
Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: +43-1-26060, Telefax: +43-1-26060-5867 / 5868, Telex: 135612 uno a
E-Mail: secretariat@incb.org Internet Address: <http://www.incb.org/>

**Statement by Prof. Hamid Ghodse,
President of the International Narcotics Control Board**

**Economic and Social Council General Segment 2011
Geneva, 28 July 2011**

**Item 14 (d): Narcotic Drugs
Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2010**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Lazarous Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council, and other members of the Bureau on their election and extend to them my best wishes for a successful outcome of the Council's deliberations.

It is a great pleasure for me to present to the Council the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2010, as called for in the international drug control conventions. The Board launched the annual report in Vienna and some 25 other locations around the world in March 2011. The report was discussed at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, when the Board also presented its report on the implementation of Article 12 of the 1988 Convention and its technical reports on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This year the Board also issued a special supplement to the annual report, which I will outline later.

Mr. President,

Each year, the Board devotes the first chapter of its annual report to a topic of significant concern to the Board. This year, the first chapter addresses the problem of drug-related corruption, which undermines global efforts to combat illicit drug production and trafficking.

High levels of violence and corruption and high levels of drug trafficking are often concurrent. In some locations, the financial assets of illicit drug trafficking may be significantly high enough to pose a risk to local stability and rule of law. Post-conflict settings are also vulnerable to drug-related corruption. Recognizing the noble efforts of law enforcement officers working to protect society from the dangers of drug trafficking, the Board notes that corruption and intimidation are used by criminal organizations to compromise drug control efforts and to prevent illicit drugs being intercepted by the authorities. In the report, the Board sets out a series of recommendations for addressing drug-related corruption, and welcomes the efforts already being undertaken by Governments and the international community.

The second chapter of the Board's annual report presents the normative work of the Board, which focuses on the operation of the international drug control system, through dialogue with Governments, the administration of the system of estimates and assessments of licit requirements, and the system of statistical returns. Key to this work are the country missions which enable the Board to gain an in-depth understanding of the drug control situation in each country and to review measures taken by the national competent authorities in drug control. The report includes summaries of the Board's recent country missions, including to: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Gabon, Georgia, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Turkmenistan.

Projects Prism and Cohesion, both launched by the Board, have continued to be the driving force behind increased monitoring of international licit trade in precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, heroin and cocaine. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs highlighted the importance of these and other efforts to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals into illicit manufacture in Resolution 54/8, which calls on Member States to take a number of actions aimed at addressing this problem as recommended by the Board.

The second chapter of the report also draws attention to several special topics, which were identified by the Board and the importance of which has been recognized in resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Board highlights measures that Governments should take in response to issues such as the use of cannabis seeds for illicit purposes, the covert administration of psychoactive substances related to sexual assault and other criminal acts, and

the increasing availability of synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists and “designer drugs”. The Board recommends that Governments continue to monitor trends regarding these topics, and consider relevant actions as proposed by the Board, with the support of international entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mr. President,

The Board remains gravely concerned about the situation in Afghanistan, for which the Board is still taking action pursuant to article 14 of the 1961 Convention. The Board’s report outlines developments over the past year. In particular, the Board notes efforts to strengthen cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, and the Government’s commitment to improving the drug control situation in the country. The Board hopes that progress will be seen in the near future. I intend to visit Afghanistan later this year to examine with the Government progress made and further action required. Article 14 of the 1961 Convention remains invoked until there is a marked improvement.

An analysis of the global drug situation is presented in Chapter III of the Board’s report with the aim of identifying weaknesses in the international and national drug control systems.

In Afghanistan, illicit opium production in 2010 decreased to about half of the amount reported for 2009, primarily due to a fungal disease and weather conditions. South Asia has become one of the main regions used by drug traffickers to source ephedrine and pseudoephedrine for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. In East and South-East Asia, illicit opium poppy cultivation increased in 2009, and the manufacture of, trafficking in and use of synthetic drugs has increased significantly since 2008.

In South America, the total area of coca bush cultivation decreased for a second consecutive year. Drug trafficking through Central America and the Caribbean, and the associated violence and corruption, remain a concern. Illicit drug trafficking and abuse are a major concern in North America.

Trafficking of cocaine through Africa to Europe increased, after a decline in the previous two years, with large seizures in West Africa in 2010. The abuse of cocaine is spreading from Western Europe into other parts of Europe, and there has been an increase in the variety of drugs being abused, including substances not under international control. In Oceania, the abuse of MDMA (“ecstasy”) has increased and the region is increasingly being used for the trafficking of drugs and precursor chemicals.

Mr. President,

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which makes it a fitting moment to look back upon the achievements that have been made in the implementation of the Convention. The Convention enjoys almost universal accession, signalling the relevance and importance accorded to the instrument by Member States. This is a timely occasion to recall that the primary aims of the 1961 Convention are to prevent the diversion of narcotic drugs to illicit uses, and at the same time ensure that there is adequate availability of narcotic drugs for medical purposes for the relief of pain and suffering.

The Board has been concerned for a long time about the inadequate availability in many countries of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and therefore decided to issue this year a Supplement to its annual report on this issue, entitled "Availability of Internationally Controlled Drugs: Ensuring Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes". In the Supplement, the Board draws attention to the disparities between and within regions with regard to availability of internationally controlled drugs. For example, ninety per cent of the global consumption of analgesics is consumed by a group of developed countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America and some European countries. In contrast, eighty per cent of the world's population has no or limited access to these medicines. The Supplement identifies impediments to adequate availability and makes a number of recommendations to Governments to improve the situation.

The importance of the issue of availability was also reiterated by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-fourth session through resolution 54/6, which calls for action by the international community to ensure the adequate availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes worldwide. I encourage ECOSOC to support the implementation of this resolution.

In addition to its ongoing dialogue with Member States, the Board has been cooperating closely with WHO on the issue of availability. Earlier this year I co-signed a letter with the Director-General of WHO and with the Chair of the UN Development Group, calling on UN Resident Coordinators to consider integrating the issue of access to controlled medicines into programmes for the health sector. A copy of this letter will be made available to you during the segment. The Board is also maintaining a dialogue with civil society on drug control issues, including availability, and has taken measures through the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs to meet with non-governmental organizations during the Board's country missions and throughout the year.

Mr. President,

The Board notes, with regret, the step taken by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to denounce the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, to which the State of Bolivia had earlier acceded. The Government also announced its intention to re-accede to this Convention but with a reservation regarding specific treaty provisions.

The Board is concerned that while this course of action is technically in line with the Convention, it is contrary to the Convention's spirit. If the international community was to adopt an approach whereby governments use the mechanism of denunciation and re-accession with reservation to deal with their problems in the implementation of specific treaty provisions, this would undermine the integrity of the global drug control system. The Board feels obliged to bring this danger to the attention of governments.

The Board recognizes the commitment shown by Bolivia over the years to addressing illicit cultivation, trafficking and abuse of drugs. The Board will continue its dialogue with the Government of Bolivia with a view to promoting the solution of any existing problems in line with both the letter and the spirit of the Convention.

Before I close, I would also like to refer to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held on 19-20 September 2011. Let us recall that the international drug control system is designed to prevent drug abuse, which is considered as a disease, and to ensure the availability of internationally controlled substances for licit purposes, for example for the provision of medicines for treatment of non-communicable diseases and for relief of associated pain. The Board trusts that drug-related issues will be duly addressed at the High-level Meeting and be reflected in the outcome document.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I wish to thank the Member States for their ongoing cooperation with the Board and their commitment to ensuring the effective functioning of the international drug control system.

Thank you.