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**EMBARGO:**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

All of us have a stake in drug control. Civil society, families and individuals have a need to be protected from the negative consequences of drug abuse and drug trafficking. We also need to have access to licit drugs—the medicines that are necessary to alleviate pain and suffering and to treat other illnesses. These two aims are intricately connected and have been agreed upon by the international community, through the international drug control conventions. A delicate balance needs to be maintained between ensuring equitable access to such medicines and ensuring that these substances are not diverted for illicit purposes.

While more drugs for medical and scientific purposes are consumed worldwide, the consumption is unevenly distributed across the globe. In many countries, medicine for treatment of illnesses is not readily available. This has to change. Governments must identify and remove the barriers to availability to prevent unnecessary suffering. The Board has brought these issues to the attention of governments in a special supplement to its report.

The implementation of the conventions has been successful in almost completely eliminating the diversion of controlled substances at the international level. However, diversion continues to occur at the national level. Illicit drug use must be tackled from both a supply and demand perspective. However it is crucial that any efforts aimed at preventing illicit drug use and drug trafficking do not limit the availability of controlled substances for licit purposes. This also applies to the precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. These chemicals also have legitimate uses. International initiatives, such as PEN-Online, Project Prism and Project Cohesion, seek to enhance the control of precursor chemicals to ensure that they are not diverted for the illicit manufacture of drugs.

We are grateful for the courageous efforts of those men and women working to protect us from the dangers of drug trafficking, who put their lives at risk every day. Sadly, their sacrifices are often counteracted by drug-related corruption and intimidation. Corruption and intimidation weaken law enforcement and judicial systems, putting at risk the international efforts to counteract the drug problem. The Board, in chapter I of its report, has highlighted the risks of corruption to drug control and has brought together a set of recommendations for the consideration of Governments.

The Board's Annual Report for 2010 focuses not only on these issues but also on the challenges presently faced in drug control and recommends measures to be taken. The situation is dynamic but together we—the international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations, local communities and individuals—must continue our efforts to ensure the effectiveness of international drug control.



### Hamid Ghodse

President

International Narcotics Control Board