

INCB President expresses grave concern about inadequately regulated medical cannabis schemes which can lead to increased abuse

VIENNA, 15 March 2013 (UN Information Service) – Use of cannabis for medical purposes is permitted under international law, if special conditions are met, “but if these medical cannabis schemes are not regulated in line with the international drug control conventions, they can contribute to increasing levels of cannabis abuse, such as in some states of the United States.”

This problem was highlighted by the President of the International Narcotics Board (INCB), Raymond Yans, in Vienna this week at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. “If such “medical” schemes are not well managed and supervised, they could be seen as “back-door legalization” of cannabis for recreational use”, said the INCB President. According to Mr. Yans, evidence suggests that in some jurisdictions, registered “patients” do not present medical histories that warrant the prescription or dispensing of “medical marijuana”.

Mr. Yans reiterated that such medical cannabis programmes must be implemented in full compliance with the provisions of the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961.

As the President of the body charged with oversight of the compliance with the three international drug control conventions said, “We call on all countries that permit medical cannabis schemes to take the necessary steps to ensure that these programmes are regulated in full compliance with the convention”. Mr. Yans also called on Governments to adopt measures to prevent the diversion and abuse of cannabis administered under these programmes, and noted the critical importance of programmes to prevent the first use of drugs.

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For further information please contact:

INCB Secretariat

Telephone: (+43-1) 26060 5638

Email: [secretariat\[at\]incb.org](mailto:secretariat[at]incb.org)

Website: www.incba.org

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