

## C. Asia

### East and South-East Asia

#### Major developments

320. In 1999, there was a major reduction in the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. China, Malaysia and Thailand remain important illicit markets for heroin and also serve as transit points for heroin destined for illicit markets in other parts of East and South-East Asia, in North America and in Oceania. The abuse of opiates by injection continues to contribute to increases in the prevalence of HIV infection in Myanmar and Viet Nam, as well as in some other countries in East and South-East Asia.

321. The abuse of and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants are spreading quickly across the entire region of East and South-East Asia. In the area of the Golden Triangle, facilities that once were used exclusively for the refining of heroin are increasingly being used for the manufacture of methamphetamine as well. China has remained a major source of clandestinely manufactured amphetamine-type stimulants. Traffickers of such stimulants appear to be targeting vulnerable groups in major urban areas, especially the young. In Thailand, for example, amphetamine-type stimulants have recently become the drug most widely abused by students. The Board urges the Governments of countries in East and South-East Asia: (a) to examine carefully the problem of the abuse of and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants in its entirety, including prevalence and the question of why an increasing number of youth in the region are turning to the abuse of methamphetamine; (b) to formulate and implement effective strategies to reduce the illicit demand for amphetamine-type stimulants based upon their examination of the problem; and (c) to increase cooperation with each other in regulatory and law enforcement activities targeting the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants.

322. While recovery from the economic crisis has started, resource constraints are still preventing several Governments and their partners from fully implementing programmes to reduce illicit drug supply and demand.

#### Treaty adherence

323. The Republic of Korea acceded to the 1988 Convention at the end of 1998 and Indonesia became a party to that Convention in February 1999. In 1999, the Government of Portugal notified the Secretary-General of the territorial application to Macau of the three international drug control treaties.

324. Cambodia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to be the only two States in East and South-East Asia that have yet to become parties to any of the international drug control treaties. While Mongolia has to date become a party only to the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Board welcomes the recent approval by the Parliament of Mongolia to its accession to the 1971 Convention and hopes that it will soon deposit its instrument of accession with the Secretary-General.

325. As the relevant domestic legislation to meet the requirements of the 1988 Convention now appears to be in place, the Board expects that Thailand will become a party to that Convention without further delay. In view of the agreement on the six-year opium elimination programme, the Board also urges the Lao People's Democratic Republic to accede to the 1988 Convention without further delay.

326. The Board notes that, following the accession by Viet Nam to all three international drug control treaties late in 1997, a number of States objected to the reservations formulated by Viet Nam on the extradition provisions of those treaties. The Board reiterates its call for Viet Nam to review its position and to withdraw its reservations.

#### Regional cooperation

327. At an Asian drug law enforcement conference held in Tokyo in February 1999, representatives of the six countries in the Mekong<sup>29</sup> area (Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) agreed to boost cooperation in combating drug abuse and trafficking by strengthening border controls throughout the entire area. The Government of Japan agreed to provide support. In May 1999, ministers from the six countries reviewed the progress made regarding the UNDCP-assisted subregional action plans developed under a 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control; the ministers agreed on a new initiative to fight the increasing abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and to intensify joint action to reduce drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in the Mekong area through an expanded cross-border cooperation programme. Interpol organized a fourth international conference on heroin in Yangon in February

1999; all countries in East and South-East Asia were represented at the Conference. The Board welcomes the opening of a law enforcement academy in Bangkok with the support of the United States. In March 1999, the academy began training of 50 drug control officers from countries in East and South-East Asia.

328. Bilateral efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse in East and South-East Asia have continued. For example, Cambodia and Thailand agreed to increase cooperation in law enforcement along their common border. At the end of 1998, Thailand agreed to assist Cambodia in training programmes by, among other things, providing equipment. In December 1998, the Philippines and Thailand signed an agreement on cooperation in crime prevention; the agreement covers, *inter alia*, the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in drugs. With a view to sharing information, knowledge and drug crime investigation skills, an Australian federal police liaison office was opened in Hanoi in April 1999. Myanmar and Thailand agreed in March 1999 to establish a joint committee to oversee increased cooperation in the suppression of illicit drug manufacture and trafficking along their common border. Cooperation in drug law enforcement operations involving China, Myanmar and Thailand has improved as a result of regular cross-border meetings held by the authorities of those countries.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

329. The Board welcomes the agreement reached in May 1999 by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and UNDCP on a six-year programme to eliminate illicit opium crops in that country. The Board encourages the international community, including bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions, to provide the necessary financing for the implementation of the programme, the total value of which is estimated at US \$80 million.

