

Chapter IV.

Recommendations to Governments, the United Nations and other relevant international and regional organizations

697. The present chapter highlights, by subject, some of the key recommendations contained in chapters II and III of this report. For detailed recommendations regarding the economic consequences of drug abuse, please refer to the relevant paragraphs of chapter I, above. Specific recommendations related to controls over chemical precursors are contained in the 2013 report of the Board on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention (the report on precursors).

698. The Board would appreciate being informed of any action taken by Governments and international organizations to implement the recommendations below. In particular, feedback on experiences and difficulties in fulfilling treaty obligations or following the recommendations of the Board would be appreciated.

Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

699. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes are essential to reducing demand for drugs and ensuring social welfare, as part of a balanced approach to drug control.

Recommendation 1: The Board encourages Governments to ensure that an adequate and sustained level of investment is made in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes, even in times of financial austerity, noting the potential savings that can be made in terms of health and social costs that would otherwise result from drug abuse and addiction and drug-related crime and violence.

Cannabis

700. The Board is concerned that a number of States that are parties to the 1961 Convention are considering legislative proposals intended to regulate the use of cannabis for purposes other than medical and scientific ones. The Board stresses once again the importance of the universal implementation of the drug control treaties by all States parties and urges all parties to take the necessary measures to ensure full compliance with the international drug control treaties in the entirety of their respective territories.

Recommendation 2: The Board therefore urges all Governments and the international community to carefully consider the negative impact of such developments. In the Board's opinion, the likely increase in the abuse of cannabis will lead to an increase in related public health costs.

701. Medical cannabis programmes should be subject to the control measures for cannabis cultivation, trade and distribution set forth in articles 23, 28 and 30 of the 1961 Convention. However, the Board notes that in a number of countries, or jurisdictions within countries, that have established such programmes, the control measures mandated by that treaty are not being fully implemented, giving rise to non-compliance with treaty obligations.

Recommendation 3: The Board reiterates its urgent call to all those Governments of countries where medical cannabis schemes are in place or the establishment of such programmes is being considered to ensure the full

implementation, within the entirety of their territory, of the provisions of the 1961 Convention to which they are a party. Moreover, the Board invites WHO, in view of its mandate under the 1961 Convention, to evaluate the potential medical utility of cannabis and the extent to which cannabis poses dangers to human health.

Internet pharmacies

702. This year's annual report of the Board pays special attention to the issue of illegal Internet pharmacies (see chapter II.E. (Special topics), above, for details).

Recommendation 4: The Board calls on Governments to continue to take action against illegal Internet pharmacies by, inter alia, empowering the appropriate authorities to investigate and take appropriate legal action against such establishments and to further develop and promote good professional practices for the provision of pharmaceutical services via the Internet. In these efforts, the Board encourages Governments to use the *INCB Guidelines for Governments on Preventing the Illegal Sale of Internationally Controlled Substances through the Internet*.

Availability of opiates for pain relief

703. The latest data available indicate that the amount of opiate raw material available for the manufacturing of narcotic drugs for pain relief is more than sufficient to satisfy current demand levels as reported by Governments and that global stocks are increasing. The Board has continuously drawn attention to the fact that consumption of narcotic drugs for pain relief is concentrated within a limited number of countries.

Recommendation 5: The Board recommends that all Governments ensure that internationally controlled substances used for pain relief are accessible to people who need them and asks Governments to make every effort to facilitate this process, including through the education of health professionals. In that connection, the Board once again draws attention to the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board on the Availability of Internationally Controlled Drugs: Ensuring Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes*,²⁶ a supplement to its report for 2010, and invites Governments to make use, as appropriate, of its *Guide on Estimating Requirements for Substances under International Control*,²⁷ jointly developed with WHO.

²⁶United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.XI.7.

²⁷Available from www.incb.org.

Cooperation with industry

704. The Board notes that cooperation by the pharmaceutical industry with the competent national authorities is key to effective collection and reporting of mandatory statistical data on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Recommendation 6: The Board calls upon Governments to encourage dialogue with manufacturing and trading companies in the pharmaceutical industry with a view to improving the collection and reporting of statistical data on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

705. Cooperation with the chemical industry is also a key element of efforts to prevent the diversion of precursors for the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Recommendation 7: The Board urges Governments to develop partnerships with industry to prevent the illicit use of precursors by establishing mechanisms, to include legislation, codes of practice, memorandums of understanding and guidelines, with a view to enhancing cooperation between the authorities and relevant industries and increasing their vigilance with regard to suspicious trade in precursors. In that connection, the Board encourages Governments to make increased use of its *Guidelines for a Voluntary Code of Practice for the Chemical Industry*.²⁸

Prescription drugs

706. The Board draws the attention of States to the growing public health consequences of prescription drug abuse. The Board notes that in many countries, prevalence rates for the abuse of prescription drugs are comparable to, if not higher than, those for other internationally controlled drugs. Factors contributing to this phenomenon include the lack of training of medical professionals in prescribing practices, the lack of prescription monitoring schemes to prevent "doctor shopping" and diversion into illicit channels, insufficient public awareness initiatives to inform the public of the health dangers associated with prescription drug abuse, and the large amounts of unused and unneeded prescription drugs in circulation.

Recommendation 8: The Board urges all Governments that have not yet done so to consider developing comprehensive strategies to address prescription drug abuse, including the provision of adequate training for medical professionals and effective mechanisms for prescription

²⁸United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XI.17.

monitoring, as well as for ensuring the safe return and disposal of medications possessing psychoactive properties, particularly those containing narcotic drugs or psychoactive substances.

