

334. Cocaine abuse appears to be rising in Africa, particularly along emerging cocaine trafficking routes in West and Southern Africa. Data on treatment for drug abuse in South Africa show a strong increase in cocaine-related treatment between 1998 and 2008. In 2008, demand for treatment for cocaine abuse fluctuated between 11 and 25 per cent of total treatment demand in different provinces of that country.

335. Heroin abuse also appears to be increasing in Africa. Heroin is the drug most commonly abused by problem drug abusers in countries such as Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Rwanda and Seychelles have also reported an increase in the abuse of heroin. In South Africa, heroin abusers frequently use a mixture of poor-quality heroin and cocaine commonly called “sugar”, which is administered mostly by smoking. Drug abuse by injection is still limited in South Africa and other countries in the region. UNODC recently estimated the number of persons in Africa who have abused opiates at least once in the past year at between 1 million and 2.8 million or between 0.2 and 0.5 per cent of the population 15-64 years of age.

336. Between 1.4 million and 4 million persons in Africa are estimated to have abused amphetamine-type stimulants at least once over the past 12 months. Nigeria and South Africa have reported the highest annual prevalence rates of abuse of such stimulants. Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone and several other African countries have also reported the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants; however, no reliable quantitative estimates have been available in recent years. The abuse of methaqualone and methamphetamine remains of concern in South Africa; the abuse of methamphetamine occurs predominantly in and around Cape Town. The abuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicines, such as slimming tablets, analgesics and benzodiazepines (including diazepam and flunitrazepam) continues to be a problem in many African countries.

337. The Board notes that the international network of drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation resource centres (Treatnet) was recently launched jointly by UNODC and WHO to improve the quality of treatment for drug-dependent persons through cooperation, information exchange and the empowerment of

selected resource centres in all regions of the world. In Africa, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia are currently participating in Treatnet. In addition, capacity-building initiatives have been launched in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco to provide a comprehensive response to drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, including community outreach services for drug abusers, drug abuse prevention services and treatment services for drug abusers, including prison inmates. In East Africa, an opiate substitution programme is being implemented in Mauritius, while treatment for drug abusers is being provided in Kenya, Seychelles and Uganda. In 2009, a programme for opioid substitution therapy was launched in Morocco.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

1. Major developments

338. The region of Central America and the Caribbean continues to be used as a major trans-shipment area for consignments of drugs originating in South America and destined for North America and Europe. Impunity, corruption and weak institutions undermine drug control efforts and the rule of law in the region, despite attempts to reform judicial systems. Drug trafficking activities are often carried out under the protection of local gangs (*maras*) operating in border areas, especially in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. There are indications that criminal associations have been established between members of Mexican drug cartels and gang members. Furthermore, the region is becoming used for trafficking in precursor chemicals. Despite new regulations banning ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in several countries, the region continues to be used as a trans-shipment area for the smuggling of precursor chemicals into Mexico, where the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants continues. The Board notes that precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants are increasingly being trafficked in the form of pharmaceutical preparations.

339. Drug trafficking by sea remains a major problem in countries in Central America and the Caribbean. In El Salvador, for example, 85 per cent of the trafficked cocaine is transported along sea routes. Furthermore,

light aircraft, operating from clandestine airstrips and landing in remote areas, are increasingly being used to transport cocaine. Drug traffickers are increasingly using stolen or falsified aircraft registration numbers when transporting illicit consignments by air. The Board encourages Governments to monitor the sale and movement of light aircraft more closely, step up airspace security and strengthen control of privately owned landing fields.

340. Drug trafficking has become a major security threat and is contributing to an increase in drug abuse. The number of homicides linked to organized crime has risen in areas where criminal groups fight to gain control of local drug distribution. The increase in criminal acts, such as robbery and kidnappings, may be linked to the increasing availability of drugs, which in turn may be attributable to the fact that drug traffickers are frequently paid in drugs rather than cash. Moreover, major tourist areas in the Caribbean continue to be a hub for drug abuse. There are indications that the abuse of psychotropic substances, particularly benzodiazepines, is increasing in the region. In view of the lack of up-to-date data on drug abuse and the treatment of drug abusers in the region, the Board strongly encourages all Central American and Caribbean States to improve their data collection systems, monitor trends in drug abuse and take appropriate prevention measures. The Board also invites Governments of countries in the region and the Pan American Health Organization to work together on training programmes for health authorities in order to ensure the proper prescription and adequate control of psychotropic substances and other controlled drugs.

2. Regional cooperation

341. The Board welcomes the recommendation of the Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Tegucigalpa in October 2008, that the Governments of countries in the region should take further steps to ensure that national legislation and administrative procedures are adequate and flexible enough to control internationally scheduled precursors and their substitute chemicals and thus prevent the establishment of the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in the region. The Board has taken note of the recommendation by Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) experts on chemical substances and pharmaceutical products that a guide be

prepared on mechanisms to assess the national requirements for substances frequently misused in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

342. The Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism as Challenges for Security and Development in the Caribbean, organized by UNODC, was held in Santo Domingo in February 2009. In the Political Declaration on Combating Illicit Trafficking, Organized Crime, Terrorism and Other Serious Crime in the Caribbean, which was adopted at that Conference, Caribbean States pledged to continue to accord priority to the prevention of organized crime and drug trafficking and to implement related actions. They also undertook to conduct public awareness campaigns on drug abuse prevention, improve their law enforcement capacity and strengthen judicial cooperation. The Board highlights the important role of UNODC in the subregion and welcomes efforts to convene ministerial meetings and foster regional cooperation.

343. CICAD continued to organize regional cooperation activities in Central America and the Caribbean. In particular, CICAD conducted training and organized workshops in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Panama to strengthen those countries' capacity to investigate, prevent and prosecute drug-related crime. Within CICAD, the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism continues to promote the exchange of information among countries in the region, to stimulate the adoption of joint measures and the application of inter-American legislation and to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to Governments at their request.

344. In March 2009, a meeting on standards of care at treatment and rehabilitation facilities for substance abusers was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, under the auspices of CICAD and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The meeting established the basis for the development of common subregional guidelines for standardized procedures to be followed by professionals working at facilities for the treatment and care of drug abusers. The guidelines are expected to be finalized by 2010. The Board welcomes this initiative and encourages States to establish a harmonized regional system for epidemiological surveillance to detect and diagnose disease and illness linked to drug addiction.

345. Under the Drug Treatment City Partnership initiative, which is implemented by CICAD and funded by the European Union Commission, European, Latin American and Caribbean cities continued to cooperate in developing policies on drug demand reduction at the local level, and seminars and forums were organized in several countries of Central America and the Caribbean, such as Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

346. In March 2009, the European Union launched a project entitled "Prevention of the diversion of drug precursors in the Latin American and Caribbean region" (PRELAC). The objectives of the project are to strengthen the capacity of national authorities responsible for precursor control and to improve communication and cooperation between countries through greater exchange of information on national drug control systems and trends in the diversion of precursor chemicals in the region.

347. On 24 April 2009, the Vice-Presidents of Belize, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama gathered together in Antigua, Guatemala, to discuss mechanisms for combating organized crime, drug trafficking, corruption, human rights violations and money-laundering. The Vice-Presidents agreed to establish a regional technical secretariat tasked with strengthening existing regional mechanisms in order to tackle those issues and increase transparency in public administration.

348. The fifth annual international Anti-Gang Conference was held in San Salvador in April 2009. More than 300 security experts from more than 12 countries gathered to establish strategies for combating the gang phenomenon and its expansion into the illicit traffic in drugs and arms. The participants agreed to implement a number of comprehensive initiatives, including prevention and intervention programmes.

349. A ministerial meeting was held in Managua in June 2009 under the auspices of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and UNODC. Ministers from Belize, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama declared their strong commitment to the fight against drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism and the financing of such crime. In the political declaration on illicit drug trafficking, transnational organized crime

and terrorism as challenges to security and development in Central America, the ministers emphasized the need to improve the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment of drug abusers and to strengthen the prevention and control of organized crime. The Board hopes that the political declaration will translate into effective regional cooperation in combating organized crime and drug trafficking.

3. National legislation, policy and action

350. The Government of Costa Rica launched a national drug control plan for the period 2008-2012, establishing a national policy on drug abuse prevention. The plan also targets vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities and farmers, whose livelihood depends on illicit cannabis cultivation.

351. In March 2009, the Attorney-General of the Dominican Republic established a national directorate for the prosecution of drug trafficking and complex crime. The role of the directorate is to support prosecutors leading investigations on drug-related crime by coordinating the activities of the relevant State institutions. The directorate is also responsible for developing institutional policies to combat and prevent drug trafficking and for coordinating training activities for investigative authorities.

352. The citizens' security council of the Dominican Republic, chaired by the President of that country, carries out investigations to identify officials involved in organized crime. In February 2009, the council reported the incarceration of 22 members of the National Police and three members of the National Drug Control Directorate for having links to organized crime.

353. In 2009, El Salvador issued a regulation revoking its new ban on ephedra, pseudoephedrine and ephedrine and establishing that ephedrine may continue to be sold subject to certain conditions, with the exception of injectable preparations containing ephedrine, such preparations being subject to special control. In order to continue to monitor the movement of preparations containing ephedrine, a list of enterprises and institutions acquiring and maintaining stocks of such preparations and the quantities acquired and stored is to be maintained and monitored. The Board notes that this change will affect precursor control efforts in Central America and the Caribbean and encourages the Government of El Salvador to

continue its efforts to strengthen the control of ephedra, pseudoephedrine and ephedrine.

354. In February 2009, the Government of Guatemala, following steps taken by Governments of countries in Central America and the Caribbean to ban ephedrine and pseudoephedrine as part of efforts to combat the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, imposed a nationwide blanket ban on pseudoephedrine. The Guatemalan authorities established 15 April 2009 as the deadline by which pharmacies were required to use up their stocks of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine.

355. In June 2009, the Government of Guatemala launched a programme entitled "Safe Schools" to prevent drug abuse and gang activity among schoolchildren. The plan includes the installation of surveillance equipment in schools and education for families on drug abuse prevention. Guatemala has also initiated a programme to evaluate standards for the treatment of drug abusers. The objective of the programme is to collect information on treatment institutions and their patients in order to standardize procedures for the medical treatment of drug abusers.

356. A new police force has been established in Guatemala with the assistance of the United States. The new body, called the counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism air intervention force, will focus on combating drug trafficking, particularly in the north-western and southern parts of the country.

357. In February 2009, the Government of Honduras issued a regulation prohibiting the import, export, possession, synthesis, use, manufacture, sale, storage, distribution and transportation of pseudoephedrine. The regulation entered into force immediately following its official publication.

358. The Government of Honduras has implemented drug abuse prevention programmes for primary and secondary school students and conducted workshops on drug abuse prevention for new students at the National University of Honduras as part of a project that the Government plans to expand to include other universities.

