

Chapter II.

Functioning of the international drug control system

A. Promoting the consistent application of the international drug control treaties

62. The fundamental goal of the international drug control system is assuring the health and welfare of humankind. That goal is to be achieved through two, twin actions: (a) ensuring the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and, in the case of precursor chemicals, ensuring their legitimate industrial use; and (b) preventing the diversion of controlled substances into illicit channels.

63. To monitor compliance with the international drug control treaties, the Board examines action taken by Governments to implement the treaty provisions aimed at achieving the overall goals of the conventions. Over the years, the treaty provisions have been supplemented with additional control measures adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to enhance their effectiveness. In the present section, the Board highlights action that needs to be taken to implement the provisions of the international drug control treaties, describes problems encountered in that regard and provides specific recommendations on how to deal with those problems.

1. Status of adherence to the international drug control treaties

64. Although there were no new accessions to the three international drug control conventions in the period under review, they remain among the most

widely ratified international instruments, with near-universal ratification by States.

65. The 1961 Convention as amended has been ratified or acceded to by 186 States, with the following States having yet to become parties: Cook Islands, Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Chad has ratified the 1961 Convention in its unamended form.

66. The number of States parties to the 1971 Convention is 184. The States not yet having acceded to it are the Cook Islands, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Kiribati, Liberia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

67. With 191 parties (190 States and the European Union), the 1988 Convention is the most widely ratified of the three international drug control conventions. The States that have not yet acceded to it are Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan and Tuvalu.

68. The Board continues to engage with States having yet to become party to one or more of the international drug control conventions with the aim of supporting them to accede to these important instruments without delay and to ensure the comprehensive incorporation of the conventions into national law.

69. As the Board has repeatedly pointed out, the three international drug control conventions provide a common normative framework for effective international drug control, in particular in their capacity as the legal basis for international cooperation, extradition and mutual

legal assistance. **The Board encourages countries not yet having done so to take positive steps towards accession to the three international drug control conventions and stands prepared to assist them in whatever manner possible.**

2. Changes to the scheduling of substances under international control

Narcotic drugs

70. At its sixty-third session, in March 2020, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, by its decisions 63/2 and 63/3, included two new substances, namely crotonylfentanyl and valeryl fentanyl, in Schedule I of the 1961 Convention as amended. In accordance with article 3, paragraph 7, of that Convention, that decision was communicated by the Secretary-General to all Governments, WHO and the Board on 7 May 2020 and became effective with respect to each party upon receipt of that notification.

Psychotropic substances

71. Also at its sixty-third session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs decided, in its decisions 63/4, 63/5, 63/6, 63/7, 63/8, 63/9, 63/10, 63/11, 63/12 and 63/13, to include 10 new substances in the schedules of the 1971 Convention. DOC was included in Schedule I; seven substances, namely, AB-FUBINACA, 5F-AMB-PINACA (5F-AMB, 5F-MMB-PINACA), 5F-MDMB-PICA (5F-MDMB-2201), 4-F-MDMB-BINACA, 4-CMC (4-chloromethcathinone, clephedrone), *N*-ethylhexedrone and *alpha*-PHP were included in Schedule II; and two substances, namely, flualprazolam and etizolam, were included in Schedule IV. With those additions, the total number of substances controlled under the 1971 Convention was brought to 159.

72. The scheduling decisions became fully effective on 3 November 2020, namely, 180 days after the date of communication by the Secretary-General.

Precursor chemicals

73. At the same session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the President of INCB announced the Board's decision to recommend that MAPA, a pre-precursor used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine and methamphetamine, be placed under international control.

74. The Board had conducted an assessment of MAPA on the basis of information received from 50 Governments and concluded that it was a substitute chemical for several amphetamine and methamphetamine precursors listed in Table I of the 1988 Convention, namely P-2-P, APAAN and the recently controlled APAA. MAPA started to emerge in late 2017 and, since November 2018, an increase in the number of seizures and amounts seized has been reported.

75. The emergence of MAPA is closely linked to an increase in scrutiny of APAA. MAPA is therefore another illustration of the concept of designer precursors, namely, close chemical relatives of controlled precursors that are purpose-made and can be easily converted into a controlled precursor. Similar to APAAN, APAA and other designer precursors, MAPA does not have any legitimate use and is therefore not traded widely and regularly, although it is advertised by a number of online suppliers.

76. At its sixty-third session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its decision 63/1, decided to include MAPA, including its optical isomers, in Table I of the 1988 Convention.

77. The number of seizures and the amounts seized have been a concern since the emergence of MAPA in 2017. With the scheduling of MAPA, INCB hopes to see an impact on the availability of the substance for illicit drug manufacturing purposes, and a first step towards an encompassing solution to address designer precursors.

78. **The Board welcomes the efforts made by the Governments that have already put the recently scheduled substances under control and urges all other Governments to amend the lists of substances controlled at the national level accordingly and to apply to those substances all control measures required under the three international drug control treaties.**

3. Submission of information by Governments to the Board

(a) Statistical reports for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals

79. In accordance with its mandate, the Board publishes its annual report and the report on the implementation

of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.⁶⁵ The Board also publishes technical reports that provide Governments with an analysis of statistical information on the manufacture, consumption, utilization and stocks of and trade in internationally controlled substances, together with an analysis of estimates and assessments of requirements for those substances.

80. The Board's reports and technical publications are produced on the basis of information that parties to the international drug control treaties are obligated to submit. In addition, pursuant to resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Governments voluntarily provide information in order to facilitate an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the functioning of the international drug and precursor control system.

81. The data and other information received from Governments enable the Board to monitor licit activities involving narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and to evaluate treaty compliance and the overall functioning of the international drug and precursor control system. On the basis of its analysis, the Board makes recommendations to improve the workings of the system with a view to ensuring the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical, scientific and industrial needs, while at the same time preventing their diversion from licit into illicit channels.

Narcotic drugs

82. As at 1 November 2020, the Board had received annual statistical reports from 158 States (both parties and non-parties) and territories on the production, manufacture, consumption, stocks and seizures of narcotic drugs covering the calendar year 2019 (form C), or about 74 per cent of those requested. That number represents a decline compared with previous years (173 reports covering the calendar year 2018 were received in 2019 and 172 reports covering the calendar year 2017 were received in 2018). The decrease is probably due to difficulties experienced in the collection of data by the competent national authorities as a result of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected countries in all regions of the world. Most large manufacturing, consuming and exporting countries, however, submitted statistics.

83. A total of 109 Governments, or 51 per cent of all Governments, submitted their data on time, that is, by the deadline of 30 June 2020, which was more than in

2019 (102 Governments) but less than in 2018 (113 Governments). As at 1 November 2020, 56 Governments (26 per cent) – that is, 49 countries and seven territories – had not submitted their annual statistics for 2019. It is expected that several additional countries and territories will be submitting the data over the coming months. Most countries and territories that have not submitted their reports are in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and Oceania and some are in conflict and post-conflict situations, which, in addition to a general lack of human and financial resources arising from such situations, presents additional obstacles to drug control efforts.

84. Most countries that produce, manufacture, import, export or consume large amounts of narcotic drugs submitted annual statistics, although of differing quality. Accurate and timely reporting is an important indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of drug control systems and the availability of good data is vital for the Board to accurately carry out the monitoring function accorded to it under the international drug control treaties. The quality of some data is a concern for the Board, particularly if they are data from major producing and manufacturing countries, as they indicate deficiencies in national mechanisms for regulating and monitoring internationally controlled substances. **The Board urges Governments to continue to strengthen their national mechanisms to monitor the cultivation, production and manufacture of and trade in controlled substances. This may be achieved, in part, by improving and developing national data-collection systems, training staff of the competent national authorities and ensuring close cooperation with companies licensed to deal with internationally controlled substances.**

85. As at 1 November 2020, the complete set of four quarterly statistics of imports and exports of narcotic drugs for 2019 (form A) had been received from 175 Governments (162 countries and 13 territories), or about 75 per cent of the 213 Governments requested. In addition, 13 Governments (about 6 per cent) had submitted at least one quarterly report. A total of 26 countries (about 12 per cent) had failed to submit any quarterly statistics for 2019.

Psychotropic substances

86. As at 1 November 2020, annual statistical reports for 2019 on psychotropic substances (form P) had been submitted to the Board in accordance with article 16 of the 1971 Convention by 170 countries and territories. Of the 197 countries and territories subject to the reporting requirements of the Convention, 154 (78 per cent)

⁶⁵E/INCB/2020/4.

submitted their annual statistical report for 2019. Furthermore, of the 13 territories not subject to the reporting requirements of the Convention, 5 (38 per cent) submitted their annual statistical report for 2019. In addition, 114 Governments voluntarily submitted all four quarterly statistical reports on imports and exports of substances listed in Schedule II of the 1971 Convention for 2019, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1981/7, and a further 33 Governments submitted at least one quarterly report for 2019. **The Board notes with satisfaction the significantly improved rate of submission of the annual statistical reports for 2019 on psychotropic substances and the number of non-party countries and territories that have submitted an annual report.**

87. While the majority of Governments regularly submit their mandatory and voluntary statistical reports, the cooperation of some has not been satisfactory. In 2020, about 64 per cent of the countries that submitted form P for 2019 did so by the deadline of 30 June 2020. A number of countries informed the Board that, owing to operational constraints stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, they would be delayed in providing the required statistical reports for 2019. However, ultimately, most countries were able to submit their reports in time for inclusion in the annual and technical reports of the Board.

88. The Board notes with concern the high percentage of countries and territories that did not furnish form P. A total of 19 countries and territories in Africa failed to furnish form P for 2019. Likewise, seven countries and territories in Oceania, nine countries and territories in Central America and the Caribbean, four countries in South America, four countries in Asia and one country in Europe failed to furnish form P for 2019. Form P for 2019 was furnished by all countries in North America.

89. The Board takes note of the countries that have provided data regarding their use of psychotropic substances for the manufacture of preparations exempted from some measures of control pursuant to article 3 of the 1971 Convention: 10 countries reported using 29 substances for such purposes in 2019. **The Board recalls recommendation 13 from its annual report for 2019, in which it called upon Governments to ensure that all aspects of article 3 of the 1971 Convention were correctly implemented if they wished to exempt a preparation from certain measures of control.**

90. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 1985/15 and 1987/30, requested Governments to provide the Board with details on trade (data broken down by countries of origin and destination) in substances listed

in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention in their annual statistical reports on psychotropic substances. As at 1 November 2020, complete details on such trade had been submitted by 149 Governments (88 per cent of all submissions of form P for 2019). A further 21 Governments submitted blank forms or forms containing incomplete trade data for 2019.

91. The Board notes with appreciation that a number of countries have already submitted consumption data for psychotropic substances on a voluntary basis, in accordance with Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 54/6.

92. For 2019, a total of 88 countries and territories submitted data on the consumption of some or all psychotropic substances. **The Board appreciates the cooperation of the Governments concerned and calls upon all Governments to report on the consumption of psychotropic substances on an annual basis, pursuant to Commission resolution 54/6, as such data are essential for an improved evaluation of the availability of psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes.**

93. The Board notes with appreciation that reports on seizures of psychotropic substances were furnished by the Governments of India and Romania. **The Board acknowledges the interdiction efforts of the Governments concerned and calls upon all Governments to furnish regularly to the Board, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 50/11, information on seizures of psychotropic substances ordered over the Internet and delivered through the mail.**

Precursor chemicals

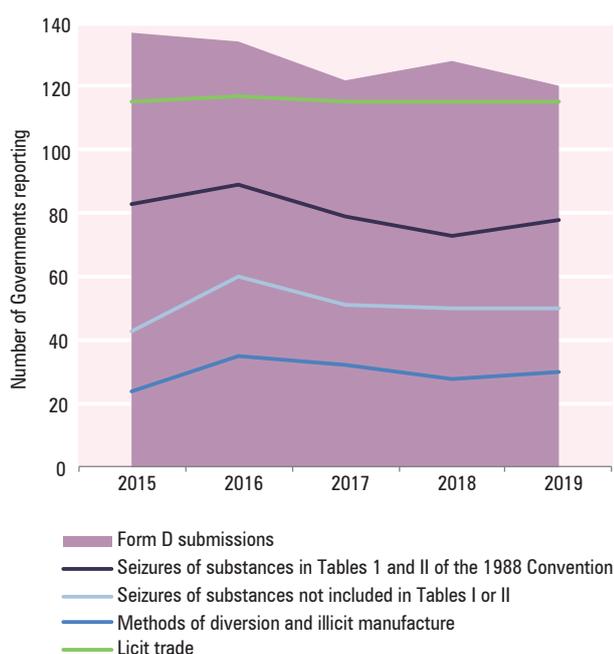
94. In accordance with article 12 of the 1988 Convention, parties are obliged to furnish information on substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. That information, provided on form D, assists the Board in monitoring and identifying trends in trafficking in precursors and the illicit manufacture of drugs. It also enables the Board to provide Governments with recommendations concerning remedial action and policies, as necessary.

95. As at 1 November 2020, a total of 120 Governments, corresponding to nearly 63 per cent of the States parties to the 1988 Convention, had submitted form D for 2019. However, the Board's analysis of the global precursor situation continued to be affected by late submission, the submission of incomplete or entirely blank forms, and the inability of some Governments to gather information at the national level and consolidate it into a single

submission. For example, of the States parties that provided data on form D for 2019, 78 reported the mandatory information on seizures of substances listed in Table I or Table II of the 1988 Convention, and only 50 reported seizures of non-scheduled substances. As in previous years, most Governments did not provide details on the methods of diversion and illicit manufacture.

96. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/20, Governments are requested to provide information regarding their licit trade in substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention on a voluntary and confidential basis. As at 1 November 2020, 115 States parties had provided such information for 2019 to the Board, and 104 had furnished data on licit uses of and/or requirements for one or more of the substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention (see figure I).

Figure I Data submitted on form D by States parties to the 1988 Convention, 2015–2019



97. Complementing the aggregated seizure data received annually from Governments through form D, since early 2012, PICS has provided a secure online platform for sharing information in real time on chemical-related incidents such as seizures, shipments stopped in transit, diversions, the dismantling of illicit laboratories and seizures of associated equipment. PICS has provided leads for national authorities to initiate backtracking investigations and, on several occasions, the timely communication of details of precursor incidents has led to further seizures or has prevented diversions. The usefulness of PICS, however, depends largely on the timeliness of the information provided so that it can facilitate immediate

follow-up and cooperation to identify those responsible for the diversion of and trafficking in precursors.

