

paste in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay were found to be 1 per cent or higher. There appears to be a variety of local forms of cocaine base paste, known as paco, basuco, pasta base or coca paste. More research, however, needs to be done in the different countries to determine whether these substances are indeed different substances or whether they should be classified as variants of the same substance.

567. The latest estimates of annual prevalence of the abuse of opioids for most of the countries in South America are at least five years old; therefore, a reliable comparison of opioid abuse within the region is not possible. According to the available data, the lowest rate of abuse of opioids in South America, 0.02 per cent, was reported in Colombia in 2008 and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) in 2011, respectively. The highest rates of abuse of opioids were reported in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) in 2007 (0.6 per cent) and Brazil, in 2005 (0.5 per cent). In Brazil, non-medical use of prescription opioids accounted for most of the opioids abused.

568. Concern over rising levels of the abuse of synthetic drugs among South American youth also continued to grow. High annual prevalence of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants among young people was reported, for example, in Argentina, Chile and Colombia. According to the latest information provided by Governments, 1.4 per cent and 1.6 per cent of youth aged 15 to 16 years old in Argentina and Chile, respectively, used MDMA (“ecstasy”) in the past 12 months.

569. According to the *CICAD Report on Drug Use in the Americas: 2011*, inhalant abuse may be a growing problem in the Americas, as youth seek out licit and easily available substances. Once considered to be a drug used almost exclusively by street children, the report indicates that inhalant abuse is firmly established among high school students in Latin America and the Caribbean. In most countries in both Latin America and the Caribbean, inhalants are the most common substance of abuse after cannabis and, in some countries, the past-year prevalence of abuse of inhalants exceeds the prevalence of cannabis abuse.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

1. Major developments

570. In 2011, East and South-East Asia continued to be the region with the second largest total area under illicit

opium poppy cultivation, accounting for over 20 per cent of illicit opium poppy cultivation worldwide. Increased illicit opium poppy cultivation was reported by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar for six consecutive years, beginning in 2007. From 2011 to 2012, the total estimated area under cultivation in the two countries increased by approximately 66 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, indicating potential growth in opium production. In view of the continued increase in illicit opium poppy cultivation in the region, the Board again urges the Governments of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar to take the necessary actions to curtail illicit opium poppy cultivation. The Board calls upon the international community, in particular UNODC, and other countries of the region, to strengthen assistance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar, including for alternative development programmes and illicit crop eradication.

571. East and South-East Asia continued to be a manufacturing hub and a growing illicit market for amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular methamphetamine. Seizures of methamphetamine in East and South-East Asia accounted for almost half of the global total in 2010. In 2011, most countries of the region continued to report increased seizures of methamphetamine. Furthermore, evidence has shown that the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants has expanded from traditional manufacturing countries such as China and Myanmar to other countries, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, substances used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, continued to be trafficked in large quantities in the region.

572. Trafficking in and abuse of prescription drugs and over-the-counter pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances are serious problems in East and South-East Asia. In Malaysia, a clandestine laboratory manufacturing tablets containing nimetazepam (a sedative-hypnotic benzodiazepine, also known as Erimin 5) was dismantled in 2010. Few benzodiazepines had ever been illicitly manufactured in other countries. That operation, together with the recent seizures of nimetazepam tablets, raised concern about Malaysia emerging as a country used for the illicit manufacture of, and as a transit area for, benzodiazepines destined for illicit markets in other countries. Many countries of the region have also reported abuse and seizures of drugs containing morphine, codeine and benzodiazepines, some of which had been smuggled out of South Asia, stolen or obtained from pharmacies with forged prescriptions. The Board therefore urges

Governments of the region to strengthen control measures over international trade in and domestic distribution of prescription drugs and over-the-counter pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances and to closely monitor patterns of and trends in trafficking in and abuse of those drugs in order to devise effective countermeasures.

573. In response to the recent challenges posed by the abuse of emerging psychoactive substances, in 2011 the Government of the Republic of Korea introduced a temporary scheduling scheme and a drug analogue management system in order to bring new substances under national control in a timely manner. The substances that have been scheduled under these control schemes include synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists and MDPV.

2. Regional cooperation

574. The Fifth Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, for ASEAN members plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, was convened in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2011. Delegates at the meeting reaffirmed the commitment of their countries to consolidating cooperation between ASEAN member States and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea in combating transnational crime. In addition, a plan of action to implement the memorandum of understanding between ASEAN and China on cooperation on non-traditional security issues, including the issue of drug trafficking, was adopted to further enhance cooperation between the two parties in the areas of information exchange, personnel training, law enforcement, and research and analysis.

575. In November 2011, the International Seminar Workshop on Sustainable Alternative Development was held in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand. The seminar was jointly organized by the Governments of Peru and Thailand and attended by over 100 participants from 27 countries. The purpose of the seminar was to gather and assess information for developing a set of international guidelines for more effective alternative development programmes in areas where illicit crops are grown. The outcome of the meeting was reported to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-fifth session, in March 2012.

576. The seventeenth Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference was held in Tokyo in February 2012. Participants from 38 countries shared information on the current drug situation in the Asia-Pacific region, with the aim of strengthening

international cooperation in drug law enforcement, in particular to counter the threat posed by trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants.

577. The twentieth ASEAN Summit was held in Phnom Penh in April 2012. At that summit, Heads of State and Government of ASEAN member States adopted a declaration in which they affirmed the goal of a drug-free ASEAN community by 2015 and decided that relevant ministers should accelerate the implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking and Use (2009-2015). The leaders also decided that annual reports on the progress of implementation in the area of drug control should be submitted to ASEAN. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of sharing information and best practices of law enforcement and the necessity of enhancing cooperation with ASEAN external partners.

578. In February 2012, the Asian Centre for Certification and Education of Addiction Professionals (ACCE), established by the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, organized the Second Regional Training of Trainers for Addiction Treatment Practitioners in Bangkok. Medical professionals working in the area of treatment of substance abuse in Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand attended the training. A similar training session organized by ACCE took place in Kuala Lumpur in April 2012. Those training initiatives were aimed at training, expanding and professionalizing the drug abuse treatment workforce in the region.

579. In February 2012, the Government of Thailand entered into an agreement with UNODC to support alternative development efforts in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Furthermore, in March 2012, Thai authorities launched a regional partnership on drug control aimed at strengthening drug control cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Under the strategy, capacity-building projects and intelligence exchange between Thailand and those countries have been implemented. Additionally, the Thai authorities have taken part in joint patrols along the Mekong river with the authorities of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar to intercept vessels used by drug traffickers.

580. The twenty-ninth International Drug Enforcement Conference took place in Bali, Indonesia, in June 2012. Law enforcement officials from over 70 countries participated in the annual meeting under the theme of enhancing international partnerships to combat drug

crimes. Meeting participants stressed the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation and sharing intelligence in fighting drug trafficking, including transnational drug trafficking with links to terrorism. The new *modi operandi* of drug traffickers for financing terrorist acts were also discussed.

581. In July 2012, a regional workshop was organized by the UNODC global SMART programme in Phnom Penh. At that workshop, participants were given an update on the trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants in the region, as well as national countermeasures. The threats and challenges posed by emerging new psychoactive substances on the market were also discussed. Over 40 drug control officials from 11 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) attended the workshop.

582. Cooperation between ASEAN and the Government of the Republic of Korea in the area of drug control continued to be further strengthened. There are plans for the establishment in Seoul of the Asia-Pacific information and coordination centre, a joint project of the Government of the Republic of Korea and ASEAN. The member agencies of the centre will include law enforcement authorities from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The mandate of the centre will be to improve information-sharing and cooperation with respect to countering drug trafficking in the region. The centre will also facilitate the formulation of regional drug control strategies and provide technical assistance in drug law enforcement.

3. National legislation, policy and action

583. In 2012, the Government of China adopted a series of control measures to prevent the diversion of pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from domestic distribution channels to the illicit market. Such measures include requiring prescriptions for purchasing those pharmaceutical preparations at pharmacies and the registration of personal information (such as name and identification number) when making such a purchase. Manufacturers and distributors found to have engaged in diverting such preparations will be subject to severe legal liabilities, such as the revocation of their licences. Those control measures were introduced in response to the increase in illegal sales of pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine by pharmaceutical

companies and pharmacies to drug traffickers in the country.

584. Two new pieces of legislation were recently enacted by the Government of Indonesia. A regulation on compulsory reporting by drug addicts provides that drug abusers, or their family members, have to report to the authorities in order to receive treatment and rehabilitation services. A regulation on precursors provides Government control over all activities involving precursors, from manufacture, import and export to packaging and distribution. The regulation requires that relevant Government agencies prepare annual legitimate requirements for precursors used in the country and report such statistics to the Board.

585. The Government of the Republic of Korea has strengthened controls over precursor chemicals in the form of raw materials. As at June 2012, any activities relating to the manufacture, import or export of precursor chemicals must be approved by the competent national authorities.

586. The Government of Singapore has amended the Misuse of Drugs Act to expand the reporting obligations of medical practitioners. The amended Act requires medical practitioners to report the duration of treatment periods and the dosage and quantities of selected prescription drugs that are prescribed to suspected drug addicts, such as those containing benzodiazepines, zolpidem, codeine and substances not under international control such as dextromethorphan and tramadol. This additional information would assist relevant authorities in identifying possible trends in the abuse of prescription drugs. Furthermore, to facilitate the submission of such reports, a web-based electronic notification system has been introduced.

587. The Government of Viet Nam launched its new national drug control and crime prevention strategies in July 2012. The strategies highlight the need for a comprehensive national response that combines effective law enforcement, drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation measures that allow for better integration of former drug dependent persons into society and the active participation of communities in crime prevention.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

(a) Narcotic drugs

588. Illicit opium poppy cultivation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar continued to increase in 2012. Approximately 51,000 ha of opium poppy were estimated to have been illicitly cultivated in Myanmar in

2012, representing an increase of about 17 per cent over 2011. UNODC estimates that about 300,000 households were involved in illicit opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar, the majority in Shan state. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, illicit opium poppy cultivation continued its steady increase, from 1,500 ha in 2007 to 6,800 ha in 2012.