330. As part of a major effort to strengthen the organizations involved in drug control in the Philippines, a presidential order was issued in January 1999 on the creation of the National Drug Law Enforcement and Prevention Coordinating Centre, which will oversee the government offensive against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking. A presidential order was also issued on the establishment of the Philippine Centre on Transnational Crime, which will deal with, *inter alia*, issues related to drug trafficking. In addition, provincial and local drug abuse councils were created nationwide.

331. A law against money-laundering went into effect in Thailand in 1999. The law covers numerous offences, including offences involving proceeds derived from the illicit drug trade.

Under the law, a new agency for the control of money-laundering will be set up in the Office of the Prime Minister. A new law against money-laundering that took effect in Singapore in September 1999 provides for the confiscation of benefits derived from, *inter alia*, drug trafficking. The Board hopes that the draft law against money-laundering that is being prepared in Indonesia will soon be adopted.

332. The Board appreciates the efforts of the Government of Thailand to identify government officials who have been implicated in drug offences. The Board stresses the importance of punishing those officials who have been found to have engaged in drug trafficking or to have cooperated with drug traffickers.

#### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

##### *Narcotic drugs*

333. Significant illicit cultivation of cannabis continues to occur in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Cambodia is increasingly becoming a major source of the illicitly cultivated cannabis found on the illicit market in countries in East and South-East Asia and in other countries, primarily Australia. The illicit cannabis consignments are mainly concealed in cargo containers leaving Cambodia on board small boats, from which they are transferred to ships waiting in international waters. Cannabis is also illicitly cultivated, both for domestic consumption and for export, in remote, mountainous areas of the Philippines, despite efforts by law enforcement authorities to deal with the problem.

334. Eradication activities and bad weather conditions have brought about a decline in the total quantity of opium harvested in Myanmar. Data for 1998 show that, compared with previous years, there has been a significant increase in the quantity of heroin seized in China, indicating a possible increase in the use of the heroin trafficking route through that country and/or strengthened activities by Chinese law enforcement authorities, as well as a possible increase in the abuse of heroin in China. The abuse of opiates remains prevalent in many countries in East and South-East Asia.

335. Seizures of cocaine in the region increased in 1998, partly as a result of a large seizure of cocaine (believed to be in transit) that was made in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China in December 1998. The region of East and South-East Asia does not appear to have a cocaine abuse problem.

### *Psychotropic substances*

336. China and Myanmar remain the major sources of methamphetamine abused in East and South-East Asia. The Board takes note of the initiatives of Thai law enforcement and military authorities to prevent consignments of illicitly manufactured methamphetamine from entering Thailand, particularly from Myanmar, and encourages the Governments of both countries to strengthen their cooperation aimed at meeting the challenge posed by amphetamine-type stimulants. Methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in China is abused locally or exported to other countries in east Asia. Methamphetamine is also illicitly transported from the Philippines to other countries in East and South-East Asia. The number of abusers of methamphetamine exceeds the number of heroin abusers in Taiwan Province of China and in a number of countries in the region, such as Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. Seizure data indicate that ephedrine, a chemical used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, continues to be smuggled out of China and India and into Myanmar. Seizures of ephedrine of Indian origin have increased sharply on both sides of the border between India and Myanmar and have reached the order of several tons annually. Trafficking routes often lead through remote areas. The Board therefore reiterates its call, made in its report for 1998,<sup>30</sup> for increased cooperation between the countries in East and South-East Asia and those in South Asia. The Board welcomes the recent decision by China to introduce stricter controls over ephedrine.

337. Most of the MDMA ("ecstasy") available in East and South-East Asia has been smuggled into the region after being illicitly manufactured in Europe. In the past few years, however, there have been attempts to manufacture the substance clandestinely in some countries in East and South-East Asia. Law enforcement authorities in Singapore, for example, uncovered in 1999 for the first time a clandestine laboratory for making "ecstasy" tablets on a large scale. The abuse of MDMA is being reported with increasing frequency in several countries in the region.

338. China continues to be a source of amfepramone found on illicit markets in the Russian Federation and in various parts of Asia. The Board therefore trusts that the ban on the manufacture of the substance, which was issued by the Government of China, will be fully enforced.