98. As at 1 November 2020, PICS had registered users from more than 285 agencies in 123 countries, who had shared information about more than 3,100 incidents. During the reporting period, information on more than 300 new incidents were shared through PICS.

99. The seizure data reported and a detailed analysis of the latest trends and developments in trafficking in precursor chemicals under international control, as well as their non-scheduled substitutes and alternatives, can be found in the report of the Board for 2020 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.

(b) Estimates for narcotic drugs, assessments for psychotropic substances and annual legitimate requirements for precursor chemicals

Narcotic drugs

100. The system of estimates and assessments of annual licit requirements for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is the cornerstone of the international drug control system. It enables both exporting and importing countries to ensure that trade in those substances stays within the limits determined by the Governments of importing countries and that diversion of controlled substances from international trade is effectively prevented. For narcotic drugs, such a system is mandatory under the 1961 Convention as amended, and the estimates furnished by Governments need to be confirmed by the Board before becoming the basis for calculating the limits on manufacture and import. As at 1 November 2020, the Governments of 161 countries and territories had submitted annual estimates of narcotic drugs requirements for 2021. To ensure that Governments may import narcotic drugs for medical and scientific purposes, estimates are established by the Board for countries that are unable to supply them and, for 2020, 28 countries in all regions of the world operated on the basis of estimates established for them by the Board.

101. Governments are obliged to comply with the limits on imports and exports of narcotic drugs provided for under articles 21 and 31 of the 1961 Convention as amended. Article 21 stipulates, inter alia, that the total of the quantities of each drug manufactured and imported by any country or territory in a given year is not to exceed the sum of the following: the quantity consumed for

medical and scientific purposes; the quantity used, within the limits of the relevant estimates, for the manufacture of other drugs, preparations or substances; the quantity exported; the quantity added to the stock for the purpose of bringing that stock up to the level specified in the relevant estimate; and the quantity acquired within the limit of the relevant estimate for special purposes. Article 31 requires all exporting countries to limit the export of narcotic drugs to any country or territory to quantities that fall within the limits of the total of the estimates of the importing country or territory, with the addition of the amounts intended for re-export.

102. The system of import and exports continues to be implemented by Governments, as trade increases, and it works well. In 2020, a total of 19 countries were contacted regarding possible excess imports or excess exports identified with regard to international trade in narcotic drugs that had been effected during the year. As at 1 November 2020, nine of those countries had responded. The Board continues to pursue the matter with those countries that have not responded.

103. **The Board recommends that Governments continue to strengthen the capacity of competent national authorities to adequately estimate the medical and scientific need for narcotic drugs, including through the use of globally available e-learning modules, and also recommends that Governments enhance domestic data-collection mechanisms so that they can present estimates that accurately reflect the national needs of narcotic drugs for medical purposes.**

Psychotropic substances

104. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1981/7 and 1991/44, Governments are requested to provide to the Board assessments of annual domestic medical and scientific requirements for psychotropic substances listed in Schedules II, III and IV of the 1971 Convention. The assessments received are communicated to all States and territories to assist the competent authorities of exporting countries when approving exports of psychotropic substances. As at 1 November 2020, the Governments of all countries and territories, except for South Sudan, for which assessments were established by the Board in 2011, had submitted at least one assessment of their annual medical requirements for psychotropic substances.

105. **The Board recommends that Governments review and update the assessments of their annual medical and scientific requirements for psychotropic substances at least every three years. However, 36 Governments have**

not submitted a revision of their legitimate requirements for psychotropic substances for three years or more. The assessments valid for those countries and territories may therefore no longer reflect their actual medical and scientific requirements for such substances.

106. When assessments are lower than the actual legitimate requirements, the importation of psychotropic substances needed for medical or scientific purposes may be delayed. When assessments are significantly higher than legitimate needs, the risk of psychotropic substances being diverted into illicit channels may be increased.

107. As in previous years, the system of assessments of annual requirements for psychotropic substances continues to function well and is respected by most countries and territories. In 2019, the authorities of 18 countries issued import authorizations for substances for which they had not established any such assessments or for quantities that significantly exceeded their assessments. Only one country was identified as having exported psychotropic substances in quantities exceeding the relevant assessment.

Precursor chemicals

108. In its resolution 49/3, entitled “Strengthening systems for the control of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs”, the Commission on Narcotics Drugs requested Member States to provide the Board with annual legitimate requirements for imports of four precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants (3,4-MDP-2-P, pseudoephedrine, ephedrine and P-2-P) and, to the extent possible, preparations containing those substances that could be easily used or recovered by readily applicable means. The estimates help Governments to assess the legitimacy of shipments and to identify any excesses in pre-export notifications for the substances.

109. Although these estimates are provided to the Board on a voluntary basis, as at 1 November 2020, 172 Governments had provided an estimate of their annual legitimate requirements for at least one of the above-mentioned substances. During the reporting period, more than 114 Governments reconfirmed or updated their annual legitimate requirements for at least one of the substances. During the reporting period, the Governments of the Marshall Islands, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam submitted an estimate for at least one of the four substances for the first time.

110. Governments provide estimates of annual legitimate requirements for precursors on form D and can update them at any time throughout the year. The latest

annual legitimate requirements, as submitted by countries and territories, are regularly updated and published on the Board's website. They are also accessible to registered users through PEN Online.

111. **The Board notes that accurate estimates of national needs and related import requirements remain key factors in preventing diversion. The Board therefore recommends that Governments regularly review their annual legitimate requirements for individual precursors and inform the Board of any necessary changes or reconfirm the published estimates. The Board encourages the competent authorities of exporting countries to use the published estimates of importing countries and suspend exports until any doubts about the legitimacy thereof have been dispelled or discrepancies have been removed.**

4. Efforts to prevent diversion from international trade

112. The system of control measures laid down in the 1961 Convention as amended provides for the monitoring of international trade in narcotic drugs to prevent the diversion of such drugs into illicit channels. As a result of the almost-universal implementation of the control measures stipulated in the 1971 Convention and the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions, there has been only one identified case involving the diversion of psychotropic substances from international trade into illicit channels in recent years. In addition, the 1988 Convention requires parties to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals from international trade to the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Board has developed various systems to monitor compliance with that aspect of the 1988 Convention and to facilitate cooperation between Governments to that end.

Requirement for import and export authorizations

113. The universal application of the requirement for import and export authorizations laid down in the 1961 Convention as amended and the 1971 Convention is key to preventing the diversion of drugs into the illicit market. Such authorizations are required for transactions involving any of the substances controlled under the 1961 Convention as amended or listed in Schedules I and II of the 1971 Convention.

114. Competent national authorities are required by those conventions to issue import authorizations for transactions involving the importation of such substances

into their country. The competent national authorities of exporting countries must verify the authenticity of such import authorizations before issuing the export authorizations required to allow shipments containing the substances to leave their countries.

115. The 1971 Convention does not require import and export authorizations for trade in the psychotropic substances listed in its Schedules III and IV. However, in view of the widespread diversion of those substances from licit international trade during the 1970s and 1980s, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 1985/15, 1987/30 and 1993/38, requested Governments to extend the system of import and export authorizations to cover those psychotropic substances as well.

116. Most countries and territories have already introduced an import and export authorization requirement for psychotropic substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention, in accordance with the above-mentioned Economic and Social Council resolutions. As at 1 November 2020, specific information had been made available to the Board by 205 countries and territories, showing that all major importing and exporting countries and territories now require import and export authorizations for all psychotropic substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention. Upon request, the Board will make available, to all Governments, a table showing the import authorization requirements for substances listed in Schedules III and IV pursuant to the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions. That table is also published in the secure area of the Board's website, which is accessible only to specifically authorized government officials, so that the competent national authorities of exporting countries may be informed as soon as possible of changes in import authorization requirements in importing countries. **The Board urges the Governments of the few remaining States in which national legislation and/or regulations do not yet require import and export authorizations for all psychotropic substances, regardless of whether they are States parties to the 1971 Convention, to extend such controls to all substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention as soon as possible, and to inform the Board in that regard.**

117. I2ES, a web-based electronic system developed by the Board together with UNODC, is provided to Governments at no cost to allow countries to securely exchange import and export authorizations for the trade in internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Greater use of the platform by Governments will help prevent the diversion of internationally controlled substances from international trade,

in addition to facilitating more rapid trade. **The Board continues to encourage all Governments that are not yet doing so to utilize I2ES and seek the assistance of the Board's secretariat in using and implementing the platform.**

118. The 1988 Convention does not impose a requirement for import and export authorizations for trade in substances listed in Tables I and II of that Convention. However, Governments that do not apply some system of control over exports and imports of precursors are not fully complying with their treaty obligations to effectively contribute to the prevention of diversion. In addition, pursuant to article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention, Governments of exporting countries and territories are to provide advance notification to the authorities of the importing Government of planned shipments with a view to preventing the diversion of those substances (see below for more information on pre-export notifications for precursor chemicals).

Discrepancies in international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

119. Discrepancies in government reports on international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are regularly investigated with the competent authorities of the relevant countries to ensure that no diversion of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from licit international trade takes place. Those investigations may reveal shortcomings in the implementation of control measures for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including the failure of companies to comply with national drug control provisions.

120. Since May 2020, investigations regarding discrepancies for 2019 related to the trade in narcotic drugs have been initiated with 73 countries. As at 1 November 2020, replies had been received from 43 countries. The responses indicated that the discrepancies had been caused by clerical and technical errors in preparing the reports, reporting on exports or imports of preparations in Schedule III of the 1961 Convention as amended without indicating it on the form, or inadvertent reporting of transit countries as trading partners. In some cases, countries confirmed the quantities reported by them, resulting in the initiation of follow-up investigations with their trading partners. Reminder letters will be sent to the countries that did not reply.

121. Similarly, with regard to international trade in psychotropic substances, investigations into 598 discrepancies related to 2019 data were initiated with 92

countries. Owing to delays in the reporting of statistical data for 2019 by some countries, investigations into trade-related discrepancies for that year are still ongoing.

Precursor chemicals

122. With regard to precursors, the 1988 Convention requires parties to prevent the diversion of precursors from international trade to the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In line with the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 Convention, which have been complemented by a number of General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions, many Governments have adopted and implemented measures that have contributed to the effective monitoring of the movement of substances listed in Tables I and II of that Convention and to limiting cases of diversion from licit international trade. Details of the systems of controls applied by Governments over exports and imports of substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention are compiled by the Board and made available to competent national authorities on its secure web page, as part of the Board's work on the control of precursors.

Prevention of diversion of precursors from domestic distribution channels

123. The diversion of precursors from domestic distribution channels remains a major source of the substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention that are used for illicit drug manufacture. The control measures applied by Governments to domestic trade in and distribution of chemical substances vary from country to country and often fall short of those used in international trade. **INCB calls upon Governments to review their domestic control mechanisms, in particular the procedures for granting or refusing registration of chemical operators, and the requirements for end-user declarations, as well as any related thresholds that may be exploited by traffickers.**

124. Public-private partnerships and voluntary cooperation with relevant industries play an important role in addressing chemical diversion, especially from domestic channels. INCB promotes such partnerships through general awareness-raising and hands-on advocacy in specific cases. In addition, INCB, in its efforts to support Governments in the prevention and investigation of cases of diversion of precursors, has developed several platforms, tools and projects to facilitate the real-time exchange of information and cooperation between

Governments. The two initiatives of the Board focusing on precursors used in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs and on chemicals related to illicit cocaine and heroin manufacture, namely, Project Prism and Project Cohesion, respectively, contribute to preventing the diversion of controlled substances from both international trade and domestic distribution channels and to closing knowledge gaps, including with regard to *modi operandi*, during time-bound operations.

125. Detailed analysis of the latest trends and developments in legitimate international trade and in trafficking in precursor chemicals under international control, as well as their non-scheduled substitutes and alternatives, can be found in the report of the Board for 2020 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.

Pre-export notification for precursor chemicals

126. To prevent the diversion of precursors, article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention allows the Governments of importing countries to make it mandatory for exporting countries to inform them of any planned export of precursors to their territory. Since the report of the Board for 2019, the Governments of two countries, Honduras and Tunisia, have officially requested to be pre-notified, thus increasing the number of Governments that have invoked that provision to 115. **The Board encourages those Governments that have not formally requested pre-export notifications to take the necessary steps to invoke article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention.**

127. Real-time communication between importing and exporting Governments as regards international trade in precursors and preventing diversion into illicit channels is facilitated by the Board's secure web-based tool, PEN Online. As at 1 November 2020, the Government of one additional country, Guyana, had registered with PEN Online, bringing the total number of registered countries and territories to 165. **INCB urges the remaining 32 Governments that have not yet registered with the PEN Online system to do so as soon as possible and calls upon Governments to use PEN Online actively and systematically. The Board stands ready to assist Governments in that regard.**

Article 13 of the 1988 Convention: materials and equipment used in illicit drug manufacture

128. Illicit drug manufacture requires not only precursor chemicals, but also equipment such as specialized glassware, tableting machines and other hardware employed in the process. Under article 13 of the 1988 Convention, Governments are required to take appropriate measures to prevent trade in and the diversion of materials and equipment for illicit drug manufacture, and to cooperate to that end.

129. The Board believes that article 13 is a valuable complementary tool in addressing illicit drug manufacture. However, it is currently underutilized. In order to assist Governments in increasing the use of article 13 and preventing specialized equipment from reaching illicit laboratories, in March 2020, INCB launched a set of guidelines on the control and monitoring of equipment essential for illicit drug manufacture, as well as a dedicated page on the INCB website on the matter.

130. The guidelines are intended to facilitate the work of regulatory and law enforcement authorities by providing a range of approaches to prevent and investigate the diversion of such equipment. The approaches range from raising awareness within the industry about the misuse of equipment for illicit drug manufacture and conducting voluntary initiatives in cooperation with the industry to establishing more comprehensive regulatory systems.