589. Some eradication of illicit opium poppy took place in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. According to the UNODC *South-East Asia Opium Survey 2012*, the authorities of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar eradicated about 700 ha and 23,700 ha of opium poppy, respectively, in 2012, which was equivalent to approximately 42 per cent of that year's total estimated cultivation in the two countries. The Government of Thailand eradicated 205 ha, which accounted for nearly 98 per cent of the total estimated cultivation during 2011-2012.

590. Illicit cannabis cultivation and cannabis seizures continued to be reported by Indonesia and the Philippines, the countries with the largest illicit cultivation of cannabis plants in East and South-East Asia. In Indonesia, approximately 24 tons of cannabis herb were seized in 2011, a slight increase over the total amount seized in 2010. About 1.8 million cannabis plants were eradicated in 2011, most of which was concentrated in Aceh province. In addition to the supply of cannabis through large-scale domestic cultivation, small quantities of cannabis resin from Denmark and France had been smuggled into Indonesia. The authorities of the Philippines eradicated about 4 million illicitly cultivated cannabis plants in 2011. Other countries, including Cambodia, China, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea and Thailand continued to report cannabis seizures in 2011.

591. The region of East and South-East Asia continues to be an important market for heroin. Significant increases in heroin seizures were reported in China, where over 7 tons were seized in 2011, compared with 5.4 tons in 2010. In 2012, authorities of the Lao People's Democratic Republic destroyed over 12 kg of heroin that had been seized in the country. Most of the heroin seized in the region continued to be manufactured in and smuggled out of the area known as the Golden Triangle. In addition, the smuggling of heroin from Afghanistan and mainly through Pakistan into East and South-East Asia increased in 2011.

592. Total cocaine seizures in the region declined and remained at low levels in 2011. In July 2012, however, a record seizure of 650 kg of cocaine found in a shipping container arriving from Ecuador was made in Hong

Kong, China. This seizure, together with the 560 kg of cocaine seized in Hong Kong, China, in 2011, raised the concern of the city becoming a transit point for cocaine consignments originating in South America and Central America and destined for mainland China.

(b) Psychotropic substances

593. Seizures of methamphetamine in East and South-East Asia continued to increase significantly in 2011. In China, seizures of methamphetamine amounted to over 14 tons in 2011, increasing by 45 per cent from 10 tons in 2010. In Thailand, 54.8 million methamphetamine tablets and 1.2 tons of crystalline methamphetamine were seized in 2011; both of those figures represent an increase over 2010 levels. During the first eight months of 2012, the Thai authorities had already seized 50.8 million methamphetamine tablets and 870 kg of crystalline methamphetamine, indicating a possible increase in total seizures in 2012. Other countries, such as Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar, also reported increased quantities of amphetamine-type stimulants seized in 2011.

594. Most of the seized amphetamine-type stimulants in East and South-East Asia continued to be illicitly manufactured within the region. In 2011, China reported having dismantled 357 clandestine laboratories, most of which were found to have manufactured methamphetamine and ketamine. The authorities of Indonesia and the Philippines dismantled 14 and 6 clandestine methamphetamine laboratories, respectively, in 2011. In addition, illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants has been reported by Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand, though on a small scale.

595. Myanmar remained an important source of illicit supply of amphetamine-type stimulants. A total of 6 million methamphetamine tablets and 33 kg of crystalline methamphetamine were seized in the country in 2011. Although no dismantling of clandestine laboratories was reported, the authorities of Myanmar indicated that all amphetamine-type stimulants seized had been domestically manufactured. There are indications that methamphetamine originating in Myanmar had been smuggled to China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand, and from those countries to Cambodia and Viet Nam. Furthermore, recent armed clashes between drug syndicates and law enforcement authorities along the Mekong river indicated that the Mekong river was increasingly being used as a trafficking route for smuggling methamphetamine from Myanmar into its neighbouring countries.

596. Seizures of MDMA (“ecstasy”) were reported mainly by Indonesia and Malaysia; in recent years, the total amount of “ecstasy” seized in those two countries has continued to grow. In 2011, over 1 million “ecstasy” tablets were seized in Indonesia, the highest level since 2008 and almost triple the number seized in 2010. In addition, five clandestine “ecstasy” laboratories were dismantled in the country. Apart from illicit domestic supply, MDMA (“ecstasy”) tablets from Malaysia and the Netherlands continued to be smuggled into Indonesia. In Malaysia, according to UNODC, an MDMA (“ecstasy”) clandestine laboratory was dismantled in 2010, indicating that in addition to Indonesia, Malaysia has been targeted by traffickers of “ecstasy”.

597. Seizures of nimetazepam tablets in Malaysia increased significantly from 2010 to 2011. In 2010, 2 million nimetazepam tablets originating in India were seized in Malaysia. In July 2012, 3 million nimetazepam tablets were seized in a shipping container arriving in Malaysia from India via Hong Kong, China. The drugs were stuffed in black plastic bags hidden among sacks of tobacco. This seizure was one of the largest drug seizures in Malaysia in the past 10 years. Other countries, such as Indonesia and Singapore, reported large seizures of nimetazepam tablets arriving from Malaysia in 2010 and 2011.

(c) Precursors

598. One of the biggest challenges related to precursor control in East and South-East Asia remains the trafficking in precursors used for the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. In 2011, the Chinese authorities continued to seize large quantities of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine, which had been diverted from domestic distribution channels to supply domestic as well as foreign clandestine laboratories.

599. With the strengthening of control over pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in many countries of the region, traffickers have turned to countries with less or no control over such preparations, such as the Republic of Korea. In December 2011, 2 million tablets containing pseudoephedrine originating in the Republic of Korea were seized in Thailand. The seized drugs were intended for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in the Golden Triangle area bordering northern Thailand.

600. In July 2011, approximately 16 tons of acetic anhydride were seized as a result of a joint operation of the Chinese and Pakistan authorities. The substance had originated in China and was destined for use in illicit heroin manufacture in Afghanistan.

601. In April 2012, a joint operation of the authorities of Australia and China led to the dismantling of a transnational drug trafficking group that intended to smuggle a total of 3.4 tons of safrole-rich oil from China to Australia. Most of the safrole-rich oil, disguised as liquid hair products, had been smuggled between April and August 2011 and seized by the Australian authorities after the arrival of the shipments in Sydney. The seized substance was probably intended to be used in the illicit manufacture of MDMA (“ecstasy”) in Australia.

(d) Substances not under international control

602. Ketamine seizures continued to be reported in East and South-East Asia. In 2011, China (including Hong Kong, China) reported seizures of 5.7 tons of ketamine, accounting for the majority of the total seizures of ketamine in the region. Illicit manufacture of ketamine continued to be detected in China. Furthermore, about 95 kg of ketamine were seized in 2011, indicating that Indonesia might have become an emerging market for ketamine. In addition, it is worth noting that many tablets seized in Indonesia that were to be marketed as “ecstasy” contained ketamine rather than MDMA.

603. New psychoactive substances are gaining popularity on the illicit markets in East and South-East Asia. The Republic of Korea has reported seizures of products containing synthetic cannabinoids and sold under the brand name “spice”, as well as products containing MDPV and sold as “bath salts”. Those substances are being increasingly smuggled into the country by mail and used as substitutes for cocaine or “ecstasy”. Viet Nam and Indonesia have also reported seizures of 1-(3-trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine (TFMPP) and *N*-benzylpiperazine (BZP).

5. Abuse and treatment

604. Heroin continues to be the primary drug of abuse in China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Viet Nam. In China, there were about 1.2 million registered heroin-dependent persons in 2011, accounting for over 64 per cent of the total registered drug-dependent population group that year. In Myanmar, 87 per cent of the persons who received drug abuse treatment in 2011 did so for heroin abuse. While most countries of East and South-East Asia have reported heroin abuse to be stable

or decreasing, Malaysia and Singapore have reported increased heroin abuse in recent years.

605. Cannabis remains the most popular drug of abuse in Indonesia, owing mainly to its abundant domestic supply. A survey of secondary schools in Indonesia in 2011 showed that annual prevalence of cannabis abuse among students was 1.3 per cent, significantly higher than among the general population (0.5 per cent). Cannabis is the second most commonly abused drug in Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, and the third most commonly abused drug in Malaysia and Myanmar.

606. A common trend that has been observed in most countries of the region is the increased abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, most notably methamphetamine. Methamphetamine remains the most common drug of abuse in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. A considerable increase in the abuse of synthetic drugs, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, has been reported in China, where registered cases of abuse increased by 36 per cent from 2010 to 2011. Malaysia and Singapore have also reported increased abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants.

607. Another concern relates to drug abuse among young people in the region. In China, people under the age of 35 constituted nearly 70 per cent of all synthetic drug abuse reported cases. In Thailand, young people between the ages of 15 and 19 represented the biggest drug abuse population group. In Indonesia and Myanmar, the average age of people under treatment for drug abuse was less than 30 years old.

608. An emerging challenge for the countries of East and South-East Asia is the abuse of prescription drugs and over-the-counter pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances, mainly morphine, codeine, benzodiazepines and barbiturates. In Brunei Darussalam, a large increase in the abuse of Erimin 5 tablets, containing nimetazepam, has been reported. Benzodiazepines and barbiturates were the third most commonly abused drug group in Indonesia and the fourth most commonly abused drug group in China. Myanmar also reported increased abuse of benzodiazepines. In Malaysia, morphine was the second most commonly abused substance among individuals receiving drug abuse treatment. In Thailand, over 260 drug-related deaths in 2010 were related to the abuse of benzodiazepines.