### **Missions**

339. In June 1999, a mission of the Board visited Japan. The Government of Japan continues to take comprehensive, sustained and systematic measures against drug abuse and illicit

drug trafficking. The message to young people by the various government authorities is unequivocal, supported by strong national consensus on the implementation of the government policy based entirely on the international drug control treaties.

340. In Japan, the drug abuse problem remains a limited social and public health problem; well controlled through a wide range of preventive and regulatory measures and a rigorous enforcement policy. There are indications that drugs are abused in Japan to a much lesser extent than in other developed countries. The country has not been affected by the scourge of heroin and cocaine abuse. However, the abuse of stimulants, in particular the recent rising trend in such abuse among young people, is understandably a matter of concern to the Government. Japan has managed to reverse rising trends in drug abuse on several occasions in the last few decades. The Board trusts that the Government will also take appropriate measures to counter the current rising trend in the abuse of stimulants.

341. The manufacture of and trade in drugs for medical purposes are effectively regulated in Japan. The use of morphine for the treatment of pain is increasing to a more adequate level. Since Japan is among the countries with the highest consumption levels for benzodiazepine-type hypnotics and sedatives, marketing and prescription practices should be closely monitored to avoid inappropriate use or abuse of those substances.

342. The Board appreciates the fact that the Government of Japan is taking important steps to enhance the detection and prevention of money-laundering by means of a new law against organized crime and through the establishment of a special investigative office in the Financial Supervisory Agency.

343. In September 1999, the Board sent a mission to Mongolia. The Government assured the Board that Mongolia intended to become a party to the 1971 Convention soon, noting that the Mongolian parliament had recently passed legislation authorizing the accession of Mongolia to that Convention. The importance of Mongolia becoming a party to the 1988 Convention was also recognized by the authorities.

344. *Ephedra*, the plant from which ephedrine is made, grows wild in Mongolia on the northern rim of the Gobi desert. While the abuse of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are minimal, there are indications that Mongolia is being increasingly targeted by drug traffickers, particularly for the diversion and manufacture of ephedrine. The Board notes with particular concern the recent attempt by foreign investors to cultivate *Ephedra* and manufacture ephedrine without a licence. While financial constraints and the

difficult climatic and geographical conditions of the sparsely populated country make communication and the enforcement of drug control policy in its outlying provinces difficult, the Board is confident that the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare will continue to cooperate with the General Department of Police and the General Customs Administration to ensure that proper controls are exercised over the international trade in and manufacture of ephedrine.

#### **Technical visits**

345. In June 1999, the secretariat of the Board made a technical visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Government confirmed its willingness to cooperate with the Board and with the Governments of other countries in international drug control matters and to provide the information required to be submitted to the Board under the international drug control treaties. The Board appreciates the fact that progress has been achieved in that area.

346. The training of several drug control administrators of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to be carried out in cooperation with the Government of Malaysia, will enhance the technical knowledge available and contribute to more effective drug control at the regional and international levels. The Board invites the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other Governments, in particular the Governments of other countries in East and South-East Asia, to cooperate with each other in matters involving international drug control.

### **South Asia**

#### **Major developments**

347. Because of the proximity of South Asia to the world's two main opiate-producing countries, Afghanistan and Myanmar, drug trafficking and drug abuse in the region have been mainly transit-related. The transit traffic in drugs has led to a rise in drug abuse in South Asia. There seem to be millions of drug abusers in the region. While cannabis and opium have traditionally been the main drugs of abuse, the abuse of heroin and synthetic drugs is rapidly increasing. The abuse of stimulants (cocaine and "ecstasy") appears to be very limited.

348. Certain areas have emerged as major drug trafficking centres and/or have witnessed a rapid deterioration of the drug trafficking or drug abuse situation. Those areas include the Chittagong port area in Bangladesh, the north-eastern part of India (in particular the states of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland) and the Indo-Pakistan border area (especially Punjab and the union territory of Chandigarh), as well as Mumbai and New Delhi.

349. India and Sri Lanka are being confronted with increasing numbers of drug-related court cases and prisoners. As neither the courts nor the prisons in India and Sri Lanka are currently in a position to cope with the situation, the Governments of both countries are considering the possibility of increasing the use of alternative measures for drug abusers, such as treatment and rehabilitation.