359. In December 2008, Nicaragua introduced new measures for the control of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. Under the measures, the acquisition and use of those substances are prohibited, except in the manufacture of pharmaceutical injections and in

research. The import and distribution of, or trade in, ephedrine are also prohibited.

360. On 17 June 2009, the President of Panama issued a decree aimed at eliminating barriers to the availability of and access to opioids for medical purposes, including those used in the treatment of pain. The decree recognizes the need for opioids in the treatment of pain in persons suffering from cancer or other conditions. Until the decree was enacted, opioids could be prescribed only by oncologists and anaesthesiologists.

361. Panama joined the Container Control Programme, which is coordinated by the World Customs Organization and UNODC. The programme is designed to assist port authorities in modernizing control techniques for the detection of illicit shipments, including illicit shipments of drugs and precursor chemicals, without disrupting licit commerce. The Board welcomes the opening by UNODC of a regional office in Panama, since the geographical location of that country makes it a major transit area for illicit shipments of drugs, precursor chemicals and weapons.

362. In December 2008, Panama issued a list of substances subject to national control. The list includes all 22 substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention and certain substances included in the INCB limited international special surveillance list of non-scheduled substances. The substances included in the national list will be subject to strict trade, import and export controls. Companies engaged in their handling or trade must be registered, and a licence is required in order to trade in those substances.

363. In Trinidad and Tobago, officials and law enforcement personnel from the ministries of energy and energy industries, finance, health, national security and trade and industry received training in how to raise public awareness of the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs and the diversion of precursor chemicals and in how to identify such drugs and precursors.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

Narcotic drugs

364. Jamaica continues to be a major producer and exporter of cannabis in the Caribbean, despite the efforts of its law enforcement agencies. In 2008,

Jamaican authorities stepped up eradication programmes and operations to combat drug trafficking, targeting major drug production areas, as a result of which 35,507 kg of cannabis herb were seized and street prices for cannabis herb increased.

365. Cannabis plants are also cultivated in other Caribbean countries, such as the Dominican Republic and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where the cannabis produced is destined mostly for local markets. In 2008, authorities of the Dominican Republic reported a considerable decrease in cannabis trafficking in that country, a total of 379 kg having been seized in that year. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, however, an increase in cannabis trafficking was noted in 2008, over the course of which a total of 47 kg of cannabis was seized.

366. Illicit cannabis cultivation has decreased slightly in Honduras, where an estimated 102 ha of cannabis plants were illicitly cultivated in 2008. The ministries of security and defence of Honduras have carried out joint crop eradication operations. Both eradication and drought in illicit cultivation areas have caused the price of cannabis to increase by 40 per cent. In 2008, a total of 424 kg of cannabis was seized, half of which had been destined for Mexico and half for local markets.

367. Cannabis cultivation and trafficking appears to be decreasing in other countries in the region. In 2008, Cuba registered its lowest amount of drugs seized in 14 years. During that year, Cuban authorities seized 916 kg of cannabis, almost half the amount seized during 2007. In Costa Rica, a total of 1,397,449 cannabis plants were seized in 2008, representing a decrease of almost 50 per cent compared with 2007.

368. The authorities of Guatemala reported a decrease in illicit cannabis cultivation and trafficking in that country, particularly in the areas of Petén and San Marcos, which lie along the country's border with Mexico. Some 11 million cannabis plants and 709 kg of cannabis herb were seized in Guatemala in 2008.

369. Cocaine trafficking in Guatemala remained at the same level as in previous years, during 2008. A total of 2,200 kg of cocaine was seized, of which 80 per cent originated in Colombia and the remaining 20 per cent in Bolivia. Data obtained as the result of seizure operations indicate that in Guatemala, cocaine is trafficked mainly by sea using speedboats.

370. In 2008, the law enforcement authorities of Costa Rica seized 16,582 kg of cocaine, approximately half the amount seized in 2007. A marginal increase in drug trafficking by land and sea was reported in that country. The number of cases of trafficking by air registered in 2008 decreased by 26 per cent compared with the figure for 2007.

371. There is evidence that Belize is becoming a major trans-shipment area for cocaine consignments from Colombia destined for illicit markets to the north. Belizean authorities continue to find abandoned boats and aircraft suspected of having been used in criminal activity. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Belize has officially requested technical assistance from UNODC in order to fully implement its national security strategy.

372. Cocaine continues to be trafficked in large quantities in Nicaragua. Cocaine shipments enter Nicaragua through the southern part of the country, to be stored in clandestine warehouses along the coastal areas before being moved out of the country towards final destinations in North America and Europe. While the majority of cocaine seizures in 2007 occurred on the Pacific coast, trafficking organizations appear to have shifted their illicit activities to the Atlantic region, where most seizures took place in 2008.

373. The quantity of cocaine seized in El Salvador increased from 39 kg in 2005 to 108 kg in 2006 to 4,074 kg in 2007. That figure fell to 1,354 kg in 2008. The authorities in El Salvador have increased police operations and checks along highways and at borders, ports and the El Salvador International Airport. All of the cocaine seized in El Salvador originates in Colombia, and most of it is destined for the United States or countries in Europe, the remainder (some 10 per cent) being destined for local markets.

374. The number of incidents of cocaine trafficking by air in Honduras has increased. To date in 2009, several light aircraft, most of which were identified by their Venezuelan registration numbers and Venezuelan flag, have landed illegally or crashed on Honduran territory. For example, in May 2009, a light aircraft bearing a Venezuelan flag and operated by Colombian nationals crashed in the department of Islas de la Bahía. Approximately 1,647 kg of cocaine was seized at the scene of the crash.

375. There has also been an increase in drug trafficking by air in Haiti. The number of light aircraft landing on clandestine airfields has increased over the past three years. Haiti is used as a trans-shipment area for drug consignments bound for the Dominican Republic and Bahamas en route to North America and Europe. Cocaine from South America reaches Haiti mainly by air or via that country's border with the Dominican Republic or the southern Haitian coastline.

376. The Dominican Republic remains a major trans-shipment area for cocaine originating in Colombia, although Dominican authorities reported a decrease in cocaine trafficking in 2008, having seized a total of 2,723 kg of the drug in that year.

377. Jamaica appears to be gaining importance as a trans-shipment area for South American cocaine bound for the United States of America and the United Kingdom. In 2008, Jamaican authorities seized 266 kg of cocaine, almost three times the amount seized in 2007. In Jamaica, drugs are trafficked by local criminal groups, some of which are linked to Colombian or Haitian criminal organizations.

378. Cocaine is also trafficked in other Caribbean countries, but on a smaller scale. A total of 21.6 kg of cocaine was seized in Trinidad and Tobago in 2008, all of it having been bound for the United Kingdom and detected at Crown Point International Airport. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a total of 3 kg was seized in 56 incidents. Authorities of that country noted a decrease in the number of cocaine trafficking incidents, believed to be the result of increased surveillance along the coastline.

379. Levels of opium poppy cultivation and heroin trafficking in Guatemala are significant. While cannabis cultivation and trafficking have diminished and cocaine trafficking remains essentially at the same level in that country, there is a rising trend in trafficking in opium and heroin, which the Guatemalan authorities attribute to the establishment in Guatemala of an armed group known as Los Zetas, which is linked to the Mexican Gulf Cartel.

380. In 2008, the Government of Guatemala eradicated almost 300 million opium poppy plants and seized 10 kg of heroin. In February 2009, it eradicated 596 fields of opium poppy plants, covering 739 ha, in the department of San Marcos during an operation conducted jointly with the United States authorities.

The number of opium poppy plants destroyed during that operation alone accounted for more than 60 per cent of the total number eradicated during 2008.

381. There was a significant increase in the number of cases involving heroin trafficking through the Dominican Republic in 2008, during which a total of 120 kg was seized. The largest heroin consignments were seized at airports, where the drug was concealed in luggage. All of the heroin seized had originated in Colombia and had been bound for the United States.

382. In February 2009, Costa Rican authorities informed the Board of the seizure of a laboratory where they had found a large amount of pharmaceutical preparations and cocaine hydrochloride. The preparations were in the form of tablets containing oxycodone, hydrocodone and codeine. The drugs were purportedly intended for sale over the Internet. The Board has been warning Governments of the dangers posed by illegal Internet pharmacies since 2006. The Board wishes to emphasize the importance of activating regional cooperation systems for the control of Internet pharmacies.

Psychotropic substances

383. MDMA ("ecstasy") continues to be trafficked in the Caribbean, particularly in tourist areas. In 2008, authorities of the Dominican Republic reported having seized 17,885 "ecstasy" tablets, 88 per cent of which originated in the Netherlands and was destined for local consumption. In 2008, Costa Rican authorities seized 342 "ecstasy" tablets, a significant decrease compared with 2007, when 19,021 tablets were seized.

384. There appears to have been a resurgence of LSD trafficking in Central America. Costa Rica reported its first four seizures of the drug, amounting to 117 doses, since 2001.

Precursors

385. Incidents of trafficking in pseudoephedrine and ephedrine have been reported in Guatemala, where 990,300 tablets of pseudoephedrine were seized in 2008. In February 2009, the Government of Guatemala adopted a new regulation to control the movement of both substances in that country. Guatemalan law enforcement agencies seized 3,900,000 pseudoephedrine capsules in February 2009

and a shipment of 17 million tablets of the substance in June 2009.

386. Honduras reported the seizure of a total of 2,000 kg of pseudoephedrine in 2008. All of the shipments seized had been bound for Mexico. Seizures of pseudoephedrine in tablet form have continued in 2009. In April 2009, Honduran authorities reported having seized a record amount of pharmaceutical preparations containing that substance in a consignment of more than 2 million tablets found in a private residence. The shipment had reportedly been imported from Bangladesh and had been addressed to a fictitious pharmacy in Tegucigalpa.

387. In 2008, El Salvador reported the seizure of 157,926 tablets, 219,065 capsules, 11,620 bottles and 1,078 envelopes containing pseudoephedrine, as well as the seizure of 3 kg of ephedrine. In the same year, the Dominican Republic seized 14 kg of pseudoephedrine and almost 1 million tablets of pharmaceutical preparations containing that substance, while Belize reported having seized more than 10 million such tablets.

5. Abuse and treatment

388. In Guatemala, the drug most commonly abused is cannabis, followed by cocaine and psychotropic substances. During 2008, Guatemalan authorities registered an increase in the use of heroin and cocaine. The number of Guatemalan nationals deported from Mexico and the United States has increased considerably over the past five years, and the drug abuse problem among that returning population is contributing to an increase in drug abuse in Guatemala. The increase in heroin abuse in particular is attributed to those returning migrants.

389. In 2008, a total of 3,500 people in Guatemala received treatment for drug abuse. Most of the patients were treated for cocaine addiction. The average age of the patients was 22.