609. Drug abuse by injection was reported by almost all countries of the region. Drugs that are commonly

injected included heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants and benzodiazepines. The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among people who abuse drugs by injection remains a serious public health risk in some countries. The Government of Indonesia estimated in 2009 that HIV prevalence among people who abused drugs by injection was nearly 50 per cent. In Myanmar, HIV prevalence among that group was about 22 per cent; in the Republic of Korea, HIV prevalence among the adult population remained very low.

610. Heroin abuse was the primary reason for people receiving treatment for drug abuse in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore, whereas in the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular methamphetamine, accounted for the majority of the drug addicts who received treatment. Cannabis was the most common drug of abuse of those receiving treatment in Japan. In many countries, demand for treatment increased in the past two years, in particular among persons dependent on amphetamine-type stimulants. Furthermore, a number of countries, such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, reported treatment of people who had abused prescription drugs, in particular those containing morphine, buprenorphine and benzodiazepines.

611. In China at the end of 2011, there were over 220,000 people receiving drug abuse treatment in compulsory treatment centres; in addition, 97,000 people were receiving drug abuse treatment in community treatment and rehabilitation centres. Methadone substitution treatment programmes continued to be expanded. By the end of 2011, there were 719 treatment units nationwide, which had provided drug substitution treatment to a total of 337,000 people.

612. In Cambodia, the UNODC-supported community-based drug treatment programme has been expanded as an alternative to compulsory treatment service since its launch in 2010. The programme provides drug-dependent persons with voluntary drug abuse treatment and care services in a variety of health centres, referral hospitals and non-governmental organizations. The services include tailored treatment plans for counselling, assessment and evaluation, vocational training and the provision of sterile injecting equipment.

613. One obstacle to effective and targeted treatment services for many countries of East and South-East Asia is the lack of surveys of drug abuse among the general population. Only a few countries, such as Indonesia, the

Philippines and Thailand, indicated that general population surveys and school surveys had been carried out on a regular basis. Other countries had usually based their analysis of the drug abuse situation on statistics on arrests or treatment. Such data are not comprehensive and may reflect only a fraction of the drug abuse problems in a country. The Board therefore encourages the Governments of countries of the region to establish, in collaboration with regional and international organizations, including UNODC, mechanisms for routinely monitoring the trends and patterns related to drug abuse among the general population, including abuse of prescription drugs, in order to devise targeted prevention and treatment policies and strategies.

South Asia

1. Major developments

614. South Asia continues to face diversion of and trafficking in pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances and a serious problem of abuse of prescription drugs and over-the-counter pharmaceutical preparations. Pharmacies represent one of the key points at which diversion occurs. Drug abusers are often able, in all countries of the region, to obtain prescription pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances without a prescription. In some cases, diversion also occurs from manufacturers. As well as being sold within the region, the diverted pharmaceuticals are also trafficked on to other countries, in significant part through illegal Internet pharmacies.

615. The main problem behind the diversion of and trafficking in prescription pharmaceutical preparations appears to be that enforcement of national laws and regulations designed to control those preparations is weak, though the laws and regulations themselves are largely adequate. At the pharmacy level, for example, it is common for pharmacies to lack a qualified pharmacist in some countries in South Asia. In all countries in South Asia, the main reason for weak enforcement of regulations is weakness in the organizations responsible for regulating pharmacies and pharmaceutical manufacturers, in particular a lack of monitoring/inspection personnel. There is also insufficient awareness of enforcement powers and the extent of the problem. The Board urges Governments in South Asia to strengthen the enforcement capacity of their national agencies responsible for regulating pharmacies that dispense pharmaceuticals containing

narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Further, there are certain gaps in the regulations on the pharmaceutical industry themselves: control measures for the manufacture of some pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances (for example, some of those containing pseudoephedrine) are insufficient, which can lead to those substances being diverted. Countries in South Asia also have few regulations with respect to online pharmacies.

616. In response to the threat posed to the region by the abuse of and trafficking in pharmaceutical preparations and other drugs, Governments in South Asia are renewing their efforts and are undertaking major new initiatives to tackle the problem. Governments across the region have revised policies and legal and criminal justice frameworks on drug control. India has approved a new national policy on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, while Maldives has approved a new drugs act regulating how the criminal justice system will deal with drug abuse and trafficking. The Government of Bangladesh has been working on a new national drug policy, while the Government of Bhutan has adopted the revised Bhutan Medicines Rules and Regulation 2012. In addition, India has undertaken significant initiatives to strengthen its law enforcement agencies and to upgrade border security. The Board welcomes the strong commitment of Governments in South Asia to tackling the illicit drug problem in the region and urges them to build on those measures and to continue to further strengthen efforts to combat drug abuse and trafficking. The Board believes, in particular, that efforts could be further enhanced (a) through better working-level contacts and information-sharing between government agencies in the region engaged in tackling drug abuse and trafficking; and (b) by improved primary prevention, for example, working through schools, encouraging the industry to self-regulate (for example, through voluntary codes of conduct) and adopting the measures mentioned above against abuse of and trafficking in pharmaceutical preparations.

2. Regional cooperation

617. At a meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Maldives in November 2011, India and Maldives signed a memorandum of understanding on combating international terrorism, transnational crime, illicit drug trafficking and enhancing bilateral cooperation in capacity-building, disaster management and coastal security.

618. The Central Bureau of Narcotics of India hosted the second meeting of the Expert Working Group on

Precursors of the Paris Pact initiative in November 2011. More than 50 participants from 30 countries and organizations took part in the meeting, which dealt with the use of precursor chemicals in heroin production in Afghanistan and ways to improve control over trade in precursors to prevent diversion.

619. A meeting between the Home Secretary of India and the Deputy Union Minister for Home Affairs of Myanmar was held in January 2012. Both sides agreed to interaction between their drug control agencies at the director-general level once a year and at the deputy director-general level twice a year.

620. In December 2011, UNODC published a report entitled *Misuse of Prescription Drugs: A South Asia Perspective* on the abuse of prescription pharmaceutical preparations in South Asia. The report was based on information gained from seminars with policymakers and experts in the fields of drug law enforcement and drug treatment in South Asia and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry in the region. The Board welcomes the report, which contributes to improving understanding of prescription drug abuse in South Asia.

621. In 2009, the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific established the Asian Centre for Certification and Education of Addiction Professionals. In March and April 2012, the Centre held a training of trainers in Kuala Lumpur, with support from the Government of the United States of America. Further, in February 2012, the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board of Sri Lanka and the Colombo Plan, also with support from the Government of the United States, launched an initiative for the certification of addiction treatment professionals in Sri Lanka, whose aim is to train, professionalize and expand the addiction treatment workforce in the country.

622. In June 2012, an expert group meeting was hosted by UNODC in New Delhi to discuss various subjects, including drug trafficking and crime prevention. Government experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the meeting. The following key decisions were reached on how to improve regional cooperation to combat drug abuse and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, in the region: to strengthen border management in relation to drugs and crime and to promote the gathering and sharing of intelligence and information to strengthen the implementation of normative and legal frameworks; to undertake capacity-building, including through the expansion of computer-based training; to connect drug abuse and crime prevention strategies; to promote cooperation

and coordination among health practitioners, law enforcement and regulators; to train criminal justice officials on drugs and crime and to use a regional forum to make regular reviews of the drug and crime situation and national and regional policy responses.

623. UNODC, in partnership with India's National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics, in 2012 continued to provide technical assistance to enhance drug law enforcement capacities in the region through computer-based training. Computer-based training centres have been established in Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal and by the end of 2012 computer-based training for drug law enforcement will be set up in Bangladesh and in Sri Lanka. More than 500 drug law enforcement officers have been trained at regional- and national-level training programmes. Three training tools — a training manual, training guidelines and a training curriculum — were also developed for use by officers in the implementation of their domestic drug laws in accordance with the international drug control conventions.

624. The Governments of all countries in South Asia worked with UNODC to finalize the UNODC regional programme for the period 2013-2015. The programme will include measures to counter transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, and drug abuse prevention and treatment. The focus is on the cross-border dimension of those challenges and the establishment of the instruments necessary for regional cooperation. Efforts will be made to strengthen data collection, research and analysis as the basis for evidence-based interventions, to enhance data- and information-gathering, analysis and sharing, to improve border control and to provide training to law enforcement and customs personnel at airports and seaports.

3. National legislation, policy and action

625. The authorities of Bangladesh have continued their efforts to raise awareness of and provide education on the dangers of drug abuse. To that end, in 2011, they distributed some 60,000 posters, 10,500 leaflets and 10,000 stickers and organized some 4,000 discussion meetings and 200 speeches at schools and colleges. They also formed around 800 anti-drug committees in educational institutes. The number of cases tried in drug courts in Bangladesh rose from 1,500 in 2010 to 3,700 in 2011. Prevention activities in Bangladesh also target the abuse of prescription-only pharmaceutical preparations.

626. In March 2012, the Government of Bhutan and UNODC organized training for forensic chemists and

law enforcement officers on drugs and precursors. Participants from a range of Bhutanese agencies attended.

627. As mentioned above, in January 2012, India's Cabinet approved a new National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, including a detailed action plan focused on implementing the recommendations that the Board made during its last mission to India, in December 2010. The Board welcomes the Government of India's responsiveness to the Board's recommendations. As regards measures against trafficking in drugs and precursors, under the policy India will use satellite imagery to detect and eradicate illicit cultivation of opium poppy and cannabis plant. India will also strengthen its international cooperation on precursor control, including by helping other countries to strengthen their precursor control measures. As regards targeting drug abuse, drug treatment services will prioritize de-addiction. Where those who abuse by injection refuse such treatment, they may be offered needle exchange or oral substitution therapy, services that have already been offered in India for some time. Such services will be restricted to centres established, supported or recognized by the Government.

628. The Department of Border Management of India is undertaking a major programme of upgrading the country's border security, which should help to combat cross-border drug trafficking. The Department will fence around 3,400 km of India's border with Bangladesh and construct some 4,400 km of border patrol roads; at least 80 per cent of the fences and at least 80 per cent of the roads have already been constructed. Around 60 per cent of India's border with Pakistan are to be fenced and 60 per cent floodlit; at least 95 per cent of the fences and at least 95 per cent of the floodlighting is already complete. India also plans to build some 800 km of strategic roads along its border with China, and has deployed a 25-battalion border guard force and established 450 border outposts along its border with Nepal. The Board notes these measures and their potential to reduce drug trafficking across India's borders.

