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EMBARGO:

**5 March 2013,
1100 hours CET**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Shared responsibility is an essential element of global drug control efforts. INCB stresses the need to uphold the international drug control conventions, if suffering caused by drug abuse and drug-related crime and violence is to be prevented.

In the International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report for 2012, we emphasize the need for shared responsibility in efforts to address the world drug problem, and prevent related suffering. We make a number of recommendations to further improve the application of shared responsibility principles in drug control efforts. Indeed, shared responsibility is a cross-cutting element of virtually all drug-control issues.

We all have a shared responsibility to address drug control—be it at the international, national, community or personal level—and we have to move forward to prevent and reduce the suffering caused by inadequate availability of controlled medicines and by drug abuse, and the negative impacts associated with the illicit drug market.

The drug problem is a truly global problem that necessitates a global solution. This was the driving force in the formulation and adoption of the three international drug control conventions that today form the basis of the international drug control system.

In signing the conventions, Governments recognized the necessity of shared responsibility in drug control. They have committed themselves to meeting their national obligations as laid out in the treaties, with the aim of ensuring adequate availability of the internationally controlled medicines that are so essential in the treatment of pain and illness, including mental and other disorders, but preventing their abuse.

National drug regulatory authorities must have adequate capacity as this is a prerequisite to effectively meeting these obligations at the national level. Governments must ensure that their competent authorities are appropriately resourced and staffed, and INCB calls on Governments and the international community to provide technical assistance in this area, so as to promote effective and sustainable national regulatory control of drugs for licit purposes.

With international trade an inherent aspect of the licit distribution of medicines, global cooperation is essential to ensuring that availability for medical uses is unimpeded and that the substances are not diverted for the purpose of abuse.

INCB welcomes initiatives put forward at the national and regional levels to optimize the pursuit of the objectives set out in the international drug control conventions and encourages States to continue to actively participate in this important dialogue in a spirit of shared responsibility.





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However, INCB warns against initiatives that aim to broaden the use of internationally controlled substances beyond scientific and medical purposes. The limitation of use of internationally controlled substances to scientific and medical purposes is one of the cornerstones of the international drug control framework negotiated and agreed upon by the international community. Disavowing this pledge would not only constitute a violation of the letter of the conventions but would also undermine the humanitarian aims of the drug control system, and constitute a threat to public health and well-being.

Proponents of such ideas have argued that their initiatives would solve problems associated with illicit drug markets. In my foreword to the annual report, I explain why this would not work and how the drug control treaties are the best available tools for addressing the world drug problem, and for protecting humanity from the suffering caused by drug abuse, and the impacts, such as drug-related crime and violence, of trafficking and illicit cultivation and production of drugs.

Raymond Yans

President

International Narcotics Control Board