131. The guidelines were launched at an event entitled "Equipment used in illicit drug manufacture: approaches to preventing and investigating diversion as complementary tools in addressing illicit drug supply", organized by the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands and the United States, in cooperation with INCB, on the margins of the sixty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. **The Board encourages Governments to make use of the guidelines and increase the operational use of article 13 of the 1988 Convention to prevent and investigate the diversion of equipment essential for the illicit manufacture of drugs and precursors.**

B. Ensuring the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes

132. In line with its mandate to ensure the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, the Board carries out various activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Board monitors action taken by Governments, international organizations and other bodies to support the availability and rational use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and provides, through its secretariat, technical support and guidance to Governments in their implementation of the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

133. An analysis of the main trends in the manufacturing, export, import and consumption of the main opioid analgesics (codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, morphine and oxycodone), expressed in S-DDD per million inhabitants per day, shows that the highest consumption of these drugs is in developed countries in Europe and North America. Countries reporting the highest average consumption of opioids for pain management in the period 2017–2019 were the United States (25,368 S-DDD), Germany (22,517 S-DDD), Austria (18,489 S-DDD),⁶⁶ Belgium (15,487 S-DDD) and Canada (14,073 S-DDD).

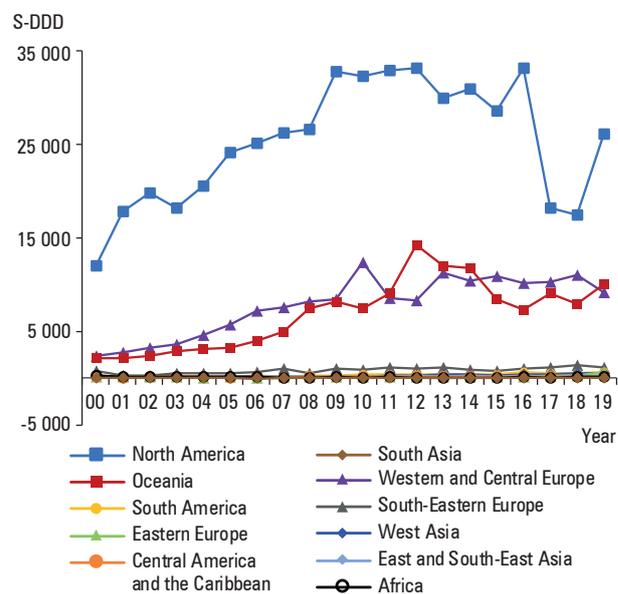
134. The Board evaluates these data in terms of S-DDD, which is the international unit of measurement established by WHO and used by INCB for the purpose of statistical analysis. It is not a recommended prescription dose. The availability levels of narcotic drugs expressed in S-DDD are calculated using the following formula: annual availability, excluding the manufacture of the preparations in Schedule III of the 1961 Convention as amended, divided by 365 days. The result obtained is divided by the population, in millions, of the country or territory during the year in question and then by the defined daily dose. Regional S-DDD is calculated on the basis of the total population of the countries reporting consumption, and the overall amounts of opioid analgesics reported as consumed. For the analysis, the Board uses the following most commonly used opioid analgesics:

⁶⁶The Government of Austria also reported data to the Board containing a breakdown of the country's morphine consumption for opioid substitution treatment, which corresponded to 93 per cent of consumption in 2019. When taking this information into consideration, the consumption of opioids for pain management in Austria during the period 2017–2019 decreases to 14,532 S-DDD. According to the information available to the Board, this is a unique situation and the S-DDD of other high-consuming countries should not be affected in a similar way.

codeine, dextropropoxyphene, dihydrocodeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, ketobemidone, morphine, oxycodone, pethidine, tilidine and trimeperidine.

135. The regional analysis confirms the persistence of a global disparity in the consumption of opioid analgesics. The reported consumption of some countries in North America, Oceania and Western Europe resulted in regional averages in 2019 of over 9,000 S-DDD (19,003 S-DDD for North America, 9,984 S-DDD for Oceania and 9,200 S-DDD for Western Europe). In North America, a sharp decrease in 2017 and 2018 was followed by a slight increase in 2019 and, overall, it remains the region with the highest consumption of opioids for pain management in the world. Declining consumption had been reported in Oceania since 2012 but, in 2019, it increased to 9,984 S-DDD. A general upward trend in consumption was evident in South-Eastern Europe until 2018, when it reached 1,415 S-DDD, but it decreased to 1,192 S-DDD in 2019. In Western and Central Europe, consumption has been relatively stable, but in 2019 it decreased to 9,200 S-DDD, from 11,021 S-DDD in 2018 (see figure II).

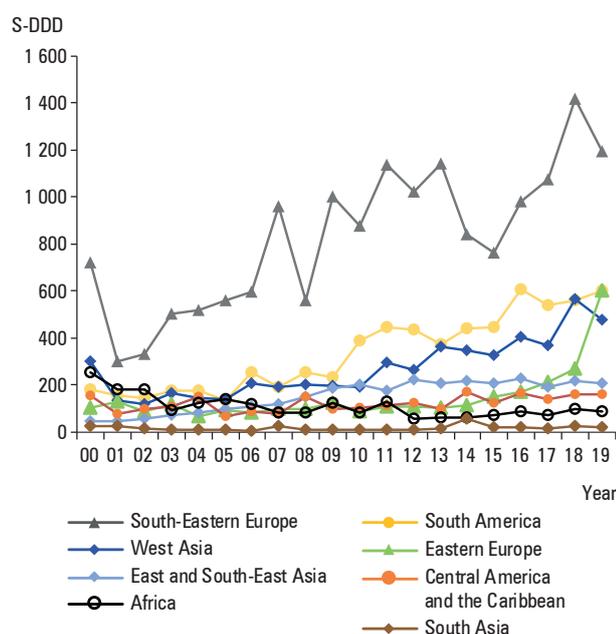
Figure II Consumption of opioids for pain management, by region, S-DDD, 2000–2019



136. Consumption well below those values was reported for other regions. Of those regions, South-Eastern Europe reported the highest consumption in 2019 (1,192 S-DDD), as part of an overall increasing trend with significant fluctuations since the early 2000s, followed by South America (603 S-DDD) and Eastern Europe (601 S-DDD), where there was a significant increase in consumption, from 269 S-DDD in 2018. This increase can be largely attributed to rising consumption in the Russian Federation,

which almost doubled between 2018 (321 S-DDD) and 2019 (608 S-DDD). An overall increasing trend in consumption was also observed in West Asia in the 20-year period 2000–2019, albeit with a decrease from 564 S-DDD in 2018 to 479 S-DDD in 2019 (see figure III). The relatively high average consumption in the region is driven mainly by Israel (13,066 S-DDD in 2019) and Turkey (606 S-DDD).

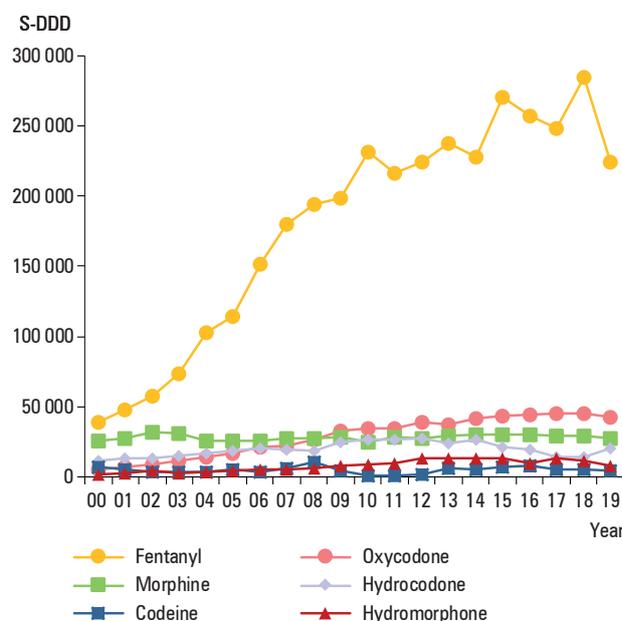
Figure III Consumption of opioids for pain management, regions with the lowest consumption, S-DDD, 2000–2019



137. A comparison of the consumption of individual substances shows the prominence of fentanyl over the past two decades (see figure IV). However, after peaking in 2018 at 285,959 S-DDD, the global consumption of fentanyl decreased to 224,805 S-DDD in 2019. The consumption of oxycodone has also been increasing, at a lower level, and, since 2009, has replaced morphine as the second most-consumed opioid, reaching an all-time high of 45,726 S-DDD in 2018 and decreasing to 42,592 S-DDD in 2019. The trend in the consumption of morphine, on the other hand, remained relatively stable between 2004 (25,644 S-DDD) and 2019 (27,746 S-DDD). After decreasing steadily since 2014, hydrocodone consumption increased from 14,161 S-DDD in 2018 to 20,415 S-DDD in 2019, levels last seen in 2015. Hydromorphone consumption decreased from 11,834 S-DDD in 2018 to 7,713 S-DDD in 2019, the lowest level since 2008. The United States accounted for almost all global hydrocodone use (99.3 per cent), whereas the consumption of the other drugs shown in figure IV was reported from more than one country. Although the

consumption of fentanyl decreased globally in 2019, especially in North America, there were significant increases in various countries in all other regions.

Figure IV Consumption of codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, morphine and oxycodone, in total S-DDD,^a 2000–2019



^aTotal S-DDD of a drug is the sum of the S-DDD of all individual countries reporting consumption.

138. Figures V and VI show consumption in total S-DDD by substance and region. This analysis highlights once again the prominence of fentanyl in most regions of the world. Oxycodone consumption is highest in North America, Oceania, Western and Central Europe and West Asia, although it is also consumed in other regions. The share of morphine is less pronounced in most regions, except for Africa and South America.

Figure V Consumption of codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, oxycodone, pethidine and other opioids, by region, S-DDD, 2019

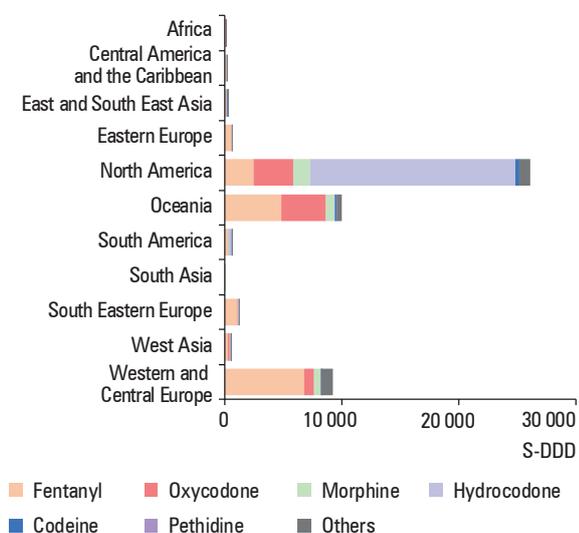
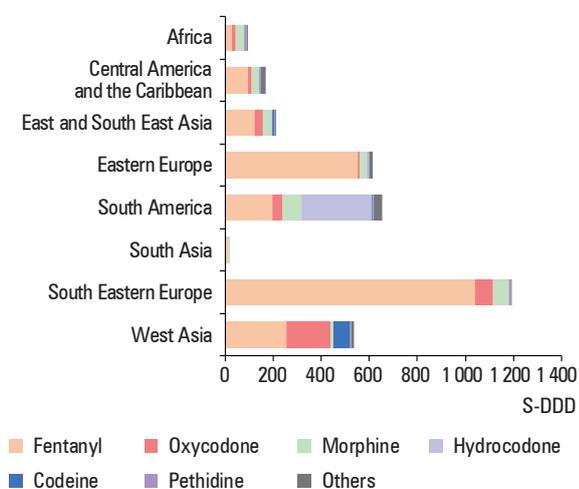


Figure VI Consumption of codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, morphine, oxycodone, pethidine and other opioids, regions with the lower consumption, S-DDD, 2019



139. The Board considers levels of consumption of opioid analgesics in quantities between 100 and 200 S-DDD to be inadequate, and less than 100 to be very inadequate. In this context, the levels of consumption reported in 2019 in East and South-East Asia (207 S-DDD), Central America and the Caribbean (160 S-DDD), Africa (90 S-DDD) and South Asia (20 S-DDD) are of particular concern. The Board reiterates that there is an urgent need to increase levels of consumption of opioid analgesics in all countries reporting inadequate and very inadequate consumption levels and calls for targeted public policies and support from Governments, civil society, the pharmaceutical industry and the international community to that end.

1. Patterns and trends in the production, manufacture, consumption, utilization and stocks of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

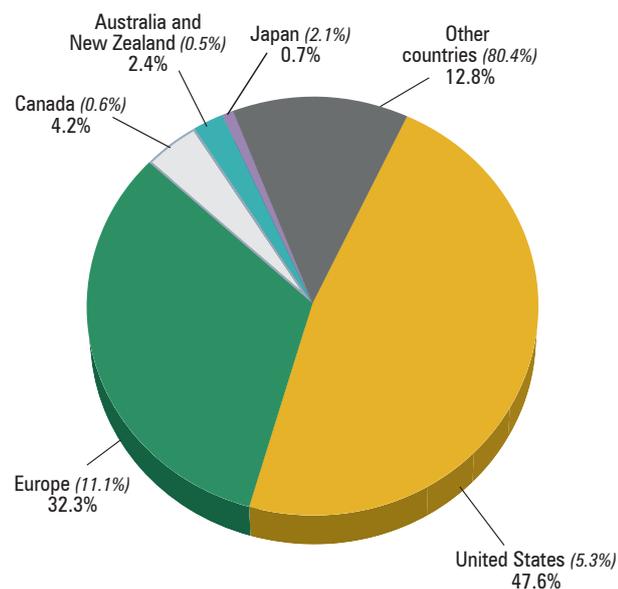
Narcotic drugs

140. Global production and stocks of opium increased significantly in 2019. Opium imports, on the other hand, showed a marked decrease, from 53.5 tons (5.8 tons in morphine equivalent) in 2018 to only 11.3 tons (1.2 tons in morphine equivalent) in 2019, with one traditional importer ceasing imports altogether. The continuing low demand for the drug could signal a move towards the eventual elimination of the drug from the international market for opiate raw materials.

141. Overall utilization of poppy straw and concentrate of poppy straw derived from the morphine-rich variety of poppy straw decreased in 2019 compared with 2018. Global manufacture of morphine in 2019 continued to be below 400 tons, a development that began in 2017, contrary to the situation in the previous decade, when the global manufacture of morphine was always above 400 tons. In 2019, global manufacture of morphine amounted to 379.2 tons, 87 per cent of which was converted into other narcotic drugs or into substances not covered by the 1961 Convention as amended. The remaining amount was used mainly for palliative care purposes, for direct consumption and in the manufacture of preparations listed in Schedule III of the 1961 Convention as amended.