629. As mentioned above, in December 2011 the Parliament of Maldives ratified the Drugs Act, which established a national drug control council, a national drug agency and drug courts. The Drugs Act regulates the prohibition of illegal drug use in Maldives and prevention of peddling and trafficking in drugs. The law also makes a legal distinction between drug abusers, drug peddlers and drug traffickers. Individuals convicted of abusing drugs are given a suspended sentence to undergo rehabilitation, which is revoked if they opt for and complete the course of treatment. Under the regulation, a clear distinction is

made between drug users, who are provided with a chance to reintegrate into society as responsible citizens, and drug dealers, who will be convicted for their offence and face harsher penalties. The Act also paves the way for increased access to rehabilitation programmes for those addicted to illicit drugs in order to provide them a chance to better reintegrate into society and remain drug-free. Establishment of drug treatment rehabilitation and aftercare services is mandated under the purview of the National Drug Agency. Separate provisions for treatment centres for persons under 18 years and for women will be implemented so as to address the specific needs of those population groups.

630. In Sri Lanka, the research division of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board began a national household survey on drug abuse in late 2011. In January 2012, the Minister of Health of Sri Lanka announced plans to create a national drug control authority.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacturing and trafficking

(a) Narcotic drugs

631. Pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs continue to be diverted from India and India continues to be the main source for those substances and for preparations smuggled into other countries in South Asia, as well as an important source for smuggling to other regions in the world. The preparations containing narcotic drugs that are most commonly diverted in India are codeine-based cough syrups, dextropropoxyphene and pethidine. Large quantities of preparations containing narcotic drugs are known to be smuggled from India into Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

632. From India to Bangladesh there is smuggling of codeine/diazepam combination tablets and ampoules of pethidine (which can be easily injected), among other drugs. In Bangladesh, seizures of ampoules of injectable drugs rose to some 120,000 ampoules in 2011, compared with a previous high of 90,000 in 2009. Codeine-based preparations are also smuggled into Bangladesh, largely overland. Seizures of codeine-based cough syrups in Bangladesh have increased considerably, with the number of litres of codeine-based cough syrups doubling between 2006 and 2010. Codeine-based cough syrups are also smuggled from India to Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In 2011, India seized over 1.16 million bottles of pharmaceutical preparations containing codeine.

633. Other routes for smuggling of pharmaceutical preparations in South Asia are from Pakistan to Sri Lanka

and from Sri Lanka to Maldives; Sri Lanka is, alongside India, one of the leading sources for pharmaceutical preparations smuggled into Maldives.

634. The Board recommends that the Government of India, as part of its efforts to tackle the diversion of and trafficking in pharmaceutical preparations, consider further strengthening its framework against the smuggling of codeine-based cough syrups.

635. The Government of India is pursuing a sustained effort to reduce the level of illicit cultivation of cannabis plant in the country. In 2010, the estimated area under illicit cultivation was 552 ha, following the eradication of 681 ha of illicitly cultivated cannabis plant during the course of that year. A further 1,114 ha were eradicated in 2011. In Bhutan, illicit cultivation of cannabis plant has historically been minimal: seizures of cannabis in Bhutan in 2010 totalled around 4 kg, but increased to around 75 kg in 2011. Significant quantities of high-potency cannabis resin are produced in Nepal. Sri Lanka seized around 204 tons of cannabis plant in 2011.

636. In India, the authorities were successful in destroying almost 6,000 ha of illicitly cultivated opium poppy in 2011. Around 528 kg of heroin (a decrease from 766 kg in 2010) and around 2.3 tons of opium were seized in India in 2011.

637. In Nepal, following an apparent brief upsurge in illicit cultivation of opium poppy from 2007 to 2010, the Government stated in 2011 that it had become poppy-free. There have been isolated cases of illicit cultivation of opium poppy in Bangladesh: in 2011, 22 ha were eradicated along the border with Myanmar. The Board welcomes the strong commitment shown by the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal to eradicating illicit cultivation of cannabis plants and opium poppy within their territory and welcomes the success of their eradication campaigns.

638. It appears that heroin is increasingly being trafficked through Bangladesh, which is being used as an alternative to heroin trafficking routes through India and Myanmar. Heroin from Afghanistan has also recently begun to be sold in Bangladesh. Heroin enters Bangladesh via forest areas, hill tracks and the sea, including from Myanmar. The airport in Dhaka and the port of Chittagong are used as exit points. Seizures of heroin in Bangladesh fell, however, from some 190 kg in 2010 to 100 kg in 2011. There remains room for improvement in cooperation between Bangladesh and neighbouring countries in South Asia with regard to combating illicit trafficking and organized criminal groups. In Sri Lanka, the authorities estimate that in 2011 around 75 per cent of heroin trafficked into the country

entered from Pakistan, with 23 per cent coming from India and 2 per cent from Maldives. The authorities in Sri Lanka estimate that in 2011 over 50 per cent of smuggled heroin came into the country by air, with the remainder being brought in by sea.

639. Drug trafficking has shown significant increases in Maldives in recent years. Cannabis is the substance most commonly trafficked into the country. According to data on seizures made by the Maldives Customs Service, the most commonly used route for trafficking narcotic drugs into Maldives is from Trivandrum in the south of India to Male. In Sri Lanka, illicit manufacture of drugs and precursor chemicals is negligible.

(b) Psychotropic substances

640. Pharmaceutical preparations containing psychotropic substances continue to be diverted from India's pharmaceutical industry and smuggled into neighbouring countries (in particular Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal) and elsewhere. The preparations containing psychotropic substances most commonly diverted from India's pharmaceutical industry are benzodiazepines and buprenorphine. In Bangladesh, ampoules of buprenorphine are smuggled in from India. The number of ampoules of buprenorphine seized in Bangladesh has risen dramatically in recent years: the number seized in 2010 (some 70,000 ampoules), was around 40 times the number seized in 2006. In Nepal, seizure data suggest that smuggling of benzodiazepines into that country is increasing.

641. Regarding amphetamine-type stimulants, trafficking in methamphetamine pills from Myanmar into South Asia continues to rise. In Bangladesh, seizures of "yaba" amphetamine-type stimulant tablets (pills containing methamphetamine and caffeine) in 2011 rose to their highest levels in the past few years: 1.4 million tablets of "yaba" were seized, compared with a previous high of 800,000 in 2010. This is a dramatic rise compared with 2006, when just 2,000 were seized. In the region of Myanmar that borders Bangladesh, 14 illicit methamphetamine factories were identified; Myanmar is a known route for trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants into Bangladesh. In Nepal, no illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants was reported. Seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants, excluding MDMA ("ecstasy"), increased in Sri Lanka from 8 kg in 2009 to 25 kg in 2010. According to data from the World Customs Organization, India was the source of 81 kg of the methamphetamine seized worldwide reported to the Organization in 2011.

642. In India, 72 kg of methaqualone were seized in 2011. No clandestine laboratories manufacturing methaqualone have been dismantled in that country since 2009. Regarding amphetamine, 473 kg of the substance were seized in India in 2011.

(c) Precursors

643. South Asia continues to be targeted by organized criminal groups as a source of precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. In India, the authorities seized 7.2 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in 2011 and 2.3 tons in the first six months of 2012. This represents a substantial increase compared with the period 2008-2010, when the most seized in any one year was 2.2 tons (2010). From November 2011 to the end of June 2012, Indian authorities reported seizing over 30 million tablets containing pseudoephedrine, over 13 million of which were destined for Myanmar. Seizures of acetic anhydride in India have decreased significantly since 2008, when around 2.8 tons were seized; no seizures were recorded in 2011. Attempted diversions and seizures of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine from Bangladesh also resurfaced in 2011, with shipments from Bangladesh being stopped while transiting through Europe en route to Central America.

(d) Substances not under international control

644. Following the decision of the Indian authorities in February 2011 to classify ketamine as a psychotropic substance under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the quantity of ketamine seized has increased, from 1.3 tons in 2010 to 1.5 tons in 2011; the quantity seized in the first half of 2012 was 350 kg.

645. In Bhutan, abuse of solvents is a serious problem. In India, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare banned the sale and storage of correction fluid, including nail polish remover, at the retail level from July 2012.

5. Abuse and treatment

646. UNODC estimates that around 3.6 per cent of the population of South Asia abuses cannabis at least once a year. The corresponding estimate for opioids is 0.3 per cent; the prevalence of opiate abuse is estimated as being slightly lower, but still around 0.3 per cent. As regards abused pharmaceutical preparations of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, in each of the countries in South Asia, benzodiazepines are among the most commonly abused; codeine-based cough syrups are also commonly abused in Bangladesh and India.

Heroin-dependent individuals in the region often use narcotic and psychotropic pharmaceuticals alongside heroin or as a substitute for heroin. Polydrug abuse is particularly apparent in Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal.

647. In Bangladesh, the most frequently abused drug is heroin, then codeine contained in cough syrups; the third most abused drug is cannabis. Recently, "yaba" has become one of the three main non-pharmaceutical drugs abused in Bangladesh, after heroin and cannabis. Drug abuse in Bangladesh is spreading from urban to rural areas, with indications that this is particularly the case for "yaba". There is also evidence that drug abuse among street children in Bangladesh is increasing. The total number of people receiving drug abuse treatment in Bangladesh was approximately 2,500 in 2010.

648. Drug abuse in Bhutan has historically been very low. However, according to the most recent estimates, 4.2 per cent of the population aged 15 to 64 abuse cannabis in any given year. UNODC data on expert perceptions also indicated that abuse of cannabis was rising in 2010. According to UNODC, expert perceptions in 2010 indicated that cannabis was the most abused drug in Bhutan. Abuse of pharmaceuticals is also increasing and becoming serious, in particular the abuse of opioids, including dextropropoxyphene, and benzodiazepines, including nitrazepam, and decongestants containing adrenergic stimulants, as well as anticholinergics and antihistamines to a lesser extent, some of which are not internationally controlled.

