

## **INCB holds workshop on boosting cooperation between governments and chemical and other industries**

VIENNA, 30 April (UN Information Service) – Experts looked at ways to more actively involve the private sector, principally the chemical industry, in helping prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals from domestic sources at a workshop organized by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

The event, which ended in Manama, Bahrain, today, brought together for the first time industry, regulatory and law enforcement experts. This was a first step on a new path of controlling precursors needed to make illicit drugs. INCB will soon organize follow-up activities to encourage stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry as well as other commercial actors who come into contact with precursor chemicals.

“For 26 of my 27 years working in drug control, I thought an approach based on combining law enforcement and regulatory agencies, and limiting corruption, was the most effective way to stop drug traffickers,” said Mr. Antonio Guzman, a representative of the United States at the INCB workshop on Enhancing Chemical-Industry Government Cooperation through Partnership. “I’m glad that I’ve finally come to realise, albeit at a late stage, just how crucial it is to engage with industry if we want to effectively combat drug trafficking.”

Since the signing of the 1988 Convention, which aims to promote cooperation among State parties to more effectively address trafficking in drugs, efforts to improve and enhance the international precursors control system have focused on enhancing information sharing and improving controls by national regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies. This has resulted in traffickers finding it increasingly difficult to divert substances they need to make illicit drugs, such as acetic anhydride for heroin production, from traditional sources, in particular international licit trade.

The starting point for the discussions was the fact that traffickers now increasingly focus instead on diverting substances from domestic sources for subsequent smuggling. Underlining the benefits, in particular brand reputation, for the industry as a new and cooperative partner to help Governments’ anti-drug aims, the workshop signifies the launch of a new and exciting field of precursors control.

Organized by INCB, the workshop was hosted by the Chief of Public Security, Major-General Tariq Al Hassan, on behalf of the Minister of Interior of Bahrain, and supported by the Government of the Russian Federation. It was the first of its kind, with more than 100 participants from 20 different Governments and chemical Industry associations and companies represented, including from countries such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation, France, Japan and China.

A draft model memorandum of understanding, which can be adapted for use to foster Government-Chemical Industry cooperation, was agreed to, as was a draft code of practice which provides for practical implementation of such agreements.

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*INCB is the independent, quasi-judicial body charged with promoting and monitoring Government compliance with the three international drug control conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.*

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For further information, please contact:

**INCB Secretariat**

Telephone for media inquiries: (+43-1) 26060 4163  
Email: [secretariat\[at\]incb.org](mailto:secretariat[at]incb.org)  
Website: [www.incb.org](http://www.incb.org)