390. In 2008, the Government of El Salvador conducted its second national survey on drug abuse prevalence among primary and secondary school students in cities with a population of more than 30,000. The preliminary results of the survey showed that the lifetime prevalence rate of cannabis abuse among persons aged 13-17 was 5.5 per cent. The second most abused drug type was the benzodiazepines

group (prevalence rate: 2.8 per cent), followed by inhalants (2.7 per cent).

391. In 2008, the Anti-Drugs Foundation of El Salvador (FUNDASALVA) treated 263 patients for drug abuse, 60 per cent of whom were first-time patients who were treated for cannabis and cocaine abuse.

392. In 2008, the Government of Honduras estimated the annual prevalence rate for the abuse of drugs among persons aged 13-25 in that country's Central District to be 1.1 per cent for cannabis abuse, 1 per cent for cocaine abuse and 2.7 per cent for the abuse of sedatives and tranquillizers.

393. There are indications that drug abuse is increasing in Nicaragua, in particular in the Atlantic region, where the increase in drug trafficking has led to increased availability of drugs. The Board invites the Government of Nicaragua to conduct an assessment of the drug abuse situation in the country and to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation.

394. The drug most commonly abused in Jamaica is cannabis, followed by cocaine. In 2008, the Government of Jamaica reported a slight increase in the abuse of those drugs. The most recent national assessment of drug abuse prevalence among the general population was carried out in 2001, and that among youth in 2006. The Board therefore encourages the Government of Jamaica to assess the extent of drug abuse in that country in order to develop a prevention strategy and prevent further increases.

395. In 2008, the Dominican Republic, with support of CICAD and the National Drug Council, conducted a drug use survey among the school population (students aged 12-18). Anxiolytics and hypnotics (mostly benzodiazepines) accounted for the highest lifetime prevalence rate (12.8 per cent). Abuse of stimulants (containing amphetamine and caffeine) accounted for the second highest lifetime prevalence rate (9.1 per cent). Forty per cent of the students who reported having abused medications containing such substances obtained the medications from their homes. The lifetime prevalence rate of cannabis abuse was estimated at 1.7 per cent and that of cocaine use at 0.8 per cent. The survey also revealed that approximately half of the students had never attended courses on drug abuse prevention. The Board invites the Government of the Dominican Republic to take

appropriate action with regard to its drug abuse prevention programmes.

North America

1. Major developments

396. The United States continues to be the world's largest market for illicit drugs and a major destination of illicit drug consignments. Except for cannabis and methamphetamine, illicit drugs are not produced domestically but are largely smuggled into the United States. Cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug. It is encouraging, however, that the abuse of cannabis and other illicit drugs among youth is declining in the United States. One matter of concern is the fact that in the United States, according to the latest national survey on drug abuse, the prevalence of abuse of prescription drugs containing controlled substances continues to be high and that such drugs are now among the most abused types of drug in the country, second only to cannabis.

397. In addition to being used as a major transit area for illicit drug consignments, Mexico is experiencing increasing problems related to the abuse of cocaine and other drugs. The level of drug-related violence in the country remains high. Between 2007 and 2008, the death toll doubled. Drug cartels, in addition to fighting each other, are violently resisting efforts of the Government to counter drug trafficking and organized crime. Anti-corruption measures and large-scale law enforcement operations in Mexico that include the deployment of military troops have resulted in the disruption of drug trafficking operations throughout North America and the arrest of a number of high-level drug traffickers. The Board recognizes the vigorous measures taken by the Government of Mexico to combat illicit drug production and trafficking.

398. Canada remains one of the primary countries supplying MDMA ("ecstasy") to illicit markets in North America and in other regions; it is also a source country of high-potency cannabis. One positive development is the decline in the abuse of drugs, in particular the abuse of cannabis, among adults and youth in Canada.

399. Organized criminal groups have maintained and expanded their control over drug trafficking operations in North America; that represents a major challenge to

the countries in the region. Drug trafficking organizations based in Mexico predominate in illicit drug production, trafficking and distribution in North America. They have expanded their control to cover the entire supply chain for illicit drugs, shipping illicit drugs from South America and distributing them in the United States. They are particularly involved in the smuggling and distribution of cocaine and heroin and the illicit cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis. In addition, organized criminal groups are engaged in the illicit cultivation of opium poppy and, albeit to a diminishing extent, the manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine. Drug trafficking organizations based in Canada are involved in the illicit production of and trafficking in high-potency cannabis and the manufacture of methamphetamine for the illicit markets in Canada and the United States. Violent gangs affiliated with drug trafficking organizations are largely in control of the distribution of illicit drugs at the street level in the United States and are increasing their position in the distribution of illicit drugs at the wholesale level.

400. While the consumption and cultivation of cannabis, except for scientific purposes, are illegal activities according to federal law in the United States, several states have enacted laws that provide for the "medical use" of cannabis.⁴¹ The control measures applied in those states for the cultivation of cannabis plants and the production, distribution and use of cannabis fall short of the control requirements laid down in the 1961 Convention. The Board is deeply concerned that those insufficient control provisions have contributed substantially to the increase in illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis in the United States. In addition, that development sends a wrong message to other countries. The Board welcomes the reaffirmation by the Government of the United States that cannabis continues to be considered a dangerous drug. The Government has also underscored that it is the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration to approve all medicines in the United States. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government, following new guidelines on prosecution, which stipulate that activities should not focus on individuals who comply with "medical" cannabis regulations in states, has confirmed that it has no intention to legalize

⁴¹ *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008 ...*, para. 432.

cannabis. The Board is concerned over the ongoing discussion in several states on legalizing and taxing the “recreational” use of cannabis, which would be a serious contravention of the 1961 Convention. The Board emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the Government of the United States to fully implement the provisions of the 1961 Convention with respect to all narcotic drugs, including cannabis (see paragraphs 61-64 above).

2. Regional cooperation

401. Cooperation efforts at the regional level to counter drug trafficking and related forms of organized crime have intensified. The Merida Initiative, a multi-year security cooperation programme involving Mexico, the United States and countries in Central America, is a major element in those cooperation efforts. In the short term, the Merida Initiative is to provide training and equipment to increase law enforcement capabilities. The long-term aim is to enhance the capacity of the judicial systems to carry out investigations and prosecutions through technical assistance. Within the framework of the initiative, the United States considerably increased its funding to Mexico, from US\$ 400 million in 2008 to US\$ 720 million in 2009 (an additional US\$ 65 million in 2008 and US\$ 110 million in 2009 were appropriated for Central America within the framework of the initiative). A letter of agreement between Mexico and the United States on implementing the first phase of the initiative was signed in December 2008. The first Merida Initiative projects included the establishment of a document analysis and verification laboratory, the funding of a bilateral conference to address arms trafficking and training for new correctional officers and federal police investigators. The issue of combating drug trafficking was a major point of discussion at a meeting between the Governments of Mexico and the United States held in April 2009.

402. At the forty-fifth regular session of CICAD, held in Washington, D.C., in May 2009, the discussion focused on the control of precursors, the progress made in the implementation of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere and the reinforcement of systems for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers. The CICAD Expert Group on Demand Reduction aims to link the scope and quality of treatment services with the general health-care system. Through its

Inter-American Observatory on Drugs, CICAD also supports countries in improving the collection and analysis of drug-related data.

403. In Operation All Inclusive 2008, an attempt was made to disrupt the flow of illicit drugs, money and precursor chemicals from South America through the transit zone into the United States. The investigative operation provided United States inter-agency analytical support to seven countries, resulting in considerable seizures of cocaine, cannabis and heroin and the arrest of nearly 1,300 persons, including several high-level drug traffickers. The operation resulted in the first seizure of a self-propelled semi-submersible vessel involved in drug trafficking; the seizure was effected by the Mexican Navy off the Pacific coast of Mexico in July 2008.

404. Cooperation between Canada and the United States continued through mechanisms such as the Cross-Border Crime Forum, which brings together senior law enforcement and justice officials. The cooperation involved joint operations, the exchange of intelligence and joint training activities. In 2008, representatives of Canada and the United States opened negotiations concerning a bilateral ship-rider agreement, which is intended to allow the exchange of ship-riders and improve maritime law enforcement operations along the maritime border. The highway enforcement programme in the United States expanded in 2008 to include coordinated operations involving Canadian and United States police forces along major corridors used for illicit drug transportation.

405. At the seventh Binational Drug Demand Reduction Conference: Unifying Efforts toward Best Practices, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in July 2008, participants from Mexico and the United States discussed measures to reduce illicit drug demand and promote best practices in the prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

406. In August 2009, the Governments of Colombia and Mexico agreed to strengthen their cooperation in combating drug trafficking. In accordance with the agreement, Colombian police forces will provide training to Mexican law enforcement officers on tactics for countering organized crime.

3. National legislation, policy and action

407. In Mexico, measures to fight corruption continue to be taken. In 2008, the Government launched Operación Limpieza, aimed at preventing corruption in law enforcement agencies responsible for combating drug trafficking. A number of Government officials, including high-level officials from the special unit for organized crime of the Attorney-General's Office, have been arrested for passing on information to drug cartels. In 2008, the Government introduced legislation to reorganize security forces and improve coordination of the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in combating drug cartels and other organized criminal groups. The law established a national public safety council to support law enforcement institutions and evaluate the effectiveness of public safety programmes, as well as a national intelligence centre. Information exchange is facilitated through a case management system, which connects the databases of different agencies (Plataforma Mexico). Data-sharing agreements with all 31 states are currently in place. The Government has made proposals for reforming the judicial sector with a view to making it more expeditious and transparent. The proposals include provisions to introduce oral trials,⁴² plea-bargaining and alternative case resolution methods. The judicial reform is currently in the process of being discussed at the state level and is being implemented in some states.

408. In 2009, the Government of Mexico enacted legislation, according to which persons found to be in possession of a specified quantity of certain illicit drugs for personal and immediate consumption will no longer face criminal prosecution. The maximum quantities for the main illicit drugs are 2 grams of opium, 50 milligrams of heroin, 5 grams of cannabis and 500 milligrams of cocaine. The legislative measure is aimed at regularizing a legal practice. In addition, persons detained with quantities of illicit drugs below the limit for personal use will be encouraged to seek treatment; in the case of persons detained for a third time, treatment is mandatory. The Board is concerned that this legal act may give the wrong signal. The Board would like to remind the Government that

⁴² Within its civil-law system, Mexico, like most States in Latin America, has traditionally maintained the practice of written trials, both in civil and criminal matters. Oral trials correspond to adversarial jury trials provided for in countries with a common-law system tradition.

article 3, paragraph 2, of the 1988 Convention requires each party to that Convention to establish as a criminal offence under its domestic law, when committed intentionally, the possession, purchase or cultivation of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for personal consumption contrary to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol or the 1971 Convention.

