an effort to address that problem effectively.

343. The abuse of drugs, particularly heroin, by injection is a problem in Mauritius. The Board commends the Government for offering a large variety of drug demand reduction services to drug abusers. The Board recommends that more psychosocial support be provided to drug abusers and trusts that measures taken to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS will not promote or facilitate drug abuse.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

1. Major developments

344. Trafficking in controlled substances containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine is increasing in Central America. Since Mexico strengthened its regulations to prevent the diversion of those precursors, criminal organizations have been taking advantage of the lax control of sales near the southern border of Mexico to acquire drugs containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine and establishing methamphetamine laboratories in the subregion.

345. The region of Central America and the Caribbean continues to be a major trafficking route for illicit drugs originating in South America and destined for North America and Europe. Despite the authorities' efforts to combat the problem, there are indications that drug trafficking is increasing in areas in Central America and in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. As a result of growing drug trafficking, drug abuse is on the rise in the Dominican Republic and crime has also escalated in the country.

346. The Board acknowledges the increasing number of regional cooperation activities organized by Governments, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and UNODC, as well as the increasing assistance from countries outside the region of Central America and the Caribbean. The Board welcomes the declaration of the eighteenth Ibero-American Summit, held in San Salvador in October 2008, in which members of the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) agreed to strengthen the role of education as a tool for development in the region and to enhance technical cooperation to combat organized crime.

347. In Central America, *maras* (street gangs) continue to be associated with international drug trafficking networks. About 5,000 gangs from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras operate in Mexico, where some of them have become involved in criminal operations with Mexican drug trafficking organizations. According to Mexico and countries in Central America, organized criminal groups based in Mexico have been recruiting gang members from El Salvador and Guatemala since 2007.

348. The increase in deportations in the United States during the past three years has forced more gang members to return to countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Seventy-five per cent of the gangs in Central America have links with other gangs and criminal groups in the United States. The deported gang members usually attempt to return illegally to the United States. Those who succeed extend and reinforce their operational networks in activities such as drug smuggling, thus strengthening international criminal associations.

349. Corruption, poorly funded judiciary systems, lack of public trust and weak law enforcement have undermined efforts to strengthen drug control policy in

Central America and the Caribbean. Money-laundering has had an impact on criminal activity at the national and regional levels. In Caribbean countries, measures are being taken to counter money-laundering and, in some cases, to ensure the seizure of proceeds of drug-related crime. However, national legislation needs to be updated and implemented at a faster pace. The Board encourages the authorities of countries in the region that have not done so to pass legislation introducing civil forfeiture and anti-corruption programmes to strengthen financial institutions and to expand and continue activities in the field of drug control.

2. Regional cooperation

350. In August 2007, CICAD, with the assistance of the Government of Spain and UNODC, organized a mock investigation in Antigua, Guatemala, focusing on an actual case involving money-laundering. The purpose of the investigation was to improve coordination between law enforcers, prosecutors and intelligence analysts. The participants included experts from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

351. CICAD, in partnership with a strategy centre based in the United States, began to implement a pilot programme in Costa Rica on the culture of lawfulness, a school curriculum for teenage students to promote respect of law. In Guazapa, El Salvador, technical and financial support was provided to a youth outreach centre that provides job training, family counselling and intervention, as well as resources, to prevent drug abuse and violence. By the end of 2007, CICAD had trained 500 counsellors in drug abuse treatment in El Salvador and 150 in Guatemala.

352. The CICAD demand reduction programme initiated in 2008 a professional certificate programme at the Université Quisqueya in Haiti. The CICAD Lions prevention programme, developed by the Lions Clubs International Foundation, is a school-based drug abuse prevention programme based on teaching life skills that has been operating in different member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) since 2005. The programme was launched in the Dominican Republic in the period 2007-2008 under the auspices of CICAD. Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, the Dominican Republic and Panama received technical assistance from CICAD for the drafting of

their national drug control plans and strategies. In addition, Caribbean countries received training on methodology for project management to strengthen human resources in national drug control commissions.

353. In 2007, CICAD celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), an instrument designed to measure the progress of Government action using evaluations. Implemented by CICAD, MEM has, during the past 10 years, proved to be an effective tool for use by countries in Central America and the Caribbean in addressing the drug problem. MEM reports are published periodically on the CICAD website. During the second half of 2007, MEM members visited Panama to promote the Mechanism in that country and to provide training for national institutions active in the field of drug control. MEM representatives participated in a meeting of Caribbean drug observatories held in Grenada in September 2007. The meeting was organized in partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The purpose of the meeting was to review research and practice regarding drug abuse policy. MEM representatives also held a training workshop in Haiti for national institutions working with the Mechanism (see paragraph 478 below).

354. The first interregional forum of CICAD and the European Union twin-city initiative was held in Santo Domingo in April 2008. The twin-city initiative teams up European cities with cities in Latin America and the Caribbean to find joint solutions to improve strategies for drug abuse treatment. Twenty-four cities in Latin America and the Caribbean sent representatives and 18 delegations from European cities attended the forum about public policy on drug abuse.

355. In 2007, CICAD worked with organizations, councils and centres based in the Caribbean, including the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council in Saint Lucia and the Regional Drug Law Enforcement Training Centre in Jamaica, to establish programmes and initiatives aimed at helping member States to reduce illicit drug manufacture, distribution and availability. In April 2008, 16 law enforcement officers from Jamaica and 18 others from other Caribbean countries attended a two-week training course in Kingston on topics related to precursor control. The course was a collaborative effort involving the Government of Jamaica, OAS and CICAD, as well as

the Government of Canada (in the form of support from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

356. In September 2007, the Governments of Jamaica and the United States signed an agreement modifying and amending the 2001 counter-narcotics agreement between the two Governments. As part of the agreement, Jamaica is to receive an additional US\$ 35 million from the United States to fight the illicit trade in narcotic drugs. A total of US\$ 14 million will go towards training, equipment and vehicles to enhance air and seaport security.

357. The “Cuscatlán joint group” is a task force created by authorities from El Salvador and Guatemala, with the assistance of the United States, to enable vessel registration, surveillance and air and sea patrols to intercept illicit drug consignments on the coast of El Salvador. The Executive Secretariat of the Commission against Addictions and Illicit Drug Trafficking of Guatemala signed an agreement with the non-governmental organization Anti-Drugs Foundation of El Salvador (FUNDASALVA) to provide a one-year training programme in treating drug abuse for 38 specialists in El Salvador, with the support of the United States.

358. As part of the Merida Initiative, an initiative of the presidents of Mexico and the United States that was incorporated into law in June 2008, the Government of the United States will provide US\$ 65 million to the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as well as the Governments of countries in Central America, for 2008. The funds are mostly to be used for equipment and training in several areas of drug control. In addition, the programme includes funds to support the drug demand reduction efforts of CICAD (see paragraph 421 below).

359. In June 2007, the OAS General Assembly adopted a resolution to promote cooperation, including at the regional level, in addressing the problem of criminal gangs. In the resolution, the Assembly resolved to instruct the Permanent Council to establish a contact group of member States concerned about the phenomenon of criminal gangs and to hold a special meeting with member States, other inter-American agencies, international organizations and representatives of civil society to analyse the criminal gang problem using a multidisciplinary approach.

360. From 1 January to 31 July 2007, investigators, prosecutors and judges from the Dominican Republic participated in the UNODC Legal Advisory Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, which included training on trial techniques, case management, circumstantial evidence and special investigative techniques. The International Association of Drug Treatment Courts, which is promoting the drug treatment court approach in the region, was also involved in the training.

361. The Government of Honduras participated in a project on substance control involving the Meso-American Control Group on Narcotics, Psychotropics and Precursor Chemicals, implemented in Central America by UNODC with the support of the Government of Mexico and the Permanent Central American Commission for the Eradication of the Illicit Production, Traffic, Consumption and Use of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (and agreed to by the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). The Commission held a meeting in Panama City in January 2008 to draft a regional action plan for the period 2009-2013.

362. Coordination and cooperation between forensic science institutes in a number of countries in Central America, including Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras, were enhanced through their representation at the Ibero-American network of forensic science institutes (the Latin American Academy of Criminalistics and Forensic Studies (AICEF)) and through the exchange of expertise with forensic science institutes in other Latin American countries, Portugal and Spain.

363. At a meeting held in Belize in June 2007, the Presidents of Belize and Mexico agreed to strengthen the rule of law in the common border and to enhance cooperation in fighting common threats such as drug trafficking, terrorism and contraband. Both Presidents declared their commitment to reinforcing cooperation against international crime through a treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.

364. In Trinidad and Tobago, capacity-building projects have been taking place under the auspices of the Dublin Group. The projects, which are aimed at supporting the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, focus on law enforcement and target lawyers, prosecutors and judges.

365. A Regional Summit on Drugs, Security and Cooperation was held in Santo Domingo in March 2007. Representatives of Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago participated in the summit. The meeting dealt with issues such as cooperation and exchange of information related to drug control.

366. CARICOM member States strengthened cooperation mechanisms for security and recognized drug trafficking as a major threat. As part of the security support for a major sporting event in 2007 (the Cricket World Cup), access to the INTERPOL document database was expanded to include offices in ports and a framework was established for the sharing of subregional information on maritime matters.

3. National legislation, policy and action

367. In Central American countries, measures are being taken to reduce the participation of youth gangs in international drug trafficking organizations. In 2007, the Nicaraguan Police had identified 21 gangs and 48 criminal groups associated with gangs. The Directorate of Young People's Affairs of Nicaragua sent multidisciplinary teams to work where those gangs were operating. As a result, 11 gangs with a total of about 800 members were dismantled in 2007. The Board notes with concern that, in spite of those efforts, the involvement of Nicaraguan gangs in criminal activity is increasing.

368. The Government of Honduras has addressed the youth gang problem through educational programmes. During the first half of 2007, almost 9,000 children, teenagers and parents participated in programmes on countering violence and preventing gang-related problems. The programmes were organized by members of the Preventive Police. Other courses were organized for judges, attorneys and law enforcement officers.

369. In addition, Governments, religious associations and other non-governmental organizations and charitable groups in Central American countries, such as Bienvenido a Casa and Homies Unidos in El Salvador, continue to work through existing programmes to help former gang members to reintegrate into society in their home countries following their deportation from the United States.

370. In August 2008, Guatemalan law enforcement authorities launched special operations to patrol their country's border with Mexico to detect illegal activities such as drug trafficking and arms trafficking. In May 2008, Guatemalan authorities started working on a new national drug prevention plan, targeting persons between 16 and 35 years old, which is the age group most affected by drug abuse and drug trafficking. In addition, the Government of Guatemala has established an office to provide legal assistance in cases involving corruption.

371. On 19 June 2008, the Ministry of Health of Belize issued a ministerial decree to strengthen controls over ephedrine. According to the new legislation, special authorization is required to trade in ephedrine and pre-export notifications must be sent to importing countries. The legislation also prohibits the importation or exportation of pseudoephedrine in bulk quantities and in pharmaceutical doses. On 13 August 2008, the Government of El Salvador issued a regulation on the handling and control of pseudoephedrine as a raw material and in pharmaceutical products. Furthermore, manufacturers of pharmaceutical preparations in El Salvador have been given 12 months to find a substitute for pseudoephedrine in medicines sold over the counter. In 2007, the Government of Nicaragua included ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the list of substances controlled by the law on medicaments and pharmacies. The Board strongly encourages the Governments of all countries in Central America and the Caribbean to adopt and implement legislation to control the increasing diversion of precursors in the region.

372. To build the capacity of forensic services in Guatemala, a forensic science institute (the Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses) was created in 2006. The institute officially began its work in July 2007, with significant assistance from various donors, including Germany and the European Commission. It is currently guided by a scientific committee of forensic experts from Colombia and Spain, as well as Puerto Rico.

373. The Government of Honduras set up a task force in the Mosquita area, an area used for cocaine trafficking by sea and air. Within 18 months, the task force seized 11 tons of cocaine. The Counter-Narcotics Directorate, attached to the Ministry of Public

Prosecution of Honduras, has set up a special division to investigate maritime drug trafficking.

374. In 2008, a pilot project developed by a CICAD task force was started to estimate drug abuse among prisoners in Costa Rica. During the past three years, Costa Rica has successfully implemented a comprehensive model for the treatment of drug addiction.

375. In July 2008, the President of the Dominican Republic launched a strategic plan for national drug control for the period 2008-2012. The plan includes guidelines to strengthen institutions, revise the legal framework, implement public policy and create a national information and research institute. In addition, the Government implemented a plan for the security of citizens. A presidential decree was issued to create a national council for the security of citizens.

376. The Government of the Dominican Republic also established a special military unit to tackle trafficking in human beings, drugs and firearms in border areas. The unit, called Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Fronteriza, began operations in September 2007, when 200 soldiers were deployed along the country's border with Haiti. In addition, the Government of the Dominican Republic provided eight aircraft for fighting drug trafficking.

377. In order to ensure that information related to pre-export notifications of controlled substances was well managed, the directorate general of customs in the Dominican Republic initiated a process to implement the electronically operated single customs declaration procedure. The directorate general will invest more than US\$ 20 million in the development of an electronic processing system. The project, which includes the provision of new equipment, computer programs and training for personnel, is supported by the Economic Development Cooperation Fund of the Republic of Korea.

378. The Government of the Dominican Republic launched in 2006 an operation to fight corruption among drug control authorities. According to reports of the Government, 5,000 persons have been reprimanded and expelled from the National Drug Control Directorate as a result of the operation. Some of those persons have been charged with drug trafficking, although the operation also targeted indiscipline and incompetence. The Board notes the efforts of the

Dominican Republic to combat corruption, drug trafficking and violence.

379. In Haiti, security remains fragile in part because of the continuous trafficking in drugs and firearms. In its resolution 1780 (2007), the Security Council, inter alia, invited Member States, in coordination with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), to engage with the Government of Haiti to address cross-border trafficking in illicit drugs and arms and other illegal activities.

380. Efforts are under way in Trinidad and Tobago to eradicate illicitly cultivated cannabis. In November 2007, Government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations participated in a workshop to finalize the drafting of a national drug control plan for the period 2008-2012.

381. In 2008, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis passed legislation aimed at increasing the efficiency of the Financial Services Commission, empowering it to impose sanctions on financial institutions involved in money-laundering.