649. Cannabis is the most abused drug in India, followed by opioids. Among those treated for drug problems in India in 2010, 22 per cent abused cannabis, 66 per cent abused opioids (33 per cent heroin, 14 per cent opium and 19 per cent prescription opioids) and 12 per cent other substances. Some 200,000 people abuse drugs by injection in India. Commonly abused pharmaceuticals are codeine-based cough syrups, opioid painkillers and benzodiazepines, all of which are widely available through retail pharmacies. In February 2012, the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences initiated methadone maintenance treatment, as part of a pilot project, with assistance from the UNODC Regional Office for South Asia. The project currently provides treatment to about 250 injecting drug abusers at five sites in the country. All of the implementing sites are government health-care facilities. An increase in the size of the programme is currently under consideration.

650. In India, a pilot study has been carried out to test the feasibility of using buprenorphine for treatment of opioid dependence in prison settings. It is a collaborative project between the UNODC Regional Office for South

Asia, the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of India and the prison service at Tihar prison. The feasibility of opioid substitution treatment in prison settings was demonstrated through this project. Additionally, a standard operating guideline was also developed for implementation of opioid substitution treatment in prison settings in the region. Opioid substitution treatment is not yet available in any other prisons in South Asia.

651. Drug abuse has been rising rapidly in Maldives in the recent years, especially among young people. In the period 2011-2012, the Ministry of Health, the National Drug Agency and the National Human Rights Commission of Maldives, the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of India (part of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences), UNODC, a national research organization in Maldives and civil society groups cooperated to undertake the national drug use survey of Maldives for the period 2011-2012. The survey found that the most commonly abused drugs in Maldives were, in order, cannabis resin, opioids and cannabis herb. The most commonly abused non-pharmaceutical opioid in Maldives is “brown sugar”, a variety of heroin. MDMA (“ecstasy”) has been abused in Maldives since 2011. Abuse of pharmaceutical preparations is also serious. Since 2011 the abuse of nitrazepam has also been detected.

652. In partnership with the Maldives Ministry of Health and Family, methadone maintenance treatment is being provided for more than 50 people through a centre operated by the Department of Drug Prevention and Rehabilitation Services. The Government of Maldives, in partnership with UNODC, also supports 14 local non-governmental organizations across nine atolls providing aftercare and support services for recovering drug users, their partners and families.

653. In Nepal, it has been estimated that 30,000-34,000 people abuse drugs by injection — some 0.18 per cent of the adult population. This is an increase from the estimated level of 28,500 people in 2009. Most of the people who abuse drugs by injection in Nepal are believed to be abusing opioids such as buprenorphine and propoxyphene. UNODC also estimates that 30,000-50,000 people in Nepal abuse heroin, though it is not so often abused by injection. A study among female drug abusers in Nepal found that cannabis, benzodiazepines, heroin and dextropropoxyphene were the main substances of abuse. Multiple drug abuse using pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances also occurs in the country; such preparations are also abused

as substitutes for other drugs when these are in short supply or too expensive.

654. According to UNODC data on expert perceptions in 2010, the most abused drug in Sri Lanka was cannabis, followed by opiates. According to other recent estimates, around 1.4 per cent of the population aged 15 to 64 abuse cannabis in any given year. Sri Lanka’s drug abuse register currently lists 245,000 people, of whom 200,000 abuse cannabis and the remainder heroin. The authorities do not currently have an estimate for the total number of people requiring treatment for drug abuse in Sri Lanka. Among those treated for drug abuse in 2010, some 70 per cent abused heroin, while 30 per cent abused cannabis. The authorities estimate that some 1,300 people received residential drug abuse treatment in 2011, of whom 75 per cent abused opioids and 30 per cent abused cannabis as their primary drug of abuse (with some abusing both drugs heavily).

655. Sri Lanka employs a range of techniques in drug abuse treatment and increased its budget for treatment programmes in 2011, including screening and short-duration therapy. The authorities estimate that around 50 per cent of those in need of such interventions do receive them. The interventions are undergoing impact evaluations. Sri Lanka also provides residential and outpatient treatment facilities (the latter defined as facilities used without an overnight stay), detoxification, counselling, contingency management (psychosocial interventions providing incentives to abstain from drug abuse), rehabilitation and aftercare. Sri Lanka has a national treatment reporting and monitoring system that covers drug treatment provided by the public sector and by non-governmental organizations.

West Asia

1. Major developments

656. West Asia continues to have the greatest share of global illicit opium poppy cultivation and illicit opiate production, primarily Afghanistan, which saw a significant rebound in illicit opium poppy cultivation, reaching 154,000 ha in 2012, 18 per cent more than the previous year, and representing an estimated 64 per cent of global cultivation. The number of provinces of Afghanistan cultivating illicit opium poppy remained unchanged, with opium poppy cultivation in excess of 100 ha in half of the 34 provinces. However, illicit opium production in 2012 decreased by 36 per cent from the previous year, dropping to 3,700 tons, as an opium poppy disease and poor weather decreased yields in 2012.

657. After a substantial increase from 2010 to 2011, the value of opium produced in Afghanistan in 2012 dropped by half over the previous year and was estimated to be valued at over \$700 million, which is the equivalent of 4 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in 2012. The majority of the farmers illicitly cultivating opium poppy who were surveyed in 2012 cited as the reason for cultivation the high income from opium poppy, which far exceeded the prices paid for alternative licit crops such as wheat. In addition, both the prices and the production of cannabis — particularly cannabis resin — appear to be increasing.

658. The uncertain security situation and political instability prevailing across the Arab world provides fertile ground for illicit activities that profit both regional and international criminal networks, resulting in increasing levels of illicit trafficking in drugs and persons and money-laundering.

659. With respect to drug trafficking in the Middle East, there is an increasing trend in both the quantity and the number of seizures reported. Most of the countries in the region are still considered to be transit areas for the smuggling of illicit drugs, in particular, Iraq.

660. Traditionally, countries in the Middle East are affected mainly by trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular, amphetamine sold as Captagon tablets. Judging by the significant number of seizures reported in the region, Saudi Arabia retains the record for most seizures, followed by Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Saudi Arabia continues to be the destination of choice and an important market for Captagon tablets, although they also continue to be a problem in other countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. However, reports indicate that Captagon tablets are also seized in other countries of the region, such as Iraq.

661. Demand for various illicit stimulants, such as cocaine and methamphetamine, appears to be increasing in parts of West Asia. Seizures of these drugs have steadily increased, and abuse, for example, of methamphetamine in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has also been reported to be on the rise.

662. The trend observed with regard to seizures of methamphetamine as reported by some countries in the Middle East, in particular Israel and Jordan, may indicate an increase in and spread of trafficking in methamphetamine in the region. Seizures of MDMA ("ecstasy") have been reported by some countries in the region.

663. Increased abuse of prescription drugs, in particular benzodiazepines such as diazepam, bromazepam and alprazolam, has been reported in a number of countries, including Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

664. The number and quantities of seizures of counterfeit pharmaceuticals worldwide increased significantly in 2011, rising from 1,398 seizures of a total of 11.7 million tablets in 2010 to 1,861 seizures of a total of 26.7 million tablets in 2011. The number of reported cases in the Middle East also increased in 2011. Seizures of counterfeit medicines used for the treatment of insomnia (benzodiazepines) were reported in the region, although they did not constitute the drug group of greatest concern.

665. Several West Asian countries continue to report large annual legitimate requirements for imports of precursors that can be used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Large-scale seizures of ephedrine were reported by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2010 and 2011, and in 2012, allegations of large-scale diversion of ephedrine were being investigated in Pakistan. The Government of Jordan has now prohibited the importation of P-2-P, a precursor that can be used in the illicit manufacture of, among other substances, amphetamines, which is common in the region.

666. The third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan was held in Vienna in February 2012 and was attended by 500 participants from 58 countries and 16 international organizations. Government Ministers and Paris Pact partners stressed the need to reduce opium poppy cultivation and production, opiate trafficking and illicit consumption. Ministers and other heads of delegation adopted the Vienna Declaration, a statement of international commitment to act in coordinated fashion against illicit Afghan opiates, which addressed four main areas of cooperation: strengthening regional initiatives to counter trafficking in opiates originating in Afghanistan, detecting and blocking financial flows linked to illicit opiates, preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals used in the manufacturing of illicit opiates in Afghanistan, and reducing drug abuse and drug dependence.

2. Regional cooperation

667. In November 2011, Ministers of the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan held a meeting in Kabul to strengthen regional security cooperation to combat threats posed by illicit drugs amid concerns over the rapidly rising quantity of opium

production in Afghanistan and its increasing value. The confidence-building meeting was aimed at promoting the exchange of information and intelligence-led operations targeting major transnational trafficking networks. All parties have been increasing their cross-border drug control capacities. Future joint operations and patrols will likely cover key maritime drug trafficking routes.

668. In November 2011, UNODC, together with the European Commission and the National Narcotics Control Commission of China, conducted a debriefing on operation Targeted Anti-trafficking Regional Communication, Expertise and Training (TARCET) III held in Beijing. Participants in the debriefing discussed the results of the operation to counter trafficking in precursors, involving Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and all Central Asian States. Seizures in Afghanistan of 13 tons of acetic anhydride, 3.5 tons of acetic acid, 7 tons of hydrochloric acid, 2 tons of sodium carbonate and 1 ton of ammonium chloride during the operational period were reported. At the meeting, the Islamic Republic of Iran also reported having seized 1.5 tons of acetic anhydride. Weaknesses in information exchange continue to hinder backtracking investigations to identify the source of diversion and intelligence-led operations related to precursor chemicals in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, particularly as trafficking in chemicals is a global phenomenon. Therefore, to enhance intelligence-sharing, particularly among those agencies in a position to take action, the Board encourages all Member States to communicate all illicit chemical-related incidents through the Board's secure online global communication platform: PICS.