409. Its national border with Mexico being a major point of entry for illicit drugs, the Government of the United States updated and expanded the National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy in 2009. The strategy is aimed at reducing the flow of illicit drugs, drug proceeds and illegal weapons by enhancing drug control capabilities, with a view to facilitating the prosecution of cases involving drug trafficking and disrupting the operations of drug trafficking organizations.

410. In the United States, 38 states had prescription drug monitoring programmes in 2008, compared with 15 states in 2001. The programmes monitor drug prescriptions with a view to preventing the diversion and abuse of prescription drugs. A prototype for a paperless prescription drug monitoring programme is currently being developed; it is to link physicians, pharmacists and patients in the process of prescribing and dispensing controlled substances.

411. In the United States, action has been taken to counter the widespread sale of prescription drugs through illegal Internet pharmacies. In September 2008, the United States Congress passed the Ryan Haight Online Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act of 2008, prohibiting the delivery, distribution or dispensing of prescription drugs over the Internet without a valid prescription. In order to obtain a prescription, at least one in-person medical evaluation of a patient by a practitioner is required. DEA is targeting the infrastructure of organizations that are engaged in drug trafficking and that use electronic media to divert drugs. The Internet Distributor Initiative of DEA is aimed at cutting supply lines from distributors to pharmacies where large-scale diversion appears to be occurring. The Board notes with satisfaction that measures targeting the illegal sale of prescription drugs through the Internet have been taken.

412. In the United States, Oregon, in an attempt to enhance the downward trend in methamphetamine

abuse, has passed state legislation making it illegal to purchase a product containing pseudoephedrine without a prescription. Other states are considering introducing such legislation. In September 2008, the Methamphetamine Production Prevention Act of 2008 was passed by the United States Congress, expanding logbook requirements for sellers and purchasers of precursors of methamphetamine.

413. In order to counteract the increasing use of self-propelled semi-submersible vessels to smuggle cocaine (see paragraph 420 below), the Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008 was signed into law by the President of the United States in October 2008. The act provides for the imposition of a fine or a prison term for operating or boarding a stateless submersible (or semi-submersible) vessel on an international voyage with the intent to evade detection; thus, the act allows for prosecution even when no illicit drugs are seized.

414. The Government of Canada continued to implement its National Anti-Drug Strategy, which consists of action plans to improve law enforcement, the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment of drug abusers. Law enforcement measures are aimed at reducing the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, the illicit cultivation of cannabis, drug trafficking and the cross-border movement of precursor chemicals by, for example, building the capacities of police, investigation and prosecution units and enhancing border control. The action plan on drug abuse prevention includes a national awareness-raising campaign involving mass media, youth, their parents and community-based projects on drug abuse prevention. Within the framework of the strategy, the Government has allocated the equivalent of US\$ 94 million to law enforcement (over a five-year period), US\$ 28 million to drug abuse prevention and US\$ 93 million to the treatment of drug abusers. The Board notes with appreciation the measures taken by the Government of Canada, in particular those aimed at reducing illicit drug manufacture and trafficking, and the action plans on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

415. Canada continues to be one of the few countries in the world that allows cannabis to be prescribed by doctors to patients with certain serious illnesses. In 2008, nearly 2,900 patients were authorized to possess cannabis for medical purposes. Until 2009, cannabis could be either obtained from a Government supplier

or grown in small amounts by the patient, or a person designated by the patient, with the sole limitation that only one patient could be supplied by a licensed supplier. In 2009, following court decisions stipulating that that approach unjustifiably restricted the patient's access to cannabis used for medical purposes, the Government increased the number of cultivation licences a person could hold from one to two. The Government intends to reassess the programme for controlling medical access to cannabis. According to article 23 of the 1961 Convention, a party to the Convention, if it is to allow the licit cultivation of cannabis, must fulfil specific requirements, including the establishment of a national cannabis agency to which all cannabis growers must deliver their crops (see paragraphs 61-64 above).⁴³ The Board therefore requests the Government to respect the provisions of article 23.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

Narcotic drugs

416. The illicit cultivation of cannabis appears to be rising in the United States. It is estimated that the total quantity of cannabis illicitly produced in the United States may exceed the total quantity of cannabis in the country that had been illicitly produced elsewhere. In 2008, the total quantity of eradicated cannabis plants increased by about 14 per cent: over 7,562,300 of the plants had been grown outdoors and nearly 451,000 had been grown indoors. Until recently, much of the illicit cannabis in the United States was from Mexico, and smaller quantities of cannabis with a higher potency were smuggled into the United States out of Canada. In recent years, however, drug trafficking organizations have expanded their illicit cannabis cultivation operations in the United States, thus avoiding risky border crossings and keeping production sites closer to the market. Drug trafficking organizations based in Mexico have expanded their illicit cannabis cultivation sites on public lands, whereas criminal organizations based in Canada have set up operations for growing cannabis indoors, mainly in the north-western part of the United States, and are expanding their operations to include other geographical areas.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, para. 431.

417. The potency of samples of cannabis seized in the United States continued to increase; the average THC content of seized cannabis exceeded 10 per cent in 2008, the highest level ever recorded in that country. That increase was mainly attributed to the use of technologically advanced methods to maximize the THC level of cannabis grown indoors in Canada and the United States. The potency of the cannabis seized at the south-west border of the United States, which has traditionally been low, has increased: the highest concentration of THC found among the 1,500 samples of seized cannabis was 27.3 per cent, and in 40 per cent of the samples the THC level was higher than 9 per cent.

418. While in 2007 more cannabis herb was seized in Mexico than in any other country in the world, the Government reported having seized less cannabis herb in 2008. Illicit cannabis production in Mexico declined to 22,275 tons in 2008, most of which was destined for the United States. The total area of illicitly cultivated cannabis eradicated in Mexico dropped from 21,357 ha in 2007 to 18,562 ha in 2008. Notwithstanding those declining figures, the quantity of cannabis seized along the south-west border of the United States in 2008 indicated a sustained flow of cannabis from Mexico.

419. Canada only supplies a small proportion of the total quantity of illicit cannabis used in the United States. British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec remain the primary areas of cannabis production in Canada. It is estimated that 37 tons of cannabis were seized in Canada in 2008. Law enforcement authorities reported an increasing number of operations for growing cannabis in rural communities and remote areas in the country.

420. The quantity of cocaine intercepted en route to the United States increased slightly to 209 tons in 2007. As a result of those seizures, coca bush eradication efforts in Colombia and increased pressure on drug cartels in Mexico, cocaine continued to be less available in some parts of the United States. In 2008, the total quantity of cocaine seized in the United States decreased by almost one half, from 97 to 50 tons, the lowest level since 1999, reflecting a decline in cocaine trafficking. The decline in cocaine trafficking in North America, the world's largest illicit market for cocaine, was also reflected in rapidly rising prices and falling purity levels. Mexican law enforcement authorities reported having seized 60 per cent less cocaine in 2008

than in 2007. Nevertheless, the estimated quantity of cocaine shipped from South America to the United States has remained significant. United States authorities have estimated that 545-707 tons of cocaine departed from South America for the United States in 2007, a figure slightly higher than the one for 2006. Of the cocaine shipments that are detected, approximately 90 per cent were being transported through the Mexican and Central American corridor, mainly through the eastern Pacific route. Illicit drug consignments are being transported by sea using speedboats, fishing vessels and, increasingly, self-propelled semi-submersible vessels.

421. Mexico's role as a transit country for cocaine destined for Canada has increased. Cocaine consignments are being transported by land (from Mexico to the United States and Canada through the highway corridor), by sea and by air.

422. Most of the heroin found on the illicit market in the United States originated in Colombia and Mexico. The Government of Mexico reported having eradicated 13,095 ha of opium poppy in 2008, an increase over the figure for 2007 (11,046 ha). Drug trafficking organizations selling "black tar" and "brown powder" heroin have expanded the distribution of those forms of heroin in what have traditionally been markets for "white heroin" in the eastern part of the United States, partly as a result of decreasing heroin manufacture in Colombia.

423. In Canada, the illicit heroin market is dominated by South-West Asian heroin. In 2008, 70 per cent of the heroin found on the illicit market in Canada originated in South-West Asia; it had been smuggled into the country mainly by air via India and Pakistan with the help of organized criminal groups in British Columbia and Ontario.

424. Internet pharmacies continue to be the main channel used for the illicit distribution of pharmaceutical preparations in the United States. However, authorities have reported that the number of Internet pharmacies decreased in 2008, owing to increased efforts by law enforcement agencies. The total number of Internet pharmacies offering controlled prescription drugs for sale (anchor sites) dropped by 15 per cent, from 187 in 2007 to 159 in 2008; almost all of them were operating illegally. In addition, according to law enforcement authorities, street and motorcycle gangs are becoming increasingly involved

in the retail-level distribution of diverted prescription drugs.

Psychotropic substances

425. In the United States, the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine decreased following the introduction of regulations to increase domestic control over the sale, at the retail level, of pharmaceutical preparations containing precursors of methamphetamine. The number of methamphetamine laboratories dismantled in the United States dropped by more than 70 per cent from 2004 to 2008. In Mexico, new control measures, including a ban on the import of medicines containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine and the prohibition of the use of those substances, contributed to a significant decrease in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine and a reduction in the quantity of methamphetamine smuggled into the United States in 2007 and 2008. However, data on seizures of methamphetamine in the United States suggest that illicit methamphetamine manufacture in that country is increasing in some areas. On the one hand, that development is attributable to a resumption of small-scale methamphetamine manufacture in response to the reduced supply of methamphetamine from Mexico. On the other hand, some drug trafficking organizations have shifted their methamphetamine manufacturing operations from Mexico to certain areas of the United States, particularly California. In order to obtain the required precursors, individuals and criminal groups are increasingly circumventing state and federal restrictions on the sale of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine in the United States; for example by making numerous small-quantity purchases from multiple retail outlets (“smurfing”) or paying individuals to carry out purchases on their behalf.

426. In Mexico, 21 laboratories illicitly manufacturing methamphetamine were seized in 2008; 5 of those laboratories had been manufacturing methamphetamine on a large scale (compared with 14 in 2007). Those figures reflect the fact that, in that country, the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine decreased and the precursors of methamphetamine became less available following the introduction of control measures by the Government.

427. Canada continues to be the primary source of MDMA (“ecstasy”) found on the illicit market in the United States and a major supplier of the growing

illicit markets for the substances in other parts of the world, in particular in Asia and the Pacific. Drug trafficking organizations manufacture “ecstasy” in large clandestine laboratories in Canada for distribution in the United States. One matter of particular concern is the increasing distribution of “ecstasy” tablets adulterated with other addictive drugs, particularly methamphetamine. According to law enforcement authorities, the number of “ecstasy” laboratories reported to have been seized in Canada in 2007 was 18, a figure equal to the highest number of such seizures ever recorded. All of the “ecstasy” laboratories seized were “super labs”, laboratories capable of manufacturing at least 5 kg of “ecstasy” in one manufacturing cycle. The quantity of Canadian “ecstasy” seized in the United States at the Canadian border increased by more than 10-fold from 2003 to 2007. Most of the seizures of “ecstasy” occurred in Washington, a state adjacent to British Columbia, where most of the “ecstasy” in Canada is manufactured.