382. In Jamaica, after years of stalling in Parliament, the Proceeds of Crime Act was approved by the Senate. The Act, in effect since May 2007, incorporates elements of previous legislation against money-laundering and allows for the recovery of assets linked to criminal activity. The Government has pledged to reform the current justice system. In May 2007, the Jamaican Justice System Reform Task Force published a preliminary report and provided guidelines for improvement in areas such as accountability and transparency. To address the new threat posed by the use of the Internet as a means of advertising and acquiring controlled drugs, members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force have received training by experts on Internet investigations. The Jamaica Constabulary Force opened a new base of operations in Saint Thomas in December 2007 to maintain security on the eastern coastline and protect it against trafficking in illicit drugs and firearms.

383. The third anniversary of Operation Kingfish, a major initiative involving law enforcement agencies from Canada, Jamaica, the United Kingdom and the United States was celebrated in 2007. Through Operation Kingfish, over 2,000 operations have been conducted and more than 13 tons of cocaine and 12 tons of cannabis have been seized.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

384. The geographical location of Central America and the Caribbean makes it an important transit and storage area for South American drug consignments en route to Mexico, including those consignments having the United States and countries in Europe as their final destination. Drug trafficking has had an impact on both drug abuse and drug-related crime in the region and has also led to increased money-laundering activities, especially in the Caribbean.

385. Drug trafficking by land continues to pose a problem to national authorities in Central America. According to UNODC, 18 per cent of the cocaine smuggled into Mexico enters that country through Belize and Guatemala. There are indications that drug trafficking along that route is increasing and that Belize is being used as a trans-shipment area for cocaine consignments entering Europe via the West Africa route (see paragraph 324 above).

386. According to the Government of Belize, Mexican criminal organizations are increasingly making use of Belizean territory for stockpiling illicit drugs and coordinating drug trafficking operations. As part of its regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean, UNODC is currently working with the Government of Belize to strengthen the rule of law and fight organized crime.

387. Since maritime drug trafficking routes are increasingly being monitored, drug traffickers have been using low-flying light aircraft, in addition to other aircraft. Speedboats continue to be used to smuggle drugs across the Caribbean. Illicit drug consignments are usually concealed in personal luggage, canned food or industrial containers. However, the use of “mules”, people who smuggle drugs by ingesting them, continues.

388. Jamaica continues to be the main producer and exporter of cannabis in Central America and the Caribbean. Despite the eradication efforts and significant seizures and arrests, cannabis is illicitly cultivated in most parts of the country. Consignments of cannabis from Jamaica are sent through the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to countries in North America or Europe. Cannabis is produced for domestic consumption in other countries

in the Caribbean, such as Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. According to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, cannabis plants are illicitly cultivated on about 145 ha in the country.

389. Guatemala is the only country in Central America and the Caribbean in which there is significant illicit opium poppy cultivation. According to the Government of Guatemala, the total amount of opium poppy eradicated in 2008 increased compared with the total amount eradicated in 2007, and illicit opium poppy cultivation also increased in 2008. The Board urges the Government to provide it with detailed information regarding the total area of illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country, as well as the total area eradicated.

390. According to Guatemalan authorities, the amount of cocaine seized during the first quarter of 2008 was more than the amount seized in 2006 and 2007 combined. In a single operation, the Guatemalan army and police seized 1,136 kg of cocaine in the area of San Andrés, Petén. The drug was found on a small aircraft headed towards Mexico. The Government of Guatemala reported that between January and April 2008, 1,511 kg of cocaine, over 59,000 cannabis plants and more than 161 million opium poppy plants were seized.

391. In the first half of 2007, the authorities of Panama reported having seized 17,872 kg of cocaine, 1,221 kg of cannabis and about 31 kg of heroin. In a joint operation, the authorities of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the United States seized 250 kg of cocaine in Nicaragua in November 2007.

392. The authorities of Costa Rica have reported a marked increase in seizures of cocaine and heroin, mainly on maritime routes. Colombian drug traffickers continue to hire fishermen from Costa Rica and use the fishermen’s vessels in their operations. In 2007, 2 tons of cocaine were confiscated in Europe in a total of 146 seizures involving consignments from Costa Rica. The majority of the seizures originating in Costa Rica were reported by Spain, followed by the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. Most of the seizures involved mail shipments.

393. There has been an increase in drug trafficking in Honduras principally in the north (Cortés, Colón, Atlántida) and along the border of Honduras with

Nicaragua. The largest amounts of drugs enter Honduras through the department of Gracias a Dios, usually by sea or by air. In March 2007, 1,350 kg of cocaine were seized on a small aircraft coming from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and 3,200 kg of cocaine were seized on a fishing boat in May 2007.

394. Haiti is used as a major trans-shipment area for consignments of South American cocaine bound for the United States. Drug trafficking has increased along the border of Haiti with the Dominican Republic. In May 2007, Haitian authorities and United Nations police (UNPOL) arrested 10 people, including 4 police officers, and seized almost 420 kg of cocaine, one of the largest cocaine seizures in that area in the past decade.

395. Between January and October 2008, authorities in the Dominican Republic seized 2,467 kg of cocaine, 220.1 kg of cannabis, 95.7 kg of heroin and 15,949 units of "ecstasy". During the same period 17,378 people were arrested for drug-related offences.

396. The Government of the Bahamas reported the seizure of 193,902 kg of cannabis and 189.5 kg of cocaine during 2007 as a result of Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT).

397. In 2007, the Government of Cuba reported having seized 3,074.6 kg of narcotic drugs, of which 2,126.9 kg was cannabis. Cannabis and cocaine are abused in small amounts, mainly in Havana. The Government addresses the problem of drug abuse through drug abuse prevention and treatment programmes under the supervision of the National Drug Commission, with the participation of political and civil organizations.

398. The availability of drugs in the streets of the Dominican Republic is a growing problem, as indicated by the fact that drug abuse is on the rise. About 20 per cent of the narcotic drugs trafficked in the country are used to pay drug traffickers. Instead of receiving money, traffickers are paid in drugs, thus expanding the local drug trafficking networks and increasing local demand. The growing illicit drug market mainly affects the poorest segment of the population and is reflected in the increasing violence and criminal activity in the country. The homicide rate in the Dominican Republic increased by 66 per cent from 2000 to 2007.

399. According to the latest available UNODC data, in 2006, the annual prevalence rate of cocaine abuse among the population aged 15-64 in Haiti was 0.9 per cent.

400. In 2007, the Ministry of Health and Environment of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines launched the Global School-based Student Health Survey to measure the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances, together with other indicators such as physical activity and mental health. The results showed that 19.9 per cent of students 13-15 years old had abused drugs at least once during their lives.

401. In Trinidad and Tobago, cannabis is the most abused drug. Cannabis plants are mainly cultivated locally, although more potent varieties of cannabis are brought into Trinidad and Tobago from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. According to the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme, there are only a few cases of heroin abuse in the country. Several demand reduction initiatives are currently under way. Those initiatives include programmes in prisons, public awareness campaigns and school-based programmes. In addition, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programme in Trinidad and Tobago is being implemented.

402. The DARE programme is also being implemented in the following other countries in Central America and the Caribbean: Barbados, El Salvador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

403. The Board notes with concern the lack of published studies on drug abuse in Central America and the Caribbean. Therefore, the Board welcomes the initiative of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs, which has announced that it is preparing a comparative report on drug abuse among school students in the Caribbean and a comparative study of the drug situation in Central America.

Psychotropic substances

404. The Board notes with concern the increase in the abuse of MDMA ("ecstasy") in countries in Central America and the Caribbean, particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala. MDMA abuse is also increasing in Jamaica, especially in the tourist areas of Negril and Montego Bay. The "ecstasy" found in the region continues to be smuggled from European countries or,

more recently, from Canada (see paragraphs 419-457 below).

405. According to the most recent data provided by UNODC, the Dominican Republic is the Caribbean country with the highest annual prevalence of abuse of amphetamines (excluding “ecstasy”): 1.1 per cent. During the first nine months of 2007, 18,347 “ecstasy” tablets were seized in that country.

406. According to UNODC, in Barbados the annual prevalence of abuse of amphetamines (excluding “ecstasy”) among persons aged 15-64 was reported to be 0.2 per cent in 2007. The rate for abuse of “ecstasy” was reported to be 0.5 per cent among persons in the same age group.

407. The authorities of Cuba have reported the abuse of psychotropic substances in that country; they have also noted that the level of abuse is decreasing due to new control measures. In Trinidad and Tobago, the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme has reported evidence of the abuse of “ecstasy” in that country.

408. There are reports indicating that methamphetamine laboratories are being established in Central America. Two clandestine laboratories for manufacturing “ecstasy” were seized and dismantled in Tegucigalpa in August 2008.

Precursors

409. Recent measures adopted in Mexico to limit the availability of pseudoephedrine have had an impact on trafficking in precursors in Central America. Honduran law enforcement officers have reported an increase in demand for medicines containing pseudoephedrine that can be sold over the counter. In particular, nationals of other countries have been buying significant amounts of those medicines. In June 2008, Honduran authorities seized 1.2 million tablets of pseudoephedrine at the airport at Tegucigalpa.

410. The authorities of El Salvador have also reported an increase in demand for pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine. The authorities have reported that nationals of El Salvador and Guatemala have been allegedly supplying Mexican cartels with precursors.

411. In 2007, Panama reported the seizure of 10,000 kg of ephedrine and over 1,000 litres of

hydrochloric acid. Costa Rica reported the seizure of 2.8 kg of pseudoephedrine. In Belize, the health authorities have noted an increase in the importation of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine and are currently monitoring their distribution to prevent diversion.

412. In Central American countries, measures are being taken to address the increasing diversion of precursors used in illicit drug manufacture; and some Caribbean countries, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Grenada, have mechanisms for regulating the use and distribution of controlled chemicals. In the region as a whole, however, the movement of precursors is poorly monitored and regulated due to weak infrastructure and insufficient funding. The Board encourages the Governments of countries in Central America and the Caribbean to adopt and strengthen legislation and to establish a regional cooperation mechanism for preventing trafficking in and diversion of precursors.

North America

1. Major developments

413. The major challenge in the region of North America is the domination of illicit drug production and trafficking by organized crime and the growing violence in fighting among drug cartels and between drug traffickers and law enforcement officers, particularly in Mexico. On the demand side, a significant shift of consumption patterns towards the abuse of prescription drugs can be observed in the United States. Canada has changed its role as a traditional importer and consumer of “ecstasy” to a major manufacturer and exporter of that drug.

414. The Government of Mexico faces violent opposition by drug cartels to its attempts to fight organized crime and drug trafficking. The Government has deployed more than 12,000 military troops and has employed forces from seven Government agencies, spending more than US\$ 2.5 billion in 2007 (an increase of 24 per cent over the spending level in 2006) to improve security and reduce drug-related violence. Drug cartels have responded with unprecedented violence and the number of homicide victims, including top-level federal police officers, in 2007 and 2008 has more than doubled compared with previous

years, as federal intervention is taking place in states where corruption had allowed drug traffickers to operate relatively undisturbed.

415. Organized criminal groups continue to control drug trafficking in North America, the strong presence of Mexican drug syndicates being felt in Mexico and the United States and the increasing influence of Asian drug trafficking organizations noticeable in Canada and the United States. Colombian drug trafficking organizations continue to focus their operations on cocaine and heroin trafficking, but Mexican syndicates have taken over from Colombian organized criminal groups the smuggling and distribution of heroin and cocaine from South America to the United States. In addition, Mexican drug trafficking organizations are heavily involved in the distribution of methamphetamine from Mexican-operated illicit drug manufacture and cannabis cultivation and trafficking within and into the United States. Asian drug trafficking organizations operating from Canada are involved in the illicit cultivation of high-potency cannabis in Canada and the United States and are illicitly manufacturing methamphetamine for the illicit market in Canada and the United States.

416. In 2007, an estimated 35.7 million citizens in the United States, or 14.4 per cent of the population aged 12 or older, had consumed illicit drugs (annual prevalence). One encouraging sign is the decline in overall illicit drug use among youth and young adults in the United States. Since 2001, there has been a decrease of 24 per cent in drug abuse among persons aged 12-17 years. That drop is mostly attributed to a decrease in the abuse of cannabis; however, there has also been a decrease in the abuse of almost all other drugs. Similarly, the abuse of drugs among young adults (persons aged 18-25 years) has decreased in all drug categories except pain relievers.

417. The decrease in the abuse of cannabis in the United States is related to the perceived risks of smoking cannabis, which increased between 2002 and 2007, and strong parental disapproval of drug abuse. The increase in the perceived risks may be attributed to educational campaigns in the United States. Despite that significant decline, the problem of substance abuse among United States teenagers continues to be widespread, as nearly half of United States students aged 17-18 (47 per cent) have tried an illicit drug by

the time they have finished secondary school (lifetime prevalence).

418. In Canada and Mexico, the abuse of cocaine, cannabis and methamphetamine has increased. Mexican authorities are concerned over the fact that the age of initiation of drug abuse has decreased to 8-10 years and over the increased risk of drug abuse associated with the use of tobacco and alcohol at an early age (before reaching age 17). The abuse of prescription drugs is also a recognized abuse problem among senior citizens in Mexico.

419. Canada has become the primary source of supply of MDMA ("ecstasy") found on the illicit market in that country and the United States. There is wide availability and stable use of MDMA in Canada: past-year prevalence is 4.4 per cent among youth and young adults (persons 15-24 years old). Canadian law enforcement authorities report continued smuggling of precursors from China into Canada for use in illicit drug manufacture in that country. Unprecedented quantities of Canadian "ecstasy" were seized in other countries, reflecting the increased significance of the country in "ecstasy" manufacture and trafficking.

420. A recent household survey showed that in Mexico the accumulated incidence of cocaine doubled between 2002 and 2008. The use of methamphetamine and "crack" cocaine (a cocaine derivative converted from cocaine hydrochloride), while showing a lower prevalence, has increased during the same period. The difference between the rates of male and female abusers has declined.

2. Regional cooperation

421. For many years, cooperation projects have been carried out in the countries in North America. A new major step in regional cooperation in 2008 is the Merida initiative, an example of security cooperation involving Mexico and the United States, as well as the countries in Central America, to combat drug trafficking, transnational crime and terrorism (see paragraph 358 above). The initiative combines national efforts with regional cooperation and supports coordinated strategies to counteract the power of criminal organizations. The initiative will support border, air and maritime controls and improve the capacity of judicial systems to conduct investigations and prosecutions. The United States Congress approved in June 2008 US\$ 465 million in assistance,

primarily for Mexico but also for Central American countries.