Import and export of controlled substances

707. The Board has noted that the format and the content of the import and export authorizations for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances currently in use in some countries do not fully meet the relevant requirements of the international drug control treaties. For example, some import and export authorizations do not contain all the mandatory elements of information listed in article 31 of the 1961 Convention and article 12 of the 1971 Convention. Furthermore, in some cases, Governments of importing countries have attempted to introduce an electronically generated “import authorization” that does not contain all the necessary information and does not allow the authorities of the exporting country to verify with certainty the authenticity of the related import authorization.

Recommendation 9: The Board calls upon Governments to review the format of their import and export authorizations currently in use and, wherever necessary, to bring them into full conformity with the international drug control treaties.

Precursors

708. The Board has raised the issue of the need to address the serious problems related to the domestic diversion of precursors, in particular acetic anhydride and pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, used to illicitly manufacture heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants, respectively. In accordance with article 12, paragraph 8, of the 1988 Convention, Governments should take adequate measures to control the domestic manufacture and distribution of scheduled chemicals. Such measures may include, for example, systems for end-user registration and declarations, adequate estimates of legitimate requirements for chemicals, including those with little or no legitimate use.

Recommendation 10: The Board recommends that Governments enhance their cooperation at all levels and exchange pertinent and timely information with all relevant national, regional and international counterparts to support domestic and international investigations targeting organized criminal networks for trafficking chemicals

and drugs and to enhance operational and information-sharing activities to that end.

Recommendation 11: The Board invites all Governments and relevant international bodies to use the existing tools provided by INCB to enhance precursor control, in particular PEN Online and PICS, the mechanisms and operations under Projects Prism and Cohesion and the INCB Precursors Task Force, for the exchange of information and common investigations.

Non-scheduled substances

709. The Board is concerned about the growing threat posed by non-scheduled precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances. The emergence of new psychoactive substances poses a particular challenge to the health and drug control systems of many countries. Given the current absence of an established international framework to deal with new psychoactive substances, the early and systematic sharing of all available operational information at the global level is essential to prevent their trafficking and diversion, to conduct investigations and prosecutions and, importantly, to alert authorities elsewhere of *modus operandi* and new trends.

Recommendation 12: Noting similarities in current issues related to precursors and to new psychoactive substances, the Board calls for urgent practical measures to effectively prevent and counter this new and dangerous trend and recommends that Governments support the development of adequate multilateral mechanisms to communicate to INCB incidents involving new psychoactive substances and products containing them, with a view to establishing or confirming emerging trends and contributing to devising early countermeasures.

710. The lack of pharmacological and toxicological data poses serious challenges to the assessment of the health and social risks associated with the use of new psychoactive substances. For example, in Europe, there is an unprecedented number and variety of substances, often sold as “bath salts”, “legal highs” or “plant food”, that have been identified over the past two years.

Recommendation 13: The Board is aware of isolated studies being conducted to generate the necessary data and therefore recommends that WHO play an active role in the coordination of relevant research and in the generation, collection and dissemination of the results of the assessments of the health risks of new psychoactive substances conducted by WHO and national and regional bodies.

Capacity-building in regulatory drug control and training of national drug control authorities

711. The Board reiterates the importance of training national competent authorities in order to help them comply with their obligations under the international drug control treaties. This need is particularly acute in several regions of the world.

Recommendation 14: The Board reiterates its recommendation that UNODC develop and implement a programme for building national capacities for the regulatory control of internationally controlled substances. It is essential that the training of national drug control administrators remain a major component of such a programme.

Promoting the consistent application of the international drug control treaties

712. The Board has noted with concern a draft law under consideration in Uruguay that, if adopted, would permit the production, sale and consumption of cannabis herb for non-medical use. The Board underlines that such legislation would not be in conformity with the international drug control treaties, particularly the 1961 Convention.

Recommendation 15: The Board urges the authorities of Uruguay to ensure that the country remains fully compliant with international law, which limits the use of narcotic drugs, including cannabis, exclusively to medical and scientific purposes. The Board further urges the Government of Uruguay to carefully consider all possible consequences on the health and welfare of its population, in particular its youth, before embarking on a course of action that would permit the sale of cannabis herb for non-medical purposes.

(Signed)
Raymond Yans
President

(Signed)
Andrés Finguerut
Secretary

713. The Board is concerned about the implementation of the ballot initiatives that legalized cannabis for non-medical purposes in two states of the United States in 2012. The Board underlines that such legislation is not in conformity with the international drug control treaties.

Recommendation 16: The Board urges the Government of the United States to continue to ensure the full implementation of the international drug control treaties on its entire territory.

714. Afghanistan remains the centre of illicit cultivation of opium poppy and illicit manufacture of heroin. Its importance as a source of cannabis resin for the world markets has also been growing. The Board, while noting the commitment expressed by the Government of Afghanistan, is concerned about the deterioration of the drug control situation in the country.

Recommendation 17: The Board urges the Government of Afghanistan to translate its national drug control strategy, as well as the drug policies it adopted in 2012, into concrete actions and ensure progress in the fields of alternative development, anti-drug trafficking and drug demand reduction.

715. The political situation in West Africa in 2012 and 2013 was marked by serious security risks, including drug smuggling. The territories of several countries of the region are being exploited by transnational criminal networks for trafficking of drugs, especially cocaine, due to the weak law enforcement and security responses in those countries.

Recommendation 18: The Board calls upon all Governments and relevant international and regional organizations, including UNODC, ECOWAS and INTERPOL, to step up their efforts to address the threat posed by drug trafficking and organized crime in the region.

(Signed)
Werner Sipp
Rapporteur