Precursors

428. While the measures to control precursors of methamphetamine in Mexico have led to a decrease in the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine, drug trafficking organizations have reacted in two ways: by shifting their operations to other countries, such as the United States and countries in Central and South America, and by smuggling into Mexico diverted precursor chemicals, including chemicals from Central and South America.⁴⁴ In 2008, the multilateral initiative Operation Ice Block revealed that almost half of the suspicious shipments of precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants identified during the operation were destined for Mexico.

429. In Canada, the high level of illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants is fuelled by the acquisition of bulk quantities of precursor chemicals by organized criminal groups.

⁴⁴ *International Narcotics Control Board, Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008 on the Implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XI.4), para. 49.

Substances not under international control

430. In the United States, ketamine continues to be among the active ingredients found in adulterated MDMA (“ecstasy”) tablets. The distribution of such tablets originating in Canada appears to be increasing.

431. In Canada, approximately 23 tons of khat were seized in 2008, less than the quantity seized in 2007. The majority of the seized khat shipments had arrived by courier package or had been concealed in air cargo. In Canada, the demand for khat is concentrated in urban centres with large East African communities.

5. Abuse and treatment

432. In 2008, an estimated 35.5 million persons in the United States, or 14.2 per cent of the population aged 12 or older, had used illicit drugs (annual prevalence). Thus, the overall declining trend in illicit drug use continued. That trend is also substantiated by results of workforce drug testing. In general, the drug test results indicate the lowest levels of drug abuse in the United States workforce since 1988. About 20.1 million persons, or 8.0 per cent of the population aged 12 or older, are “current users” — that is, they have abused illicit drugs in the past month.

433. The decline in the abuse of drugs, particularly cannabis, among youth in the United States is an encouraging sign. The use of illicit drugs among students aged 13-18 declined significantly during the period 1997-2008, according to the 2008 survey “Monitoring the Future”. Annual prevalence fell by 27 per cent: every fourth student reported having used illicit drugs in the previous year. The abuse of cannabis dropped by 29 per cent in the period 1997-2008, reaching an annual prevalence of 21.5 per cent. Even greater declines were recorded in the abuse of cocaine (-36 per cent), methamphetamine (-68 per cent) and MDMA (-52 per cent) compared with their respective peak levels during that period; the abuse of those drugs continued to fall in 2008. That indicates reduced drug abuse and its initiation during a critical age period. However, the abuse of OxyContin (annual prevalence: 3.4 per cent), a product containing oxycodone, and Vicodin (annual prevalence: 6.1 per cent),⁴⁵ a product

containing hydrocodone, remained close to the peak levels.

434. In the United States, cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug: 25.8 million persons (or 10.3 per cent of the population aged 12 or older) abused cannabis in 2008, slightly more than in 2007.

435. In 2008, past-year prevalence of the abuse of cocaine (including “crack”) among the United States population aged 12 and older was 2.1 per cent: 5.3 million cocaine abusers (compared with 5.7 million in 2007). The proportion of persons who tested positive for cocaine in workplace drug tests declined by 38 per cent from 2006 to 2008.

436. In the United States, heroin abuse is stable at a relatively low level, annual prevalence amounting to 0.2 per cent in 2008. Past-year heroin abuse among youth has remained at 0.8 per cent for some years, according to the annual survey “Monitoring the Future”. However, heroin abuse levels may increase, as more abusers of prescription drugs containing opiates are switching to heroin.

437. In 2008, the abuse of methamphetamine in the United States declined further: 0.3 per cent of the population were past-year abusers (compared with 0.5 per cent in 2007). The proportion of persons who tested positive for the abuse of methamphetamine dropped by about 50 per cent from 2006 to 2008. There has been a steady decline in the abuse of methamphetamine among all age groups in recent years.

438. In the United States, the number of persons who have abused prescription drugs declined for the second consecutive year. In 2008, about 15.2 million persons (or 6.1 per cent of the population aged 12 or above) reported having abused prescription drugs in the previous year; in 2007, the number was 16.3 million. About 6.2 million of those who abused prescription drugs in the past year were “current users”: persons abusing such drugs in the past month. Most of those who abused prescription drugs in the past year were abusers of pain relievers: they numbered 11.9 million in 2008, compared with 12.5 million in 2007. Notwithstanding those declines, the number of persons abusing prescription drugs remains greater than the total number of persons abusing cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens and/or inhalants. Prescription drugs are the second most abused category of drugs, surpassed

⁴⁵ Trade names are used in this particular case, since the survey “Monitoring the Future” collects and reports prevalence data for those specific preparations.

only by cannabis. Young adults (persons 18-25 years old) have by far the highest rate of abuse of prescription drugs, more than twice the level of abuse among youth (persons 12-17 years old) and more than three times the level of abuse among adults (persons aged 26 or older).

439. One matter of concern in the United States is that the number of first-time abusers of prescription drugs continues to be high. In 2008, 2.5 million people aged 12 or above reported having abused prescription drugs for the first time, over 300,000 more than the number of first-time cannabis abusers.

440. In the United States, the increase in the number of deaths due to overdose is to a significant extent related to the abuse of prescription drugs, in particular the abuse of opioid pain relievers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone, morphine and fentanyl. The number of deaths involving prescription opioids increased by two thirds from 2001 to 2005, reaching 5,789 in 2005.

441. According to the Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey, which was newly introduced in 2008, the abuse of illicit drugs (including cannabis, cocaine, “crack”, methamphetamine, hallucinogens, MDMA (“ecstasy”) and heroin) among members of the population aged 15 and older declined significantly from 2004 to 2008. In 2008, 12.1 per cent of the population reported having abused illicit drugs in the previous 12 months (compared with 14.5 per cent in 2004). That development is attributable to a reduction in the abuse of cannabis (from 14.1 per cent in 2004 to 11.4 per cent in 2008) and cocaine and “crack” (from 1.9 to 1.6 per cent). By contrast, the levels of abuse of other drugs increased during the same period; for instance, the abuse of “ecstasy” increased from 1.1 to 1.4 per cent. In 2008, the abuse of illicit drugs was higher among men (15.3 per cent) than among women (9.1 per cent). The past-year use of prescription drugs, mainly opioid pain relievers but also stimulants and sedatives, was reported by 28.4 per cent of the population; however, only 0.6 per cent of the population (2.0 per cent of drug abusers) reported the non-therapeutic abuse of those preparations, stating that they would take prescription drugs “to get high”.

442. In Canada, past-year abuse of illicit drugs among youth (persons 15-24 years old) decreased from 37.9 per cent in 2004 to 34.0 per cent in 2008, but remains significantly higher than illicit drug abuse

among the adult population (persons 25 years old or older) (7.9 per cent in 2008). Past-year abuse of cannabis among youth declined from 37.0 to 32.7 per cent. The average age of initiation of cannabis abuse among youth remained stable at 15.5 years in 2008.

443. In Mexico, a national household survey conducted in 2008 showed a significant increase in cocaine abuse in the period 2002-2008: the lifetime prevalence rate almost doubled, reaching 2.4 per cent of the population aged 12-65. Lifetime prevalence of cannabis abuse increased from 3.5 to 4.2 per cent. In 2008, methamphetamine and inhalants were among the most commonly abused drugs in Mexico, second only to cannabis and cocaine. Drug abuse, which used to be limited to certain areas of Mexico, appears to be spreading throughout the country. That may in part be attributed to the spillover effect of drug trafficking, as well as to attempts by drug trafficking organizations to create local markets.

444. In Mexico, most drug-related deaths in 2008 were attributed to the abuse of cocaine (236 deaths). The Government reported a sharp increase in the abuse of cocaine, particularly “crack”, and methamphetamine in 2008. The abuse of sedatives and tranquilizers, in particular benzodiazepines, was stable. In 2008, the number of problematic drug abusers reached 428,819 (0.6 per cent of the population aged 12-65). The prevalence of drug abuse increased more sharply among women than among men.

445. In the United States, most treatment related to drug abuse in 2008 was received for cannabis abuse (947,000 persons aged 12 and older), followed by cocaine abuse (663,000). The proportion of persons admitted for treatment of cannabis abuse continued to increase. In addition, the number of persons admitted for treatment for the abuse of pain relievers increased significantly (to 601,000 persons compared with 360,000 in 2002). The number of persons admitted for heroin addiction (341,000 in 2008) may increase, according to the *National Drug Threat Assessment 2009*,⁴⁶ as more abusers of prescription opiates are switching to heroin, mainly because heroin is cheaper and easier to obtain. According to facilities for the

⁴⁶ United States of America, Department of Justice, National Drug Intelligence Center, *National Drug Threat Assessment 2009* (Johnstown, Pennsylvania, December 2008).

treatment of drug abuse, once a person switches from prescription opiates to heroin, it is unlikely that the person will switch back to abusing prescription opiates only. In some areas, the switching from prescription opiates to heroin led to an increase in heroin abusers seeking treatment in 2008.

446. Drug treatment courts have experienced significant growth in the United States. Their main objective is to divert non-violent, substance-abusing offenders from imprisonment into treatment with increased supervision, thus breaking the cycle of criminal behaviour and improving treatment outcome. In 2008, about 2,300 drug treatment courts, some for adults and others for juveniles, were operating nationwide. New drug treatment courts, including drug treatment courts targeting particular groups such as veterans, are being developed.

447. As part of the National Anti-Drug Strategy (see paragraph 414 above), the Government of Canada has created a programme to ensure funding to enable provincial governments to strengthen systems for the treatment of drug abuse. The Government has also initiated projects to improve the access of First Nations and Inuit families, in particular youth, to treatment for drug abuse. Drug treatment courts are operating in six cities in Canada; they deal only with cases involving non-violent accused persons whose criminal activity is driven by addiction. A judge may suspend the imposition of a sentence to allow the addicted person to undergo treatment under certain conditions.

448. In Mexico, most persons admitted for treatment for drug abuse are addicted to cocaine or methamphetamine. Although the number of persons seeking help for drug problems has risen, only one third of drug addicts actually receive treatment. The Government is attempting to expand the drug abuse treatment capacity in order to cope with the increasing demand for such treatment. A pilot programme involving drug treatment courts has been introduced in the State of Nuevo León with a view to developing procedures and instruments to replace penal procedures.

449. The strategy developed by the Government of Mexico for reducing illicit drug demand has enhanced the infrastructure for treatment. One of the core elements is the network of Nueva Vida centres, which provides treatment services for different groups of drug abusers in the country's main municipalities, in

cooperation with civil society organizations. Demand reduction initiatives also include a project for the development of the national network for technology transfer to combat addictions (RENADIC) — a platform for the exchange of medical information and education in cooperation with the United States.