422. Progress is also being made in other cooperation projects. United States law enforcement agencies are supporting their Mexican counterparts by providing training in precursor detection, investigative techniques and methamphetamine investigations in the main areas of illicit methamphetamine manufacturing in Mexico. Support in the form of specialized equipment, vehicles and computers is being provided to the new federal police corps and its special investigative units. In 2007, a multi-year effort was initiated in Mexico to help the Secretary of Public Security carry out reform. In addition, specialized training was provided to the new federal police in such areas as addressing cybercrime and handling explosives and incendiary devices and to the Mexican Navy. Since 2007, prosecutors from Colombia, Mexico and countries in Central America have strengthened their exchange of police and financial intelligence in judicial investigations and interception operations.

423. Cooperation between Canada and the United States is progressing and bilateral forums, such as the Cross-Border Crime Forum and Project North Star, have increased information-sharing and joint training among law enforcement officers. Under the Border Enforcement Subgroup of the Forum, agreement is being sought on the Integrated Marine Security Operations programme, known as Shiprider. The Shiprider programme will allow officers from one country to operate from vessels (or aircraft) of another country, thereby permitting a single vessel to patrol both Canadian and United States waters. The pilot programme of the border enforcement security task force will complement the existing integrated border enforcement team initiative and enable comprehensive border control, not only between ports of entry but also at ports of entry. Canada has expanded its cooperative efforts in the transit zone from South America to North America and deployed "Maritime Patrol Assets" in support of the Joint Interagency Task Force South.

424. As many samples of seized MDMA contain methamphetamine, United States law enforcement agencies and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have stepped up their intelligence-sharing and coordinated law enforcement operations to fight criminal organizations manufacturing "ecstasy". Canadian and United States law enforcement agencies are also

enhancing their coordination through the National Methamphetamine Chemicals Initiative.

3. National legislation, policy and action

425. The Government of Mexico has continued to take action against corruption, including by improving pay and benefits, introducing stricter criteria for the selection of new employees and using more modern investigative techniques. In Mexico, drug control operations have been launched in 11 states and the investment in security forces has been increased. Furthermore, the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with the Governments of Colombia and countries in Central America, has developed a regional security plan to improve drug control operations throughout the Americas.

426. In Mexico, Congress approved legal and constitutional reforms unifying the federal police into one force and allowing proactive investigation, increasing the discretion of prosecutors and the modification of the code of criminal procedures.

427. Complementary legislation on mandatory minimum prison sentences for convictions of serious drug-related crime was introduced in Canada. Such serious drug-related crime includes growing cannabis and manufacturing and dealing in "crystal" methamphetamine and "crack" cocaine.

428. In order to respond to the increasing abuse of prescription drugs, several measures have been introduced in the United States, such as point-of-purchase messages on prescription drugs with high abuse potential. Several states in the United States have introduced prescription monitoring programmes such as the Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS), available via a secure website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Critics had feared that the introduction of the system would reduce the number of prescriptions issued, but that was not the case. In fact, physicians have stated that they find OARRS reports useful for the validation of information provided by patients.

429. The Government of Canada launched its revised National Anti-Drug Strategy, which combines treatment and prevention, including public awareness campaigns, and stricter law enforcement measures targeting illicit drug manufacturers and traffickers. The new strategy in Canada provides 100 million Canadian

dollars for personnel dedicated to tackling the illicit production of cannabis and the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. In addition, it includes measures to strengthen precursor control and border control, as well as to improve cooperation with authorities of the United States. Resources allocated to prevention focus on youth and programmes in schools and resources allocated to treatment focus on the development of national benchmarks for evaluation and data collection, enhancing treatment for indigenous populations and youth offenders in the criminal justice system. The goal is to reduce illicit drug use among Canadian youth aged 10-24, including high-risk youth, focusing on risk and protective factors before drug use begins.

430. The Board is concerned that distribution of “safer crack kits” has continued in several cities in Canada and that a Supreme Court of British Columbia issued a decision in May 2008 permitting a “drug injection room” in Vancouver, the first “drug injection room” in the Americas, to continue to operate. The Board views such programmes with great concern and considers that they violate the international drug control treaties.

431. Canada is one of the few countries worldwide that allows cannabis to be prescribed by doctors to patients with certain illnesses. There are currently over 2,200 patients in Canada for whom cannabis is prescribed. Initially, only state-run institutions could make cannabis available for medical purposes. However, subsequent regulations allowed patients to grow a small amount of cannabis for their own use and provided for private persons to obtain licences for growing cannabis to be used for medical purposes. According to current regulations, each of those private persons may supply cannabis to only one patient. In Canada, the Federal Court ruled in January 2008 that the provision that a supplier could only provide cannabis to one patient unduly restricted the patient’s access to cannabis used for medical purposes and unreasonably slanted the market in favour of the Government’s chosen supplier. The Government has appealed the ruling. Article 23 of the 1961 Convention stipulates specific requirements that a Government must fulfil if it is to allow the licit cultivation of cannabis, including the establishment of a national cannabis agency to which all cannabis growers must deliver their total crops. The Board encourages the Canadian authorities to respect the provisions of article 23 and fulfil those requirements.

432. The Board is concerned that in the United States, the disagreement between the Government and several states regarding the use of “medical cannabis” continues. The question whether the “medical use” of cannabis should be made legal has been put to a referendum in several states (most recently in Massachusetts and Michigan). While the Government maintains that the consumption and cultivation of cannabis are illegal activities, several states have passed laws by referendum that ease or eliminate sanctions for the “compassionate/medical use” of cannabis. In California, for example, legislation allows the use of “medical cannabis” for a variety of indications, as well as the cultivation of the plant by designated growers of cannabis. That has led to a proliferation of cannabis cultivation in California and to the establishment of cannabis “vending machines” as well as other reported methods of abuse. The Board is concerned that that practice may lead to a further increase in cannabis abuse in the United States and may affect other states. The Board calls upon the authorities of the United States to continue its efforts to stop that practice, which is in contradiction to national law and is in violation of article 23 of the 1961 Convention.

433. The Government of Mexico has developed standards and norms to be followed for the treatment of drug abuse at the national, state and local levels. Those standards and norms are contained in the official norms for the prevention, treatment and control of addiction and the criteria of minimum standards of quality for the administration of treatment in medical and residential establishments. In Mexico, the National Council against Addictions (CONADIC) and the Secretariat of Health are both responsible for maintaining a national registry of services and treatment programmes and the names of the institutions permitted to conduct such programmes. A process is under way to create a national network of facilities for the treatment of drug abuse, comprising 300 new treatment centres (70 of which have already been built) in addition to the existing 96 programmes for outpatient treatment and 6 programmes for inpatient treatment. Both types of treatment programmes are public programmes available to the entire population for the treatment of drug abuse.

434. The Government of Mexico has increased the share of the budget earmarked for reducing drug demand and, with the participation of the main

Government ministries, including the Ministry of Health, has launched a national programme. In addition, the national system for family development is supporting a national programme for drug abuse prevention in communities. The Ministry of Social Development is supporting, with the active involvement of the community and the assistance of the police, a social programme aimed at making public places in communities safer environments. Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Education, in close collaboration with the Attorney General's Office and the police, has launched a new prevention programme as part of an integrated approach to dealing with the drug problem.

435. In the United States, the number of persons aged 12 or older receiving treatment at a facility specializing in the treatment of substance abuse in 2007 was 2.4 million, or 1 per cent of population aged 12 or older. One cause for concern is that the share of the national drug control budget allocated to drug abuse prevention has continued to decline. According to the 2009 budget summary of the National Drug Control Strategy, 11 per cent of the US\$ 14.1 billion requested for the 2009 national drug control budget is allocated to prevention, compared with 20 per cent in 2001. Slightly less than 25 per cent of the budget is allocated to treatment. A major share of the budget is allocated to supply reduction. The Board encourages the authorities of the United States to seek an even balance between demand and supply reduction programmes and to provide adequate funding to demand reduction measures.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

436. North America remains one of the main areas of cannabis illicit production and abuse, the largest producer country being Mexico (about 7,400 tons), followed by the United States (about 4,700 tons) and Canada (about 3,500 tons). Despite the efforts of the Government of Mexico to eradicate cannabis, the total area under illicit cannabis cultivation increased. In 2007, the Mexican military took over from the Attorney General's Office the sole responsibility for eradicating cannabis and opium poppy. Due to the realignment of responsibilities for aerial eradication efforts, the total eradicated area of illicitly cultivated

cannabis declined (to 21,357 ha) in 2007 compared with the figure for 2006 (30,158 ha).

437. In Canada, 61.4 per cent of youth and young adults (aged 15-24) have used cannabis at least once in their lives, 37 per cent have used it at least once in the past 12 months and 8.2 per cent have used it on a daily basis. Illicit cannabis growers utilize advanced methods of cultivation to meet the high demand for cannabis in Canada and on the illicit market in the United States. Annual cannabis production in Canada is estimated to range from 1,399 to 3,498 tons. One cause for concern is the very high THC content of a limited number of samples in Canada and the United States, proving that criminal organizations in both countries are able to produce high-potency cannabis. Illicit cannabis cultivation continues to thrive in Canada, partly because of the absence of laws providing strict punishment for such activity. The majority of the illicit cannabis growing operations in that country are carried out by organized criminal groups.

438. In the United States, cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug: 25.1 million persons (or 10.1 per cent of the population aged 12 or older) used cannabis in 2007. The illicit market for cannabis is supplied by an increasing number of domestic indoor and outdoor cannabis cultivation sites. Cannabis is also smuggled into the United States out of Canada, Colombia, Jamaica and Mexico. While most of the cannabis available in the United States has a lower potency and is produced in Mexico, United States authorities are concerned about the high potency of some cannabis grown indoors in Canada and the United States under hydroponic conditions. Largely as a result of those innovations, the average THC content of all cannabis samples tested in the United States increased to 8.77 per cent in 2006, nearly twice the figure obtained in 1996 (4.5 per cent). Individual samples may have an extremely high THC content: cannabis seized in Atlanta that had been grown indoors had a THC content of over 18 per cent.

439. Cocaine continues to be easy to obtain on the illicit market in Canada, where 5.5 per cent of the population aged 15-24 years has abused cocaine in the past 12 months. The total amount of cocaine seized in Canada increased slightly from 2,556 kg in 2005 to 2,676 kg in 2006. Most of the cocaine in Canada has been smuggled over land routes leading through countries in Central America, Mexico and the United

States. In addition, cocaine continues to be smuggled into Canada on direct flights from South America, as well as through various transit countries in the Caribbean, such as Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. Colombian drug traffickers have attempted to escape detection by routing cocaine consignments through countries neighbouring the countries of destination. Cocaine is also smuggled through Canada into other countries such as Australia. "Crack" continues to be abused throughout Canada. Cocaine laced with methamphetamine (to increase demand), has been identified as an emerging trend in Canada.

440. In the United States, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in 2007 was 2 per cent among persons 13-14 years of age, 3.4 per cent among persons 15-16 years of age and 5.2 per cent among persons 17-18 years of age, and the annual prevalence of "crack" cocaine among teenagers ranged from 1.3 to 1.9 per cent. The annual prevalence of cocaine abuse among the general population in 2007 was 2.3 per cent (5.7 million cocaine abusers, compared with more than 6 million in 2006). In 2007, domestic and international law enforcement efforts resulted in large cocaine seizures in the Eastern Pacific, which contributed to the cocaine shortage in the United States, which in turn contributed to the decline in the annual prevalence rate in that country for 2007. In addition, intensified efforts by the Mexican authorities to fight drug cartels resulted in a decline in cocaine deliveries across the border to the United States. Law enforcement reports indicated that, between January and September 2007, there was a sustained cocaine shortage in 38 cities in the United States with large illicit markets for cocaine, while the price of a gram of pure cocaine nearly doubled. The shortage of cocaine was also reflected in workplace drug testing and in a lower percentage of cocaine-related emergency room visits in 2007 compared with the data for 2006.

441. Notwithstanding the successful law enforcement activities mentioned above, the estimated amount of cocaine from South America smuggled into the United States remained significant. United States authorities estimate that 530-710 tons of cocaine left South America for the United States in 2006, an estimate similar to the estimate for 2005. About 90 per cent of the cocaine smuggled out of South America and into the United States has passed through the Central

America corridor, the majority of it being shipped through the Eastern Pacific vector.

442. In Canada, heroin abuse continues to be the least common form of drug abuse (lifetime prevalence: 0.9 per cent). Heroin is mostly supplied by countries in South-West Asia; India continues to be the primary source or transit country. There have been no changes with regard to the availability and purity of heroin in Canada. Most of the heroin in Canada has been smuggled into the country by air passengers or through postal or courier services. In Canada, heroin abuse has been at least partly replaced by the abuse of prescription opiates. The total amount of opium seized increased considerably from 16 kg in 2005 to about 124 kg in 2006. India was the primary source of the opium seized; however, the most significant individual seizures involved consignments transited through Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey. In Canada, opium is mainly abused by older members of some ethnic groups.

443. In the United States, heroin abuse is stable at a relatively low level (lifetime prevalence: 1.5 per cent), despite the fact that heroin is easily available in most large urban areas and in some suburban and rural areas, mostly in the north-eastern part of the country. However, there has been some increase in heroin abuse among young adults in suburban and rural areas. The concentration of heroin abuse in the north-east is partly the result of abusers of prescription opiates switching to heroin because of its lower cost and higher purity level. Heroin continues to be abused by youth in the United States: the annual prevalence of heroin abuse is currently 0.9 per cent, which is significantly below the peak level of 2000, when 1.5 per cent of all persons aged 17-18 reported having abused heroin during the previous year. However, United States authorities are concerned that the high level of abuse of prescription opiates may lead to increased heroin abuse among adolescents. In the United States, a combination of Mexican "black tar" heroin and over-the-counter medication containing diphenhydramine hydrochloride is being sold under the street name "cheese heroin".

444. Most of the heroin abused in the United States is illicitly manufactured in Colombia or Mexico. Mexico experienced a continuous decline in eradication levels, the total area eradicated dropping from 21,609 ha in 2005 to 16,831 ha in 2006 and only 7,784 ha in 2007. That decline was partly the result of unfavourable

climate conditions and the realignment of responsibilities for aerial eradication in Mexico (see paragraph 436 above).

