

## **INCB warns against weakening the international drug control legal framework**

VIENNA, 2 February (UN Information Service) – At the opening of its 112<sup>th</sup> Session on Monday, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) once again cautioned the members of the international community of the public health risks associated with the adoption of legislative and policy measures which are inconsistent with the provisions of the three United Nations drug control conventions.

According to INCB President, Dr Lochan Naidoo, “The drug control conventions aim to promote and protect public health. These conventions, drafted by, and almost universally ratified by States, are the bedrock of the drug control framework in that they represent the minimum standards agreed upon by the members of the international community.”

“Flexibility” in the interpretation of the international drug control treaties has been a reoccurring theme in the media in the recent months, especially in the United States, due to legal measures in some jurisdictions on the control of cannabis. The Board, however, invited States to consider the consequences that these measures may have in imperilling the broad consensus these treaties represent, in particular with respect to the limitation of use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, an obligation to which no derogation is permitted.

While the Board has always recognised that State parties to the UN drug control treaties have a wide degree of discretion in the choice of means to implement their legal obligations, they are held not to take any action which would threaten the object and purpose of the UN drug control treaties: the health and welfare of mankind.

Thus, the Board encourages States to persist in their efforts to identify measures to fully implement the drug control conventions and respond to evolving realities surrounding drug abuse, trafficking and drug-related violence; it also reminds them that this undertaking must be conducted with caution and due consideration.

The Board also reminds all States parties of their obligation to respect human rights in the elaboration of their drug control policies, including by ensuring access to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances needed for medical treatment; by providing treatment and rehabilitation services to persons suffering from drug addiction; by adopting criminal justice responses to drug-related crime that favour treatment and rehabilitation whenever possible.

Finally, the Board repeats its call for countries that continue to retain the death penalty for drug-related offences to take note of international legal developments encouraging the abolition of capital punishment for this category of offence.

\*\*\*

The INCB Annual Report for 2014, which presents the latest findings and recommendations of the Board, will become available on 3 March 2015, together with the INCB technical publications on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and the Board’s report on precursor chemicals.

\*\*\*

*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.*

\* \* \* \* \*

For further information, please contact:

**INCB Secretariat**

Telephone for media inquiries: (+43-1) 26060 4163

Email: [secretariat@incb.org](mailto:secretariat@incb.org)

Website: [www.incb.org](http://www.incb.org)