South America

1. Major developments

450. South America continues to be the sole source of illicitly manufactured cocaine, which is smuggled primarily into North America and Europe. In 2008, potential manufacture of cocaine in South America was 845 tons, 15 per cent lower than potential manufacture in 2007 and the lowest since 2003. That significant decline in potential manufacture can, to a large extent, be attributed to a significant decrease in the total area under coca bush cultivation in Colombia in 2008. In Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru, the area under illicit coca bush cultivation increased for the third consecutive year. The Board, concerned about the continued increase in the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru, urges the Governments of both countries to take appropriate measures to reverse the trend.

451. In addition to the illicit production and smuggling of cannabis, cocaine and heroin, trafficking organizations in South America appear to be expanding into areas of illicit activity not previously associated with drug problems in the region. In recent years, the Board has noted an increase in attempts in the region to divert precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular ephedrine and pseudoephedrine (including in the form of pharmaceutical preparations). Governments of several countries in South America responded to the emerging trafficking trends by strengthening at the national-level measures to control ephedrines. Nevertheless, the smuggling of ephedrines, in particular into Mexico, continued. Moreover, in 2008, the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs emerged in the subregion, as evidenced by the laboratories illicitly manufacturing MDMA (“ecstasy”) and methamphetamine that were dismantled in Argentina and Brazil. The Board urges the Governments of the countries in the region to remain vigilant with regard to the diversion of precursors of amphetamine-type

stimulants, including in the form of pharmaceutical preparations.

452. The abuse of illicit drugs in several countries in South America, has continued to increase — a spillover effect of drug trafficking in the region. According to UNODC, nearly 1 million people in the region are treated annually for the abuse of illicit drugs. The demand for treatment for the abuse of cannabis has increased significantly in the region in the past few years. Using strategies ensuring a balance between reducing illicit drug supply and demand to tackle illicit drug problems is a widely recognized approach in the region. The Board notes, however, that in some countries demand-reduction activities, including education, prevention and rehabilitation programmes, remain underdeveloped. In 2009, the Organization of American States (OAS), through CICAD, began a review of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere (adopted in 1996), so that new developments in the area of drug control could be taken into account. It is anticipated that the new drug control strategy for the Americas will focus on the reduction of drug demand in the region.

453. The Board notes with concern that in countries in South America, such as Argentina, Brazil and Colombia (and in countries in North America, such as Mexico and the United States), there is a growing movement to decriminalize the possession of controlled drugs, in particular cannabis, for personal use. Regrettably, influential personalities, including former high-level politicians in countries in South America, have publicly expressed their support for that movement. The Board is concerned that the movement, if not resolutely countered by the respective Governments, will undermine national and international efforts to combat the abuse of and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. In any case, the movement poses a threat to the coherence and effectiveness of the international drug control system and sends the wrong message to the general public.

2. Regional cooperation

454. At the forty-fourth regular session of CICAD, held in Santiago from 19 to 21 November 2008, participants reported on achievements and current challenges in drug control, including policymaking in the area of treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers. At the session, experts on chemical substances

and pharmaceutical products discussed problems related to the growing number of imports of chemical substances in amounts exceeding legitimate requirements.

455. In 2007, the European Commission and OAS launched the European Union/Latin American and the Caribbean Drug Treatment City Partnership initiative, which paired cities in Europe with cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, forming partnerships to improve the treatment and rehabilitation of problem drug abusers and address other aspects of drug dependency at the municipal level. Under the initiative, a number of activities were organized in South American countries in 2008 and 2009. For example, representatives of participating cities attended a forum on local assessments and information systems in the treatment of drug abuse, held in Montevideo from 4 to 6 December 2008. The objective of the forum was to facilitate the exchange of experiences, from the perspective of municipalities, on demand for, and availability of, treatment services for drug abusers.

456. On 22 December 2008, Brazil and the European Union adopted a joint action plan at the second Brazil/European Union summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The action plan for the control of illicit drugs and drug-related crime recognizes the principle of shared responsibility and the need for an approach ensuring a balance between reducing the supply of and reducing the demand for illicit drugs, and promotes bilateral cooperation to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.

457. The project financed by the European Commission and UNODC for cooperation among national security offices to counter the smuggling of cocaine from South America through West Africa into Europe has the participation of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and, in West Africa, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Togo. At a training seminar held in Bogota in January 2009 as part of that project, police officers from 16 countries exchanged information on the smuggling of cocaine through West Africa to Europe with a view to optimizing drug law enforcement operations in those countries.

458. Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador and Peru participated in the activities of the project for support for the Andean Community in the

area of synthetic drugs (DROSICAN) launched in July 2008. The project, financed by the European Commission, supports institutions that focus on development, the control of synthetic drugs and the reduction of demand for those drugs in the Andean subregion. The project includes the establishment of a reference drug laboratory in Colombia to provide support for all countries in the subregion in the area of synthetic drugs. The heads of the drug control agencies of States members of the Andean Community reviewed the operational plan of the project for 2009 at the coordination meeting of the project held in Bogota in February 2009.

459. CICAD and the Government of Spain launched Health and Life in the Americas (SAVIA), a programme for the period 2008-2010 that provides direct support to local demand-reduction initiatives in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). At a workshop on the quality of local policies to reduce consumption of drugs in Latin America, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 27 April to 1 May 2009, experts from the above-mentioned countries, as well as Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Spain, shared experiences in the decentralization of drug control policies in their countries and the implementation of programmes for the prevention of drug abuse.

460. The Eleventh High-Level Specialized Dialogue on Drugs between the Andean Community and the European Union was held in Quito in May 2009. Participants from 60 countries adopted the Quito Declaration, in which they reaffirmed the importance of cooperation in combating illicit drugs including in the areas of alternative development and preventive alternative development.

461. Drug-testing laboratories in countries in Latin America are participating in the international collaborative exercise, a component of the UNODC international quality assurance programme, which monitors the performance and capacities of forensic laboratories worldwide and provides tailored technical support and assistance. In March 2009, UNODC initiated a national collaborative exercise involving 35 drug-testing laboratories in Brazil.

462. In March 2009, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), together with Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago, joined a

new project, co-financed by the European Commission, for the prevention of the diversion of drug precursors in Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC). That three-year project, which partly builds on the achievements of the completed project to counter the diversion of drug precursors in the region (PRECAN), will focus on preventing the diversion of precursors in Latin America and the Caribbean.

463. The Board notes that in 2009, the Governments of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) participated in Operation PILA, which focused on monitoring trade in precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants. In addition, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) participated in the second phase of Operation Dice, targeting trade in and diversion of acetic anhydride, the key precursor used in the illicit manufacture of heroin.

3. National legislation, policy and action

464. In December 2008, the Government of Argentina promulgated Decree No. 2094/2008, establishing the Interjurisdictional Committee of the National Register of Precursor Chemicals. The Board notes that a draft law on medicines banning the sale of pharmaceutical products through the Internet was submitted to the Congress of Argentina for approval.

465. Following the approval of the new constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in January 2009,⁴⁷ the Bolivian Government notified the Secretary-General of its request to amend article 49 of the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, concerning the abolishment of coca leaf chewing.

466. In 2009, the Bolivian Observatory on Drugs conducted a study on the prevalence of drug abuse among students between the ages of 13 and 18 years to assist in planning future policies for the reduction of drug demand.

467. The Board wishes to remind the Governments of all countries concerned, in particular the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, that unless any

⁴⁷ The new constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia states that the State protects the original and ancestral coca as cultural heritage, as a natural and renewable resource of Bolivia's biodiversity and as a factor of social cohesion; in its natural state, it is not a narcotic drug.

further amendments to the 1961 Convention are put into effect, the use or importation of coca leaf from which cocaine has not been extracted, for purposes other than those allowed under the 1961 Convention, constitutes a breach of obligations under the Convention (see paragraphs 156-166 above).

468. The Government of Brazil is implementing measures to prevent the counterfeiting of pharmaceutical products in that country. In 2008, the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) carried out inspections to verify the compliance of pharmacies with regulations concerning pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances. Starting in 2009, electronic tracing will be used with all medicines manufactured in Brazil. The Government of Brazil has also strengthened measures related to the dispensation and control of anorectics, which have high levels of consumption in the country.

469. In November 2008, the Government of Colombia launched the national plan for the reduction of drug consumption for the period 2009-2010. The plan, among other things, provides for the implementation of comprehensive care guidelines for use in the social security system that establish clinical standards for treatment and rehabilitation services. In January 2009, the Government published the executive summary of the 2008 national study of abuse of psychoactive substances in Colombia. The comprehensive survey is the first of its kind in more than 10 years, and the Government is committed to conducting such surveys every two years.

470. Governmental and non-governmental organizations and health-care professionals of Colombia participated in the first national conference on heroin abuse, held in Medellín on 4 and 5 December 2008. The objective of the conference was to raise awareness among health-care professionals concerning treatment, rehabilitation, prevention programmes and aftercare services for heroin abusers. In 2009, the Government of Colombia took further measures to ensure the availability of opioids for medical use in the country. Pain treatment medicine is now accessible at all times in at least one place in each state of Colombia.

471. Between August and December 2008, Argentina adopted several new regulations that significantly restricted trade in ephedrine and pseudoephedrine and their use in the manufacture of medicines. In Peru, cold

medicines containing pseudoephedrine, which had previously been sold over the counter, can now be purchased only with a medical prescription in pharmacies. The Government of Chile took further steps to enhance awareness among pharmacists and health-care professionals of the possible misuse of ephedrine in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and proposed further control measures. In July 2009, the Government of Colombia adopted resolution No. 2335, which prohibits the manufacture and import of and trading in medicinal products containing pseudoephedrine and restricts trade in and use of ephedrine.

472. In 2008, a number of countries in South America, including Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), strengthened measures to tackle money-laundering. For example, in December 2008, the National Council of Justice of Brazil, by its resolution No. 63, established the National Seized Assets System, which consolidates data on assets seized during criminal proceedings related to the prosecution of money-laundering. Further, in September 2009, the National Secretariat of Justice of Brazil organized an international seminar on extinction of property rights.

473. In November 2008, the Government of Ecuador adopted a resolution approving the regulation of the control of substances subject to control and medicines containing such substances, thus strengthening control measures on substances listed in the international drug control treaties. The new measures also apply to pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances. Preventing the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is one of the principal objectives of the national plan for the comprehensive prevention and control of drugs for the period 2009-2012 adopted by the Government of Ecuador in 2009. The Board also notes that in April 2009, following the findings of the national Institute of Public Health, the Government of Chile adopted a decree placing six synthetic cannabinoid analogues on the national list of controlled substances.

474. In 2009, the Government of Peru adopted decree No. 045-2009, which bans the sale, use and distribution of kerosene in the country by 2010. Kerosene is not controlled at the international level but is widely used for the maceration of coca leaves in laboratories illicitly manufacturing cocaine.