445. In the United States, the number of persons who abuse prescription drugs is now greater than the total number of persons who abuse cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, “ecstasy” and/or inhalants. Prescription drugs are the second most abused category of drugs, surpassed only by cannabis. In 2007, about 16.3 million persons reported having abused prescription drugs in the previous year (6.6 per cent of the population aged 12 and above), compared with 14.8 million in 2002. About 6.9 million of those who abused prescription drugs in the past year are “current users” (persons who abuse such drugs at least once a month). Most of those who abused prescription drugs in the past month are abusers of pain relievers: they numbered 5.2 million in 2007, compared with 4.4 million in 2002.

446. One matter of particular concern is the high rate of abuse of prescription drugs among youth. The non-medical use of prescription pain relievers among young adults (aged 18-25) in the past month increased from 4.1 per cent in 2002 to 4.6 per cent in 2007. About 15 per cent of students aged 17-18 reported the non-medical use of at least one prescription medication within the past year. The annual prevalence of abuse of narcotic drugs other than heroin among secondary school students is 9.2 per cent. More than 5 per cent of students aged 17-18 have tried oxycodone (Oxycontin®) at least once in the past year and nearly 10 per cent have tried hydrocodone (Vicodin®), 7.5 per cent have tried amphetamines, 6.2 per cent have tried sedatives and 6.2 per cent have tried tranquillizers.

447. According to the 2006 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study parents in the United States talk to their children less about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs than about the dangers of abusing heroin, cocaine, “crack”, MDMA, cannabis or alcohol, although a significant percentage of parents consider the abuse of prescription drugs to be a growing problem. Subsequently, a large portion of adolescents associate no particular risk with the non-medical use of pain relievers such as Vicodin® or Oxycontin®.

448. Concerned with the increasing abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances, the Board has, for a number of years, called on the competent authorities of the United

States to investigate possible ways and means of preventing the advertisement of controlled substances to the general public, in conformity with the provisions of article 10, paragraph 2, of the 1971 Convention. In May 2008, a bill was introduced in the United States House of Representatives to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to drug and device advertising. The bill, once it becomes law, would establish limitations on advertising directed at potential consumers and would require the prominent display of the side effects of drugs in such advertisements. However, the Board notes that the bill would not prohibit the advertisement of controlled substances to the general public, as required by the provisions of article 10. Advertising through the United States media reaches consumers not only in the United States. Due to technological progress, such advertisements also reach the general public in all countries where such advertising is prohibited in line with article 10. The Board, therefore, reiterates its concern that direct-to-consumer advertising aimed at increasing the consumption of internationally controlled substances is not in line with article 10 of the 1971 Convention and may promote medically unjustified consumption of those substances in the United States, as well as in other countries.

449. In the United States, the abuse of prescription drugs has caused a significant number of deaths among drug abusers. According to the Florida Medical Examiners Commission, autopsies conducted in 2007 revealed that prescription drugs had caused death in three times as many cases as had all illicit drugs combined. The increase in the number of deaths caused by oxycodone was more than 2.5 times the increase in deaths caused by heroin. While legislation allowing prescription drug monitoring programmes has been adopted in 38 of the 50 states in the United States, Florida has still not adopted such legislation due to privacy concerns.

450. In the United States, methadone-related deaths and overdoses increased sharply (by 390 per cent) from 786 in 1999 to 3,849 in 2004, according to the most recent national-level data available. Data from states with a traditionally high number of methadone-related deaths suggest that that increasing trend has continued. The licit distribution of methadone to pharmacies, hospitals, teaching institutions and practitioners increased by nearly 500 per cent from 1999 to 2004.

451. The surge in the abuse of fentanyl in the United States, which resulted in the death of a large number of abusers, was reversed after a large clandestine laboratory manufacturing fentanyl in Mexico was dismantled in 2006. While the abuse of fentanyl has occurred periodically in the United States, the last large outbreak, which began in late 2005, was the most significant, geographically diverse and most long-lasting one. By mid-2007, the number of fentanyl-related deaths had decreased to the levels before 2005.

452. In 2007, the Drug Enforcement Administration of the United States initiated 1,736 criminal and complaint investigations targeting trafficking in controlled pharmaceuticals, including by Internet companies. The Drug Enforcement Administration issued immediate suspension orders to 10 Internet pharmacies operating in the State of Florida that had illegally distributed millions of dosage units of hydrocodone throughout the United States. The number of Internet pharmacies selling controlled prescription drugs increased by 70 per cent, from 342 in 2006 to 581 in 2007, the majority of them selling prescription drugs without the required prescription.

453. In Canada, diverted prescription drugs are mostly obtained from domestic sources. The abuse of oxycodone remains a cause for concern in Canada, and oxycodone continues to be smuggled out of Canada and into the United States. However, there is some indication that pharmaceuticals smuggled into Canada may be contributing to the supply of pharmaceuticals to the illicit market.

Psychotropic substances

454. Methamphetamine abuse remains a problem in Canada and traffickers continue to adulterate “ecstasy” and cannabis with methamphetamine in order to increase the illicit demand for methamphetamine. Most of the methamphetamine on the illicit market in Canada is supplied by laboratories in that country, which are increasingly being used as a source for illicit markets in other countries, including the United States. Significant seizures of methamphetamine of Canadian origin were effected in 2006 by authorities in Japan and New Zealand (see paragraph 755 below).

455. In the United States, the abuse of methamphetamine in 2007 was slightly less than in previous years: 0.2 per cent of the population are current abusers. There has been a steady decline in the

abuse of methamphetamine by youth at all age levels. The abuse of “crystal” methamphetamine (commonly called “ice”) among youth reached its lowest level since 1992.

456. Mexico continues to be the primary source of the methamphetamine trafficked in the United States. In 2007, Mexican authorities dismantled 26 clandestine laboratories for processing drugs, 9 of which were classified as methamphetamine “super laboratories” (that is, having the capacity to produce at least 10 pounds (4.54 kg) of methamphetamine per processing cycle).

457. Canada, traditionally an importer and consumer of MDMA, has become a major manufacturer and exporter of “ecstasy” (see also paragraphs 404 above and 755 below). The increased illicit manufacture and trafficking in MDMA in Canada is reflected in the unprecedented quantities of Canadian “ecstasy” seized in other countries, such as Australia and the United States. While the number of seized MDMA laboratories decreased slightly, the manufacturing capacity of the laboratories and their level of sophistication increased, indicating the involvement of organized criminal groups. The manufacture of all clandestine MDMA laboratories combined is estimated to exceed 2 million tablets per week. There is no requirement for the registration of tablet presses in Canada.

458. Total seizures of MDMA illicitly manufactured in Canada increased significantly in the United States, from 1.1 million doses in 2004 to 5.2 million in 2006. A significant proportion of the samples of seized MDMA (more than 50 per cent) contained methamphetamine, increasing the danger of the doses. The abuse of MDMA has increased among secondary school students: the annual prevalence of abuse of MDMA among students aged 17-18 is 4.5 per cent. That development may be related to the decline in the perceived risk and the disapproval of MDMA abuse. Considering that changes in attitudes often indicate an imminent change in abuse patterns, United States authorities are concerned that the number of initiates to MDMA abuse will increase.

459. As the smuggling of MDMA from Canada into the United States began to increase, the importance of European sources of MDMA decreased. In the United States, the illicit manufacture of MDMA within the country remains limited.

460. *Gamma*-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) continues to be abused in Canada and is mostly supplied by clandestine laboratories in that country. However, small quantities of GHB are occasionally smuggled into the country.

461. In the United States, LSD and psilocybin, supplied by clandestine laboratories within the country, continue to be abused. The annual prevalence of LSD abuse among youth is low. Psilocybin is the hallucinogen most widely abused in that country.

Precursors

462. Organized criminal groups in Canada smuggle ephedrine, a precursor required for the manufacture of methamphetamine, from China and India into Canada. While the number of seizures of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories seized in Canada has continued to decline, the manufacturing capacity of those seized laboratories has increased. In response, in at least eight provinces in Canada, medications containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have been removed from grocery and convenience stores and have been made available only at the counter in pharmacies. The illicit manufacture of MDMA in Canada is supported by the smuggling of large amounts of the precursor 3,4-MDP-2-P from China. The precursor *gamma*-butyrolactone (GBL), used in the illicit manufacture of GHB, is obtained from sources within Canada or outside the country via the Internet or the postal system.

463. In the Synthetic Drug Control Strategy of the United States, authorities in that country set the goal of reducing by the end of 2008 (using data for 2005 as a baseline) methamphetamine abuse by 15 per cent. The goal of reducing the number of incidents involving methamphetamine laboratories by 25 per cent was reached already in 2006, when the number of such incidents declined by 48 per cent. The significant decrease in the number of incidents involving such laboratories was attributed to the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005, which established stricter national controls over the sale of products containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.

464. Drug trafficking groups in Mexico have responded to the strong restrictions on the import and

sale of precursors of methamphetamine in Mexico⁷⁹ by smuggling those precursors using new routes leading from China and India, importing non-restricted chemical derivatives instead of those precursors and using alternative manufacturing methods. That has ensured a stable level of illicitly manufactured and smuggled methamphetamine in the United States.

Substances not under international control

465. While the main transit countries used for smuggling khat into Canada remained the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, seizures of khat smuggled into Canada from other transit countries, such as France, Germany, Italy and the United States, increased slightly. In Canada, khat is mainly used by members of ethnic communities located throughout the country.

466. Ketamine continues to be abused in Canada, where it has gained popularity as a new “club drug”. Ketamine is not only abused for its hallucinogenic effects, but has also been found to be an active ingredient in seized MDMA tablets. In Canada, ketamine is either diverted from licit distribution channels in the country or is smuggled into the country, where it is abused or trans-shipped to the United States.

467. The over-the-counter cough and cold medicines abused in the United States mostly contain dextromethorphan. In 2007, the annual prevalence of abuse of those drugs was 4 per cent among students aged 13-14, 5.4 per cent among students aged 15-16 and 5.8 per cent among students aged 17-18. Students may not recognize the potential dangers of the abuse of dextromethorphan, as the drug is available in more than 140 cough and cold medications without prescription. Several states and metropolitan areas in the United States are concerned about the abuse of dextromethorphan by youth and young adults, as the number of poison control calls related to the abuse of dextromethorphan continues to increase.

468. The abuse of inhalants by youth has been rising in the United States since 2003. The highest annual prevalence of abuse of inhalants is among students aged 13-14: 8.3 per cent. United States authorities are

⁷⁹ See also *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008*

concerned about the decline in the perceived risk of abuse of inhalants. An average of 593,000 adolescents aged 12-17 use inhalants for the first time each year, the most frequently mentioned types of inhalants being glue, shoe polish, gasoline (petrol), lighter fluid and spray paint.

South America

1. Major developments

469. In 2007, the total area of illicit coca bush cultivation increased in all three of the main countries in which coca bush is illicitly cultivated (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru) to 181,600 ha, 16 per cent more than in 2006. The potential illicit manufacture of cocaine in the region remained stable.

470. According to UNODC, in Colombia, despite the continuation of eradication efforts, illicit cultivation of coca bush increased by 27 per cent. Moderate increases, not exceeding 5 per cent, were noted in Bolivia and Peru. Colombia accounted for 55 per cent of the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in South America; that country was followed by Peru (29 per cent) and Bolivia (16 per cent).

471. The overall increase in illicit coca bush cultivation in the Andean subregion in 2007 was offset in part by decreased yields of coca leaf in some of the areas of cultivation. As a result, potential global manufacture of cocaine increased over the previous year by only 10 tons, to 994 tons. The Board is concerned that the recent growth in illicit coca bush cultivation in the subregion may lead to further increases in illicit cocaine manufacture.

472. The area of illicitly cultivated coca bush that was eradicated in the three main countries producing coca leaf in 2007 totalled 238,300 ha (5,500 ha more than in the past year): 153,100 ha were eradicated by aerial spraying and 85,200 ha by manual eradication. In Colombia alone, 220,000 ha of illicit coca bush were eradicated. Small areas under illicit coca bush cultivation were also eradicated in Ecuador.

473. International criminal groups continued to use the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as one of the main departure areas for illicit drug consignments leaving the region of South America. According to UNODC,

the smuggling of cocaine through that country has increased significantly since 2002.

474. South American countries participated in the Drug Treatment City Partnership initiative, focusing on the establishment of a network between cities in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices regarding drug control policies. The objective of the initiative, which is being funded by the European Commission and executed by CICAD, is to contribute to the improvement of treatment and rehabilitation programmes for drug abusers and demand reduction programmes for different groups of people in the participating countries.

475. The Board appreciates the importance given by the Governments of South American countries to drug demand reduction programmes and preventive approaches in their national drug control strategies and policies. However, according to the latest Hemispheric Report of CICAD, in which progress in drug control was evaluated in countries in the western hemisphere in the period 2005-2006, the budget allocated by the Governments of some of those countries is insufficient to develop demand reduction activities.

476. In 2008, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay presented a study on drug use in the southern part of South America entitled "Guiding elements for public policy on drugs in the subregion", which was conducted in cooperation with UNODC and CICAD. As part of the study, for the first time, the same methodology was applied to determine different aspects of drug use among the general population (persons aged 15-64) in the region. According to the study, cannabis is the most abused drug in the countries surveyed. Past-year prevalence of cannabis abuse was 4.8 per cent, higher than the global average of 3.8 per cent.

477. Large quantities of precursor chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of drugs continue to be seized in South America. For example, in 2007, Colombia seized 144 tons of potassium permanganate. The origin of seized chemicals often remains unknown. The Board reiterates its call to the Governments of countries in the region to urgently devise strategies to address the smuggling of precursor chemicals into areas in which cocaine is illicitly manufactured.

2. Regional cooperation

478. CICAD remains the main regional forum for coordinating drug control issues in the Americas. In 2007, a decade after the creation of MEM, CICAD presented the report entitled *Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) Achievements, 1997-2007*. The report summarizes the progress made by each country in the region, as well as advances in the region as a whole, regarding the development of policies and programmes to combat illicit drugs between 1997 and 2007. As regards strengthening institutions, the report highlights the importance of established national drug control authorities and drug observatories that assist Governments in implementing their national drug control strategies. In terms of prevention, it points to progress in developing minimum treatment standards and drug control programmes that target different segments of society. The report also reflects the progress made in reducing illicit crops and tackling the demand side, as well as in implementing drug control measures.

479. At the Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito from 15 to 19 October 2007, participants made recommendations on combating illicit cannabis cultivation and trafficking, money-laundering and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants in the region. During the meeting, experts from the Netherlands held a training workshop on the detection and dismantling of clandestine laboratories manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants.