669. The Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia was held in November 2011, following preparatory meetings in Oslo and Kabul in October. At the Conference, the declaration entitled "Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan" was adopted by 13 participating States in the region and supported by 22 other States, institutions and organizations present as observers. The Istanbul Process reaffirms general principles of regional cooperation and contains a list of seven specific confidence-building measures for consideration by the countries of the region, including one measure in the area of counter-narcotics.

670. The International Conference on Afghanistan, held in Bonn, Germany in December 2011, marking a decade of partnership between Afghanistan and the international community, was attended by 85 States and 15 international organizations. Participants discussed issues related to future regional cooperation; governance; the peace process; economic and social development;

security, including terrorism-related issues; and illicit drug trafficking. Afghan authorities will assume responsibility for the security of their country, fully taking over from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), at the end of 2014. The international community has committed to the continued support of Afghanistan beyond 2014.

671. The forty-sixth session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East was held in Vienna in December 2011. It was attended by representatives of Azerbaijan, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, along with numerous observers. The Subcommittee discussed and made recommendations regarding the ongoing impact of illicit drug production in the Near and Middle East, improved coordination and models of drug demand reduction, developing and enacting legislation to allow for coordinated cross-border law enforcement activities such as controlled deliveries, strengthening the monitoring of precursor chemicals and synthetic drug trafficking, and supporting the implementation of evidence-based drug treatment throughout the region.

672. In December 2011, UNODC launched the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, focusing on creating a broad international coalition to counter opium poppy cultivation, drug production and trafficking. The programme includes a comprehensive set of responses aimed at addressing the nexus of poverty and drug cultivation, curbing illicit drug demand, sharing intelligence and targeting high-value traffickers.

673. A meeting organized by UNODC in Almaty in February 2012 provided an opportunity for the heads of counter-narcotics operational units from Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to review the current state of multilateral operations. The meeting, attended by senior officials from police, customs and drug control agencies, in addition to international counterparts from 30 countries, international and regional organizations, focused on sharing information on targeted transnational drug trafficking groups, reviewing regional cooperation efforts related to precursor control in Afghanistan and developing a list of specific drug control activities for 2012.

674. In May 2012, the Ministerial Meeting of the Tripartite Initiative brought together drug control authorities from Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to improve regional cross-border counter-narcotic activities. Regional partners are

promoting counter-narcotics cooperation by strengthening border controls between Afghanistan and Tajikistan through the provision of training and equipment and by making available legal, health-related and law enforcement expertise to Governments in the region.

675. The active participation of countries in the Middle East in regional and subregional cooperation meetings under the umbrella of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the Arab Office for Narcotic Affairs, as well as close cooperation between law enforcement agencies, including INTERPOL, the Arab Criminal Police Bureau and the Arab Office for Narcotic Affairs resulted in successful cross-border drug control operations and numerous controlled deliveries leading to the dismantling of international drug networks.

676. The first meeting of the steering committee of the regional programme for the Arab States for the period 2011-2015 was held under the auspices of the League of Arab States in Cairo in May 2012. The steering committee consists of the League of Arab States and its relevant councils, UNODC and the 18 States included in the UNODC regional programme. The steering committee called upon all States concerned to strengthen regional cooperation on drug control, in particular in the light of the Arab region's increased exposure to drug trafficking and organized crime in 2011, as reported by Member States.

677. At the 21st INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference, held in Amman in September 2012, measures were approved by senior law enforcement officials from Asia, the South Pacific and the Middle East to enhance collective police responses and the capacity of law enforcement authorities to enhance regional and international security. Delegates from some 40 countries reviewed a range of law enforcement issues including terrorism, cybercrime, trafficking in persons, integrity in sports, maritime piracy, trafficking in illicit goods, pharmaceutical crime and environmental security.

678. The Board takes note with satisfaction of the increasing number of bilateral agreements and memorandums of understandings signed between countries in the region. All countries in the region affirm that they are committed to regional and international cooperation for drug control in the Middle East.

3. National legislation, policy and action

679. In 2012, the Government of Afghanistan launched the National Drug Demand Reduction Policy for the period 2012-2016, prepared by the Ministry of

Counter-Narcotics, as the competent national authority, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled. The policy addresses drug abuse prevention and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug-affected persons and recommends the establishment of regional drug treatment centres and an increase in drug prevention and treatment capacity by up to 40 per cent over the next five years. In addition, drug treatment services will become part of the regular public health services budget in order to improve funding stability.

680. In February 2012, the Government of Afghanistan also launched the National Alternative Livelihood Policy, aimed at strengthening and diversifying rural livelihoods by tackling the root causes and drivers of dependency on illicit crops. The policy has six main objectives: undertake comprehensive, locally-adapted and practical interventions focusing on rural communities affected by the Government's counter-narcotics campaigns; provide assistance to farmers, labourers and rural communities that have taken the decision not to engage in the production of narcotics; maintain the "opium poppy-free" status of communities that have opted not to engage in the illicit cultivation and production of narcotics; reduce the cultivation of opium poppy and production of narcotics; prevent the spread of illicit opium poppy cultivation; and achieve a steady reduction in illicit opium poppy cultivation.

681. In May 2012, the Government of Afghanistan launched its new Anti-Drug Trafficking Policy, which concentrates law enforcement resources on high-value drug traffickers and their organizations. The policy prioritizes asset forfeiture, improves existing processes for opium poppy eradication, enhances the capacities of counter-narcotics agencies, strengthens border controls, enhances regional cooperation and coordination among counter-narcotics institutions, establishes a fund to provide incentives to law enforcement authorities and seeks to improve the conditions of those incarcerated for drug offences. The policy's objectives include increasing the drug seizure rate from the current 0.5-1.5 per cent to a minimum of 12 per cent and increasing the precursors seizure rate to between 30 and 50 per cent within five years.

682. The Board continues to be concerned about the lack of reliable data and information being collected on the nature and extent of drug abuse in the Middle East, as it hinders the provision of adequate treatment and prevention programmes. In that connection, the Board welcomes the signing in 2011 of a five-year agreement

between the United Arab Emirates and UNODC to carry out an in-depth analysis of shortages in the availability of treatment for drug addiction in the country.

683. In the area of reduction of illicit drug demand, the Board notes that UNODC and the Ministry of the Interior of the United Arab Emirates jointly established the rapid situation assessment and data collection process. The Board encourages all Governments in the region to start or to continue to assess the patterns of and trends in drug abuse in their country in order to better assist the authorities in addressing the drug problem, including the diversion of pharmaceutical preparations; to do so will reinforce efforts in drug demand reduction. In that context, the Board would like to stress the importance of establishing epidemiological data collection and improving the health-care system's capabilities in the area of prevention and treatment.

684. The Board welcomes the fact that the Jordanian law on drugs drafted in April 2012 recommends that first-time drug users be sent to a rehabilitation centre instead of prison.

685. In an effort to address the challenging problem of a fast-developing synthetic drug market, the Government of Israel amended the Dangerous Drug Ordinance to include analogues of amphetamine, methamphetamine, cathinone and methcathinone.

686. Jordan has taken measures to increase public awareness of dangers of drugs by involving governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, correction and rehabilitation centres and youth clubs. Actions taken in 2011 included courses aimed at preventing drug abuse, lectures and fairs to raise awareness, and media programmes and press briefings.

687. The Syrian Arab Republic established stringent procedures for the control of some pharmaceutical preparations containing trihexyphenidyl (benzhexol), codeine and dextropropoxyphene, which may be dispensed only upon receipt of a renewable prescription for a maximum of seven days supply at each dispensation. Severe penalties are established for pharmacists contravening those procedures, although it is unlikely that the law will be enforceable throughout the country under the current circumstances.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

(a) Narcotic drugs

688. UNODC estimates that in 2012, illicit opium poppy cultivation totalled 154,000 ha in Afghanistan, an increase

of 18 per cent over 2011. That amount represents an estimated 64 per cent of global cultivation. An opium poppy disease that damaged the harvest significantly in 2010 reappeared again in 2012, and, along with adverse weather, decreased the opium yield, particularly in the eastern, western and southern regions of the country.

689. Opium poppy cultivation in 2012 increased in most of the significant opium poppy-growing provinces and remained concentrated in the south, notably Helmand province. However, growth in cultivation in the central and eastern provinces was noted. Beyond Helmand and Kandahar, attention should be given by the Government to the increasing cultivation trends in Nangarhar and Badakhshan provinces, which previously had significant areas of illicit opium poppy cultivation.

690. The number of opium poppy-free provinces remained unchanged in 2012, with 17 cultivating opium poppy in excess of 100 ha. Increases were also seen among the provinces with the largest areas of opium-poppy cultivation, with cultivation in Helmand and Farah increasing 19 and 58 per cent, respectively. A slight decrease was noted in Kandahar. However, the area under cultivation remained elevated, with more than 24,000 ha of opium poppy cultivation.

691. Afghanistan accounted for nearly three quarters of estimated global opium production, even as production decreased to 3,700 tons in 2012, compared with 5,800 tons in 2011. The *Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2012*, a survey jointly carried out by the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics of Afghanistan and UNODC, revealed a 49-per-cent drop in the farm-gate value of opium over the past year, which was estimated to have had a value of over \$700 million in 2012, equivalent to 4 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

692. In 2012, the farm-gate price for dry opium had decreased to \$196 per kilogram, a 19-per-cent drop from 2011. Even with the decrease, 64 per cent of village leaders surveyed in 2012 cited the high income from opium as the predominant reason for growing opium poppy.

693. The price of illicit dry and fresh opium declined in 2012 — but continues to far outweigh prices of licit agricultural products — making illicit opium poppy cultivation more profitable than licit crops for farmers. None of Afghanistan's licit crops can match the gross income per hectare generated by the illicit cultivation of opium poppy. Additionally, UNODC production and price data for 2011 indicate that gross revenue generated from illicit cannabis cultivation surpassed that of opium poppy, with households, numbering 65,000, reportedly earning \$8,100 per hectare annually from cannabis plant

cultivation, which is significantly greater than the 2012 estimated per hectare earnings generated from opium poppy cultivation (\$4,600).