142. The differences in consumption levels among countries continued to be very significant. In 2019, 80.4 per cent of the world's population, mainly in low- and middle-income countries, consumed only 12.8 per cent of the total amount of morphine used for the management of pain and suffering, or 1 per cent of the total 379.2 tons manufactured (see figure VII). Although that is a slight improvement from 2014, when 80 per cent consumed only 9.5 per cent, the disparity in the consumption of narcotic drugs for palliative care continues to be a matter of concern.

Figure VII Morphine: distribution of consumption for medical purposes, 2019



Note: Percentages in parentheses refer to share of the world population (i.e., total population of all reporting countries).

143. In 2019, after some fluctuations in the preceding years, global manufacture of thebaine remained high, at 127.7 tons, almost the same amount as in 2018 but considerably below the record level of 156 tons in 2016. The demand for medicines derived from thebaine may have been affected by the restrictions on prescription drugs imposed in the main market, the United States, in response to the abuse of such drugs and the high number of overdose deaths that have been associated with them. Nonetheless, the data continued to indicate a high level of demand.

144. In terms of the semi-synthetic opioids, global manufacture of oxycodone and hydrocodone decreased again in 2019, after showing decreases in 2018. Global manufacture of hydromorphone decreased to the lowest level since 2004, and the manufacture of ethylmorphine and heroin increased.

145. In the case of synthetic opioids, global manufacture of fentanyl increased in 2019, after a marked decrease in 2018. Consumption of fentanyl, on the other hand, decreased, while reported consumption of fentanyl analogues (alfentanil, remifentanil and sufentanil) increased. The manufacture of diphenoxylate showed growth, after declines had been recorded for some time. Reported manufacture of tilidine rose in 2019, after historically low levels in 2018. The manufacture of pethidine has trended downwards for 20 years but increased slightly in 2019. Trimeperidine manufacture increased for the

second consecutive year. There was no report of manufacturing of ketobemidone and less than 1 kg of dextro-propoxyphene was reported as having been manufactured in 2019. The manufacture of methadone declined in 2019, after increasing in 2018.

146. The cultivation and production of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes has been on the rise over the past five years. Prior to 2010, only the United States reported production, which was related to scientific research. Since 2000, and particularly since 2015, an increasing number of countries have started to use cannabis and cannabis extracts for medical purposes as well as for scientific research and have also authorized the cultivation of cannabis. For 2019, the licit production of 468.3 tons was reported. However, as manufacturing processes and yields are not standardized, some data are being clarified with the relevant Governments in order to ensure consistency.

147. The United States continued to import coca leaf for the extraction of a flavouring agent. The global licit consumption of cocaine, which had been stable during the previous two decades, ranging between 100 kg and 300 kg, amounted to 466 kg in 2019, a further increase, after 394.1 kg were recorded in 2018.

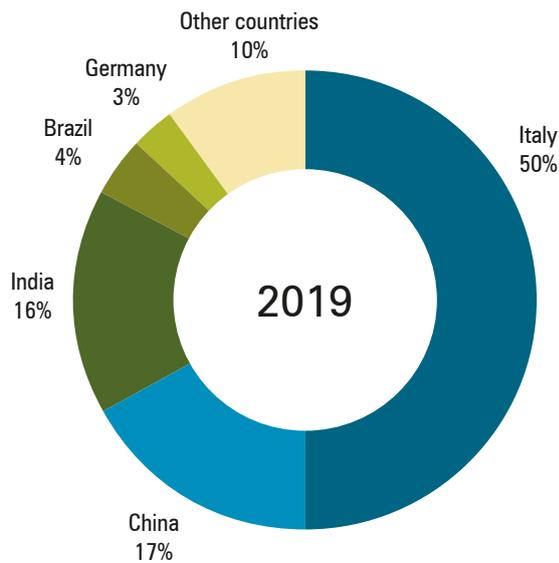
Psychotropic substances

148. As at the end of 2019, 149 substances had been placed under international control, up from 144 at the end of 2018. Of those, five new substances were included in Schedule II of the 1971 Convention: ADB-FUBINACA; FUB-AMB (MMB-FUBINACA, AMB-FUBINACA); CUMYL-4CN-BINACA; ADB-CHMINACA (MAB-CHMINACA); and *N*-ethylnorpentylone (ephylone). As these substances came under international control in late 2019 and countries are not required to collect data on the manufacture and consumption of and trade in substances prior to their placement under international control, information on the licit market activity is limited.

149. In 2019, similar to previous years, benzodiazepines accounted for most of the manufacture and consumption of and trade in internationally controlled psychotropic substances. Of the 36 controlled benzodiazepines, 21 were identified as having a significant presence on the licit market that year. The main manufacturers of this group of substances overall continued to be Italy, China, India, Brazil and Germany (in descending order of the amount manufactured), together accounting for 90 per cent of total global manufacture (see figure VIII). In 2019, the most-traded benzodiazepines were diazepam, midazolam,

clonazepam and alprazolam, in terms of the number of importing countries. The total reported manufacture of those benzodiazepines amounted to more than 185 tons, with manufacture having been reported in all regions of the world.

Figure VIII Benzodiazepines with significant presence on the licit market: share of global manufacture, by country, 2019



150. In 2019, the Board received data from nearly 85 countries reporting consumption of at least one benzodiazepine, which represented a decrease from the previous year, when 100 countries submitted national consumption data. The highest rates of consumption of all benzodiazepines with significant presence on the licit market combined, measured in S-DDD per 1,000 inhabitants per day, were reported by Spain, Serbia, Uruguay, Israel, the United States and Hungary, in descending order. The most widely consumed benzodiazepines in 2019 were alprazolam, lorazepam, diazepam, clonazepam, bromazepam, lormetazepam and estazolam, each of which were reported to have been consumed in quantities greater than 50 S-DDD per 1,000 inhabitants per day globally. In 2019, Cameroon, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Thailand, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen provided consumption data for the first time in over three years.

151. As in previous years, phenobarbital was one of the most manufactured psychotropic substances under international control, at 382 tons in 2019, an increase of almost 80 tons compared with 2018. China (181 tons) and India (114 tons) accounted for approximately three

quarters of all global manufacture, a trend largely unchanged from previous years. Hungary (44 tons) and the Russian Federation (25 tons) were other major manufacturers of the substance.

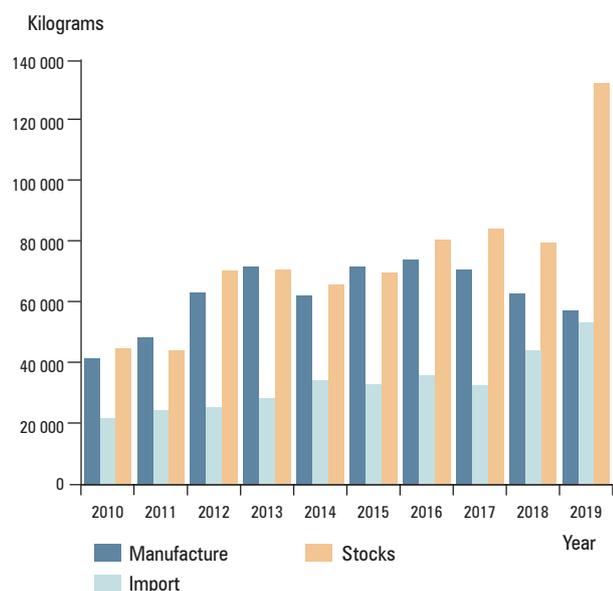
152. Eighty countries provided data on their consumption of phenobarbital in 2019, down from 99 for 2018. Average consumption, among the 80 countries that provided data for 2019, stood at 0.59 S-DDD, down from the 2018 average of 0.79 S-DDD among countries and territories that reported consumption for that year. The decrease in global consumption is probably a result of fewer countries reporting consumption for 2019.

153. Regional differences in the consumption of phenobarbital remain difficult to ascertain as consumption data were only provided by approximately half of the countries and territories that submitted a statistical report on psychotropic substances for 2019. Countries and territories in the Americas and Europe provided the most data on consumption in 2019: 20 and 25 countries and territories, respectively. In contrast, the number of countries in Africa and Asia providing consumption data for 2019 was low (12 and 17 countries and territories, respectively), continuing the general trend of low consumption data reporting from previous years.

154. Global manufacture of methylphenidate decreased further in 2019, following the downward trend that began in 2017. Total imports of the substance, however, registered a further increase in 2019 and reached 53 tons, its highest record for the past six years. Global stocks of methylphenidate registered a considerable increase and reached 132 tons in 2019, up from 79.5 tons in 2018 (see figure IX). Unlike the year before, the United States accounted for only half of those stocks, with the rest being held by Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

155. A total of 58 countries provided consumption data on methylphenidate in 2019, with the majority of those with the highest consumption rates reporting further increases in their consumption of the substance. The countries with the highest rates of reported consumption of methylphenidate in 2019 were Iceland, Israel, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States, Spain, Denmark and Sweden, in descending order of the amounts consumed.

Figure IX Methylphenidate: global manufacture, imports and stocks, 2010–2019



156. A detailed analysis of the patterns and trends in the manufacture, trade, stocks and consumption of psychotropic substances is contained in the technical report of the Board for 2020 on psychotropic substances.⁶⁷

2. Supply of and demand for opiate raw materials

157. The Board, in fulfilment of the functions assigned to it under the 1961 Convention as amended and the relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, regularly examines issues affecting the supply of and the demand for opiates for licit requirements and endeavours to ensure a standing balance between that supply and demand.

158. The Board analyses the data provided by Governments on opiate raw materials and opiates manufactured from those raw materials to establish the status of the supply of and the demand for opiate raw materials globally. In addition, the Board analyses information on the use of those raw materials, estimated consumption for licit use and stocks at the global level. A detailed analysis of the current situation as it pertains to the supply of and the demand for opiate raw materials is contained in the technical report of the Board for 2020 on narcotic drugs.

159. The combined total harvested area of opium poppy rich in morphine and opium poppy rich in thebaine increased by 26 per cent in 2019 compared with 2018;

this significant growth has continued since 2017. However, in this total it should be noted that the harvested area of opium poppy rich in morphine increased by 40 per cent and the harvested area of opium poppy rich in thebaine more than halved. The production of opiate raw materials rich in morphine increased, while the production of opium raw materials rich in thebaine decreased.

Morphine

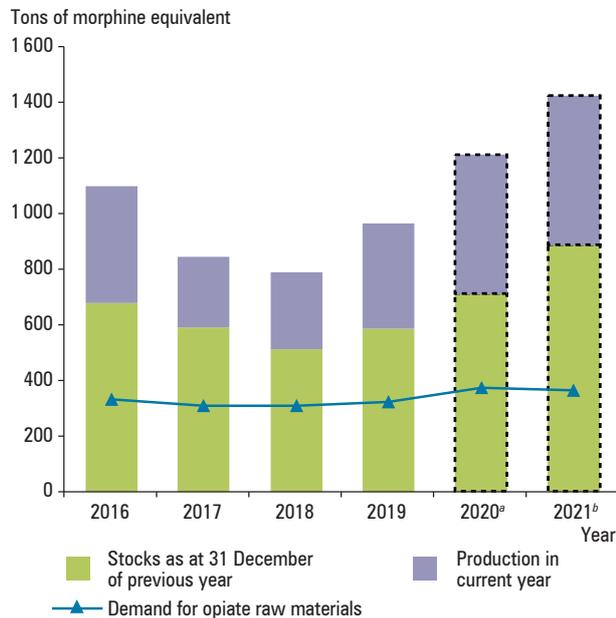
160. The total actual harvested area of opium rich in morphine increased from 62,022 ha in 2018 to 86,982 ha in 2019. Compared with 2018, the actual harvested area increased by as much as 589 per cent in Spain, 505 per cent in Hungary, 118 per cent in Slovakia, 46 per cent in India, 33 per cent in France and 25 per cent in Turkey, and it decreased by 45 per cent in Australia. India is the only opium-producing country included in the present analysis. Australia and Spain were the only two countries that cultivated opium poppy rich in codeine in 2019. The area harvested with this variety decreased slightly in Australia, from 2,683 ha in 2018 to 2,300 ha in 2019, but in Spain it decreased by almost half, from 1,990 ha in 2018 to 863 ha in 2019.

161. The global production of morphine-rich opiate raw materials in the main producing countries increased significantly, to 421 tons in morphine equivalent, in 2019 (see figure X), compared with 304 tons in 2018. Spain, in which production increased almost threefold compared with 2018, became the largest producer in 2019, and was followed by Turkey, Australia, France, India and Hungary. Those six countries accounted for 96 per cent of global production in 2019.

162. At the end of 2019, the global stock of opiate raw materials rich in morphine, which includes poppy straw, concentrate of poppy straw and opium, amounted to about 645 tons in morphine equivalent, an increase from 564 tons at the end of 2018. Those stocks were considered to be sufficient to cover 18 months of expected global demand by manufacturers, on the basis of advance data for the level of demand in 2020. In 2019, Turkey continued to be the country with the largest stocks of opiate raw materials rich in morphine, with 207 tons in morphine equivalent, followed by France (96 tons), Spain (87 tons), India (80 tons, all in the form of opium), Australia (54 tons), the United States (43 tons), the United Kingdom (21 tons), Hungary (18 tons), Japan (16 tons), Slovakia (15 tons) and Belgium (7 tons). Together, those 11 countries accounted for 99 per cent of the global stock of opiate raw materials rich in morphine. The remaining stocks were held in other producing countries and in countries importing opiate raw materials.

⁶⁷E/INCB/2020/2.

Figure X Supply of and demand for opiate raw materials rich in morphine, in morphine equivalent, 2016–2021



^aData for production and demand for 2020 are based on advance data (dotted line) submitted by Governments.

^bData for 2021 are based on estimates (dotted line) submitted by Governments.

163. At the end of 2019, global stocks of morphine-based opiates, mainly in the form of codeine and morphine, amounted to 531 tons in morphine equivalent and were sufficient to cover global demand for those opiates for about 19 months. On the basis of data reported by Governments, total stocks of opiates and opiate raw materials are fully sufficient to cover demand for medical and scientific purposes for morphine-based opiates for more than a year.