480. The Government of Colombia hosted the Ibero-American Workshop on Drug Policies in the Local Context in Cartagena de Indias from 29 October to 2 November 2007. Workshop participants discussed experiences and best practices to increase the participation of subnational and local authorities in the planning and management of national drug control policies and activities.

481. Representatives of the drug control and judicial authorities of Mexico and Peru held a preparatory working meeting on coordinated action in fighting drugs in Peru on 29 October 2007. The authorities discussed issues concerning the harmonization of legal documents related to synthetic drugs and mechanisms for sharing experiences and knowledge regarding drug trafficking organizations.

482. The Tenth High-Level Specialized Dialogue on Drugs between the Andean Community and the European Union was held in Bogota on 1 and 2 November 2007. Representatives of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru presented their national strategies for alternative development and eradication of illicit crop cultivation, while the representative of Ecuador reported on preventive alternative development programmes implemented in the northern areas of that country along its borders with Colombia. According to the Andean Community, although cannabis continued to be the most abused drug in the subregion, the abuse of coca base was increasing steadily. The meeting concluded that measures related to demand reduction and drug abuse needed to be strengthened further.

483. On 8 and 9 November 2007, the Government of Uruguay hosted in Montevideo the Twelfth Meeting of the Specialized Drug Network of MERCOSUR Countries. The objective of the network is to promote activities and programmes of cooperation and prevention of drug abuse and treatment of drug abusers. The participants adopted the Declaration of the Presidents of MERCOSUR and Associated Countries, which stressed the importance of the shared responsibility of the countries in combating illicit drugs.

484. In July 2007, UNODC launched a project on law enforcement and intelligence cooperation against cocaine trafficking from Latin America to West Africa. The aim of the project is to stimulate cooperation between the national law enforcement agencies of countries in South America (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)), the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago) and West Africa (Cape Verde, Ghana, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Togo) by gathering and sharing drug-related intelligence (see paragraph 300 above).⁸⁰

485. At a meeting of the Intelligence Sharing Working Group held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 13 and 14 November 2007, the participants, representing 22 countries and territories in Latin America and of 4 European Union member States, were informed of the above-mentioned UNODC project. The participants also reviewed recent drug trafficking routes leading from Latin America and the

⁸⁰ See *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2007...*, para. 299.

Caribbean through Africa and discussed the role of national forensic authorities in combating drug trafficking.

486. Chile hosted the Ninth Meeting of the Expert Group on Drug Demand Reduction in Santiago from 13 to 15 November 2007. The Meeting was attended by representatives of 22 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Meeting, which focused on issues related to the abuse of drugs in the work environment, concluded that drug abuse worsened the work environment, reduced overall production capacity and was a cause of increased work-related accidents and absence from work.

487. Corruption seriously affects many South American countries and reduces the impact of drug control efforts in the region. According to Transparency International's *Global Corruption Report 2007*, Chile and Uruguay are the only countries in the region with a corruption perceptions index of over 5.0. Countries that score under the index are considered to have a serious corruption problem. During the reporting period, South American countries launched a number of initiatives to address the problem. For example, 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were represented in the Regional Conference on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption held in La Paz in December 2007.

488. At a workshop held in Lima on 6 and 7 December 2007, Government representatives and experts from Bolivia, Colombia and Peru discussed their experiences in the field of alternative development and proposed guidelines to optimize the role of international cooperation in support of Government policies.

489. In July 2008, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, in cooperation with the European Union, launched a project to provide support to the Andean Community in the area of synthetic drugs, aimed at developing methodologies to obtain objective data on demand for and supply of synthetic drugs and their impact on society in the countries concerned. The data will help the Governments concerned to prepare their national strategies and programmes to combat trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs.

490. High-level representatives of 25 countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America met in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 30 July to 1 August 2008 at the Regional Summit on the World Drug Problem, Security and Cooperation. Participants adopted the Cartagena Declaration, in which they emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to implementing drug supply and drug demand strategies. In the area of drug supply reduction, the Declaration highlighted the importance of preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals by using the internationally established control mechanisms. In the area of drug demand reduction, it called for further enhancement of prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration activities.

491. On 1 August 2008, the National Council for Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (CONSEP) of Ecuador and the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) of Peru signed an agreement providing a framework for joint activities and cooperation in the areas of prevention, interdiction and sustainable alternative development, including preventive alternative development programmes.

3. National legislation, policy and action

492. In 2008, the Government of Bolivia initiated a study on coca leaf in Bolivia, the objective of which is to produce quantitative and qualitative data on the use, marketing and production of coca leaf in the country. The study is expected to be conducted over a period of 18 months. The Board hopes that the results of the study will assist the Governments of Bolivia and the other countries concerned in the implementation of the provisions of the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, in particular the provisions on the production and use of coca leaf.

493. The Brazilian authorities continued to participate in the Drug Abuse, HIV/AIDS and STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) Prevention Project, aimed at increasing access by the HIV/AIDS population to related health services and promoting prevention activities targeting vulnerable groups, including an estimated 193,000 persons who abuse drugs by injection. According to UNODC, the incidence of AIDS cases related to drug abuse by injection fell from 23.6 to 9.3 per cent among men and from 12.6 to 3.5 per cent among women between 1996 and 2006.

494. In November 2007, the Government of Colombia convened a national workshop in Bogota to examine procurement and distribution systems for opioid analgesics so as to facilitate patient access to those essential pain-relief medications in the country. The meeting was attended by representatives of the national regulatory authorities, and also of several international organizations, including WHO and the Pan American Health Organization. Later in 2008, the Government of Colombia adopted a resolution guaranteeing the availability of opioids 24 hours a day in at least one pharmacy in every department in the country.

495. In 2007, the Government of Peru promulgated a series of laws aimed at strengthening the prevention, investigation and prosecution of organized crime, as well as strengthening the control of precursor chemicals, including Decree No. 928, which criminalizes activities that impede the eradication of illicit crops. In 2008, the Government also promulgated a new civil asset forfeiture law, aimed at seizing illicit assets of drug cartels and of those involved in forms of organized crime other than drug trafficking. A similar civil asset forfeiture law has been submitted to the Constitutional Assembly in Ecuador for its adoption.

496. In 2008, the government of the region of Puno, Peru, passed a resolution declaring coca leaf a regional, cultural, medicinal and industrial heritage and a symbol of the Quechua-Aymara people and demanded a stop to forced eradication of coca bush in that part of the country. The Government of Peru referred the case to the Constitutional Court, which declared the resolution unconstitutional.

497. A number of countries in South America devote special attention to problematic drug users. In December 2007, the competent authorities of Paraguay published a national programme for treatment of problematic drug users, which gathers experiences from different national and international institutions and experts involved in drug abuse prevention programmes, including programmes for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

498. According to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, over 180 airstrips used for drug trafficking were detected in that country in 2007. Ninety of those airstrips were destroyed during the law enforcement activities. Pursuant to the national drug control plan for the period 2008-2013, the Government has initiated a series of measures aimed at protecting

its territory and national air space from drug smuggling. Those measures include the destruction of non-authorized airstrips and the installation of a radar system for air traffic control, in particular in the areas of the country that are most affected by trafficking, such as the country's border with Colombia. In addition, the Government imposed restrictions on the use of airports for private flights. The drug control strategy also includes measures to reinforce the participation of the community in combating drugs, including in prevention of diversion of precursor chemicals, in cooperation with the chemical industry.

499. The Board notes that, in 2008, the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru participated in Operation "Ice Block", which focused on the monitoring of trade in precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants. The Board wishes to encourage the Governments of Latin American countries to remain vigilant with regard to shipments of precursor chemicals and to adopt further measures to enhance their controls.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

500. According to UNODC, the annual illicit production of cannabis in South America is estimated at about 10,000 tons, almost 25 per cent of global illicit production in 2006. Paraguay, whose illicit production of cannabis is estimated at 5,900 tons, is the main country producing cannabis in the region.

501. According to law enforcement agencies in South America, most illicit cannabis cultivation occurs in remote and inaccessible areas. The organized criminal groups established in the region take advantage of the lucrative cannabis trafficking operations and are often involved in other types of criminal activity.

502. Brazil continues to report the largest seizures of cannabis in South America. In 2007, Brazilian authorities seized almost 200 tons of that narcotic drug. During 2007, Colombia seized 183.2 tons of cannabis, the largest amount of the substance seized in the country in the previous 10 years. In Peru, seizures of cannabis remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2007, ranging from 1.1 to 1.5 tons. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, cannabis seizures have

gradually increased since 2003; in 2007, authorities in that country seized over 25 tons of cannabis.

503. According to the first comparative study on drug abuse among the general population in six South American countries, the highest lifetime prevalence of abuse of cannabis, 27.1 per cent, was found in Chile and the lowest, 4.0 per cent, in Peru. In Chile, the past-year prevalence of cannabis abuse was significantly lower (7.5 per cent) and was comparable with that found in Argentina (7.2 per cent). According to UNODC, in Uruguay, cannabis abuse, which had grown rather modestly in the 1990s, increased noticeably in the period 2001-2007: the annual prevalence of cannabis abuse among the general population quadrupled, from 1.3 per cent in 2001 to 5.3 per cent in that country in 2007.

504. According to UNODC, in Bolivia, the cultivation of coca bush increased slightly for the second consecutive year, amounting to 28,900 ha. The illicit cultivation was concentrated in the Yungas and Chapare regions, which accounted for 69 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, of the total illicit coca bush cultivation in the country. In most of the Chapare region, farmers cultivate coca bush on an area averaging one *cato* (0.16 ha), the largest area allowed according to an agreement reached between the Government and coca grower's organizations in that region in 2004. In September 2008, the Government of Bolivia signed an agreement with coca bush growers of the Yungas allowing them to cultivate coca bush in that area. The Board expects that the Government, when addressing the existing cultivation of coca bush in the Yungas, will comply with its obligations under the treaties.

505. According to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, all coca bush cultivation is illicit unless it is destined for medical, scientific or specific industrial purposes. As that continues not to be the case in Bolivia, the Board urges the Government, when addressing the existing cultivation of coca bush in the country, to bear in mind the above and to do its utmost to comply with its obligations under the 1961 Convention.

506. A study of coca leaf yield conducted in the Yungas region in 2006 confirmed that farmers cultivating coca bush employed sophisticated agricultural techniques, such as the use of agrochemicals and mechanical irrigation, to improve

the yield. In 2007, the Government of Bolivia reported the manual eradication of over 6,200 ha of coca bush, 24 per cent more than in 2006. Ninety-five per cent of that eradication was carried out in the Chapare region. In Bolivia, potential cocaine manufacture in 2007 increased by 9 per cent over the previous year, to 104 tons.

507. Colombia continues to be the world's largest producer of coca leaf. In 2007, the illicit cultivation of coca bush increased there by 27 per cent, to 99,000 ha. Illicit coca bush cultivation increased above all in low-yield areas, such as the Pacific region, which yields about 2,600 kg of fresh coca leaf per hectare each year. In regions in which production is high, such as Meta-Guaviare, in which the coca leaf yield is about four times higher than in the Pacific region, the area under illicit coca bush cultivation has decreased slightly. As a result, in 2007, potential cocaine manufacture in Colombia did not increase; it amounted to 600 tons, 10 tons less than in 2006.

508. In 2007, about 67,000 ha of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated manually in Colombia and a further 153,000 ha were subject to aerial spraying. The forced manual eradication was carried out by mobile eradication groups with the assistance of the police and the army. Those eradication efforts were hampered by violent attacks by armed and criminal groups using firearms and anti-personnel mines to protect illicit crops.

509. According to UNODC the cultivation of coca bush in Peru increased in 2007 by 4 per cent, to 53,700 ha. For three years, such cultivation increased in the areas bordering Bolivia. In 2007, estimated cocaine manufacture in Peru was 290 tons, and Peru accounted for 29 per cent of potential global manufacture of cocaine, a level 4 per cent higher than in 2006 and the highest level since 1999.

510. According to DEVIDA, there has been an alarming increase since 2004 in attacks by armed groups and drug traffickers against workers eradicating illicit coca bush, in particular in areas without permanent police protection. In mid-2008, the Federation of Coca Farmers in Peru initiated a strike and demanded the suspension of the eradication of coca crops in the Upper Huallaga area. In 2007, eradication in Peru decreased by 5 per cent to 12,072 ha, of which 8 per cent was eradicated voluntarily and 92 per cent was eradicated by force. In

the first half of 2008, a further 5,100 ha of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated.

511. The world's main cocaine trafficking routes continue to run from countries in the Andean subregion, notably Colombia, to the United States. In the past few years, the amount of cocaine from South America smuggled via West Africa into Europe has increased dramatically (see also paragraphs 242-246 above).

512. According to Europol, drug trafficking networks in South America cooperate in temporary joint ventures established on an ad hoc basis, making use of specialists in all sectors of their criminal activities, ranging from chemists for processing the cocaine, skippers, pilots and trained couriers for the transportation of drugs to financial experts for the laundering of their criminal proceeds. The South American trafficking organizations also exploit the unstable social and economic situation and the weak drug control mechanisms in some African countries. They have established bases in West Africa and have set up a variety of businesses to justify their presence in that subregion and to conceal their criminal activities and their cooperation with African criminal groups.

513. UNODC estimates that the global rate of interception of cocaine consignments is currently about 40 per cent. In 2006, the South American countries accounted for 45 per cent of cocaine seizures worldwide. Large seizures continue to be concentrated in a few countries. In 2007, cocaine seizures increased in Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia and decreased in Ecuador and Peru.

514. Drug seizures in Bolivia have followed an upward trend that started several years ago. In 2007, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride doubled over the level of the previous year, reaching 2.9 tons, and seizures of cocaine base tripled compared with 2002, amounting to 14.9 tons. In accordance with the national drug control strategy for the period 2007-2010, which provides for further measures to combat drug trafficking, drug control operations in Bolivia have been further reinforced. In the first half of 2008, seizures of cocaine increased by one third compared with the same period in 2007.

515. In 2007, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride and cocaine base in Colombia increased slightly, to

181 tons, accounting for one fourth of potential manufacture of cocaine in the country. The Colombian authorities estimate that of the illicit drugs leaving their country about 80 per cent is smuggled by sea through the Mexico-Central American corridor, the Euro-African corridor and the Caribbean corridor, in that order. Most of the drugs are trafficked by sea on board speedboats capable of carrying a load of between 1 and 1.5 tons. The use of submersible vessels for drug trafficking, which had been noted in the past, was reported in 2007 as well. More illicit drugs are trafficked by sea than by air. Drugs are smuggled across borders by air (on board aircraft) rather than by land.