#### **Treaty adherence**

350. Of the six States in South Asia, four are parties to the 1961 Convention, three are parties to the 1971 Convention and five are parties to the 1988 Convention. The Board urges Bhutan, which is not a party to the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention, and Nepal, which is not a party to the 1971 Convention, to accede to those conventions as soon as possible. The Board notes with regret that Maldives, after having announced early in 1998 that it would soon be taking steps to become a party to each of the three main international drug control treaties, has not yet acceded to any of those treaties.

#### **Regional cooperation**

351. The Board notes with appreciation the continuing bilateral cooperation efforts to prevent drug trafficking between India and its neighbouring countries, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan.

352. The Board welcomes the ongoing collaboration at the subregional level, including activities carried out by regional bodies, such as the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan Bureau and activities of the secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, and by a number of non-governmental organizations.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

353. The Board welcomes the amendment in India of the law on the extradition of criminals, enabling the extradition of criminals from all States that are signatories to bilateral agreements with India. The Board trusts that the amendments to the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the

Foreign Exchange Management Act and the draft legislation on money-laundering will be approved in Parliament, particularly in the light of the liberalization of the economy, including the lifting of restrictions on imports and the promotion of exports, which have led foreign exchange racketeers and money-laundering operators to change their modus operandi.

354. The Board also welcomes the recent establishment in Nepal of the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee on Precursor Control, which is expected to formulate a policy proposal and to develop a control mechanism in the near future.

355. The Board notes with satisfaction that a number of countries in South Asia are devoting increased attention to the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and to the involvement of non-governmental organizations in those activities. The Government of India has adopted a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach to reducing illicit drug demand, launching awareness-raising and education programmes on the effects of drug abuse, training officials involved in drug abuse prevention and carrying out community-based activities aimed at identifying, motivating, treating and rehabilitating drug addicts.

356. The Government of Sri Lanka is in the process of introducing legislation offering treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers as an alternative to imprisonment. There are not enough government rehabilitation centres to cover the needs of drug abusers in the entire country. The Board notes with appreciation the increase in the number of community groups concerned with drug problems and the establishment of the Federation of Non-governmental Organizations against Drug Abuse, which coordinates activities of leading non-governmental organizations.

357. The Board notes with appreciation that Bhutan, a country in which there is no known drug abuse, has decided to take preventive action and to initiate a campaign to increase public awareness of substance abuse.

358. The Board welcomes the recommendations of a presidential task force in Sri Lanka on overcoming constraints on law enforcement activities imposed in the interest of drug trafficking groups. The recommendations have already led to more effective law enforcement activities.

### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

#### *Narcotic drugs*

359. Despite cannabis eradication campaigns being conducted on a regular basis in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, illicit cannabis cultivation has continued in those countries, particularly in remote and inaccessible areas. The illicit demand for cannabis resin from Nepal, which has a high THC content, has increased in other countries. That has led to a sharp increase in the cultivation of cannabis and trafficking in cannabis resin and cannabis herb. It is estimated that about 70 per cent of the cannabis cultivated in Nepal enters international trafficking routes. While the cannabis herb smuggled out of Nepal is mainly destined for India, the cannabis resin is shipped to illicit markets in Asia, Europe and North America. Sri Lanka is increasingly being used as a transit point for illicit consignments of cannabis and heroin from South Asia and south-west Asia.

360. Large quantities of heroin have been smuggled out of Afghanistan through Pakistan and out of Myanmar and into countries in South Asia, mainly to be shipped further to illicit markets in Europe and North America, but also to be abused locally. Seizure data indicate an increase in trafficking in heroin from India to countries in Africa, some of which is destined for the more profitable illicit markets in the United States and countries in Europe. The number of local heroin abusers is increasing; the number is particularly high along the main trafficking routes and in major drug trafficking areas such as Mumbai in India and the south-western border area of Bangladesh with India. Because of the increasing abuse of heroin by injection and the sharing of needles, the number of HIV/AIDS cases is rising in most countries in South Asia. The preferred mode of administering heroin continues to be inhalation.

361. The supply of illicit opiates from south-west Asia continues and may increase as a result of record opium poppy harvests in Afghanistan. Trafficking in raw opium and heroin from north-western Myanmar has been on the rise for the past few years. New smuggling routes leading from Myanmar through the Indian border states of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland, mainly to markets overseas, were developed following intensified law enforcement activities in China and Thailand. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy and the production of opiates are also taking place in various parts of India and in Nepal. Regarding licit opium production in India, the Board notes with concern that there have been reports of fraud involving licensed opium poppy growers, whereby the opium poppy growers reported to control authorities that their crop yield was lower than it actually was and then sold to drug traffickers the difference between the actual and the reported crop yield. The Board encourages the Central Bureau of

Narcotics to proceed with its efforts to reinstitute adequate control.