164. From 2009 until 2016, the global production of opiate raw materials rich in morphine exceeded global demand. As a result, stocks increased during that period, with some fluctuations. In 2017 and 2018, global production was lower than global demand, which led to a decline in global stocks. However, in 2019, production was again higher than demand; consequently, stocks also increased (to 645 tons in morphine equivalent).

Thebaine

165. The total actual harvested area of opium poppy rich in thebaine more than halved, from 9,755 ha in 2018 to 3,455 ha in 2019. The area decreased by 97 per cent in Spain, 92 per cent in France, and 48 per cent in

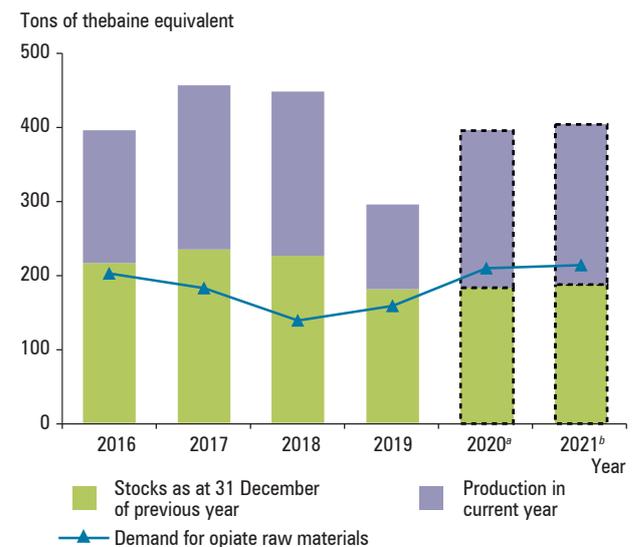
Australia. Hungary did not cultivate that variety of opium poppy in 2019.

166. In 2019, the global production of opiate raw materials rich in thebaine amounted to 119 tons in thebaine equivalent, a drop of almost half compared with the 230 tons produced in 2018 (see figure XI). Australia accounted for nearly 97.5 per cent of global production of those opiate raw materials and India accounted for the remaining 2.5 per cent (with thebaine being extracted from opium). Australia reported a significant decrease in production compared with 2018.

167. Stocks of opiate raw materials rich in thebaine (poppy straw, concentrate of poppy straw and opium) decreased to 188 tons in thebaine equivalent at the end of 2019, from 235 tons at the end of 2018. Those stocks were considered to be sufficient to cover the expected demand by manufacturers worldwide for about 10 months at the 2020 level of demand.

168. Global stocks of thebaine-based opiates (oxycodone, thebaine and a small quantity of oxymorphone) decreased slightly, to 241 tons in thebaine equivalent at the end of 2019, from 248 tons in 2018. Those stocks were sufficient to cover global demand for thebaine-based opiates for medical and scientific purposes for more than two years.

Figure XI Supply of and demand for opiate raw materials rich in thebaine, in thebaine equivalent, 2016–2021



^aData for production and demand for 2020 are based on advance data (dotted line) submitted by Governments.

^bData for 2021 are based on estimates (dotted line) submitted by Governments.

169. Despite the reduction in global production of opiate raw materials rich in thebaine, demand grew, from 144 tons in 2018 to 164 tons in 2019. This led to a decrease in the quantity of stocks, from 235 tons at the end of 2018 to 188 tons at the end of 2019. The stocks at the end of 2019 were sufficient to cover global demand for 10 months.

Noscapine

170. Even though noscapine is not under international control, a significant amount of morphine can be extracted from opium poppy rich in noscapine. Cultivation of noscapine-rich opium poppy plants for the purpose of opiate production was reported by France in 2019. France sowed 2,298 ha and harvested 1,974 ha of noscapine-rich opium poppy in 2019 and produced noscapine-rich poppy straw with a gross weight of 1,493 tons.

C. Overall treaty compliance

1. Evaluation of overall treaty compliance

171. The 1961 Convention as amended, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention create a series of obligations incumbent upon States parties that require them to adopt legislative and policy measures in a variety of areas to ensure effective implementation of the conventions.

172. These areas include the adoption of regulatory frameworks for the monitoring of licit production and manufacture of and trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and for the permitted uses for controlled substances; the development of a legal framework to combat trafficking in and diversion of drugs, and related conduct; and the taking of all practicable measures for the prevention of illicit drug use and for the early identification, treatment, education, aftercare and social reintegration of persons affected by illicit drug use.

173. In carrying out its mandate of ensuring the execution of the provisions of the three international drug control conventions, the Board reviews developments in States parties with the aim of identifying possible shortcomings in the implementation of those conventions by States with a view to recommending remedial action.

174. The Board's evaluation of the status of implementation by States of their legal obligations pursuant to the international drug control conventions is guided by its ongoing dialogue and exchange of information with

Governments, including through extensive correspondence, meetings with Government representatives, country missions and participation in INCB initiatives, and through the submission of statistical reports by Governments to the Board. In the period under review, the Board reviewed the drug control situation in Australia, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

(a) Australia

175. The Board notes that new cannabis cultivation and possession rules came into effect in the Australian Capital Territory on 31 January 2020, as a result of the passage in September 2019 of the Drugs of Dependence Amendment Act. According to the new rules around personal use of cannabis for non-medical purposes, people in the Australian Capital Territory over the age of 18 are permitted to possess up to 50 grams of dried cannabis or up to 150 grams of fresh cannabis and adults may grow up to two cannabis plants per person, with a maximum of four plants permitted per household. Also under the rules, personal use of cannabis for non-medical purposes is permitted in people's homes.

176. Under the changes to the cannabis rules in the Australian Capital Territory, the following have been established as offences: (a) using cannabis in a public place; (b) exposing a child or young person to cannabis smoke; (c) storing cannabis in reach of children; (d) growing cannabis using hydroponics or artificial cultivation; and (e) growing plants where they could be accessed by the public. Rules pertaining to the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes that have not been changed include that it is illegal to sell, share or give cannabis as a gift to another person and it is illegal for people to drive with cannabis in their system.

177. The government of the Australian Capital Territory describes these new regulations as decriminalization and explains that cannabis is not legal in the Australian Capital Territory. Rather, the territory has removed penalties for adults who possess or use small amounts of cannabis so that they can receive support without fear of being sanctioned through the justice system.

178. The Board takes note of the indicated purposes of the amendment. However, the text of the amendment states that cannabis is not considered a "prohibited substance". While the amendment does create new offences, such as use of cannabis around children, the effect of it is the legalization of cannabis for personal and non-medical use by adults.

179. Despite the restrictions with regard to the place and minimum age of consumption, the amendment does not meet the requirement found in article 36, paragraph 1 (a), of the 1961 Convention as amended that possession of drugs contrary to the Convention shall be a punishable offence. It is further specified, in article 4, paragraph (a), of the Convention, that parties shall take such legislative and administrative measures as may be necessary to give effect to and carry out the provisions of the Convention within their own territories.

180. The Board recognizes that the possession or cultivation of cannabis with the intention to sell continues to be an offence in Australia, in line with the Commonwealth Criminal Code of 1995. Further, the Board understands that the federal Government does not give effect at the federal level to the amended cannabis regulations in the Australian Capital Territory and that federal law will continue to be enforced throughout Australia.

181. The Board will continue to monitor these developments in the Australian Capital Territory and will also continue to monitor the application of the federal law (the Commonwealth Criminal Code), which includes the offence of possession or cultivation of cannabis.

(b) Italy

182. During the period under review, the Board continued to monitor drug-related developments in Italy. In December 2019, the Supreme Court of Italy issued a ruling removing small-scale cultivation of cannabis for private use from the definitions in article 73 of the Consolidated Law included in Presidential Decree 309/1990 that criminalizes illicit activities with controlled substances. In its ruling, the Court declared that the offence of “cultivating narcotic drugs” should not include small amounts grown domestically for the exclusive use of the grower. Although the cultivation and sale of cannabis remain illegal under the drug legislation, there has been some uncertainty in the interpretation of this prohibition following previous court decisions on the matter.

183. The Board is engaged in close dialogue with Italian authorities to ascertain the details of the Supreme Court ruling and its impact on the prohibition of the cultivation and sale of cannabis for non-medical purposes under current Italian legislation and to facilitate the country’s compliance with its international legal obligations as a State party to the three international drug control conventions. In the context of that dialogue, the Board has reiterated that the legalization of the non-medical and non-scientific use of controlled narcotic drugs is a violation of the 1961

Convention as amended, which restricts the use of controlled substances to medical and scientific purposes, and of the 1988 Convention, which obliges States parties to establish as criminal offences a wide range of conduct related to the production and commercial distribution of controlled substances in a manner inconsistent with the 1961 Convention as amended.

(c) Luxembourg

184. The Board continued to follow closely the drug-related developments in Luxembourg, in particular those related to control of cannabis in the country, and engaged in active dialogue with the national authorities to facilitate compliance with the international drug control treaties.

185. The governing coalition in Luxembourg released its policy positions in December 2018, which included its plans to introduce legislation to regulate the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes within the following five years. According to the Government, the stated objective of the plan is to move from a repressive to an innovative approach, through: (a) the reduction of demand on the black market; (b) the reduction of psychological and physical harms; and (c) the reduction of criminal activity at the supply level. The Board engaged with the Government of Luxembourg during a series of meetings to gain a broader understanding of these developments and to ensure that Luxembourg remains in compliance with the provisions of the 1961 Convention as amended.

186. During those meetings, the representatives of the Government of Luxembourg informed the President of the Board about the potential plans for the regulation of the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes in the country, including certain planned measures to prevent trafficking in or personal cultivation of cannabis, such as the introduction of strict punishments for cannabis-related activity outside the planned programme, notably for sale to minors (those aged under 18) or to non-residents of the country, and to ensure that consumption of cannabis in public and personal cultivation remained illegal.

187. The Board has continued to emphasize that, although the initiative to regulate non-medical use of cannabis is still at the planning stage in Luxembourg, any and all legislative or regulatory measures aimed at the legalization of the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes would be inconsistent with the provisions of the 1961 Convention as amended, in particular article 4, paragraph (c), which requires States parties to take such legislative and administrative measures as may be

necessary to limit the use of narcotic drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes, and article 3, paragraph 1 (a) (i), of the 1988 Convention, which creates the obligation for States to establish as criminal offences, when committed intentionally, the production, manufacture, extraction, preparation, offering, offering for sale, distribution, sale, delivery on any terms whatsoever, brokerage, dispatch, dispatch in transit, transport, importation or exportation of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance contrary to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, the 1961 Convention as amended or the 1971 Convention.

(d) Mexico

188. As a result of a jurisprudential ruling of the Supreme Court of Mexico in 2018, which required that personal cannabis use be made legal in the country, draft legislation on the matter is pending in the country's Senate. The Supreme Court ruling came after five appeals were resolved in favour of the personal possession and consumption of cannabis for non-medical purposes. The Supreme Court found that the refusal of the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks to grant permits to adults for the consumption of cannabis for non-medical purposes violated the country's constitutional principle of the right to free development of the personality.

189. The Supreme Court of Mexico did not authorize, in its 2018 ruling, the commercial sale, supply or distribution of cannabis or the consumption of any other narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In order to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court, the Congress of Mexico is required to develop legislation that would include new guidelines and modalities to regulate the possession and use of cannabis for non-medical purposes by adults.

190. In March 2020, the Senate of Mexico began deliberations in committees on the amendments to the country's cannabis regulations. Although work was initially paused owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, on 19 November 2020, the Senate of Mexico approved legislation that would legalize and regulate the personal use and possession of cannabis for non-medical purposes. To enter into force, the legislation still needs to be passed by the Chamber of Deputies and signed into law by the President. The Supreme Court extended the deadline for passage of the legislation to 15 December 2020.

191. The Board takes note of these proposed changes to the drug laws of Mexico and will continue to engage with the Government on developments pertaining to amended

regulations on cannabis consumption for non-medical purposes, as well as other matters pertaining to the country's implementation of its international legal obligations as a State party to the three international drug control conventions.

(e) Philippines

192. During the reporting period, the Board continued to closely monitor developments in the Philippines related to drug control. In March 2020, the President of the Board held a meeting with the delegation of the Philippines to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-third session, during which the implementation by the Philippines of its laws and policies related to drug control, including allegations of extrajudicial targeting of persons suspected of drug-related activities and the plans of the Government to reinstate the death penalty for drug-related offences, was discussed.

193. During that meeting, the President of the Board was informed of the Government's plan of action, which was revised in 2018 and contains actions on demand-reduction advocacy, community-based drug rehabilitation programmes and supply-reduction operations. Information was also provided on the introduction of a points-based system, whereby those receiving drug treatment were assessed and monitored, and on the provision of incentives to administrative divisions in the Philippines that demonstrated tangible progress in implementing drug-related reforms.

194. The Board also held consultations with a high-level delegation of the Philippines at its 129th session, held in November 2020, during which those issues were further discussed.

195. The Board has taken note of concerns put forward by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the fact that a preliminary examination has been initiated by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague with regard to allegations of extrajudicial killings of persons for reasons related to their alleged involvement in illegal drug use or dealing.

196. The Board has also taken note of information provided by the Government of the Philippines in response to allegations of extrajudicial targeting of drug users, including on the establishment of oversight mechanisms over police operations and the systematic review of any deaths resulting from anti-drug operations. The Board has further taken note of the stated position of the

Government that it does not condone extrajudicial targeting and that the Constitution of the Philippines provides for the right of due process.

197. The Board, while acknowledging the stated efforts of the Government to introduce measures to prevent any coercive or punitive actions against individuals suspected of involvement in drug-related activities without due process, and also acknowledging the continued engagement of the Government in dialogue with the Board, wishes to reiterate its call to the Government of the Philippines to condemn any extrajudicial actions against individuals suspected of involvement in the illicit drug trade or of drug use, to introduce more robust measures to prevent any such actions and to ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice in full observance of due process and the rule of law.

198. Calls by senior government officials of the Philippines to reinstate the death penalty for drug-related offences in the Philippines continued during the reporting period, although opinion seemed to be divided on the matter in the legislature. As repeatedly stated in its annual reports, although the determination of sanctions applicable to drug-related crime remains the prerogative of States parties to the conventions, the Board encourages States that retain capital punishment for that category of offence to commute death sentences that have already been handed down and to consider the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences.