516. After an exceptionally large amount of cocaine was seized in Peru in 2005 and 2006, the amount seized in 2007 decreased to 8.1 tons, about half the amount seized in the previous year. The decrease in the amount of cocaine seized was offset in part by an increase in the amount of coca paste seized, which amounted to 6.3 tons. According to UNODC, about 5 per cent of potential manufacture of cocaine hydrochloride in Peru is destined for use in that country. The remainder is smuggled into North America and, increasingly, Europe. Approximately 40 per cent of that amount is smuggled by maritime routes and the rest mainly over the borders with Ecuador, Chile and Brazil, in that order.

517. In Brazil, the competent national authorities seized a total of 18.2 tons of cocaine, including coca paste, in 2007. In Argentina, the smuggling of coca leaves from the southern part of Bolivia has increased. During 2007, Argentine police at the Bolivian border seized 44 tons of coca leaves and 3.3 tons of cocaine.

518. Ecuador is affected by not only drug trafficking, but also drug stockpiling, the diversion of precursor chemicals and to some extent illicit drug production. In 2007, more than 25 tons of cocaine base and cocaine hydrochloride were seized. According to the Ecuadorian authorities, drug trafficking and money-laundering are accompanied by an increased level of other forms of serious crime, including robbery, extortion and kidnapping, which destabilize the national economy and undermine security.

519. Between 2002 and 2007, the authorities of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela seized an average of 35 tons of cocaine each year. In 2007, the amount of cocaine seized in that country totalled 31.8 tons.

European countries, in particular Spain, have been identified as the main countries of destination for some 70 per cent of the drugs smuggled through the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The number of persons arrested in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in connection with drug trafficking increased from 809 to 4,150 between 2006 and 2007.

520. Although Guyana and Suriname are not associated with significant production of illicit drugs, both countries are used as trans-shipment areas for a significant amount of cocaine en route to Europe and North America, partly through Africa.

521. In Colombia, traditional use of coca leaf is marginal and statistically insignificant: virtually the entire coca leaf production is destined for illicit cocaine manufacture. It is estimated that Colombian farmers process half of their coca leaf production into cocaine base to gain a higher income per hectare of cultivated area. The last step in the process of manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride is usually carried out by traffickers in clandestine cocaine laboratories. Although several countries in South America regularly report on the number of laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride that have been destroyed on their territory, most of the destroyed laboratories are reported by Colombia. Of the 2,500 clandestine laboratories destroyed in Colombia in 2007, 11 per cent were processing cocaine hydrochloride and the rest were processing coca paste or cocaine base.

522. The number of laboratories illicitly processing coca leaf identified in Bolivia has gradually increased in recent years. Between 2000 and 2007, the number of destroyed coca maceration pits increased from 790 to 6,525 and the number of laboratories destroyed for processing coca paste and cocaine increased from 628 to 4,087. The Bolivian authorities destroyed over 4,000 laboratories for processing coca paste and cocaine in 2007 and 2,000 such laboratories in the first half of 2008.

523. The destruction of 16 laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride in Peru in 2007, in addition to over 600 laboratories processing coca paste and cocaine base, confirms the capacity to manufacture cocaine hydrochloride in the country. In the first half of 2008, 12 more cocaine hydrochloride laboratories were destroyed in Peru. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 13 laboratories illicitly manufacturing

cocaine were dismantled in 2007 in the states of Zulia and Táchira, close to the Colombian border.

524. In the past few years, most South American countries have reported increasing abuse of cocaine, probably a spillover effect of the drug trafficking throughout the region. Several countries in the southern part of South America previously used as transit areas by drug traffickers have been used more and more for drug processing. That shift has resulted in the increased availability of inexpensive semi-refined cocaine derivatives, such as cocaine base and coca paste, in the local markets. Changes in drug abuse patterns, including increased abuse of *paco* (coca paste), were reported, for example, by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

525. The first comparative study on drug use in six countries of South America has shown that the average past-year prevalence of cocaine abuse in those countries was 1.4 per cent, which is 0.3 per cent higher than the global average. The prevalence of cocaine abuse ranged from 0.1 to 2.7 per cent. The prevalence was highest in Argentina, followed by Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. Argentina reported the lowest age of initiation for the abuse of cocaine among the surveyed countries: 25 per cent of cocaine abusers in Argentina are 16 years old or younger. Between 42 and 46 per cent of cocaine abusers in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru showed signs of drug dependency. The higher level of cocaine abuse has resulted in increased demand in the region for treatment for cocaine abuse. According to UNODC, treatment for cocaine abuse accounted for 48 per cent of all drug-related treatment in 2005; that figure increased to 54 per cent in 2006.

526. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy in South America accounts for less than 1 per cent of illicit opium poppy cultivation worldwide. In Colombia, the main country of illicit cultivation of opium poppy in the region, such cultivation has declined 10-fold during the past decade. In 2007, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Colombia was about 700 ha, or 1.4 tons of potential heroin manufacture. In the past, opium poppy was eradicated on small cultivation sites in Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In 2007, Peruvian authorities eradicated a total of 28 ha of opium poppy.

527. In 2007, two heroin laboratories were destroyed in Colombia. During 2007, the largest seizures of

heroin in South America occurred in Colombia (over 500 kg), followed by Ecuador, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Brazil. There are indications that heroin found in South America could also be coming from West Asia. In 2008, the Government of Pakistan reported that traffickers were exchanging heroin for cocaine in that country.

528. According to the latest UNODC data, the annual prevalence of abuse of opiates in South America is 0.3 per cent, which is 0.1 per cent lower than the global average. The highest annual prevalence of abuse of opiates in the region was found in Brazil (0.5 per cent) and the lowest (less than 0.1 per cent) was recorded in Bolivia and Suriname. Most of the reported abuse of opiates in the region involves the abuse of opioids diverted from licit sources. The Board notes with concern that, contrary to the situation in other South American countries, in Uruguay the relative number of females who abuse drugs by injection is high; consequently, there is an increasing number of cases of HIV infection among pregnant women who abuse drugs by injection and among newborn babies of women who abused drugs by injection during pregnancy.

Psychotropic substances

529. Several countries in South America reported an increase in the non-medical use of psychotropic substances, in particular sedatives and tranquillizers, in the past year. Those countries, including Argentina, expressed their concern at the increased abuse of so-called “date rape drugs”, which are often administered by criminals to victims of sexual assault or other types of crime. Use of such drugs, in particular in combination with alcohol, may result in rapid loss of resistance, impaired judgement and amnesia. GHB, flunitrazepam and ketamine (a substance not under international control) are among the substances most often used by criminals for such purposes.

530. In 2007, the National Secretariat on Drug Policies (SENAD) of Brazil initiated a study on the use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, including cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines and benzodiazepines, in road traffic accidents in Brazil. The aim of the study is to measure the impact of the abuse of those psychoactive substances on private and professional drivers in the country.

531. In Argentina, the lifetime prevalence of abuse of stimulants and tranquillizers without medical prescription by people aged 15-64 was 1.6 and 3.6 per cent, respectively. According to the latest study relating drug abuse to emergency room admissions in Argentina, anxiolytics, sedatives and tranquillizers were together the third most frequently used psychoactive substances (after alcohol and tobacco) among patients treated in emergency rooms in public hospitals. Although some South American countries, including Argentina, Chile and Peru, reported increased abuse of MDMA (commonly known as “ecstasy”) in 2006, seizures of the substance continued to be low in the region.

Precursors

532. Large-scale diversion of precursor chemicals continued to be reported in South America. In 2007, over 14,000 tons of chemicals were reported to have been seized in the region. Acetone and sulphuric acid were the most frequently seized precursor chemicals under international control. Between 2000 and 2007, global seizures of potassium permanganate, the key chemical used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine, totalled about 850 tons. Over 90 per cent of the seizures of potassium permanganate were made in Colombia. The Board is concerned that traffickers have found ways to circumvent international trade controls, for example, by illicitly producing potassium permanganate in Colombia, by diverting the substance from domestic trade and by smuggling within the region. The Board reiterates its request to the Governments of all countries in the Americas to urgently devise strategies to address the smuggling of precursor chemicals into the area in which cocaine is illicitly manufactured, utilizing, where appropriate, the experiences gained in the framework of Project Cohesion in targeting acetic anhydride in Central and West Asia.

533. The Board notes that imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in some South American countries, including Argentina, have significantly increased in the past several years. The Board is concerned that the increased imports may indicate increased interest among drug trafficking organizations in obtaining the key chemicals to meet the needs of the clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in countries in North America, in particular Mexico, as well as in South America. In 2007, seizures of pharmaceutical

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

dismantled laboratories illicitly manufacturing amphetamine was reported by the Russian Federation, accounting for 57 per cent of all the illicit drug laboratories dismantled in Europe. The majority of the laboratories illicitly manufacturing methamphetamines in the region were uncovered in the Czech Republic. Several other Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova,⁸⁴ Slovakia and Ukraine, also reported having dismantled laboratories that had been illicitly manufacturing synthetic drugs.

691. The subregions of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe continued to be used as transit areas for consignments of acetic anhydride destined for Afghanistan, where it is used in the illicit manufacture of heroin. It is estimated that almost 80 per cent of the acetic anhydride required for illicit laboratories in Afghanistan is smuggled through countries in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (see paragraphs 157-158 and 230-231 above). The Board encourages Governments to fully implement Security Council resolution 1817 (2008) in which the Council called on 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 acetic anhydride.

2. Regional cooperation

692. The Paris Pact expert round table for the Black Sea area was held in Bucharest from 9 to 11 July 2008. Participants in the round table discussed ways and means of actively supporting and utilizing existing communication and information networks (such as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, Europol, MAR-Info (the maritime traffic information system), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, GUAM and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Center) to achieve maximum law enforcement coverage of the routes used for trafficking in opiates originating in Afghanistan. The round table requested UNODC and other international entities to continue providing to law enforcement operations technical assistance utilizing the expertise and instruments already available.

⁸⁴ Since 9 September 2008, "Republic of Moldova" has replaced "Moldova" as the short name used in the United Nations.

693. In September 2008, the European Commission proposed a new European Union Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012, in which the following priorities are identified: (a) reducing the demand for drugs and raising public awareness; (b) mobilizing European citizens to play an active part; (c) reducing the supply of drugs; (d) improving international cooperation; and (e) improving the understanding of the problem. Following discussion with European Union member States, the European Council is expected to endorse the Action Plan by December 2008.

694. Building on the success of the series of operations known as "Operation Channel" conducted since 2004, CSTO and the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation carried out the second stage of operation Channel 2007 in November and December 2007, with the participation of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The goal of the operation was to build a system of enhanced collective security to prevent trafficking in drugs from Afghanistan. During the operation, new drug trafficking routes leading from Central Asia to CSTO member States and to Europe were detected. Representatives of law enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan, China, Estonia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Latvia, Lithuania, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United States and Uzbekistan participated in the operation as observers. The operation resulted in the seizure of 27,815 kg of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, including 1,157 kg of heroin, 8,573 kg of opium, 6,196 kg of cannabis resin, 5,567 kg of cannabis herb, 709 kg of poppy straw, 15 kg of cocaine and 35 kg of synthetic drugs, as well as over 2 tons of precursor chemicals.

695. In Bulgaria, a new regional office of the European Cities against Drugs (ECAD) was opened in late 2007 in the city of Burgas. The aim of the office is to assist the member cities in the Balkan area in exchanging information and best practices regarding drug abuse prevention.

696. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fifth Regional Conference of the ECAD Balkan network entitled "Local community in fight against drug abuse" was held in Sarajevo on 15 and 16 November 2007. Participating in the conference were officials from eight countries in the Balkan area, as well as national and international experts in scientific areas and in the

areas of social policy and law enforcement. The conference adopted a declaration in which it called for improved coordination between local authorities in drug abuse prevention, the treatment of addiction and the civil sector.

697. The Board welcomes the holding of the Synthetic Drug Enforcement Conference in Nunspeet, the Netherlands, from 28 to 30 November 2007. The conference was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands. Represented at the conference were Australia, Belgium, China, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Europol and the European Commission were also represented at the conference.

698. The Board welcomes the activities of Experience and Mutual Assistance (EXASS Net), a European network of partnerships between stakeholders at the frontline level responding to drug problems, providing experience and assistance for intersectoral cooperation. EXASS Net is part of activities of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe. The third meeting of EXASS Net, held in Frankfurt, Germany, in May 2008, included visits to various institutions in the Frankfurt system for providing assistance to drug abusers, such as a heroin distribution clinic, a methadone clinic and a crisis centre.

3. National legislation, policy and action

699. The Board is concerned that the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has still not established a body at the national level to coordinate the fight against illicit drugs, pursuant to the Law on Prevention and Suppression of the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs, which entered into force in 2006. The law calls for the creation of a national inter-ministerial committee and a national agency to develop, oversee and coordinate the national drug control strategy. The Board urges the Government to take the necessary measures without further delay to ensure that the inter-ministerial committee and the national agency are established and functioning properly and that the national drug control strategy is developed and implemented.

700. In the Netherlands a ban on tobacco smoking in the catering industry went into effect in July 2008. The ban also affects the so-called “coffee shops”, where the sale and abuse of cannabis is tolerated, but not the smoking of tobacco. The Government of the

Netherlands has informed the Board that the “coffee shops” are being provided with information for visitors about the risks of cannabis use and about ways to obtain help when cannabis use becomes a problem.

701. The Board notes that the Home Secretary of the United Kingdom has recommended that cannabis should be reclassified, which would mean that cases involving cannabis would be subject to stricter law enforcement and harsher penalties. The decision reflects the fact that highly potent forms of cannabis (such as “skunk”) have become dominant in the illicit drug market of the United Kingdom. If approved by Parliament, reclassification would take effect from early 2009. In addition, the first edition of the new drug strategy of the United Kingdom was released in February 2008. While maintaining a single focus on illicit drugs, the new strategy places more emphasis than the previous 10-year strategy on families and communities. Priority will be given to providing effective treatment for those who are causing the most harm to community and family members, such as parents whose drug use may be putting their children at risk.

702. In Ukraine, a new law on drug trafficking and abuse entered into force in January 2008. The new law defines the structure of legislation, principles of Government policies, general regulations on the control and distribution of licit drugs. In addition, the new legislation regulates a wide range of items, such as licensing requirements, lists of substances used in veterinary practice, the maximum allowed substance content in doses of medication, the quality of drugs crossing borders, manufacturing methods, the use of equipment, transport and the required documentation. The new law is expected to strengthen further control of the movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors within the country.