362. The preparation Proxyvon, which contains dextro-propoxyphene, a synthetic opioid used as an analgesic, is increasingly being abused by drug addicts in the north-east of India. Because Proxyvon is cheaper, it is used as a substitute for heroin and, while not available in injectable form, it is dissolved and injected by drug addicts, thereby exposing them to additional health risks, including the spread of HIV/AIDS. Mizoram, a particularly affected state in India, having about 6,000 Proxyvon addicts, plans to ban the drug from the pharmaceutical market.

363. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, the abuse of codeine-based cough medicines continues, particularly the abuse of codeine-based cough medicine sold under the brand name Phensedyl, which is either diverted from licit channels or marketed in the form of counterfeit products. In Bangladesh, huge amounts of precursors used for the illicit manufacture of Phensedyl were seized by the police at the border between that country and India. In India, pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are manufactured locally, are readily available and are cheaper than heroin. They are being used as substitutes for heroin mainly when heroin is not available. The Board is concerned that, despite Government regulations prohibiting pharmacies from selling any pharmaceutical preparation containing psychotropic substances or narcotic drugs without a prescription from a registered medical practitioner, domestic distribution channels, including pharmacies, stockholders and wholesale purchasers, are suspected of illicitly supplying such preparations.

364. In Bangladesh, chemicals included in Table I or II of the 1988 Convention are only controlled by existing legislation if they are used for the manufacture of pharmaceutical products. Those controls do not apply if the substances are for some other industrial use, such as in the textile industry or in the manufacture of paint. Amendments to the current regulations are under consideration. The Board trusts that the Government of Bangladesh will introduce the required legal and regulatory changes as soon as possible.

365. As India continues to tighten its control over exports of precursors, it is possible that other countries may be used by traffickers to trans-ship such precursors or to divert them from international trade. The Board encourages all countries in South Asia to exercise the necessary vigilance to prevent such a development. The Board notes with concern certain disquieting new trends in India such as the smuggling into Myanmar of precursors, including ephedrine, for the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and the large-scale diversion of

acetic anhydride from licit manufacture in India to be smuggled out of that country for use in the illicit manufacture of heroin. The Board therefore requests the authorities of India to tighten controls to prevent the diversion of precursors from domestic distribution channels.

#### *Psychotropic substances*

366. The large-scale abuse of psychotropic substances, in particular benzodiazepines such as diazepam and nitrazepam, continues in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The pharmaceutical industry in India manufactures large amounts of psychotropic substances for medical purposes. Despite efforts by the various authorities in India, a number of those substances continues to be diverted from domestic distribution channels and are either abused in the country itself or smuggled into other countries.

367. For a number of years, the abuse of the analgesic buprenorphine in South Asia has been a major concern to the Board. The Board, therefore, notes with appreciation that intensified efforts by the authorities in India have prevented to a large extent the diversion of buprenorphine from licit distribution channels to the illicit market and, as a result, seizures of that substance have declined significantly.

368. In Sri Lanka, various psychotropic substances are abused as substitutes for or in addition to heroin. The abuse of psychotropic substances in prisons in Sri Lanka is a recent development, as prison surveys have shown. Controls over psychotropic substances at the retail level have been lacking in Sri Lanka for a long time.

369. In India, law enforcement authorities continue to report seizures of methaqualone tablets and the dismantling of illicit facilities for manufacturing that substance, while intensified law enforcement efforts and stringent new regulations have resulted in a continuous decline in illicit methaqualone manufacture. The Board encourages the authorities in India to keep up their vigilance to prevent any resurgence in the illicit manufacture of that substance. The Board notes with concern that methamphetamine tablets illicitly manufactured in the Wa hill area of Myanmar have begun to appear on the illicit market in India.

## West Asia

### Major developments

370. In Afghanistan, the large-scale illicit cultivation of opium poppy has continued to spread to areas in the country which were previously not affected by it. It is estimated that, due to favourable weather conditions, the production of opium in 1999 increased sharply compared with the 1998 figure, to a record level of about 4,600 tons. Thus, it is likely that approximately 75 per cent of the world production of opium takes place in Afghanistan.