199. The Board continues to actively seek the acceptance of the Government of the Philippines of an INCB country mission, which was initially proposed by the Board in 2017, in order to seek further clarification on the implementation of the three international drug control conventions by the Philippines from senior drug control stakeholders in the country. It reiterates its call to the Government of the Philippines to facilitate the holding of the mission at the earliest opportunity.

(f) Trinidad and Tobago

200. During the period under review, Trinidad and Tobago passed the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill to amend the regulation of cannabis use for non-medical purposes. The amendment will decriminalize the possession of not more than 30 grams of cannabis or not more than 5 grams of cannabis resin and create offences restricting the use of cannabis in specific instances, such as in a public place.

201. The text of the amendment to the Dangerous Drugs Act, which came into force on 23 December 2019, includes the provision that the offence and related liability will no longer apply to those possessing the specified amounts of cannabis. The Board notes that the stated aim of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is to decriminalize the possession of cannabis and enable the expungement of criminal records and the pardoning of past convictions for possession of limited quantities of cannabis.

202. However, without the establishment of an offence or liability attached to the consumption by adults of cannabis for non-medical purposes, the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill might not be a sufficient legislative and administrative measure to limit the use and cultivation of cannabis to medical and scientific purposes in line with article 4, paragraph 1 (c), of the 1961 Convention as amended and article 3, paragraph 1 (a) (i), of the 1988 Convention.

203. The Board will continue monitoring these developments in Trinidad and Tobago and engage in dialogue with the Government to support the full and effective implementation of the international drug control treaties.

(g) Uruguay

204. During the reporting period, the Board followed closely the implementation by Uruguay of law No. 19172, which legalized the production, distribution, sale and consumption of cannabis and its derivatives for non-medical purposes in the country, through three access routes: domestic cultivation, membership of a cannabis club and dispensing by registered pharmacies.

205. According to a February 2020 report on the regulated cannabis market in Uruguay, published by the country's Institute for the Regulation and Control of Cannabis, there has been an upward trend in the number of people entering the cannabis market for non-medical purposes. The 2020 report confirms that, as at February 2019, by which time the law had been implemented for two years and seven months, 53,399 people were authorized to access cannabis through the Government's regulated market. That represented an increase of 7.5 per cent, or 3,720 people, in the number of cannabis users registered with pharmacies, as home growers or as members of cannabis clubs since the previous report, published in 2019. Of the three routes for accessing cannabis through the Government's regulated market, membership of cannabis clubs showed the greatest growth, with 18 per cent more

members reported in October 2019, largely due to the formation of new clubs.

206. As part of its close monitoring of these developments in Uruguay, the Board held consultations with a high-level delegation from Uruguay on 12 November 2020. The Board will continue its engagement with the Government of Uruguay to promote the effective implementation of the drug control treaties and enhance understanding of convention requirements, particularly article 4, paragraph (c), of the 1961 Convention as amended, which requires States parties to take such legislative and administrative measures as may be necessary to limit the use of narcotic drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes.

2. Country missions

207. Under normal circumstances, the Board undertakes several country missions each year in order to assist it in monitoring compliance by States parties with their legal obligations under the three international drug control conventions and to promote the effective implementation of those treaties.

208. The Board utilizes these country missions to engage in dialogue with relevant national authorities on a range of drug control issues, including legislative, institutional and practical measures implemented at the national level in the areas of licit manufacture of and trade in controlled substances with a view to facilitating the availability of those substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion into illicit channels. The Board also discusses with national stakeholders mechanisms for preventing and addressing the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

209. Following its missions, the Board adopts a series of recommendations aimed at improving the implementation of the international drug control conventions that are communicated confidentially to the Governments in question.

210. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has suspended its country missions until the global public health situation permits. Accordingly, during the period under review, no country missions were undertaken. The Board continues to consider country missions as an essential tool in facilitating its dialogue with States and looks forward to resuming them at the earliest opportunity.

3. Evaluation of the implementation by Governments of recommendations made by the Board following its country missions

211. As a follow-up to its country missions, the Board reviews developments in countries that have hosted Board delegations two to three years previously. In order to do so, the Board requests the Governments in question to provide it with relevant information on any developments since the missions, including any legislative or policy actions taken to implement the Board's post-mission recommendations.

212. In 2020, the Board invited the Governments of Australia, Egypt, Guyana, the Russian Federation and Switzerland, countries to which missions had been conducted in 2017, to report on any drug policy-related developments that had resulted from the Board's post-mission recommendations. During the period under review, the Board also received a report from the Government of Afghanistan on the status of implementation of the Board's recommendations following its mission to the country in 2016.

213. The Board wishes to express its appreciation to the Governments of Afghanistan, Egypt, the Russian Federation and Switzerland for submitting timely responses and renews its call to the Governments of Australia and Guyana to provide the information requested at the earliest opportunity.

(a) Afghanistan

214. In May 2016, the Board undertook a mission to Afghanistan to review the implementation of the international drug control treaties by Afghanistan and continue the consultations with the Government of Afghanistan that it had initiated in 2001. At that time, INCB concluded that the situation in the country, if left unattended, would seriously endanger the aims of the 1961 Convention as amended and decided to invoke the relevant measures under article 14 of that Convention with a view to promoting cooperative action at the international level.

215. During the mission, the Government of Afghanistan informed the Board that it remained committed to combating the illicit cultivation, production and manufacture of, trafficking in and illicit use of drugs. The Board expressed concern that the illicit cultivation of opium poppy in Afghanistan, regardless of fluctuations, had

continued to increase over the previous two decades. The Board observed that, in the light of reports of increasing illicit cultivation and production of cannabis, as well as the emergence of illicit methamphetamine manufacture in the country, there was a need to strengthen the Government's efforts to address those challenges. The Board also expressed concern over the level of illicit drug use in the country. Issues of the availability of drugs for medical purposes and precursor control challenges in the country were also on the agenda of the mission.

216. The Board continues to monitor drug-related developments in Afghanistan and engage in close dialogue with the Government with a view to promoting compliance with the international drug control treaties. More detailed information on the cooperation of the Board with Afghanistan is provided in chapter II, part E, of the present report.

(b) Egypt

217. The Board notes that the Government of Egypt has made progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board following the mission in 2017. Egypt reported that, since the mission, it had taken substantial law enforcement measures to prevent narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from being trafficked into the country. Egyptian law enforcement authorities had been monitoring official border crossings in cooperation with the competent national authorities to prevent drug trafficking. Joint commissions had regularly brought together the border guard intelligence forces, the navy and the air force, as well as other anti-drug agencies, to tackle trafficking in a unified manner.

218. With respect to the expansion of drug law enforcement capacity, Egypt reported that its police and customs authority were strengthening their cooperation to establish government control over legal points of entry into the country in order to determine the best administrative and legislative mechanisms for controlling the movements of containers, goods and parcels, as well as the movement of persons, thereby consolidating the country's policy on combating cross-border trafficking offences.

219. The Government of Egypt updated the Board on the measures it had taken since 2017 to combat the misuse of precursor chemicals and psychotropic substances. A tripartite commission composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior, which monitor the legal use of precursor chemicals, had been strengthened. New

types of drugs that had been appearing on the illicit market in Egypt were being monitored and studied by the Government with a view to adopting necessary measures. Illicit activities resulting from the improper distribution of certain psychotropic drugs by pharmacies had also been targeted and efforts had been made to keep those drugs from being trafficked.

220. Egypt also reported that the Ministry of the Interior had been coordinating with the relevant entities in the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Investment to assess actual need and determine the amounts of precursor chemicals required for legal use in the health and manufacturing industries in order to prevent such chemicals from being trafficked. Egypt noted that a laboratory would be established within the Administration for the analysis of narcotic substances, in order to detect and identify new psychotropic substances and their ingredients and expedite the addition of new substances to the country's drug schedules.

221. The Board was informed that the Government of Egypt was cooperating closely with neighbouring countries and countries in the region and that Egypt had participated in regional cooperation efforts to combat the country's drug problem. Egypt reported that it had strengthened its frameworks for the exchange of information, such as on where drugs were produced, trafficking routes, means of trafficking, patterns of illicit use, new developments and challenges, related criminal activities and the persons involved in those illicit activities. Egypt had also been coordinating with the UNODC Regional Office in Cairo to support multilateral cooperation on training. It had cooperated and coordinated with liaison officers in international and regional anti-drug agencies and had participated in all relevant coordination meetings, including with the Mediterranean Area Anti-Drug Enforcement Coordination Centre, in support of international anti-drug operations and early targeting of offences involving the import and smuggling of drugs into the country. Egypt had also taken part in the high-level meeting of the heads of the anti-drug agencies of the Mediterranean Area Anti-Drug Enforcement Coordination Centre held in Paris in November 2019.

222. The Government of Egypt stated that it continued to face difficulties, including with regard to the scientific advancements that were being misused to produce new synthetic and psychotropic drugs. Criminal networks had been resourceful in using non-scheduled substances as substitutes and, therefore, the types of substances had multiplied significantly and their spread on the illicit market had accelerated. Taking advantage of political instability and insecurity, criminal networks used

neighbouring countries to cultivate, produce and manufacture narcotic substances and to traffic them into other countries in the region. The Government of Egypt reported that the information technology and social media revolution had facilitated the digital promotion of drug trafficking and drug use.

223. With regard to the mechanisms established to overcome difficulties relating to drug law enforcement capacity, the Government of Egypt provided information to the Board that: (a) trafficking routes, persons involved in trafficking operations and areas where drug shipments were stored had been targeted; (b) the main hubs and routes through which shipments of drugs transited and were then trafficked onward had been monitored; (c) air, sea and land ports had been monitored more closely in order to crack down on trafficking operations; (d) new technologies had been deployed to detect, screen for and confiscate drugs at ports and the capacity of law enforcement agencies to perform those tasks had been enhanced; (e) anti-drug personnel had been trained and new methods of trafficking and means of concealment had been studied; (f) cutting-edge investigative methods such as controlled delivery had been used to track the activity of and apprehend high-level drug traffickers; and (g) officials in neighbouring countries had met to exchange intelligence on the activities of the networks involved in drug trafficking.

224. With respect to the progress made by Egypt since 2017 in implementing the Board's post-mission recommendations, the Board has requested further information from the Government of Egypt on treatment and rehabilitation, reporting obligations, the submission of data to INCB and ensuring the adequate availability of opioids for medical purposes. Egypt has made substantial efforts to implement the Board's recommendations pertaining to strengthening and expanding law enforcement capacity, and the Board acknowledges the effective cooperation of the Government of Egypt in fulfilling the country's obligations under the international drug control treaties.

(c) Russian Federation

225. The Board undertook a mission to the Russian Federation in November 2017 in order to review the implementation of the international drug control treaties by the country and to examine drug control developments since its last mission to the country, in 2005.

226. During the mission, the Board noted that the Government of the Russian Federation remained committed to the objectives of the international drug control treaties. The intention of the Government to cultivate

opium poppy for medical and scientific purposes to satisfy the domestic need for opiate raw materials was one of the main subjects discussed during the mission. In addition, the delegation of the Board reviewed the availability of drugs for medical purposes and other matters concerning the implementation of the international drug control treaties, as well as drug use and drug treatment, including in penitentiary facilities, and trafficking in drugs, precursors and new psychoactive substances.

227. The Board notes that the Government has implemented several initiatives aimed at removing regulatory and other barriers towards better access to controlled substances for rational medical use, which has resulted in an increase in the consumption of such drugs. The country has also significantly improved and extended its system of drug use treatment, which is available in all parts of the country and in prison facilities.

(d) Switzerland

228. The Board undertook a mission to Switzerland in November 2017 in order to review the implementation of the international drug control treaties by the country and to examine drug control developments since its last mission to the country, in 2000.

229. During the mission, the Board observed close communication and coordination among various stakeholders in the area of drug control (competent national authorities, law enforcement agencies, representatives of pharmaceutical and chemical industries, related academic institutes and non-governmental organizations) within the country.

230. The Board was informed that the Government of Switzerland wished to adapt the legislative framework governing cannabis in order to adequately respond to the opportunities and risks associated with the substance. In this regard, the Board notes that the Government has submitted two legislative changes to Parliament in order to facilitate access to cannabis for medical purposes and to permit scientific studies to be conducted on the recreational use of cannabis. The Board understands that, on the basis of the legislation currently in place, various applications for research licences to study the potential non-medical use of cannabis were denied by the Federal Office of Public Health.

231. The Board was informed that Switzerland had been using "drug consumption rooms" for over 30 years and that, according to the Government, they had proved to mitigate risks and maintain public safety in the country.

The Board notes that the Government is participating in an EMCDDA project in order to better understand the use of “drug consumption rooms” in Europe and to analyse the demand for, trends in and evolution of “drug consumption rooms” in a more in-depth manner.

232. The Board recognizes the fruitful collaboration between the Government and the industrial sector, which has led to the control of three other classes of substances (namely fentanyl, derivatives of lysergic acid, and derivatives of nitazene). In particular, cooperation with the relevant authorities has resulted in a balanced approach to ketamine, by countering trafficking on the one hand and avoiding restrictions for medical use on the other.

233. The Board notes that the Government is conducting an assessment on the development of pain medication following a change in consumption patterns in recent years. The Government recognizes the importance of ensuring that no unjustifiable barriers exist to the overall availability and accessibility of controlled drugs intended for medical purposes. In this regard, the Government intends to analyse and conduct research to determine whether there is a need to improve the availability and accessibility of more affordable drugs in the country.

234. The Government confirmed its commitment to the development of networks for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The Board commends the commitment of Switzerland to a global approach to drug-related problems and to the three international drug control conventions.

D. Action taken by the Board to ensure the implementation of the international drug control treaties

1. Action taken by the Board pursuant to article 14 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol and article 19 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971

235. In situations where the Board has objective reasons to believe that the aims of the international drug control treaties are being seriously endangered by the failure of a party, country or territory to comply with the obligations contained therein, or there is a serious situation requiring cooperative action at the international level, the Board can pursue specific courses of action under the

conventions to facilitate compliance and/or international assistance. These courses of action are set out in articles 14 and 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended, article 19 of the 1971 Convention and article 22 of the 1988 Convention. Under these articles, the Board engages in a formal dialogue with the States in question, as well as with the international community, with a view to facilitating compliance with the conventions.