475. In Suriname, programmes to prevent drug abuse are incorporated into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. In 2008, a nationwide crisis helpline was established in the country to provide drug-related information and assistance to the general public. In 2008, the Ministry of Justice and Police of Suriname drafted legislation for the control of chemical substances. The Board urges the Government of Suriname to adopt that legislation without further delay.

476. In June 2009, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela approved the national drug control plan for the period 2008-2013. Under the plan, the Venezuelan authorities implemented a number of activities to combat illicit drugs, including the monitoring by satellite of areas susceptible to illicit crop cultivation. Installation of a radar system for air traffic control in the country enhanced the protection of the national airspace, as well as maritime areas, from drug traffickers. Within the framework of a national plan to combat the use of clandestine smuggling routes, in 2008 the Venezuelan law enforcement authorities destroyed more than 220 clandestine airstrips used by drug traffickers in the country. In April 2008, the Venezuelan Observatory on Drugs initiated a national study on the extent of drug abuse among the general population.

477. In Brazil, legislation in place since 2006 distinguishes between drug traffickers and drug users and established alternative sanctions for drug abuse without decriminalizing it. In 2009, the Supreme Court of Argentina, in a case involving personal use of cannabis by adult consumers, ruled that the punishment of personal use of cannabis was unconstitutional. The Board, concerned that such legal acts may impart a wrong message, would like to remind Governments that article 3, paragraph 2, of the 1988 Convention requires each party to that Convention to establish as a criminal offence under its domestic law, when committed intentionally, the possession, purchase or cultivation of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for personal consumption contrary to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, or the 1971 Convention.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

Narcotic drugs

478. According to UNODC, it is difficult to estimate with greater accuracy the magnitude of the illicit cultivation of drug crops that takes place in a number of countries. In Paraguay, one of the major producers of illicit cannabis in South America, the main methods used for detecting drug crop cultivation include aerial remote sensing and ground surveys. In January 2009, the Paraguayan authorities, in cooperation with the Government of Brazil, carried out a monitoring mission to further identify areas of cannabis cultivation in the country.

479. According to the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD) of Paraguay, illicitly cultivated cannabis plants cover an estimated area of 6,000 ha, yielding about 16,500 tons of cannabis herb. In 2008, the Paraguayan authorities eradicated more than 1,800 ha of illicitly cultivated cannabis plants.

480. Cannabis plants are also illicitly cultivated in Colombia. The cannabis plants cultivated in the department of Cauca are several times more potent than traditional varieties of cannabis plant cultivated in the country. According to the National Narcotics Directorate (DNE) of Colombia, the highly potent variety of cannabis, which contain 17-18 per cent of the active ingredient, is cultivated from seeds originating in Europe. In Chile, although authorities do not consider illicit drug production to be significant in the country, the Government is concerned about cannabis cultivated for domestic consumption in rural mountainous and coastal areas in the central part of the country.

481. In 2008, seizures of cannabis herb increased in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru and decreased in Brazil and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Bolivian authorities seized the largest total amount of cannabis herb in South America in 2008: 1,113 tons in Bolivia, a quantity about two-and-a-half times that reported for 2007. In 2008, seizures of cannabis herb larger than 100 tons were also reported in Paraguay (208 tons), Brazil (187 tons) and Argentina (108 tons). In recent years, Paraguay has been named as the source of cannabis herb seized in South America more often than other countries in the region.

482. The total area under coca bush cultivation in South America decreased in 2008 to 167,600 ha, 8 per cent less than the total area in 2007. Colombia accounted for 48.3 per cent of that total; it was followed by Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which accounted for 33.5 per cent and 18.2 per cent, respectively. Cocaine manufacture in Colombia declined by 28 per cent in 2008, a reduction that was not fully offset by the increased manufacture of cocaine in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru. As a result, the potential global cocaine manufacture decreased from 994 tons in 2007 to 845 tons in 2008.

483. Although sizeable coca bush cultivation is not found outside the three main countries of cultivation, eradication reports indicate that small-scale coca bush cultivation of an exploratory nature takes place in other countries in South America. For example, in 2008, illicit coca bush was cultivated on small plots of land in Ecuador near that country's border with Colombia.

484. In 2008, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in the Plurinational State of Bolivia increased to 30,500 ha, 6 per cent more than in 2007. The Board notes with concern that as a result of repeated small increases, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in the country doubled between 2000 and 2008. In 2008, potential manufacture of cocaine in the country increased by 9 per cent to 113 tons, accounting for 13 per cent of potential global manufacture of cocaine. In 2008, a total of 5,483 ha of coca bush were manually eradicated in the country. That total area of annual eradication is the second smallest reported since 1995.

485. The eradication of illicitly cultivated coca bush and prevention of coca bush cultivation in new areas were among the main objectives of the Peruvian national strategy to combat drugs for the period 2007-2011. In 2008, the total area under coca bush cultivation increased in Peru for the third consecutive year, amounting to 56,100 ha. The Board notes with concern that from 1999 to 2008, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in the country gradually increased by 17,400 ha, or 45 per cent. The Board calls on the Governments of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru to enhance their programmes to reduce illicit drug supply in order to address the increasing illicit cultivation of coca bush in their countries, which is apparently a result of drug traffickers' attempts to

offset the decline in the total area under coca bush cultivation in Colombia.

486. Potential illicit manufacture of cocaine in Peru increased to 302 tons in 2008, accounting for 36 per cent of potential global cocaine manufacture. In 2008, 10,143 ha of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated in Peru, slightly exceeding the goal of 10,000 ha. The forced eradication efforts were hampered by incidents of violence, including armed attacks. The Government's eradication goal for 2009 is 8,000 ha.

487. The Board urges the Governments of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru, in spite of perceived difficulties in combating illicit manufacture of and trafficking in cocaine, not to reduce their efforts in those areas and to address in a decisive manner the increasing illicit cultivation of coca bush on their territory. At the same time, the Board believes that measures to provide legitimate and sustainable alternative livelihoods, accompanied by continued law enforcement efforts to prevent the re-emergence of illicit crop cultivation, are essential to achieving a lasting reduction in the production of coca and other narcotic drugs in South America.

488. In Colombia, illicit coca bush cultivation, as well as cocaine manufacture, saw a major decline in 2008. The total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in 2008 decreased by 18 per cent to 81,000 ha, and potential manufacture of cocaine decreased by 28 per cent, or 170 tons, to 430 tons. Colombia's share of global cocaine manufacture fell to 51 per cent, the lowest in a decade. Much of the decline in the illicit manufacture of cocaine in Colombia can be attributed to the manual eradication efforts targeting areas with high-yields. In 2008, a total of 96,115 ha of illicitly cultivated coca bush were eradicated manually (an increase of 44 per cent), and an additional 133,496 ha were subject to aerial spraying.

489. According to UNODC, in 2007, for the third year in a row, the global cocaine interception rate was above the 40-per-cent benchmark. South American countries accounted for almost half of the total amount of cocaine seized worldwide in 2007.

490. In 2008, all three of the main countries producing coca leaf, as well as Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador, reported a significant increase in the quantity of cocaine seized compared with the figures for 2007. In

2008, Bolivian authorities seized 21.6 tons of cocaine paste (an increase of 45 per cent) and 7.2 tons of cocaine hydrochloride (an increase of 148 per cent). In Peru, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride doubled from 2007 to 2008, reaching 16.8 tons, the largest annual total since 2000. In Colombia, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride increased by 57 per cent to 198.4 tons. In Ecuador, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride totalled 27.2 tons, an increase of 55 per cent over 2007. Stable or declining seizures of cocaine were reported, for example, in Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Despite the large quantity of cocaine seized in South America, drug control agencies in the region emphasized the continued need for the exchange, among law enforcement and judicial authorities in South America, of real-time information in investigative and operational activities in order to further enhance the interdiction capacity of those authorities.

491. The permeable borders and long coastlines of countries in South America pose challenges to drug law enforcement authorities in the region, especially considering their limited resources. Drug trafficking by sea remains a major problem. For example, in Colombia, of a total of 198 tons of cocaine hydrochloride seized in 2008, 74.6 tons were seized on the high seas and at seaports. In particular, drug traffickers have continued using non-commercial maritime vessels (fishing vessels, fast boats and semi-submersibles). Drug traffickers have demonstrated their ingenuity by modifying the structure of fishing vessels to hide illicit drugs and the building of semi-submersibles capable of transporting 10 tons of cargo with a range of 2,500 km. Throughout South America, there has been an increase in the use of light aircraft with forged or stolen registration numbers, operating out of small, privately owned airstrips in remote areas, to transport cocaine. There has also been an increase in the use of human couriers (“mules”) and the dissolving of cocaine in liquids.

492. The drug seizures reported by the Governments of countries in South America attest to the fact that almost all countries in the region are affected by drug trafficking. Cocaine smuggled into North America typically originates in Colombia and enters the United States from Mexico after having passed through countries in South America and in Central America and the Caribbean. In 2007 and 2008, there was a decline in the amount of cocaine smuggled into countries in

North America, in particular the United States. Colombia, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (in that order) were the most frequently named as the countries of origin of cocaine consignments destined for Europe in 2007. The involvement of Mexican cartels in cocaine trafficking has been reported in several South American countries, including Ecuador and Peru. Large illicit consignments of cocaine are transported from countries in Latin America through Brazil. About half of the cocaine seized in Brazil in 2008 had been smuggled using air routes. In Paraguay, almost all the cocaine seized in the country originated in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

493. According to UNODC, in the past few years at least 50 tons of cocaine from the Andean countries have passed through West Africa each year, destined for illicit markets in Europe. In 2008 and 2009, UNODC noted an apparent decline in the use of West Africa as a transit area for cocaine. The Board wishes to encourage the Governments of the countries of South America and West Africa to cooperate and remain vigilant in their efforts to combat the smuggling of drugs through their territory.

494. In many countries in South America, criminal organizations engaged in drug trafficking continued to exploit vulnerable population groups. In Ecuador and Paraguay, unemployed persons accounted for 34 per cent and 90 per cent, respectively, of all persons arrested in connection with drug trafficking in 2008. Incidents of drug trafficking involving youth under 15 years of age were reported in several countries in the region, including Chile and Ecuador. Drug trafficking is accompanied by an increased level of other forms of serious crime.

495. In 2007, over 99 per cent of coca-processing laboratories were located in the three main countries cultivating coca bush: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru. By 2007, a small number of clandestine cocaine laboratories were dismantled in other South American countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The spreading of coca-processing laboratories beyond the main cocaine-producing countries resulted in increased abuse of coca paste, in particular among adolescents and young people, in the countries concerned, in particular Argentina and Brazil.