371. The commitment of the Taliban in Afghanistan to ban opium poppy cultivation and heroin manufacture remains questionable, as it continues to collect taxes on the opium poppy crop that is harvested and the heroin that is manufactured. According to the latest survey, 97 per cent of the area under opium poppy cultivation was on territory controlled by the Taliban. Heroin manufacture has moved to Afghanistan from Pakistan, where it has virtually disappeared. The Board is concerned about this grave situation, which negatively affects not only West Asia, but also Europe and the rest of the world. It urges the world community to take appropriate measures.

372. Most countries in West Asia are used by traffickers as transit points for opiates originating in Afghanistan and destined mainly for Europe but also for other regions. Cannabis originating in Afghanistan and Pakistan is also smuggled through many countries in the region. Precursors used in the illicit manufacture of heroin continue to be trafficked into the opposite direction.

373. The Board is concerned about the rapid spread of illicit crop cultivation and the trafficking in and abuse of drugs, especially heroin, in countries in central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). In view of the overall rise in criminal activities in central Asia and the Caucasus, inadequate resources to deal with the problem, drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, if left unchecked, would have devastating consequences for societies in those subregions.

374. While an increasing proportion of opiates originating in Afghanistan is smuggled through central Asia, the largest share of those drugs continues to be transported through the Islamic Republic of Iran to Turkey or from Pakistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries in the Persian Gulf area before being sent to its final destination. Turkey continues to be the major transit point for heroin destined for Europe.

375. The Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to make significant efforts to intercept illicit consignments of opiates en route from Afghanistan to Turkey, member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and other countries in Europe. The Board commends the Islamic Republic of Iran for its major contribution to reducing the availability of opiates on the illicit markets of those countries. More than 80 per cent of seizures of opium worldwide are carried out by Iranian authorities, who have suffered heavy human casualties and made considerable financial sacrifices.

376. The Caspian Sea is increasingly being used to trans-ship large amounts of both opiates and cannabis from Afghanistan through Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation and other countries in Europe.

377. The abuse of opiates appears to have continued to rise in Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Pakistan, heroin abuse appears to have continued at a very high level. Although drug addiction has remained limited in most other countries in West Asia, increases have been reported in a number of countries in the region (Azerbaijan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan).

378. While West Asia offers many possibilities for money-laundering, many countries in the region have not yet enacted legislation to identify and counter such activities. Similarly, some Governments have not yet fully implemented the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 Convention to prevent the diversion of precursors for use in illicit drug manufacture.

379. In many countries in West Asia, controls over the licit distribution of pharmaceutical products containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances appear to be weak. Internationally controlled drugs are reportedly often sold over the counter, without medical prescription, because national schedules are not updated according to the schedules of the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention or because the prescription system is insufficiently applied.

### Treaty adherence

380. Of the 24 States in West Asia, 20 are now parties to the 1961 Convention in its amended form, 3 are parties to the 1961 Convention in its unamended form, 23 are parties to the 1971 Convention and 22 are parties to the 1988 Convention.

381. The Board notes with satisfaction that Azerbaijan has acceded to the 1961 Convention in its amended form and to the 1971 Convention. The Board encourages the Government of that country to complement that positive step by adopting legislation for the control of substances scheduled under the international drug control treaties, in particular the 1988 Convention. The Board also notes with satisfaction that Pakistan has acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention.<sup>31</sup>

382. The Board urges Georgia, which is already a party to the other two main international drug control treaties, to accede to the 1961 Convention. Georgia has declared its intention to do so, and the Board trusts that the matter will be accorded high priority.

383. The Board encourages the Islamic Republic of Iran to accede to the 1971 Convention and to become a party to the 1972 Protocol. The Board also encourages Israel and Kuwait to accede to the 1988 Convention.

#### **Regional cooperation**

384. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has been active in fostering cooperation and harmonized action among its member States. A specialized drug control unit has been established at ECO headquarters in Tehran to coordinate training and the collection of reports on the drug control situation in parts of West Asia. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, ECO member States participated in a legal workshop held in Tehran in March 1999 on judicial cooperation in handling drug and money-laundering cases. A similar workshop for the training of judges and prosecutors took place in Tehran in November 1999. The Government of Turkey is about to establish an international law enforcement academy for training of law enforcement personnel, as well as prosecutors and other judicial agencies, from ECO member States and other countries in the region.

