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INCB Examines International Drug Control Challenges

VIENNA, 29 October (UN Information Service) – A review of the challenges facing international drug control is one focus of the 93rd session of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The session is currently being held in Vienna, and will conclude on 14 November 2008.

Despite considerable achievements in the fight against illicit drug trafficking, manufacturing and abuse, international drug control continues to face challenges that demand decisive responses. In line with its mandate, INCB will contribute its analysis and assessments to the deliberations of the review of the goals established by United Nations General Assembly Special Session in 1998.

Another highlight of the 93rd session will be the examination of issues affecting drug control today such as the effects of globalization, evolving health threats, and legal issues regarding coca leaf and cannabis in different countries. The analysis will be reflected in the Board's Annual Report for 2008, which will be adopted at the current session.

In addition, INCB will review the supply and demand of narcotic and psychotropic substances used for medical purposes. The Board will examine the requirements of licit drugs for each country and, where necessary, make amendments to ensure that all patients in the world have access to the cure and care they need.

As part of its continuing dialogue with States, the Board has invited representatives from Bolivia and The Netherlands to the session, as it has done in the past with other Governments. The World Health Organization (WHO), Interpol, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC) will also participate in the exchange of views on drug control issues.

The Board will also review the achievements of the international community in preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals for the manufacturing of drugs. INCB has supported operations that have led to the successful interception of illicit shipments of chemicals, thus preventing the manufacture of heroin and cocaine. The Board will discuss how to continue and strengthen this global effort in the midst of an increasing demand for monitoring international chemical trade, especially in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.

Since its last session in May, the Board has visited Japan, Mauritius, Pakistan and Romania. The results of these missions and technical visits will be presented and the Board will discuss ways to cooperate with those countries in their efforts to tackle illicit drug abuse and trafficking.

The current president of the Board is Professor Hamid Ghodse (Iran) and the current members are: Joseph Bediako Asare (Ghana), Sevil Atasoy (Turkey), Tatyana Borisovna Dmitrieva (Russian Federation), Phillip O. Emafo (Nigeria), Carola Lander (Germany), Melvyn Levitsky (United States), María-Elena Medina-Mora (Mexico), Sri Suryawati (Indonesia), Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia), Brian Watters (Australia), Raymond Yans (Belgium) and Xin Yu (China).

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