

2006 Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council

**Statement by Dr. Philip O. Emafo,
President of the International Narcotics Control Board**

Item 14 Social and human rights questions
(d) Narcotic Drugs
Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) about the work of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for the year 2005.

But before doing so, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Hachani, President of ECOSOC and other members of the Bureau as well as to extend to them the Board's best wishes for a successful outcome of your deliberations.

Mr. Chairperson,

The annual report of the Board for 2005 was officially launched in Vienna as well as in 28 other countries, in February 2006. It was also presented to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2006.

This year's report of the Board includes a new chapter that outlines key recommendations addressed to Governments, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and other relevant international organizations. The Board introduced this new chapter in the hope that by highlighting these important recommendations in one chapter, policy-makers will be able to identify them more easily, which in turn will facilitate their implementation.

The Board also presented in its report for 2005, the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since 1992, the first chapter of the report has been dedicated to a topical issue, which is of particular concern to the Board. This year, the Board has chosen to examine alternative development and legitimate livelihoods. This topic is closely related to and complements the first chapter of last year's report, which dealt with the interaction

between supply and demand of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control.

In the report, the Board notes the success stories of alternative development, which resulted in substantial reductions of drug crops in Thailand, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Colombia and Peru.

However, it cannot be denied that the classic alternative development approach has many weaknesses, such as the project-by-project approach. The Board calls for alternative development to be taken out of the confines of this short-term approach and should be seen as a cross-cutting issue, involving a multitude of players at all levels.

In addition, the issue of alternative development should not only be addressed in rural areas, but also in urban areas where illicit drugs are abused. Very many abusers of illicit drugs often belong to the fringes of society, living in slums in large cities and members of marginalized communities in urban areas. In such situations, well-defined policies are needed to provide opportunities for earning legitimate income and help reduce problems of drug abuse.

The Chapter contains concrete recommendations to Governments, international organizations, and other concerned parties on how to ensure that all communities affected by the illicit drug economy - are provided with legitimate livelihoods that are both viable and sustainable in the long-term.

Mr. Chairperson,

With regard to Afghanistan, the Government has strengthened its drug control machinery and built up its institutional capacity. The Board also notes that measurable progress has been made in the area of law enforcement activities, resulting in significant seizures and the dismantling of illicit laboratories. The Board welcomes these positive developments that have been achieved by Afghanistan with the assistance of the international community.

The Board remains, however, concerned that illicit opium production continues to be high, and that most of the provinces where opium has been produced continue to be involved in this.

The Board urged the Government of Afghanistan to continue its commitment to enforcing its drug control strategy and to work closely with its partners towards comprehensive programme of alternative development and legitimate livelihoods and the elimination of illicit opium production in the country.

Mr. Chairperson,

With regard to other aspects of the world drug situation, the Board notes with concern that synthetic drugs, in particular amphetamine-type stimulants, are a serious

threat currently being faced by the international community. The illicit manufacture of those substances has recently spread beyond the countries initially affected by the abuse of those substances and that all regions are currently experiencing similar problems, fuelled by the ease of their manufacture and the availability of the required precursor chemicals. Based on its experiences, the Board has encouraged Governments to establish a global system of estimates for certain key precursors and pharmaceutical preparations containing those substances, to be used as an important tool in preventing their diversions into illicit channels. The Board is pleased that at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, a resolution was adopted to this effect (Resolution E/CN.7/2006/L.7). The Board looks forward to its adoption by ECOSOC at its current session and to its early implementation by the member states.

Mr. Chairperson,

Another ominous development is drug trafficking and smuggling through the Internet and the postal system. As regards the latter, Governments are urged to strengthen their national control measures by limiting the number of entry points for parcels and ensuring that regular and thorough searches of mail were conducted for illicit drug consignments.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Board regularly examines issues affecting the supply of and demand for opiates for medical requirements.

Although licit global consumption of narcotic drugs has increased significantly over the years, the Board continues to observe significant differences in their consumption among countries. The availability of opioid analgesics for the management of pain remains very low in many developing countries resulting in patients being denied access to such medicines.

In response to ECOSOC resolution 2005/25 and the World Health Assembly resolution 58.22, the Board and WHO are together working to make recommendations regarding possible assistance mechanism to facilitate the availability of opioid analgesics for the proper management of pain associated with cancer or HIV/AIDS.

One of the central instruments of the Board is its dialogue with Governments. The Board continues to encourage an open and constructive dialogue with Governments.

Country missions are an important part of the dialogue between Governments and the Board. These missions are carried out to review the drug control situation in various countries and Governments' compliance with the Conventions. The missions examine the institutional framework for national drug control as well as administrative and legislative measures adopted by Governments to implement the provisions of the international drug control conventions. The Board also discusses accession or ratification of the treaties with the relevant authorities, where appropriate.

In 2005, the Board carried out missions to Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mexico, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland and Zambia.

Mr. Chairperson,

Moreover, the Board continues to be committed to co-operating and collaborating with international and intergovernmental organizations in trying to identify solutions to the world drug problem.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the Board and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs are working closely to achieving universal accession to and full implementation of the international drug control treaties, as traffickers might attempt to take advantage of any loopholes in national and international drug control measures.

The Board is pleased to have had the President of ECOSOC to address it in May 2006, in Vienna. The Board looks forward to future Presidents of ECOSOC having the opportunity to meet and interact with its members.

Thank you for your attention.