385. The Board welcomes many new activities aimed at fostering subregional cooperation and harmonization of drug control efforts among the countries in the eastern Mediterranean, such as a legal workshop planned for the training of judges and prosecutors. The Board is pleased that the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority have agreed to increase their cooperation in harmonizing drug control policies, which is in the best interest of both parties.

386. Member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf participated in a training seminar for judges and prosecutors on handling drug cases in Abu Dhabi in October 1999. In Qatar, a workshop on judicial cooperation

related to drug trafficking and money-laundering was held by UNDCP in November 1999 for judges and prosecutors from countries in the Persian Gulf area.

387. The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior continues to actively promote cooperation and harmonization of efforts among Arab countries.

388. The Governments of several countries in West Asia have signed new or reviewed existing memoranda of understanding or protocols on cooperation in drug control matters or have otherwise agreed with each other and other Governments and institutions outside the region to combat drug trafficking. The Board notes with appreciation the agreements between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kazakhstan and between UNDCP and Armenia, Georgia and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the declaration of the heads of State of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan pledging mutual cooperation in fighting, *inter alia*, drug trafficking. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has concluded similar agreements with Governments of other countries in the Persian Gulf area (Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) and with the Government of Pakistan and has signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of an Iranian/Turkish commission on drug control coordination.

389. The Board welcomes the first joint drug law enforcement operation involving Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and the signing by Pakistan of an extradition and judicial cooperation treaty with Egypt.

390. Since European countries are also affected by the traffic in heroin through central Asia, the Board calls on the authorities in central Asian countries to continue to cooperate with, and to seek the active assistance of, authorities in European countries. The Board welcomes initiatives such as the expert meeting held in Brussels in July 1999 to discuss elements of a comprehensive action plan on drug-related issues involving the European Union, UNDCP and the five central Asian States.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

391. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government of Pakistan has extended the Control of Narcotics Substances Act of 1997 to include the Federally and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas and that Lebanon has adopted a new penal code for drug-related offences. In the Palestinian

Autonomous Areas, an inter-ministerial committee has been established to coordinate activities of the Palestinian Authority related to drug control, and the drafting of a harmonized and updated drug control law has been initiated.

392. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has accepted the establishment of an office of UNDCP in Tehran, thus reconfirming its commitment to cooperate at the international level in the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking.

393. The Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates held national training seminars for judges and prosecutors on handling cases related to drug trafficking and money-laundering.

394. The Board trusts that in Lebanon a regulation will soon be promulgated for the implementation of the law on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors that was adopted in 1998, as it will make individual import authorizations mandatory for all substances in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention.

395. Grave economic and budgetary constraints have prevented States in central Asia and the Caucasus from investing sufficient funds in drug control. The resources and experience available in those subregions are inadequate to deal with the rapid growth in drug-related crime. In addition, most Governments in those subregions lack adequate legal systems and other national mechanisms for controlling the licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. The Board urges States in those subregions to accelerate the adoption of national drug control programmes, to make, if necessary, amendments to national drug control legislation and to strengthen their drug law enforcement activities.

396. The Board welcomes the adoption in Uzbekistan in August 1999 of a comprehensive law for the control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. The Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan could enhance significantly their drug control efforts by enacting comprehensive legislation on drug and precursor control. The Board urges the Governments of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to create their own national structures for controlling the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. The need for government control over the licit trade in chemicals is of particular importance to States in central Asia, especially Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan is a major transit point for the diversion and smuggling of chemicals for illicit heroin manufacture in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan has a significant

chemical industry that could increasingly become a source of chemicals used in the processing of heroin.

397. The Board appreciates the fact that the Government of Pakistan elaborated in 1998 a comprehensive drug law enforcement programme, involving several disciplines, aimed at, *inter alia*, strengthening the judicial system. The Board trusts that the establishment of special drug courts will enable the Government to deal with drug-related court cases in a more expeditious manner and that the reporting by banks of suspicious transfers of funds will soon become mandatory. In 1998, the Government uncovered a major drug trafficking organization, arresting key drug traffickers and freezing drug-related assets that, when confiscated, will be used in efforts to fight drug trafficking and reduce illicit drug demand. The Board encourages the Government to proceed with the long-awaited reforms that will enable the investigative, prosecuting and judicatory systems to better target major drug traffickers, and to prioritize cases involving drug trafficking. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government, in its recently adopted national drug control master plan for the period 1998-2003, has given higher priority to the prevention of drug abuse.

