

Sustained Efforts in Drug Control are Essential to Prevent Suffering, says President of International Narcotics Control Board

VIENNA, 25 October (UN Information Service) – The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) commenced its 102nd session in Vienna on 24 October. According to the President of the Board, Professor Hamid Ghodse, “the 102nd session provides a timely opportunity for the Board to review efforts at the international and national levels to implement the international drug control conventions. While the Board welcomes the continued efforts of Governments, the international community and civil society, these efforts in drug control must be sustained in order to prevent the suffering caused by drug abuse and inadequate access to internationally controlled medicines for medical purposes.”

During the first two days of the session, the Board’s Standing Committee on Estimates will review national requirements for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and some precursor chemicals, in order to enable access to these substances for licit purposes worldwide, while ensuring that the availability of the raw materials for the manufacture of these drugs does not reach excessive levels, which could pose a risk of diversion to illicit use.

The Board will identify developments as well as shortcomings in the international drug control system, which will be brought to the attention of Governments in the Board’s Annual Report for 2011, which will be launched in early 2012.

The Board maintains an ongoing dialogue with Governments to monitor and promote the implementation of the drug control treaties and, as part of this dialogue, the Board conducts about fifteen country missions each year. During the session, the Board will review the findings of its recent country missions to Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Mexico, Serbia and Zimbabwe. Summaries of the findings of the Board’s missions will be included in the Annual Report for 2011.

The Annual Report for 2011 will include a thematic chapter addressing the relationship between social vulnerability and drug abuse, and how improved social cohesion can prevent drug abuse. “Drug abuse and involvement in illicit drug activity causes immense damage to individuals, families and communities”, noted the President of INCB. “While each person is ultimately held responsible for their own actions, there are a variety of factors at play that contribute to whether or not an individual will make a decision to abuse drugs or to abstain. Some of these factors are protective, such as family situation, education or employment opportunity, while some factors are negative. The Board is identifying means of addressing what is happening in marginalised communities around the world, where involvement in illicit drug activity has come to be seen as a norm and where youngsters may not have many positive role models for a healthy, drug-free lifestyle to look up to.”

Also during the session, the Board will meet with the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and representatives of the World Customs Organization, the World Health Organization and INTERPOL.

The International Narcotics Control Board is the independent, quasi-judicial body mandated to promote and monitor Government compliance with the international drug control conventions. Established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of

1961, the Board is made up of thirteen members, who are elected in a personal capacity by the Economic and Social Council for a term of five-years.

The current president of the Board is Professor Hamid Ghodse (Iran) and the current members are: Galina Aleksandrovna Korchagina (Russian Federation), Carola Lander (Germany), Melvyn Levitsky (United States), Marc Moinard (France), Jorge Montaña (Mexico), Lochan Naidoo (South Africa), Rajat Ray (India), Viroj Sumyai (Thailand), Sri Suryawati (Indonesia), Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia), Raymond Yans (Belgium) and Xin Yu (China).

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