703. In November 2007, the Government of Finland adopted a resolution on cooperation regarding national drug policy for the period 2008-2011, which outlines measures the Government intends to undertake to address drug abuse. The measures are related to preventive work and early intervention; combating drug-related crime; the treatment of drug addiction and the “reduction of harm” from drug abuse; and intensifying the treatment of drug abuse in connection with criminal sanctions.

704. In France, a new Government plan for fighting illicit drugs and addiction was adopted in July 2008. The plan includes an outline of the priorities of the Government for the period 2008-2011. The current plan is based on the evaluation of the previous plan (covering the period 2004-2008) and is comprised of 193 measures: 38 measures on prevention and communication, 41 on law enforcement, 69 on treatment and reduction of risks associated with drug abuse, 30 on training and research and 15 at the international level. A total of 87.5 million euros will be required to implement the plan over the four-year period 2008-2011.

705. In January 2008, the Government of Italy adopted a new action plan on drugs that covers five areas: coordination; demand reduction; supply reduction; international cooperation and information; and training, research and evaluation. The plan includes 66 measures to be implemented in 2008 and will be followed by a plan for the four-year period 2009-2012.

706. In the Republic of Moldova, the national plan of action to prevent drug abuse and drug smuggling in the period 2007-2009 was adopted. The plan covers activities under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Health. In addition, the Penal Code, the Penal Procedural Code and the Code on Administrative (Minor) Offences have been amended by the Parliament to include judicial measures against drug trafficking and abuse, in conformity with the provisions of the 1988 Convention.

707. The Board welcomes the publication of the European Commission Eurobarometer survey on attitudes and perceptions about drug issues, involving more than 12,000 persons aged 15-24 in the European Union member States. The survey, published in May 2008, shows, inter alia, that while more than 80 per cent of young people recognize the health risks associated with the use of heroin, cocaine and "ecstasy", only 40 per cent of young people recognized the health risks associated with cannabis use. In the Czech Republic, young people believe that tobacco and alcohol use pose a slightly higher risk than cannabis use.

708. The Board welcomes the publication of the *Home Office Cannabis Potency Study 2008*⁸⁵ in the United Kingdom in May 2008, which provides important information about the market share of different types of cannabis available and their potencies. The study shows that the share of all drug seizures accounted for by cannabis herb seizures has increased markedly in recent years. Most of the cannabis seized on the street by law enforcement authorities is cannabis herb. There appears to have been a decline in the prevalence of cannabis resin.

709. The Board notes that in the evaluation of a project to establish a "drug injection room" in Norway it is stated that there is no evidence that the scheme has resulted in a reduction in drug overdose rates or fatalities. Also mentioned in the evaluation are important issues such as the fact that the drug injection room may contribute to the perpetuation of drug abuse and that health authorities might be perceived as condoning drug use. The Government has decided that the temporary act relating to a trial scheme for drug consumption rooms will remain in force until December 2009. The Board urges all Governments to refrain from establishing "drug consumption rooms" and to pursue alternative ways to increase access to health and social services, including services for the treatment of drug abusers.

710. The Board notes the results of a new survey on the prevalence of drug abuse in Ireland and in Northern Ireland (in the United Kingdom), published in 2008. The survey shows that the proportion of adults (persons aged 15-64 years) who reported having used an illicit drug in their lifetime increased from 19 per cent in the period 2002-2003 to 24 per cent in the period 2006-2007. The proportion of young adults (persons aged 15-34 years) who reported having used an illicit drug in their lifetime also increased by 5 per cent, from 26 per cent in the period 2002-2003 to 31 per cent in the period 2006-2007. More men than women reported having used an illicit drug in their lifetime. The prevalence of use at least once in a lifetime, as well as use in the past month, increased for both cannabis and cocaine.

⁸⁵ Sheila Hardwick and Leslie King, *Home Office Cannabis Potency Study 2008* (Sandridge, St. Albans, Home Office, 2008).

711. In the Netherlands, a new policy document entitled "Follow-up strategy on synthetic drugs from 2007" has been adopted by the Government. The policy document calls for, among other things, the continuation of a drug abuse prevention project entitled "Nightlife and drugs", coordinated at the national level by the Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction (Trimbos Instituut). The project targets clubbers and nightlife districts: a group of people and a type of district both known for the large-scale use of synthetic drugs. The project aims to limit the risks of drug use among clubbers by working with local authorities and "nightspots".

712. In July 2008, a task force aimed at reducing the large-scale cultivation of cannabis was launched in the Netherlands. The objective of the task force is to set up a programme that will achieve by 2011 a measurable reduction in the large-scale cultivation of cannabis in the Netherlands. In addition, the task force is to provide more information about the criminal organizations behind the illicit cultivation of cannabis, their operating procedures and their profits. The establishment of the task force was announced in the policy programme on strengthening the approach to organized crime that was submitted to the parliament in December 2007.

713. The Government of Belarus and UNODC signed a memorandum of understanding on drug control and crime prevention in January 2008. The agreement sets out strategic areas of cooperation in fighting international crime and trafficking in illicit drugs and establishes a basis for the expansion of UNODC activities in Belarus.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

714. The illicit cultivation of cannabis continues to be reported in many countries in Western Europe, such as Germany, where large-scale cannabis cultivation areas have been seized. In Eastern and Central Europe, most of the cannabis herb originates in Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine. Reports from Albania indicate that cannabis plants are being cultivated on public land. Europe is the region with the largest illicit market for cannabis resin. The amount of cannabis resin seized in Europe increased in

2007 after having declined in 2006. In 2007, as in the previous year, more cannabis resin was seized in Spain than in any other country in the world. A large amount of cannabis resin was also seized in Belgium, France and Portugal.

715. Cannabis continues to be the most widely abused drug in Europe. In European countries, lifetime prevalence of cannabis abuse ranges from 2 to 37 per cent, the lowest rates being in Bulgaria, Malta and Romania and the highest rates being in Denmark, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The prevalence of cannabis abuse in the past year is about 7 per cent among European adults (persons aged 15-64). National estimates of the prevalence of cannabis abuse in the past year range from 1 to 11 per cent, the lowest rates being in (listed in ascending order) Bulgaria, Greece and Malta and the highest rates being in (listed in ascending order) the Czech Republic, Spain and Italy. The prevalence of cannabis abuse is disproportionately high among young people. Lifetime prevalence of cannabis abuse among schoolchildren aged 15-16 is highest in (listed in ascending order) Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, France and the United Kingdom, where the rate ranges from 30 to 44 per cent and is lowest in (listed in ascending order) Norway, Sweden, Romania, Cyprus and Greece, where the rate is less than 10 per cent.

716. There are indications that the abuse of cannabis is stabilizing or declining at a fairly high level. In the United Kingdom, the prevalence of cannabis abuse among pupils in England decreased significantly between 2001 (13.4 per cent) and 2007 (9.4 per cent). Between 2004 and 2007, lifetime prevalence of cannabis abuse fell in Germany as well; however, the number of cannabis abusers was estimated at 600,000 in 2007, a significant increase compared with the 1997 figure. In France, about 1.2 million persons abuse cannabis on a regular basis (at least 10 times a month).

717. In Europe, the total amount of cocaine seized continues to be high. Europe's share of global cocaine seizures rose from less than 3 per cent in 1980 to 17 per cent in 2006. It is likely that less cocaine will be reported to have been seized in 2007, as Portugal, one of the main gateways for cocaine entering Europe, has reported a significant decrease in cocaine seizures. Similarly, effective action taken to prevent the use of couriers in cocaine trafficking at the international airport at Amsterdam, once a major gateway for

cocaine entering the region, has resulted in fewer seizures of that substance. According to the Government of the Netherlands, 9,084 kg of cocaine were seized by customs authorities in 2006. In 2007, a single seizure of 480 kg of cocaine originating in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was made in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Another large seizure of 118 kg of cocaine from Colombia was made by Polish customs authorities. The increased number of shipments of cocaine from South America to countries in Eastern Europe in recent years is part of a new development: cocaine arriving in Western Europe is increasingly being smuggled into Eastern Europe and then back into Western Europe via the Balkan route.

718. Cocaine abuse has become more prevalent in some parts of Western Europe. Lifetime prevalence of cocaine in France is 2.6 per cent among the adult population (persons aged 15-64) and has more than doubled over the past 10 years. Lifetime prevalence of cocaine abuse is highest (4.1 per cent) among young adults (persons aged 25-34). Annual prevalence of cocaine abuse tripled between 2000 and 2005 among the general population: the number of people who abuse cocaine is currently estimated at 250,000. In Spain, however, results of a national survey of drug abuse among students show that the lifetime, annual and monthly prevalence of cocaine abuse among students in secondary schools has decreased significantly.

719. Almost all the heroin available on the illicit drug markets in Europe originates in Afghanistan. The traditional (northern) Balkan route, passing through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and then Austria, was used more frequently in 2007, as evidenced by the fact that more than 2.5 tons of heroin were seized on that route. The alternative (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. With opium production shifting towards the southern provinces of Afghanistan, it has become less convenient for traffickers to ship opiates via the so-called "silk route"; therefore, drug trafficking along that route has declined. In 2007, less than 1 ton of heroin was identified as having been smuggled into Europe on the "silk route"; that represents a decrease compared with the amounts seized in previous years. Train connections between the Russian Federation and its western neighbouring

countries Belarus, Poland and Ukraine are increasingly being used for smuggling heroin into Western Europe. Reports indicate that heroin is increasingly being trafficked by air from countries in Eastern and Central Europe to countries in Western Europe.

720. In Europe, major seizures of heroin were reported in Bulgaria (more than 1 ton), the Russian Federation (934 kg) and Serbia (225 kg). An increase in heroin seizures was reported in some countries in Western Europe such as Germany and Spain.

721. Most of the laboratories illicitly producing opiates continue to be located in Eastern Europe. According to the Government of the Russian Federation, of the 3,717 laboratories illicitly producing and processing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances dismantled in that country in 2006, 186 were used for the illicit production of acetylated opium from limited quantities of locally produced poppy straw. In Moldova,⁸⁶ 112 laboratories illicitly producing opiates were dismantled in 2006.

722. For several years, the abuse of heroin and other opiates has been stagnant or declining in Western Europe. In Italy, for example, heroin abuse has continually declined since 2001. However, it now appears that heroin abuse could become more widespread. In the Netherlands, the lifetime prevalence of heroin abuse increased between 1997 and 2005, indicating greater interest in experimenting with the drug. In France, the abuse of heroin has begun to emerge among younger and more socially integrated segments of the population. The methods used for heroin abuse tend to vary: sniffing is more common and polydrug abuse is very frequent. Increasing trivialization of the consequences of heroin abuse appears to play a part in the abuse as the real dangers of the drug are poorly understood. Rising levels of abuse of opiates have been reported in countries in Eastern Europe, particularly in CIS member States and in countries in South-Eastern Europe along the Balkan route. According to UNODC, the number of people in Eastern Europe who abuse opiates is estimated to be about 2 million, or about 1.4 per cent of the population aged 15-64.

⁸⁶ Since 9 September 2008, "Republic of Moldova" has replaced "Moldova" as the short name used in the United Nations.

723. According to the Government of the Russian Federation, in 2007 the number of persons newly registered for drug abuse treatment was 37,560; 87.7 per cent of the total number of patients were registered for treatment for the abuse of opiates. In 2007, of the total number of patients in treatment for drug abuse, 11.9 per cent were infected with HIV, a slight increase compared with the figure for 2006 (11.8 per cent). Drug abuse by injection continues to be the main route of transmission of HIV infection in the Russian Federation.

724. The Russian Federation is the largest illicit market for opiates in Europe. According to the UNODC *World Drug Report 2008*, as many as 1.65 million people in the Russian Federation abuse opiates.⁸⁷ The second largest illicit market for opiates in Eastern Europe is in Ukraine, where more than 300,000 people abuse opiates.

725. The increased drug trafficking and abuse in Eastern Europe in recent years have led to an increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to UNAIDS, nearly three out of four (73.8 per cent) of the registered drug addicts in the Russian Federation abuse drugs by injection, which is also the main mode of HIV transmission in the country. In the Russian Federation, the proportion of persons who abuse drugs by injection among the general population (persons aged 15-44) is estimated at 2 per cent. According to UNAIDS, in 2007 about two thirds (66 per cent) of newly registered HIV cases were attributable to drug abuse by injection.

726. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ukraine is now more severe than in any other country in Europe: the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection among the adult population is estimated to be 1.63 per cent. The number of reported cases of HIV infection among persons who abuse drugs by injection has continued to increase in Ukraine in the past few years. The most serious drug abuse problem in Ukraine is the abuse by injection of concentrate of poppy straw (called "shyrka"): it is used by 98 per cent of all persons who abuse drugs by injection. Needle-sharing, a common practice among drug abusers, has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS infection. According to estimates of the Government of Ukraine, there are more than 500,000 registered drug abusers in the country,

including about 300,000 persons who abuse opiates by injection.

727. Estonia has the second highest prevalence of HIV infection in Europe: it is estimated that 1.4 per cent of the adult population is infected with HIV. The HIV epidemic in that country is mainly driven by drug abuse by injection, a behaviour that is widespread among the prison population. In 2007, more than 12 per cent of all prison inmates in Estonia were HIV positive.

Psychotropic substances

728. Western Europe continues to be a major source of amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly MDMA. According to UNODC, Belgium and the Netherlands are the main countries exporting amphetamine and substances in the MDMA group. However, as MDMA is increasingly being illicitly manufactured in other parts of the world, seizures of MDMA in Western Europe have declined. In Western Europe, most seizures of MDMA are reported in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The main source of methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in Western Europe is the Czech Republic, which also reported the largest number of dismantled laboratories illicitly manufacturing that substance. The United Kingdom has the largest illicit market for amphetamine. However, annual prevalence of amphetamine abuse among the general population (persons aged 16-59) decreased significantly, from 3.2 per cent in 1996 to 1.3 per cent in 2006. Similarly, Sweden has witnessed a significant decrease in amphetamine abuse over the past 20-30 years with the annual prevalence rate at 0.2 per cent, less than half the European average. Past-year prevalence of abuse of MDMA among young adults has remained largely stable over the past five years in the European Union.

Precursors

729. Countries in Eastern Europe continued to be used as transit areas for consignments of acetic anhydride destined for Afghanistan, where the substance is used in the illicit manufacture of heroin. It is estimated that almost 80 per cent of the precursor chemicals required for illicit drug laboratories in Afghanistan is smuggled through countries in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

⁸⁷ *World Drug Report 2008* ...

