

Check against delivery

**Statement by Prof. Jallal Toufiq, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
Sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Opening of the high-level segment**

14 March 2024

Mr. Chair, Mr. President of the General Assembly, Madam Waly, Dr. Tedros, Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Narcotics Control Board, I congratulate the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Commission on the convening of this high-level segment.

I also congratulate the Members of the Commission on their adoption of the outcome document.

As a contribution to this high-level session, INCB has published a contribution to the mid-term review, mapping out a way forward for Member States to address the drug control challenges identified in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

This “road to 2029” comprises recommendations in the INCB annual reports over the period from 2019 to 2023, made with the aim of fostering effective drug control policies and actions in two key areas:

- firstly, to promote the availability of controlled substances for medical purposes while preventing diversion to illicit channels; and
- secondly, to adopt health- and evidence-based drug policies that take into account the specific needs of populations, respect human rights and provide for responses to drug-related criminality which are proportional and respect due process.

I will cover this in further detail at the roundtable on the way forward: the road to 2029 which will take place tomorrow.

The INCB contribution also takes stock of the Board's efforts since 2019 to support Member States in implementing the three international drug control conventions and in addressing related emerging challenges.

To address the persistent disparities in availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes, the INCB Learning programme is building the capacity of competent national authorities to improve the accuracy of their estimated requirements for these substances. Under INCB Learning, over 150 countries have received training through e-modules and 11 regional seminars over the past five years. The Board published a supplement to its 2022 Annual Report entitled "No Patient Left Behind: Progress in Ensuring Adequate Access to Internationally Controlled Substances for Medical and Scientific Purposes", following up on the implementation of recommendations contained in the 2016 UNGASS outcome document.

In ensuring the continued functioning of the system for licit international trade in controlled substances, the Board annually reviews nearly 600 supplementary estimates for narcotic drugs, processes over 100 annual assessments for psychotropic substances, and monitors over 33,000 international shipments of precursor chemicals.

In accordance with its treaty role in the scheduling of precursor chemicals, INCB has recommended 25 chemicals for international scheduling since 2019. Complementing the scheduling functions, over the past five years, Governments' use of the Pre-Export Notification Online system for precursor chemicals has prevented the diversion of nearly two tons of pseudoephedrine preparations.

To address the challenges of diversion of equipment and the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals, INCB has introduced new initiatives to facilitate public private partnerships and prevent the diversion of specialized equipment. The INCB Pre-Export Notification Online Light system has helped to stop shipments amounting to over 350 tons of GBL and use of the Precursor Incident Communication System collected information on nearly 2,000 incidents, which led to the prevention of the illicit manufacture of more than 120 tons of amphetamine-type stimulants.

To help Governments address the public health threat posed by trafficking in new psychoactive substances and highly potent non-medical synthetic opioids, INCB established the Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances Programme, known as the

GRIDS Programme. Recently, operational cooperation facilitated by the GRIDS Programme has assisted a Government in South Asia in identifying and arresting drug dealers operating on the dark web and a Government in Europe in dismantling an organized crime group responsible for shipping new psychoactive substances and synthetic opioids by mail.

Over 20 GRIDS meetings facilitating public private cooperation to prevent exploitation of legitimate industry and services have resulted in over 250 recommendations published as four Practical Guidance booklets containing self-assessment checklists for governments and their private sector partners. The number of incidents communicated through the Project Ion Incident Communication System increased from 1,840 to almost 80,000.

These are just some of the concrete ways in which INCB is working with Member States to safeguard health and welfare.

In addition to being at the midpoint of the 2029 review, we also stand at the midpoint to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

The third section of the INCB contribution outlines how INCB's work is contributing to progress on the Goals, in particular SDG 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

To my frustration as a health professional, slow progress has been made towards SDG 3, and too many people continue to suffer. This Commission has a direct role to play in alleviating the suffering

that results from a lack of access to controlled medicines or from preventable and treatable substance use disorders.

I urge you to keep the health and welfare of people and communities at the heart of your deliberations over the coming days. The conventions and the Commission were born out of the concern for the health and welfare of humankind. To this end, I pledge INCB's unstinting support on the road to 2029 and beyond.

Thank you.