694. The Government of Afghanistan estimated that in 2011, the livelihoods of some 191,500 rural households depended on the growing of illicit drug crops, primarily opium poppy. Among the surveyed villages, however, only 30 per cent had received some form of agricultural assistance (e.g. seeds, fertilizers and irrigation) in the preceding year. Without sustainable alternatives for households currently engaged in the illicit cultivation of drug crops and production of narcotics, it will be difficult to achieve regional security, governance, development and counter-narcotics objectives.

695. Research continues to suggest that there is a strong correlation between security and agricultural assistance and the likelihood of opium poppy cultivation. Villages that reported good levels of security and that had received government-sponsored agricultural assistance in the previous year were significantly less likely to have grown opium poppy in 2012 than were villages with a low level of security and that had not received assistance. Additionally, villagers who had received materials to raise awareness of the problems associated with opium poppy were found to be significantly less likely to grow illicit opium poppy. The continuing decreases in the force levels of ISAF and the planned handover by ISAF of security responsibility to the Afghan Government by 2014 could impact on security in parts of the country, and that, combined with an increase in opium prices, could foster instability and lead to greater levels of illicit drug production.

696. As of August 2012, a total of 9,672 ha of Governor-led eradication of fields of opium poppy cultivation were verified in 18 provinces of Afghanistan, an increase of 154 per cent over the area eradicated in the same period in 2011, with large increases in verifiable eradication noted in Helmand, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces. Increases were due to pre-planting and pre-eradication campaigns conducted by the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and to its improved coordination with other Government ministries. However, eradicating illicit opium poppy crops is not without risk to the eradication teams involved. Farmers' resistance to operations took the form of direct attacks, mine explosions, the flooding of poppy fields and violent demonstrations. In 2012, as of June, 102 lives had been lost and 127 people had been injured during eradication efforts.

697. Pakistan reports limited illicit cultivation of opium poppy and Government eradication efforts, with an estimated 362 ha of opium poppy cultivation in 2011, the

lowest levels in a decade. Pakistan is affected far more by cross-border trafficking in illegal drugs and precursor chemicals, which have a local value estimated at between \$910 million and \$1.2 billion. Reports suggest that 40 per cent of heroin trafficked from Afghanistan transits Pakistan (the so-called southern route), 35 per cent transits the Islamic Republic of Iran (the Balkan route) and a quarter transits various Central Asian countries (the northern route). It appears that traffickers are increasingly using Central Asian railways to transport opiates to the Russian Federation.

698. Turkey continues to seize significant amounts of opiates originating in Afghanistan and destined for markets in Europe, and in 2011 approximately 98 per cent of opiates seized by the country's authorities were in the form of heroin (6.4 tons). Turkey reports that the number of seizures of all opioids has been in decline, with heroin seizures at their lowest level in the past five years and the number of opium seizures dropping by 80 per cent between 2007 and 2011. As was the case in 2010, no seizures of morphine base were reported in 2011. Decreases were attributed to lower production in Afghanistan, the increased use of air and sea cargo shipping methods and trafficking routes avoiding Turkey, as traffickers responded to enhanced law enforcement efforts in that country.

699. Heroin seizures remain low in the Middle East, but the global trend in 2011 showed an increase, particularly in Saudi Arabia, which reported total seizures of 111 kg, followed by Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic (92 kg each) and Qatar (12 kg).

700. In 2011, the authorities of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan detained a total of 15,690 people for suspected involvement in illicit drug offences, 22 per cent fewer than in 2010. Compared with 2010, opioid seizures in those countries declined 21 per cent in 2011, to 4.3 tons. However, total drug seizures increased 89 per cent, to 91.6 tons, driven by a substantial increase in seizures of cannabis, including cannabis resin.

701. Three of the five countries most commonly reported worldwide as the origin of cannabis resin are located in West Asia, namely Afghanistan, Lebanon and Pakistan. According to UNODC, information on the origin of seized cannabis resin indicates that Afghanistan is the second most commonly identified supplier of cannabis resin, after Morocco. Cannabis cultivation and cannabis resin production may also be spreading, with more than half of Afghanistan's provinces now cultivating cannabis plant. Cannabis plant cultivation in Afghanistan in 2011 covered 8,000-17,000 ha, with subsequent

cannabis resin production estimated at 1,000-1,900 tons. The demand for Afghan cannabis resin, irrespective of quality, also appears to have risen in recent years, with average farm-gate prices for the highest quality resin increasing from around \$35 per kg in 2009 to \$86 per kg in 2010 and \$95 per kg in 2011.

702. Illicit cultivation of cannabis plant continued in some areas throughout the Middle East, in particular Lebanon. According to officials in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, some illicit cultivation of cannabis plant, although limited, takes place in the West Bank.

703. The volume of both cannabis resin and herbal cannabis intercepted in the Middle East increased in 2011. Most of the seizures in 2011 were reported by Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which seized 1.7 tons and 23 tons, respectively. Yemen, for the second consecutive year, was identified as the source country.

704. Although the number of seizures involving opium in the region decreased, quantities seized in Qatar in 2011 increased significantly (to 535 kg) compared with previous years (less than 5 kg). Most of the seizures were carried out at the Doha international airport and involved passengers from Bangladesh, Egypt and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

705. Cocaine seizures in West Asia are reported to be occurring with increasing frequency and to be of increasingly large amounts, with cocaine seizures increasing more than 20 times between 2001 and 2010. In 2011, Turkey seized a record 589 kg of cocaine — nearly double the amount in 2010 — and reported that the number of cocaine seizures had increased dramatically, as well as the average amount per seizure. Qatar, which has reported no cocaine seizures, was frequently identified as a transit area for cocaine trafficked from Brazil in 2011, often destined for countries in East Asia.

706. The new trend of smuggling of cocaine observed in Jordan in 2010 continued in 2011. However, the quantities seized were less: in 2011, Jordan seized 1.4 kg of cocaine compared with more than 4.2 kg in 2010. Cocaine enters Jordan from South America via European airports, destined for Israel, Lebanon and other countries in the region.

(b) Psychotropic substances

707. West Asia has experienced considerable growth in trafficking in and seizures of amphetamines, and, as was reported in the report of the Board for 2011, a particular concern is the rapid emergence and growth of

methamphetamine manufacture, trafficking and abuse throughout the region. Significant increases were seen in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the country reported seizing 3.9 tons of methamphetamine — nearly triple the previous year's totals — placing it among the countries seizing the largest quantities of the substance globally. Iranian authorities reported dismantling several significant methamphetamine trafficking organizations in 2011. In 2010, 166 illicit clandestine methamphetamine laboratories were reported to have been dismantled.

708. According to UNODC, the region accounted for nearly a quarter of the global amphetamine (amphetamine and methamphetamine) seizures. In 2010, large amphetamine seizures totalling 500 kg or more were reported in Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2011, customs authorities in Saudi Arabia reported seizures of tablets sold as counterfeit Captagon and amphetamine totalling 20,585 kg — the highest amounts ever recorded — while Jordanian authorities reported seizures of 905 kg. In all cases, the drugs were en route to Saudi Arabia, with 48 per cent originating in the Syrian Arab Republic and 44 per cent originating in Jordan.

709. Saudi Arabia continues to be the main country of destination for amphetamine sold as counterfeit Captagon tablets. These tablets are smuggled into the country through Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2011, the volume of amphetamine (including Captagon) seized in the Middle East amounted to nearly 22 tons, and according to the World Customs Organization, seizures made in Saudi Arabia constituted nearly 95 per cent of the total, followed by Jordan. According to Government sources, total seizures of amphetamine in Saudi Arabia amounted to 11.4 tons, followed by the Syrian Arab Republic (3.8 tons) and Jordan (1.8 tons).

710. Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic continue to be the main countries of origin of the seized amphetamine. Furthermore, in the light of the seizures reported in Iraq, the amphetamine market seems to be expanding in that country.

711. According to the World Customs Organization, the quantity of methamphetamine seized decreased sharply in 2011 compared with previous years, and a total of 31 kg were intercepted in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, MDMA (“ecstasy”) seizures in the region increased, according to Bahrain and Yemen. In all cases, the drug was found in international airports in travellers' belongings. Origins cited included Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan and Thailand.

712. In 2010, Jordan reported for the first time the seizure of methamphetamine (2 kg), and seizures of the substance reported by Israel have increased over the past few years.

713. Most countries in the region continue to report the abuse of prescription drugs containing psychotropic substances such as benzodiazepines and stimulants such as methylphenidate. In Israel, Ritalin (methylphenidate) is mainly abused among the student community.

(c) Precursors

714. Most acetic anhydride reported seized was destined for use in Afghanistan. Based on a limited number of backtracking investigations, combined with an analysis of pre-export notification patterns, the source of diverted acetic anhydride in the region is best characterized as diversion from domestic distribution channels followed by subsequent smuggling into Afghanistan. The Board urges increased use of backtracking investigations of seizures of acetic anhydride and other scheduled chemicals, particularly those found in illicit heroin laboratories, to determine their source of diversion. Results of such investigations should be shared with the Board through the global Project Cohesion mechanism and among other relevant regional and international partners.

715. Data collected by the Afghanistan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and UNODC suggest that the price of illicit acetic anhydride, as estimated in May 2011 (\$416 per litre) declined by about half by May 2012, to between \$165 and \$232 per litre, depending on the perceived quality of the substance. Given the inherent value of illicit precursor price data in understanding the dynamics of illicit markets, the Board recommends the systematic collection and monitoring of prices of illicit precursors by Governments, as is typically done for illicit drugs.