730. Seizures of precursors of amphetamine in Eastern European countries have increased in the past few years. According to UNODC, in 2006, major seizures of the precursor P-2-P were reported in Poland (1,085 litres), the Russian Federation (402 litres), Estonia (51 litres) and Bulgaria (32 litres).

5. Missions

731. A mission of the Board visited Romania in October 2008. The Board notes that there has been some improvement and greater commitment by the Government in its efforts to fulfil the objectives of the international drug control treaties. Progress has been made in the Government's efforts to address the drug problem in the country, and the Government's cooperation with the Board has improved since the 2002 mission of the Board to that country. The Board notes that Romania has taken some steps in recent years to strengthen its drug control efforts, but a number of problems continue to exist in that area.

732. In particular, the Board notes that in Romania the existing mechanism for the monitoring and control of internationally controlled substances is neither sufficient nor functioning adequately. The Board requests the Government to take steps to put in place legislation, as well as to provide resources and trained personnel, to enable all drug regulatory authorities, especially the Ministry of Health, to perform their control functions. Moreover, with regard to efforts by the Government to address the challenge of the smuggling of drugs through its territory, the Board encourages the Government to further strengthen customs and border control activities to prevent such trafficking, for example, through capacity-building and increasing the allocation of resources to such activities.

733. The Board notes that the availability of opioids for the treatment of pain does not appear to meet the requirements of the population in Romania. The Board urges the Government to accurately determine the national medical and/or scientific requirements for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to take all steps necessary, including the provision of education and training to staff, to ensure that those substances are available for medical purposes.

734. A mission of the Board visited Ukraine in May 2008. The Board notes the commitment of the Government to the objectives of the international drug control conventions. Progress has been made in the

Government's efforts to address the drug problem. Administrative steps have been taken to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the conventions. Ukraine has adopted comprehensive drug control legislation and developed a national drug control strategy. Although a mechanism has been established to coordinate efforts to fight drug trafficking, problems continue to exist, largely because of lack of cooperation among authorities involved in drug control.

735. The transit traffic in heroin and cocaine poses serious drug control problems for Ukraine, particularly with regard to the increasing influence of organized transnational crime on drug trafficking both in and through Ukraine. The Board is of the opinion that that development requires effective inter-ministerial coordination at the policy level, as well as at the operational level. The Board recommends that the Government should clearly define the lines of responsibility between the various law enforcement agencies and improve the coordination of their activities.

736. The intravenous abuse of acetylated opium made of locally produced poppy straw is the most serious drug abuse problem in Ukraine. As needle-sharing is practised among drug abusers, it has contributed to the increase in HIV/AIDS infection in Ukraine. The Board urges the Government to prevent the diversion of poppy straw from farms licensed for cultivating opium poppy. The Board encourages the authorities of Ukraine to develop, if necessary with the help of WHO and UNODC, a consolidated approach towards drug abuse prevention and treatment programmes. Long waiting lists and the increasing rate of HIV/AIDS infection indicate that the treatment programmes presently offered are not sufficient and that the treatment facilities urgently need to be expanded to respond to those problems.

E. Oceania

1. Major developments

737. A recent increase in drug smuggling from Canada to Australia has been noted. Australian law enforcement officials reported having seized cocaine, MDMA and methamphetamine from a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada. Law enforcement

authorities in the United States also seized cocaine, MDMA and methamphetamine from a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada and destined for Australia. While the source country for the majority of seizures of methamphetamine in New Zealand continued to be China, a recent increase in trafficking in that substance from Canada was also noted.

738. While comprehensive seizure data for Australia and New Zealand are available, limited data are available for other countries in Oceania. However, illicit substances including cannabis, cocaine, heroin and precursor chemicals were seized in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu during 2007, confirming concerns that countries in Oceania other than Australia and New Zealand are also vulnerable to drug trafficking.

739. Australia reported a significant increase in seizures of cocaine in the period 2006-2007, compared with the period 2005-2006. Australia also reported an increase in seizures of paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA): six seizures were reported in 2007, compared with only two confirmed seizures prior to that year. In addition, a clandestine PMA laboratory was dismantled in the Australian State of New South Wales in 2007.

2. Regional cooperation

740. The Pacific Islands Forum continued to bring countries in Oceania together to address drug control issues. Australia and New Zealand remained active in supporting capacity-building initiatives in drug control in the region.

741. At the thirty-eighth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Nuku'alofa in October 2007, participants directed relevant national and regional organizations and regional law enforcement secretariats to strengthen the collection and exchange of law enforcement information to combat national and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. The annual meeting of the Regional Security Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum was held in Suva in June 2008.

742. The Micronesia Regional Transnational Crime Unit, an initiative involving Australia, the Micronesia (Federated States of) and the United States, was launched in April 2008. The Unit, located in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, focuses on issues such as drug trafficking and will allow regional law enforcement authorities to share intelligence. The Unit

is linked to a network of transnational crime units in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Cooperation under that network has led to the seizure of 55 kg of cannabis that were being smuggled between Fiji and Tonga.

743. Law enforcement authorities in Australia and New Zealand provided ongoing support to a programme of sniffer dogs, trained to detect drugs, in Samoa. In an effort to combat the growing drug problem in Samoa, Australia and New Zealand each provided a sniffer dog to their Samoan counterparts in May 2007. In Australia from February to April 2007, Samoan law enforcement authorities were given specialized training on handling sniffer dogs and on safely handling drugs. Sniffer dog teams were trained to search people, baggage and cargo at the international airport, seaport and post office in Apia.

744. The third regional workshop of the Pacific Drug and Alcohol Research Network was held in Suva in July 2008. Participants discussed collaborative research opportunities among health, law enforcement and social research professionals in Oceania and shared experiences in the use of rapid assessment methodologies for collecting data on drug abuse.

3. National legislation, policy and action

745. In May 2008, the Government of Australia endorsed the national strategy on amphetamine-type stimulants, which encompasses a comprehensive approach to addressing problems associated with the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and recommends action in the areas of prevention, supply reduction and improved access to treatment. The Government also endorsed a National Corrections Drug Strategy for the period 2006-2009, which provides a framework for coordinated, integrated action to address drug-related issues for adults and juveniles in correctional facilities. The objective of the strategy is to promote and enforce laws, policies and practices that detect and reduce the smuggling of drugs into correctional and community-based facilities and services, prevent and reduce drug abuse among adult and juvenile offenders and increase access to a range of prevention and treatment services for adult and juvenile offenders.

746. In Australia in February 2008, the Parliament of Queensland enacted the Drugs Misuse Amendment Act 2008, which amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and

the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987. MDMA and PMA were rescheduled, so that the maximum penalty for the unlawful possession and supply of and trafficking in those drugs was increased from 20 to 25 years of imprisonment. Ephedrine was also rescheduled; as a result, the maximum penalty for the unlawful possession and supply or trafficking increased to 20 years of imprisonment from two years of imprisonment for possession and five years for the unlawful supply of or trafficking in that substance. The illicit manufacture and supply of substances such as pseudoephedrine or methamphetamine were included in the 2008 act as new offences, as was the possession of equipment, such as tablet presses, used in the illicit production of drugs.

747. The Australian customs authorities established Project Stridor as a pilot project in 2006 and 2007 to test the benefits of having a multidisciplinary law enforcement team involved in combating the emerging threat of precursor chemicals in Australia. Australian customs officers involved in intelligence, investigations and enforcement activities were brought together to monitor and track the trade in selected commodities through the Internet. The Australian customs authorities cooperated with their counterparts in the United Kingdom and utilized software developed by the customs authorities of the Netherlands. As a result of the exercise, two significant consignments of precursor chemicals were detected.

748. In January 2008, 100 people formerly involved in the illicit cultivation, sale and use of cannabis in Simbu Province, Papua New Guinea, gave public testimony of how they became involved in such illicit activities and promised to assist law enforcement authorities in preventing others from becoming involved in such activities.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

749. Cannabis continued to be illicitly cultivated throughout Oceania. According to UNODC, Australia is the largest producer of cannabis herb in the region.⁸⁸

750. Fiji reported a significant decrease in the number of cannabis plants that were eradicated during 2007,

when 1,353 plants were eradicated compared with 8,542 plants in 2006.

751. In June 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Perth Airport seized 3.5 kg of heroin from a passenger arriving from Malaysia. In December 2007, Australian customs officers seized heroin from two passengers arriving from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. In February 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities found 28 kg of heroin in a sea cargo consignment that had arrived in Sydney; and in August 2008, customs officers at Melbourne Airport reported having seized 2 kg of heroin from a passenger arriving from Thailand.

752. States in Oceania continue to report seizures of cocaine. Australia reported the seizure of 634 kg of cocaine in the period 2006-2007, compared with 46 kg in the period 2005-2006. An additional 610 kg of cocaine were seized at the Australian border in the period 2006-2007, more than seven times the amount seized in the period 2005-2006 (83 kg). Although parcel post continued to be the preferred method of smuggling cocaine into Australia, a recent increase in smuggling by sea cargo was noted. In March 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities in Sydney reported having seized 250 kg of cocaine concealed in a sea cargo container originating in South-East Asia. In July 2008, law enforcement authorities in Australia seized 150 kg of cocaine hidden in a shipping container that had arrived in Melbourne. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 124 kg of cocaine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada.

753. Cannabis continued to be the most abused drug in Oceania. A particularly high incidence of abuse was reported in Australia, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. According to a recent study carried out by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction⁸⁹ of Australia, cannabis is the most commonly abused illicit drug among schoolchildren aged 12-17 years in Australia; 3.4 per cent of all students surveyed regularly abused cannabis. Nonetheless, the annual prevalence of cannabis abuse among the Australian population aged 14 and above has gradually decreased from its high

⁸⁸ *World Drug Report 2008 ...*

⁸⁹ Ann M. Roche and others, *Drug Testing in Schools: Evidence, Impacts and Alternatives* (Canberra, Australian National Council on Drugs, 2008).

level of 17.9 per cent in 1998 to 12.9 per cent in 2001, 11.3 per cent in 2004 and 9.1 per cent in 2007. In contrast, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in Australia for the same age group increased from 0.5 per cent in 1993 to 1.6 per cent in 2007,⁹⁰ the highest prevalence recorded for that substance in all surveyed years.

Psychotropic substances

754. In Australia and New Zealand, amphetamine-type stimulants continued to be supplied predominantly by clandestine manufacturers operating in those countries. However, the fact that methamphetamine and tablets made of a combination of MDMA and methamphetamine were also regularly seized at those countries' borders indicates that amphetamine-type stimulants are also being smuggled into Oceania.

755. In 2007, the Australian customs authorities seized 4 kg of amphetamine from a postal shipment originating in Thailand. In August 2007, customs authorities in New Zealand seized 17 kg of methamphetamine. In November 2007, New Zealand law enforcement authorities at the Port of Tauranga reported having seized 32 kg of methamphetamine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China. In January 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities in Sydney reported having seized 28 kg of amphetamine that had been hidden in an air cargo consignment originating in Lithuania. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 66 kg of methamphetamine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada.

756. Significant quantities of MDMA continued to be seized in Oceania. In a single seizure in 2007, 4.4 tons of MDMA were seized from a shipping container that had arrived in Melbourne, Australia. That was almost the same as the total amount of MDMA seized worldwide in 2006: 4.5 tons. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 121 kg of MDMA that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada. In May 2008, customs authorities in Perth, Australia, reported having seized, in a clandestine laboratory,

45 kg of MDMA and equipment for manufacturing tablets. In February 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Brisbane Airport reported having seized 80,000 MDMA tablets in parcels originating in the United Kingdom. Following an investigation that lasted 12 months, law enforcement authorities in Australia uncovered an international drug smuggling syndicate, leading to the arrest of 22 persons.

757. While the incidence of abuse of amphetamines among the Australian population aged 14 and above declined from 3.7 per cent in 1998 to 2.3 per cent in 2007,⁹¹ abuse of MDMA surpassed that of other amphetamine-type stimulants, making it the second most abused substance in Australia and New Zealand. In contrast to the general decline in drug abuse in Australia, the annual prevalence of abuse of MDMA among persons in the same age group increased from 0.9 per cent in 1995 to 3.5 per cent in 2007. The annual prevalence of abuse of MDMA among persons aged 15-45 years in New Zealand was 2.6 per cent.

Precursors

758. States in Oceania continued to report seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. Traffickers attempted to smuggle large amounts of the substances in air and sea cargo and smaller amounts through the postal system. In July 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities seized 850 kg of pseudoephedrine, one of the largest seizures of the substance reported in that State to date. The substance was concealed in three sea cargo consignments that had arrived in Port Botany, Sydney, from Thailand. During 2007, reported seizures of ephedrine tablets totalled 167 kg in Australia and 0.5 kg in New Zealand, and reported seizures of pseudoephedrine totalled 266 kg in Australia and 155 kg in New Zealand.

759. In December 2007, the customs authorities at the New Zealand International Mail Centre reported having seized 14.9 kg of ephedrine concealed in two packages originating in India and 2.1 kg of pseudoephedrine concealed in a parcel originating in Singapore.

760. While most of the pseudoephedrine continued to be smuggled into Australia and New Zealand from East

⁹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey: First Results*, Drug Statistics Series No. 20 (Canberra, April 2008).

⁹¹ Ibid.

Asia and South-East Asia, in June 2008 law enforcement authorities at Sydney Airport seized 45 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in an air cargo consignment originating in Lebanon. In November 2007, law enforcement authorities at the Port of Tauranga, New Zealand, reported having seized 127 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China. In December 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Sydney seized 105 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been hidden in an air cargo consignment originating in Cambodia. In December 2007, law enforcement authorities in New Zealand seized 44.8 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China.

761. In July 2008, law enforcement authorities in New South Wales, Australia, reported having seized 12.6 kg of pseudoephedrine and equipment that had purportedly been used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in a private residence.

Substances not under international control

762. Seizures of substances not under international control continued to be reported in Oceania. In 2007, Australian customs authorities seized 45 consignments of GBL, a precursor of GHB, totalling approximately 68 litres. The primary method of transportation continued to be through the postal system. Sixty per cent of the seized consignments originated in the United Kingdom. In July 2008, Australian customs officers in Sydney intercepted a consignment of GBL that had been shipped without the required import permit. The Australian Federal Police searched the premises of the office of the importer and found 3,000 litres of GBL.