236. In the past, INCB has invoked article 14 of the 1961 Convention as amended and/or article 19 of the 1971 Convention with respect to a number of States and has engaged in a close dialogue with them with a view to bringing about compliance with the treaties. In line with the requirements of the relevant provisions of the treaties, the names of the States concerned are not publicly disclosed and the related consultations with the Board remain confidential, unless the Board decides to bring the situation to the attention of the parties, the Economic and Social Council or the Commission on Narcotic Drugs following its consultations with the Government in question or if the country in question consents to the invocation of the provisions being publicly disclosed.

237. The present section contains information on measures taken by the Board in relation to Afghanistan. In 2001, the Board determined that a serious situation existed that called for cooperative action at the international level and with the authorities of any future governing body in Afghanistan, whether transitional or permanent, and decided to call the attention of the parties, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, through its annual report, to the situation in Afghanistan, under the provisions of article 14, paragraph 1 (d), of the 1961 Convention as amended.

238. One of the recommendations of the Board following its high-level mission to Afghanistan in May 2016 concerned the importance of the invocation of article 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended with respect to the country. That article is concerned with the provision of technical and financial assistance to the country in respect of which the article has been invoked. It states that “in cases which it considers appropriate and either in addition or as an alternative to measures set forth in article 14, paragraphs 1 and 2, the Board, with the agreement of the Government concerned, may recommend to the competent United Nations organs and to the specialized agencies that technical or financial assistance, or both, be provided to the Government in support of its efforts to carry out its obligations under this Convention”. On 28 March 2018, the Board received a letter from the Government of Afghanistan in which the Government

expressed its agreement to invoking article 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended, in addition to the measures already invoked by the Board under article 14. At its 122nd session, in May 2018, the Board decided to invoke article 14 bis with regard to Afghanistan.

2. Consultation with the Government of Afghanistan pursuant to articles 14 and 14 bis of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol

239. During the reporting period, the Board continued to pursue consultations with the Government of Afghanistan under articles 14 and 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended. Several important meetings were held with the Government of Afghanistan in that regard. One of the highlights of the consultations was the participation of the delegation of Afghanistan in the 127th session of the Board, in February 2020, in order to hold consultations with the Board under article 14 bis. The Government of Afghanistan was represented by the Deputy Minister of the Interior for Counter-Narcotics, the Director for Coordination of Counter-Narcotics Efforts of the Ministry of the Interior and the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations (Vienna).

240. The consultations held on 7 February 2020 with the delegation of Afghanistan, during the 127th session of the Board, provided an opportunity to discuss the current challenges and needs of Afghanistan in terms of addressing the serious drug control situation in the country. The Government cited several specific areas in which assistance by the international community, including United Nations organs and specialized agencies, as well as other donors and partners, was still needed. In particular, the Government of Afghanistan called for urgent and sustained technical and financial support by the international community in the following broad areas:

(a) Building upon the success of existing alternative livelihood programmes, in particular through further supporting developing agricultural infrastructure, and strengthening marketing opportunities for goods and products produced under those initiatives;

(b) Addressing linkages between terrorism, insurgency, corruption and drug trafficking through integrated crime prevention and criminal justice technical assistance initiatives;

(c) Strengthening law enforcement capacities in interdiction and investigation of domestic and cross-border drug-related offences through increased provision of training and necessary border control and other equipment;

(d) Facilitating regional cooperation in addressing drug control challenges, on the basis of common and shared responsibility;

(e) Addressing the trafficking in chemical precursors used in illicit drug production through effective cooperation among source, transit and destination countries;

(f) Increasing health-care opportunities for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug users, in particular for women and youth.

241. On 10 February 2020, the Board issued a press release outlining the details of the consultations held with the Government of Afghanistan under article 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended. In the press release, the Board reiterated its readiness to further facilitate support to Afghanistan through continuous engagement with the United Nations and other agencies, and with members of the international community at large, while highlighting that efforts to stabilize the country would not be sustainable unless the country's illicit drug economy was effectively addressed.

242. In his statement during the opening meeting of the sixty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna from 2 to 6 March 2020, the President of INCB addressed the drug control situation in Afghanistan and reported on the outcome of the consultations with the Government of Afghanistan held during the 127th session of the Board. He noted that the urgent needs in drug control that could be addressed through technical and financial assistance from the competent organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations had been identified.

243. In March 2020, the President of the Board held further consultations with the delegation of Afghanistan to the sixty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, led by the Deputy Minister of the Interior for Counter-Narcotics. During the meeting, the delegation informed the President that government agencies, including the Ministry of the Interior, were developing a new opium poppy eradication plan and noted the decrease in opium poppy cultivation in 2019. Issues of increased trafficking in methamphetamine in Afghanistan were also discussed. The President noted that the Board would take further steps, in consultation with the Government of

Afghanistan, as and when appropriate, to communicate the matters raised by the delegation of Afghanistan to the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations, for the purposes of facilitating the provision of technical and financial assistance to Afghanistan to assist it in meeting its obligations under the 1961 Convention as amended.

United Nations action

244. On 10 March 2020, the Security Council adopted resolution 2513 (2020), in which it welcomed accelerated efforts to make progress towards reconciliation and also welcomed and encouraged the continuation of the efforts of all regional and international partners to support peace, reconciliation and development in Afghanistan. Also in the resolution, the Council called upon the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to pursue, in good faith, additional confidence-building measures to create conditions conducive to a swift beginning and the success of intra-Afghan negotiations and a durable peace. The Council recalled the urgent need for all Afghan parties to counter the world drug problem with the goal of combating the traffic in opiates originating in Afghanistan.

Situation in Afghanistan

245. The political and security situations in Afghanistan during the reporting period were dominated by developments related to the presidential elections and to the peace talks with the Taliban.

246. After being re-elected as President, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani announced his intention to form a strong and united Government, noting that the participation of women would be vital. Amid claims from opposition parties regarding the legality of the results of the presidential elections and their intention to form an alternative government, UNAMA and other international actors in the country called upon all parties to address grievances through dialogue and respect for the constitutional order.

247. Despite an announcement by the President of the United States on the withdrawal of the United States from peace negotiations with the Taliban in September 2019, the post-electoral period was marked by the accelerated efforts of the United States to re-engage in peace talks with the Taliban. The United States Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation restarted his close engagement with national and regional stakeholders and participated in peace talks with the Taliban in Doha, claiming that the negotiations had led to an agreement on a “significant and nationwide reduction of violence across

Afghanistan” from 22 February 2020. Despite the initial criticism by the Government of Afghanistan of the peace process led by the United States owing to the lack of the involvement of the national Government in those negotiations, in February 2020, Mr. Ghani welcomed the developments in the talks between the United States and the Taliban and noted that Afghanistan would manage the next steps in a manner that positively supported the overall peace process. On 28 February 2020, an agreement was signed between the United States and the Taliban on the reduction in the number of United States military forces to 8,600 troops and the proportional reduction in the number of coalition forces over the subsequent 135 days. That was to be followed by a reduction in the number of all international forces within another nine and a half months, which would be conditional on the Taliban’s commitment to reducing violence.

248. The security situation, meanwhile, remained unstable. Between 8 November 2019 and 6 February 2020, UNAMA recorded 4,907 security-related incidents, a number similar to that recorded during the same period in the previous year. The highest number of incidents occurred in the southern region, followed by the northern and eastern regions. Fighting decreased during the winter (at the end of 2019 and in early 2020) and an overall reduction in violence was noted from February 2020, although it is yet to be seen how long-lasting that reduction will be.

249. On 22 February 2020, UNAMA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a joint report entitled *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – 2019*, in which the continuing record-high levels of civilian casualties in the ongoing conflict were described. According to the report, a documented 3,403 civilians were killed and 6,989 were injured, with the majority of the civilian casualties in 2019 caused by anti-government elements. It was also noted in the report that 2019 was the sixth year in a row that the number of civilian casualties had exceeded 10,000. The figures represent a 5 per cent decrease over the previous year, mainly owing to a decrease in civilian casualties caused by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province. The number of civilian casualties caused by other parties increased, in particular those inflicted by the Taliban (21 per cent increase) and the international military forces (18 per cent increase), mainly as a result of an increase in improvised explosive device attacks and airstrikes. In total, more than 100,000 civilians have been killed or injured since the United Nations began its systematic documentation of civilian casualties, in 2009. The report contains several recommendations, including the need to comply with the key principles of

distinction, proportionality and precaution to prevent civilian casualties, and also contains a reminder to the parties that attacks deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects are serious violations of international humanitarian law that may amount to war crimes, which need to be promptly and transparently investigated.

250. Afghanistan continued to report seizures of substantial amounts of illicit substances, including heroin, opium, cannabis resin, methamphetamine, “ecstasy” and precursor chemicals, through its counter-narcotics operations. Those seizures were accompanied by the arrests of many suspects and the confiscation of assets and weapons. There have been many reports of officers of the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Police being killed or wounded while carrying out their operations. More detailed information regarding the drug-related trends in Afghanistan can be found in chapter III, part D, of the present report.

251. With the support of the United Nations, the Drug Demand Reduction Department of the Ministry of Public Health opened five drug treatment centres in Afghanistan, which provide services for the prevention and treatment of drug use disorders to children and their families. In February 2020, the delegation of Afghanistan to the 127th session of the Board called for support in the area of drug treatment and highlighted that the Afghanistan national drug use survey for 2015 had shown a presence of 2.9 million to 3.6 million drug users across the country, representing about 11.1 per cent of the entire population of Afghanistan. The same survey had found that, in 2015, the total number of drug treatment centres in the country was 123, with a total annual treatment capacity of 32,170 patients.

252. The return of many Afghans from Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic threatens a greater outbreak in Afghanistan that could overwhelm its already inadequate health infrastructure. As at 13 August 2020, the International Organization for Migration had recorded more than 672,000 returnees to Afghanistan since January 2020 (about 430,000 from the Islamic Republic of Iran and 242,000 from Pakistan). The removal of many staff of international non-governmental organizations from Afghanistan owing to the pandemic has put additional stress on the fragile health-care system in Afghanistan, which does not have the capacity to test, take the temperatures of or quarantine the returnees. Afghan officials have emphasized that, if no urgent action is taken, up to 80 per cent of the country’s total population of 35 million could be infected.

253. As the Board continues its close consultations with the Government of Afghanistan, in particular, with a view to effectively implementing article 14 bis of the 1961 Convention as amended, it looks forward to facilitating further support to Afghanistan through ongoing engagement with the United Nations and other agencies in addressing the complex drug control challenges in Afghanistan and in supporting the pursuit of peace and sustainable development.

3. Supporting Government compliance with the treaties

INCB Learning

254. In 2016, in order to increase the effectiveness of its work to ensure the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, the Board launched the INCB Learning project. Under the project, assistance is provided to Member States by promoting the implementation of and full compliance with the international drug control conventions through awareness-raising and training. One of the objectives of the project is to address the barriers to the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances required for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their abuse and diversion into illicit channels. Timely and accurate national reports of estimated requirements, statistical data for controlled substances and submissions of the estimates of annual legitimate requirements for precursors to the Board are essential for achieving this objective.

255. Through capacity-building, INCB Learning supports Governments in estimating and assessing their specific needs for internationally controlled substances. Activities include regional training seminars, availability workshops, e-learning modules, bilateral consultations and, since mid-2020, online training sessions.

256. The ninth regional INCB Learning training seminar was held in Moscow from 2 to 4 December 2019. It was attended by 38 drug control officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation and with the participation of WHO representatives, the training seminar provided, over three days, specialized training on the requirements of the three international drug control conventions relating to the regulatory control and monitoring of licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. Participants also

received hands-on training on the Board's global online tools: I2ES, PEN Online, PICS and IONICS.

257. Following the seminar, on 5 December 2019, an awareness-raising regional workshop on the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes was held in Moscow. The event, which was co-organized and hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, brought together participants from national authorities, international organizations and civil society to discuss the importance of ensuring access to medicines containing internationally controlled substances.

258. Between April 2016 and December 2019, in-person training was provided through INCB Learning to 274 officials from 95 countries and territories in nine regional training seminars and four workshops. Between June and November 2020, 76 officials from 11 countries were provided with online training, in line with the restrictions put in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

259. Webinars were offered to provide online training on the implementation of the international drug control conventions with a focus on treaty compliance and exchange of best practices among countries. Between 8 and 15 June 2020, 26 government officials from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama participated in nine online sessions focused on internationally controlled substances. Participants had the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the international drug control framework and to receive hands-on training on the technical reporting requirements of the conventions relating to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and on the use of I2ES. This was the first time that webinars had been offered through INCB Learning. The aim of the webinars is to continue supporting Governments through the provision of capacity-building activities while complying with measures designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

260. An anonymous online evaluation of the INCB Learning webinars revealed that 95 per cent of participants had found the content to be relevant to their daily work. Furthermore, 84 per cent of participants indicated that the sessions had met their expectations and 95 per cent considered that webinars should play a role in capacity-building in the future. The activity received an overall rating of 4.71 out of 5. Following the webinars for Spanish-speaking countries, a series of bilateral meetings were scheduled between July and September 2020 with officials from the competent national authorities of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras,

Guatemala and Panama to address national issues related to narcotic drugs.

261. Webinars for the competent national authorities of Belize and Guyana took place from 16 to 23 June 2020. The participation of Panama in the Spanish webinar and of Belize and Guyana in the English webinar marked an important milestone, as none of those three countries had received training under INCB Learning before.

262. A second series of webinars in Spanish took place from 28 September to 1 October and on 25 and 26 November 2020 for 43 officials from three countries: Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The webinars were tailored to assist Governments in estimating and providing accurate data to ensure the availability of controlled substances while preventing diversion and abuse.

263. On 3 March 2020, INCB Learning launched Spanish versions of its e-learning modules at a side event during the sixty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The side event, organized by the Government of El Salvador in cooperation with INCB and the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, the Russian Federation and Singapore, provided an opportunity for beneficiaries of and contributors to INCB Learning to highlight the importance of capacity-building for competent national authorities. The importance of such capacity-building had been recognized by Member States in the outcome document entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", adopted at the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, and reiterated by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolutions 62/5 and 62/8.

264. In its resolution 63/3, adopted in March 2020, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs highlighted the work of INCB Learning for a second year in a row and encouraged its continuation. In implementing the mandates contained in Commission resolutions 63/3, 62/5 and 62/8, INCB is seeking further donor support to expand and continue carrying out activities under INCB Learning.