716. The Government of Jordan informed the Board that the import of P-2-P had been prohibited as of May 2012. The country previously had the highest annual legitimate requirements for the substance in the world, purportedly for use in cleaning supplies for export to Iraq. The Board had repeatedly expressed concerns to the Government over its unusual use and the high likelihood of diversion into the illicit manufacture of amphetamine, the psychoactive ingredient found in counterfeit Captagon tablets seized in mass quantities throughout the region. Iraqi authorities no longer allow importation of P-2-P-based cleaning products.

717. Several countries in West Asia continue to report some of the highest annual legitimate requirements for

imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, precursors that can be used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Syrian Arab Republic and Pakistan have some of the highest annual legitimate requirements for importation of pseudoephedrine of any country. Pakistan has the fourth highest annual legitimate requirements for ephedrine worldwide, and since March 2012, the alleged diversion of significant amounts of ephedrine have led to high-profile investigations in the country. In 2011, the Islamic Republic of Iran reported several significant seizures of ephedrine originating in the neighbouring countries of Iraq and Pakistan. The Board encourages all Governments to communicate all chemical-related incidents through PICS, the Board's secure online global communication platform.

718. The Board continues to be concerned by Governments in high-risk regions failing to implement the most fundamental tools to counter trafficking in chemicals. Many countries in West Asia are not registered with the Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system, which provides real-time notification of pending exports of chemicals that can be used in illicit drug production. Of equal concern is the fact that many countries in the region — including those registered with and actively using the PEN Online system — have not invoked article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention, meaning that exporting countries are not required under international law to notify importing Governments of any pending precursor shipments. These fundamental anti-trafficking tools are provided to all Governments free of charge. The Board calls upon all Governments that have not yet done so to register with the PEN Online system and invoke article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention for all substances in Tables I and II without further delay. The international community's development assistance efforts should include any technical assistance required to enable States effectively to take part in these Board-managed precursor control mechanisms.

(d) Substances not under international control

719. Substances not under international control, in particular khat, continue to be seized in the Middle East. In 2011, a total of 250 kg of khat, destined for Saudi Arabia, was seized, almost all by the Yemeni customs services. Abuse of khat is also reported in Israel.

720. Solvent and inhalant abuse is reported in some countries, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, a large proportion of patients seeking care for drug abuse in rehabilitation centres are being treated for

solvent abuse (glue and gasoline), with a reported growing number of school students among those patients.

5. Abuse and treatment

721. Many countries of West Asia have high levels of opiate abuse, which can be seen in both direct and indirect estimates of annual prevalence of drug abuse and treatment admissions data, with indications that opiate abuse is increasing, particularly abuse of heroin. Prevalence of heroin abuse is particularly high in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. UNODC estimates the prevalence of opiate abuse in Afghanistan, excluding abuse of opioids and pharmaceutical opioids, as among the highest in the world, with prevalence of past-year abuse at between 2.3 and 3 per cent of the general population aged 15-64 years.

722. The Afghanistan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics reports that the number of drug abusers in the country is increasing, especially abusers of heroin and opium. From 2005 to 2009, the number of heroin abusers increased by 140 per cent, and the number of opium abusers increased by 53 per cent. The Government estimates that more than a third of the 940,000 drug abusers in Afghanistan live in Kabul province. Studies of drug abusers in Kabul found that the most commonly abused drug types are opium, cannabis oil, heroin and pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances. Approximately 13 per cent of those studied were injecting drug abusers. Drug abuse initiation was most commonly due to the influence of friends or done out of curiosity, as indicated by 54 per cent of respondents.

723. Limited data are available on the prevalence of injecting drug use in the countries of the Middle East. There are estimates of 20,000 injecting drug abusers in Afghanistan and 2,000-4,000 injecting drug abusers in Lebanon. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, 18.7 per cent of the approximately 1.5 million drug abusers are injecting drug abusers, while other countries do not report data in that regard.

724. The prevalence of injecting drug abuse in prison settings is also largely unknown, except for the Islamic Republic of Iran, where data indicate that 1.2 per cent of male prisoners are injecting drug users. There is virtually no data available on the prevalence of HIV among injecting drug abusers in prisons, apart from the Islamic Republic of Iran, where there is an estimated rate of HIV infection of 8.1 per cent among inmates who had a history of injecting drugs.

725. In the Middle East, needle and syringe programmes are available in Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Lebanon and Oman, as well as the Occupied Palestinian Territory, whereas opioid substitution therapy is available only in Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel and Lebanon. Only the Islamic Republic of Iran has made available opioid substitution therapy in prisons and other closed settings. Lebanon is planning a pilot opioid substitution therapy programme in prisons.

726. The Islamic Republic of Iran reports that 2.7 per cent of the general population have abused opiates in the past year. Drugs abused included opium (34 per cent of drug abusers), "crack" heroin (a high purity form of heroin) (27 per cent), heroin (19 per cent), opium residue, analgesics and methamphetamine (4 per cent each) and cannabis (2 per cent). Abuse of methamphetamine, although substantially lower than abuse of opiates, has increased, and the Government reported that in 2011, the national drug addiction telephone hotline received more than 470,000 calls, with the most common questions related to crystalline methamphetamine.

727. New 2010 estimates of prevalence of drug abuse from Azerbaijan and Georgia showed that, since the time of the last survey (2-4 years ago) abuse of opioids (including opiates) has more than doubled in those countries. In Azerbaijan, past-year prevalence of opioid abuse for the general population aged 15-64 years increased from 0.2 per cent in 2008 to 1.3-1.7 per cent. The prevalence of past-year drug abuse in Georgia increased from 0.6 per cent in 2006 to 1.3-1.4 per cent.

728. Treatment admission data for most countries of West Asia show elevated levels of opioid abuse, mostly in the form of heroin abuse. Treatment admissions data reported by countries showed that the proportion of those entering treatment primarily for opioid abuse ranged widely, between 31 and 99 per cent of admissions since 2006, with the highest proportions of opioid abuse (rates of 75 and 97 per cent in two countries) found in Central Asian countries. Most recent UNODC estimates suggest that drug abusers in West Asia (excluding Turkey) consumed an estimated 12 per cent of all heroin consumed worldwide.

729. Treatment in Afghanistan is woefully limited, with existing drug treatment capacity equal to just 3 per cent of the estimated number of opiate abusers. There are 50 drug treatment centres located throughout the country providing treatment and aftercare services. There are nine treatment centres in Kabul province, with a total of 255 beds, of which two treatment centres are allocated for women and one for children; the remaining six centres are for men. The centres admit nearly 2,000 drug abusers

annually, with the average length of stay in treatment being just one month. Rates for successful treatment completion and relapse were not reported.

730. According to the Ministry of Health of Iraq, the number of drug abusers entering outpatient and inpatient treatment countrywide has steadily increased, with 1,462 individuals receiving treatment in 2008, 2,337 individuals in 2009, 5,668 individuals in 2010 and 2,761 individuals in the first half of 2011. The highest number of those entering treatment are from the southern district of Basra, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran, with trihexyphenidyl (benzhexol) being the most commonly reported substance of abuse. That substance is also found to be abused in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Board encourages the Governments of Afghanistan and Iraq, through assistance by the international community, to expand appropriate drug treatment services throughout their respective countries.

731. The Board notes with satisfaction that some countries in West Asia, such as Jordan and Lebanon, took measures to strengthen their treatment and rehabilitation centres. In particular, the involvement of both the private and public medical care sectors in order to reach the maximum number of drug abusers. In Lebanon, for example, drug addicts are treated in hospitals and by some non-governmental organizations. A study cited by the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health on drug addicts treated in hospitals and by non-governmental organizations in 2011 showed that a total of 1,411 patients were receiving treatment (1,206 males and 205 females). Almost 22 per cent of the patients are treated for abuse of tranquillizers, followed by alcohol (16 per cent), cocaine, amphetamine, cannabis oil, heroin and codeine, in descending order. In addition, among the patients, there were 119 cases of polydrug abuse.

D. Europe

1. Major developments

732. Abuse of illicit drugs in Europe has stabilized in recent years, although at a high level. Yet the emergence of new psychoactive substances, so-called “designer drugs” or “legal highs”, poses a major challenge, which many Governments are addressing by placing individual substances or groups of substances under national control. Adding to the challenge is the pattern of polydrug abuse: the consumption of illicit drugs in combination with other drugs, alcohol and non-controlled substances. In 2011, a significant increase in new cases of HIV infection based on a high HIV prevalence among injecting drug users was reported by Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.

733. Bosnia and Herzegovina has become an important regional trafficking hub for narcotics shipments. Main trafficking routes pass through Bulgaria, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Kosovo,³³ then through Montenegro and Serbia to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and from there to Croatia and Slovenia and Western European markets.

734. In October 2011, the Convention of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center entered into force, and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) Center became the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC). The main objective of SELEC is to provide support for the competent national authorities of Member States and enhance coordination in preventing and combating organized crime in the region. SELEC inherits the activities of the SECI Center: 12 years of operational activities, joint investigations, training sessions and strategic analysis covering the most sensitive criminal areas in the South-Eastern European region.

735. Detections of laboratories used for the illicit manufacture of amphetamines have increased, and the increased manufacturing capacity of some of these sites has been noted. The trend of methamphetamine replacing amphetamine in Northern and Western Europe appears to be continuing, and the quantity of methamphetamine seized in Northern Europe has increased significantly.

2. Regional cooperation

736. In November 2011, a dialogue on drugs was held between the European Union and the Russian Federation in Brussels. Also in November 2011, a regional ministerial conference on challenges and achievements related to regional and transnational cooperation in the fight against organized crime in South-Eastern Europe was held in Belgrade. The conference was attended by ministers of internal affairs and justice and public prosecutors from the region, as well as representatives of European Union member States and members of the European Commission. The participants agreed on the necessity of creating expert teams to monitor regional cooperation in criminal matters and judicial cooperation.

737. In November 2011, the regional anti-drug initiative, Operation Channel, carried out annually under the auspices of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), involved competent law enforcement, customs authorities and financial intelligence units of CSTO member States. In the course of the operation,

³³ All references to Kosovo in the present document should be understood to be in compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).