496. Since 2001, the number of clandestine coca paste and cocaine laboratories identified in the Plurinational

State of Bolivia reflected the increasing trend in illicit coca bush cultivation in the country, although the increase in the number of identified laboratories was even more pronounced. Between 2000 and 2008 the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation doubled in the country, while the number of destroyed coca paste and cocaine laboratories increased eightfold over the same period. In 2008, Bolivian authorities destroyed nearly 5,000 coca paste laboratories, including a number of cocaine hydrochloride laboratories and 7,500 maceration pits. In March 2009, the Bolivian police specialized in drug control operations (FELCN) dismantled in Ñuflo de Chávez province a clandestine laboratory with a capacity to manufacture 3 tons of cocaine hydrochloride per month. The size of the laboratory raises concerns about the growing capacity of traffickers to manufacture cocaine in the country.

497. In Colombia, traditional use of coca leaf is marginal and illegal. Virtually all of the coca leaves produced in the country are destined for cocaine manufacture. According to UNODC, about 40 per cent of coca bush growers in Colombia sell the coca leaves without any further processing at the farm, while the remaining 60 per cent of growers process the coca leaves into coca paste or cocaine base to increase their profits. The last step, the processing of the cocaine base into cocaine hydrochloride, is carried out by traffickers in clandestine laboratories. According to the Colombian DNE, the national drug control agency of Colombia, of the 3,200 clandestine laboratories destroyed in the country in 2008, more than 2,900 laboratories had been manufacturing coca paste or cocaine base, and the remaining laboratories, less than 300 had been manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride. The number of clandestine laboratories dismantled in Colombia in 2008 was 36 per cent greater than in 2007.

498. In 2008, authorities in Peru dismantled over 1,200 coca paste laboratories (the highest number of coca paste laboratories dismantled in that country since 2000) and 19 laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride. In 2008, clandestine laboratories processing cocaine base or cocaine also were dismantled in Chile (4 laboratories), Ecuador (1 laboratory) and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (13 laboratories). The laboratory dismantled in Ecuador was estimated to have manufactured 2 tons of cocaine hydrochloride per month.

499. As a result of continued eradication efforts, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Colombia gradually declined to 400 ha in 2008, one twentieth the area under such cultivation in 1998. Opium poppy is mainly cultivated in small fields on mountainsides, where it is interspersed with licit crops, in the departments of Cauca, Nariño, Huila and Tolima. In most areas of Colombia in which opium poppy is cultivated, the illicit crop is harvested twice a year. Potential manufacture of heroin in Colombia in 2008 was calculated to be 1.3 tons, 43 per cent less than in 2007.

500. In 2008, 381 ha of illicitly cultivated opium poppy were eradicated in Colombia, and 23 ha were eradicated in Peru. In the past, the eradication of illicitly cultivated opium poppy has also been reported by Venezuelan authorities. In 2007, the total amount of opium seized in South American countries, was 259 kg, or only 0.1 per cent of the amount seized worldwide. In 2008, heroin seizures in Colombia increased to almost 650 kg (an increase of 20 per cent) and heroin seizures in Ecuador decreased to 144 kg (a decrease of 20 per cent). Seizures of heroin by Venezuelan authorities did not change significantly, totalling approximately 130 kg. In 2008, Peruvian authorities destroyed a laboratory processing opium and seized 8 kg of heroin.

Psychotropic substances

501. In the past few years, South American countries reported that Europe was one of the main sources of MDMA (“ecstasy”) seized in their region. In 2008, Brazilian authorities dismantled the first clandestine laboratory manufacturing “ecstasy” and seized a total of 132,000 units of the substance. A second “ecstasy” laboratory was dismantled in Brazil in August 2009. An “ecstasy” laboratory was dismantled in Argentina in 2008. Seizures of “ecstasy” also took place in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). It cannot be excluded that South America, in addition to having a tradition of being a destination of “ecstasy” consignments from other regions, is now becoming a source of the substance, as indicated by the World Customs Organization. According to the latest report of that organization, in 2008, seizures of “ecstasy” from Brazil, Chile and Suriname were reported, for example, in the Netherlands and Sweden.

502. In addition to MDMA (“ecstasy”), drug-testing laboratories in South American countries reported seizures of less common psychotropic substances such as brolamfetamine, mazindol and zolpidem, as well as synthetic drugs not controlled internationally such as 2,5-dimethoxy-4-iodoamphetamine, dihydro-lysergic acid diethylamide, meta-chlorophenylpiperazine and modafinil (a stimulant used for the treatment of narcolepsy).

Precursors

503. According to a Peruvian national study on the diagnosis of the situation concerning the diversion of chemical substances to drug trafficking, published in 2009, the manufacture of 1 kg of cocaine hydrochloride requires the use of approximately 100 kg of various chemical substances. In 2007 and 2008, seizures of potassium permanganate, the key precursor used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine hydrochloride, were reported in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Since 2000, the largest seizures of potassium permanganate have been reported by Colombia. Between 2000 and 2008 a total of 837 tons of potassium permanganate were seized in Colombia. Despite the dismantling of a large number of cocaine laboratories in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in recent years, the seizures of potassium permanganate reported in the country remained low, totalling less than 500 kg in the period 2000-2008. The Board notes with concern that, with the exception of the clandestine potassium permanganate laboratories seized in Colombia, the origin of the potassium permanganate seized in South American countries remains unknown. The Board calls on the Governments of countries in the Americas and the regional members of the Project Cohesion Task Force to devise strategies to address the smuggling of potassium permanganate into the cocaine-manufacturing areas of South America.

504. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of attempts by traffickers to secure precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants, including ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the form of pharmaceutical preparations in both Central America and South America. From 2007 to 2009, seizures of sizeable amounts of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were made in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The diverted substances were destined primarily for clandestine methamphetamine

laboratories in countries in North America, in particular Mexico. However, in 2008, the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine was detected in Argentina. Investigations into seizures of ephedrine indicate Mexican traffickers have increased their presence and activities in South America.

Substances not under international control

505. In 2008, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela placed under national control four substances currently not under international control: butorphanol, nalbuphine, ketamine and tramadol. The control measures include the issuance of import permits and the registration of medicines containing the substances. Paraguay also made subject to national control four substances not currently controlled under the international drug control treaties: ketamine, modafinil, oxymethadone and thalidomide.

5. Abuse and treatment

506. According to the *World Drug Report 2009*,⁴⁸ the primary drugs of abuse among persons treated for drug problems in South America are cocaine-type drugs (accounting for 52 per cent of all cases involving persons seeking treatment for drug abuse), followed by cannabis (accounting for 33 per cent of such cases). The demand for treatment for the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants is significantly lower. Only 4.8 per cent of those seeking treatment do so for the abuse of amphetamines and 5.1 per cent for the abuse of MDMA (“ecstasy”). Only 1.7 per cent of drug abusers in the region are treated primarily for the abuse of opiates.

507. According to the *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*,⁴⁹ published by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), although HIV transmission as a result of drug use by injection is still high in South America, the number of new infections transmitted by injecting drugs appears to be decreasing. While the level of HIV infection among persons who use drugs by injection has declined in some cities of Brazil, HIV transmission among such persons remains significant in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. Brazilian authorities estimate that about

⁴⁸ *World Drug Report 2009* ..., pp. 14 and 261.

⁴⁹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic* (Geneva, 2008).

0.2 per cent of drug abusers in Brazil inject drugs. Uruguayan authorities estimate that 0.3 per cent of drug abusers in their country inject drugs.

508. The UNODC estimate of the past-year prevalence of cannabis abuse among the general population in South America is 3.4 per cent. The prevalence of cannabis abuse was the highest in Argentina and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), exceeding 7 per cent of the adult population. According to the eighth national survey of drug abuse in Chile, conducted in 2008, cannabis continues to be the most abused illicit drug in the country. About 6.4 per cent of Chileans aged 12-64 years reported having abused cannabis at least once in the previous year. The national study on the use of psychoactive substances in households conducted in 2008 showed that cannabis is also the most abused drug in Colombia. The past-year prevalence of cannabis abuse among persons aged 12-64 years in Colombia increased slightly from 1.9 per cent in 2003 to 2.3 per cent in 2008. Almost half of the individuals surveyed responded that cannabis was easily available in the country.

509. The estimated annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in South America among persons aged 15-64 was 0.9 per cent, approximately double the world prevalence rate of cocaine abuse (0.4-0.5 per cent). Although Colombia is one of the world's main producers of cocaine, according to the 2008 national study of drug abuse, past-year prevalence of cocaine abuse in Colombia was 0.7 per cent, which is slightly less than the prevalence rate for the region as a whole. Cocaine abuse has continued to increase in some countries in the region. In 2008, the abuse of cocaine was reported to have increased in Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In Uruguay, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse among persons aged 12-65 rose from 0.2 per cent in 2001 to 1.4 per cent in 2007. In Chile, the lifetime prevalence of the abuse of cocaine, including cocaine base, increased from to 3.5 per cent in 1994 to 7.7 per cent in 2008. In Peru, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse was stable. The lifetime prevalence of cocaine abuse among persons aged 12-64 in Peru was 1.4 per cent.

510. The past-year prevalence of the abuse of opiates in South America was 0.3 per cent. According to UNODC, levels of opioid abuse are stable in a number of countries in the Americas, including Brazil, Chile and Paraguay. Nevertheless, rising levels of opioid

abuse in 2008 were reported in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The largest population of opioid abusers in South America, in particular those abusing synthetic opioids, was found in Brazil.

511. According to the latest data, the annual prevalence of the abuse of MDMA ("ecstasy") among the general population in South America is estimated at 0.2 per cent, which is one of the lowest rates of all regions. In the past few years, increased abuse of "ecstasy" among secondary school students was reported in several countries in the region, including Argentina, Chile and Colombia. According to the 2008 study on drug abuse, an estimated 55,000 Colombians, or 0.3 per cent of the population aged 12-64 years, had used "ecstasy" in the previous year. Most of those persons were men aged 18-24 years. About 1.7 per cent of the persons surveyed in Colombia had received an offer to try or buy "ecstasy" in the previous year.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

1. Major developments

512. States in East and South-East Asia have made progress in reducing illicit opium poppy cultivation over the years. However, it appears that they have recently been experiencing some setbacks. In 2008, the area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in the region increased by 3.3 per cent compared with 2007.

513. In addition, there was a significant increase in the trafficking in methamphetamine and the illicit manufacture of MDMA ("ecstasy"). Moreover, for the first time in recent years, the illicit manufacture of GHB was reported.

514. Seizures of new types of products containing mixtures of synthetic drugs were reported in China. In December 2008, tablets consisting of a mixture of methaqualone and ephedrine were seized in northern China (in the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia). In January 2009, mixtures of GHB, MDMA and ketamine concealed in bottles labelled "traditional cough medicine" were seized in the autonomous region of Guangxi, China.

515. Drug traffickers are increasingly using social networking sites to recruit South-East Asian women to