265. The demand for INCB Learning online training modules has increased since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the introduction of restrictions that have affected the ability to carry out face-to-face training. As at 2 November 2020, INCB Learning had received access requests to the e-learning modules from 812 government officials from 101 countries and territories. Upon completion of the INCB e-learning modules, participation is acknowledged with a certificate of completion. As at 2 November 2020,

a total of 680 certificates had been issued. Access to the modules can be requested by email (incb.learning@un.org).

266. Available in English and Spanish since March 2020, the three INCB e-learning modules provide interactive training on the estimates system for narcotic drugs, the assessment system for psychotropic substances and the estimates of annual legitimate requirements for imports of precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants. These modules were developed to assist competent national authorities build capacity and maintain continuity of relevant knowledge despite staff turnover.

267. The Board is pleased to note the positive reception of the e-learning modules and continues to encourage all Governments to register pertinent officials of their competent national authorities to benefit from them. It also invites Governments to provide feedback and suggestions for the development of further training. The Board is looking forward to reaching a larger audience through the development of additional modules and the translation of the modules into other official languages of the United Nations.

268. The Board is grateful for the contributions to INCB Learning made by the Governments of Australia, Belgium, France, the Russian Federation, Thailand and the United States, and reiterates its invitation to Governments to consider actively supporting INCB Learning by participating in its activities and providing the resources required to ensure the project's continuation and expansion.

International Import and Export Authorization System

269. Pursuant to article 31 of the 1961 Convention as amended, article 12 of the 1971 Convention and relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council, international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances requires both import and export authorizations. Given the growing volume of licit trade in internationally controlled substances, which leads to an increasing workload for competent national authorities, it is essential to modernize the import and export authorization system in order to reduce the risk of diversion while continuing to ensure the adequate availability of and access to those substances.

270. I2ES, a web-based electronic system developed by the Board together with UNODC, with financial and technical support from Member States, was designed to promote paperless trade in internationally controlled

substances by facilitating the online exchange of import and export authorizations.

271. Available to all Governments at no cost, I2ES serves as a safe and secure platform for generating and exchanging import and export authorizations between trading countries while ensuring full compliance with all provisions of the 1961 Convention as amended and the 1971 Convention. The system helps competent national authorities to reduce errors in data entry and save time and communication costs.

272. The estimates of requirements of narcotic drugs and the assessments of psychotropic substances established by States parties and endorsed by the Board are automatically synchronized with I2ES. After an import authorization has been approved, the system calculates in real time the remaining balance of the estimates or assessments available to the importing country. Trading partners registered with the platform can access that information at any time. Authorities of the trading countries can also use the system to securely communicate and exchange information directly with their counterparts if further clarification relating to a transaction request is required.

273. Unlike paper-based systems, in which authorizations can be further processed only after their physical delivery and receipt, the online exchange of import and export authorizations using I2ES enables the instantaneous transfer of data between trading countries, thus facilitating a much faster approval process. To provide a fully electronic and paperless international trade system, the Board established the possibility for Governments to use electronic signatures along with the import and export authorizations processed using the system.

274. In the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, Heads of State and Government recommended expediting the process of issuing import and export authorizations for licit international trade on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances by using I2ES.

275. In its resolutions 55/6, 57/10, 58/10 and 61/5, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs set out actions to further the establishment of an import and export authorization system and invited the secretariat of INCB to administer and monitor I2ES and report on the progress made on its implementation.

276. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 further highlights the important role that I2ES plays in the international drug control system. The Board

notes that many countries have initiated emergency procedures to expedite the authorization process for the trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in order to respond to heightened demand, stemming from the pandemic, for medicines containing controlled substances. Several countries already registered with I2ES were able to leverage the advantages of the platform to rapidly respond to their needs.

277. In addition, the secretariat of the Board has expedited the registration of Governments to allow them to use I2ES and has made available a secure forum in the platform so that competent national authorities can exchange information regarding their respective special measures to ensure the availability of controlled substances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

278. The Board notes that, in the 12-month period to 1 November 2020, nearly six years after the launch of I2ES, 23 Governments registered with I2ES, bringing the total to 87 Governments that have registered with the system. Of those, 68 Governments have an active administrator account. Of those with an active account, 24 entered data into the system during 2020.

279. In order to encourage the further adoption of I2ES among Member States, INCB carried out multiple activities to raise awareness of the system and improve the technical capabilities of competent national authorities.

280. In December 2019, several technical webinars were held to introduce the competent national authorities of Denmark, Latvia, Norway and Sweden to the functions of I2ES. In February 2020, a technical introduction was conducted through a webinar with representatives from the competent national authority of Lithuania. A similar webinar was held for representatives from Luxembourg in March. In May, a webinar was held for Bhutan, Bulgaria, Mozambique and Oman to introduce representatives of their competent authorities to the technical functions of I2ES.

281. In the light of the travel restrictions still in place in countries that require technical assistance on I2ES, further Member States have expressed an interest in online training activities. Accordingly, more online training sessions are planned.

282. The efforts made by the Board can be reinforced and complemented only with the ongoing commitment of Member States in supporting the adoption of I2ES as the unequivocal choice of a digital international trade system for controlled substances. In its resolution 61/5, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs invited Member

States to consider providing extrabudgetary resources for the maintenance and promotion of I2ES.

283. Following the recommendations contained in Commission resolutions 58/10 and 61/5, the Board has continually expressed the need for extrabudgetary resources to increase awareness of I2ES, improve the capacity of Governments to use it and expand the functionalities of the system to address the challenges faced by Member States.

284. A multilingual user interface would facilitate the adoption of I2ES in more countries and regions. The possibility of adding nationally controlled substances to the import authorizations processed using I2ES would enable competent national authorities to comply with domestic legal obligations and avoid the burden at the operational level of running two parallel systems, one for nationally controlled substances and another for internationally controlled substances. In addition, the trading data stored in I2ES could be exported for post-processing purposes, which would help competent authorities to expedite reporting to INCB on substances controlled under the international drug control treaties.

285. At the same time, know-how at the operational level and commitment to using I2ES at the decision-making level continue to be significant barriers to be overcome. The Board reiterates its commitment to working hand in hand with Member States on activities that encourage the wider adoption of the system and greater user engagement.

286. The Board encourages all Member States to contact its secretariat to discuss challenges they face in implementing the system and jointly setting out the specific steps to achieve a road map that integrates I2ES into nationwide governmental procedures and policies for supervising the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

287. The Board invites Member States that are already using I2ES to share their experiences and expertise with the Board and other Member States, in particular, their trading partners that are not currently using the platform. Member States are invited to express their views on I2ES in regional meetings for drug control and health monitoring and engage with their counterparts to facilitate active cooperation that expands adoption of the system.

288. It is essential for Governments and the Board to continue their cooperation to implement I2ES in order to fully realize the benefits of the platform and facilitate

the more rapid trade of internationally controlled substances.

289. INCB encourages Governments that have not yet done so to request the assistance of the INCB secretariat in implementing and integrating I2ES into their national systems, including through the provision of guidance on first steps and initial training.

290. The Board wishes to reiterate to Member States the need for continual support, including extrabudgetary resources, to expand the functionality of I2ES, address technical issues identified by Governments and provide expanded training to further support countries in adopting and implementing the platform.

Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances Programme

291. The GRIDS Programme focal point networks form the core of activities under the Board's operational projects on dangerous substances, namely Project Ion and the OPIOIDS project. These networks comprise an infrastructure that enables the rapid exchange of information and alerts, facilitates bilateral and multilateral operational actions that assist with investigations, and provides participating agencies with practical solutions to stop trafficking in non-scheduled substances. As at 1 October 2020, there were 1,421 Project Ion focal points representing 471 agencies from 176 Governments and 1,398 OPIOIDS project focal points from 165 Governments.

292. IONICS, established in 2014, has 773 law and regulatory enforcement users from 138 Governments and 15 international organizations who receive its trafficking notifications. Information communicated through and intelligence derived from IONICS represent more than 13,000 incidents involving 209 unique types of new psychoactive substances, of which 15 per cent are non-medical synthetic opioids and dangerous fentanyl-related substances. The Board encourages the Governments of Algeria, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, the Holy See, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, North Macedonia, Oman, Panama, the Republic of Moldova,

Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as the government of Kosovo,⁶⁸ to nominate both law and regulatory enforcement focal points to exchange communications using IONICS.

293. In 2020, 11 confidential global alerts and special notices were circulated to GRIDS Programme focal points, including a notification in May 2020 on the emergence of and increased reporting on encounters involving isotonitazene, a potent synthetic opioid and one of the etonitazene analogues not under international control. Isotonitazene was subsequently placed under temporary scheduling in the United States, effective August 2020; the European Commission initiated the process to ban it across the European Union in September; and the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence reviewed it for international control at its forty-third meeting, held in October 2020.

294. The GRIDS Programme continued to provide officers worldwide with access to and training on the Board's intelligence tools throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, through distance-learning technologies. Between 1 January and 1 October 2020, 50 training sessions were held under the Programme on topics including information exchange using IONICS, intelligence development, awareness of new psychoactive substances, and safe handling and interdiction methods for opioids. A total of 1,108 law and regulatory enforcement officers representing 104 Governments and international organizations took part in those training sessions.

295. In 2020, the GRIDS Programme convened several expert group meetings and events that brought together leading global private sector partners, including Internet domain name registries and registrars, Internet search engine companies, social media companies, private postal and express mail operators and express courier services, to collaborate with Member State Governments and, through them, the Board. The Board continues to assist Governments in their efforts to foster voluntary cooperation with private sector partners to prevent the exploitation of legitimate industries by traffickers of fentanyls and other dangerous substances.

296. The Board released its updated list of fentanyl-related substances with no known legitimate uses on

⁶⁸References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

September 2020 to Governments, their private sector partners and international organizations. The list identifies 144 fentanyl-related substances that have been trafficked or seized, encountered in illicit Internet sales, manufactured and found in toxicology or related incident reports. Of those listed substances, 122 are not scheduled under any of the international drug control treaties. Since the list's initial introduction in June 2018, more than 50 additional substances have been identified and added to it. The Board circulated the list by letter to all Governments, provided it to all GRIDS Programme focal points, circulated it, through Governments, to private sector partners and posted it on the Board's OPIOIDS project web page. **The Board encourages Governments and industry partners to refrain, on a voluntary basis, from manufacturing, marketing, importing, exporting and distributing any of the substances listed.**

297. Under the GRIDS Programme, INCB facilitates access by law and regulatory enforcement officers to the Board's proprietary IONICS platform for the secure exchange of real-time information related to trafficking in dangerous substances and the communication platform for INCB-coordinated intelligence-gathering operations. In 2019, INCB coordinated two operations, Operation Fast Forward and Operation Trance.

298. Operation Fast Forward, launched in January 2019, was aimed at identifying key sources and re-distribution points involving fentanyl, fentanyl analogues and related substances trafficked using international post, express mail and courier services. The operation involved 45 Governments and two international agencies and resulted in 53 communications on target substances, with seizures of more than 29 kg and the dismantling of a fentanyl distribution operation by authorities in Canada.

299. Operation Trance, launched in December 2019, targeted traffickers of non-medical ketamine and tramadol and involved cooperation with 131 officers from 74 Governments, as well as INTERPOL, the Oceania Customs Organization, the Universal Postal Union and WCO. Governments communicated 91 incidents through IONICS involving 35 countries and territories, and over 470 kg of ketamine and 957,000 tablets of tramadol were reported seized. Authorities from India reported dismantling their first darknet vendor operating a global distribution operation, with subsequent investigations leading to seizures of 135 kg and 112,000 tablets of psychoactive substances and the arrests of four suspects.

Project Prism and Project Cohesion

300. Project Prism and Project Cohesion are two international initiatives led by INCB that bring together operational focal points from more than 140 Governments worldwide to address the diversion of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs (Project Prism) and heroin and cocaine (Project Cohesion).

301. Participating Governments have provided and received information on emerging trafficking trends, identified *modi operandi* and exchanged data on activities related to the diversion of precursors and non-scheduled chemicals. The Board continues to assist those Governments on a regular basis by serving as a focal point for the exchange of such information, including through PICS and through the dissemination of special alerts. During the reporting period, 10 special alerts were circulated to all participating Governments, including on: (a) illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in Afghanistan; (b) precursor trends in the illicit manufacture of fentanyl; (c) trends in increasing the efficiency of P-2-P-based methamphetamine manufacture; (d) suspicious shipments of chemicals destined for Myanmar; and (e) awareness-raising interventions for the sale of equipment for illicit drug manufacture over e-commerce platforms.

302. Both projects are steered by the INCB Precursors Task Force, which met twice in 2020 to exchange information on the latest operational trends in precursor trafficking in different regions of the world and to discuss options to address the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors for heroin, cocaine and synthetic drugs. The Task Force also discussed issues related to public-private partnerships, including concerns about the vulnerability of chemical manufacturing companies with economic difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures for the early identification of such manufacturers to prevent their premises being targeted for illicit activity.

303. Since January 2019, INCB has trained 313 regulatory and law enforcement officers from 34 countries and territories (Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cambodia, Cayman Islands, China, Dominica, Egypt, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Libya, Malaysia, Montserrat, Myanmar, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Viet Nam). The training focused on providing support for the sharing of intelligence, including through

PICS, the secure online platform developed by INCB for enhanced real-time communication and information-sharing between national authorities on precursor incidents.

304. In 2020, cooperation between INCB, Europol and the authorities of Bulgaria, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Netherlands and Turkey resulted in the identification of suspected links between six seizures of acetic anhydride made in Europe and West Asia since 2017. The six cases, involving almost 22,000 litres of acetic anhydride, represent the largest number of interlinked seizures of precursors identified so far on the basis of analysis of intelligence communicated through a Project Cohesion alert and PICS. Investigations are ongoing.

305. INCB encourages all Governments to make use of the existing global cooperation mechanisms under Project Prism and Project Cohesion to gather and exchange information on new precursor trafficking trends and on the criminal organizations involved and how they operate, and to use that knowledge to develop specific risk profiles and conduct joint operations to prevent future diversions. INCB also reiterates its recommendations to all Governments to ensure that the contact details of their focal points for Project Prism and Project Cohesion are always up to date and that those focal points actively participate in the relevant operations under Project Prism and Project Cohesion and follow up on the actions and information identified.