398. The Board notes that the Government of Tajikistan has demonstrated that it has the political will to combat the movement of illicit drug consignments through and from its territory, with the cooperation of the Russian Federal Border Service, by establishing the Tajik Drug Control Agency on the basis of a protocol signed with the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

399. The Board continues to be concerned about the fact that effective measures against money-laundering have not yet been adopted in many countries in West Asia, particularly in those countries with a high potential to be used for money-laundering. At the same time, it welcomes the fact that the Governments of Bahrain and Kuwait have drafted legislation aimed at tightening measures against money-laundering and that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has initiated the drafting of such legislation. The Board encourages States that have drafted such legislation, such as the United Arab Emirates, to adopt it as soon as possible. The Board welcomes the fact that in Israel new legislation to combat money-laundering and to provide for the setting up of a financial intelligence unit has passed first reading and is awaiting consideration by the Knesset; the Board urges the Government to adopt without delay legislation that will enable Israel to become a party to the 1988 Convention.

400. The Board continues to be concerned that the Government of Lebanon is not taking steps to withdraw its reservation on the provisions against money-laundering in the 1988

Convention. The Board notes the position of the Government of Lebanon that bank secrecy is needed for the development of the national economy. The Board would like to emphasize that the implementation of articles 5 and 7 of the 1988 Convention does not require the abolition of bank secrecy as such; instead, the provisions of the 1988 Convention as adopted by most States, among them States with efficient bank secrecy laws, are aimed at preventing bank secrecy from enabling drug traffickers and criminal organizations to enjoy impunity and prosperity. The Board therefore invites the Government of Lebanon to withdraw its reservation and modify its legislation to permit the judicial authorities to lift bank secrecy when investigating criminal activities. To do otherwise would make Lebanon attractive to international drug traffickers and other criminal groups interested in hiding their illicitly derived profits, which could lead to the undermining of the financial, economic and political system in the country and jeopardize the development of the national economy.

401. The Board commends the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for making it possible for confiscated funds derived from drug trafficking to be used for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse and for the rehabilitation of drug abusers, thus increasing the amount of funds made available for reducing illicit drug demand compared with previous years. The Board encourages other Governments to consider making similar arrangements. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has also expanded the facilities available for the treatment of drug abuse.

402. The Board welcomes the assessment of the extent of drug abuse by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and encourages other Governments in West Asia to assess the extent of drug abuse in their countries. Since relatively little is known about the current drug abuse situation and the abuse of psychotropic substances is assumed to be taking place in many countries in the region, such assessments should also take into account the abuse of stimulants and sedatives, including the abuse of those substances in the form of pharmaceutical products.

#### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

##### *Narcotic drugs*

403. Cannabis continues to be illicitly cultivated and to grow wild on extensive areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, no

cannabis eradication efforts having been reported in either country. Seizures of cannabis resin originating in Afghanistan or Pakistan are increasing in Europe. Cannabis continues to be the most frequently abused drug in West Asia. The world's largest single area covered by wild-growing cannabis plants, estimated to be about 300,000 hectares, is in Kazakhstan and it could develop into a significant source of illicitly trafficked cannabis. In Lebanon, efforts to eradicate the small-scale illicit cultivation of cannabis continue. Limited illicit cultivation of cannabis is also occurring in the Palestinian Autonomous Areas and the following countries: Israel, Jordan and Turkey.

404. In Afghanistan, the area under illicit cultivation of opium poppy seems to have exceeded 90,000 hectares in the 1998/1999 growing season; it thus increased by over 40 per cent compared with the 1997/1998 growing season, for two reasons: there was an increase in the number of districts in which opium poppy was cultivated and in most districts there was an increase in the area under opium poppy cultivation. In addition, the yield of opium during the 1998/1999 growing season was very high; as a result, it is very likely that total production will amount to about 4,600 tons, almost doubling the production of the previous year.

405. Illicit opium poppy cultivation in central Asia and the Caucasus remains limited. The opium produced there is destined primarily for local markets and does not significantly affect the international illicit market for opiates.

406. In Pakistan, the Government has reiterated its commitment to pre-empt the sowing of opium poppy seeds in the 1999/2000 growing season. It eradicated over 60 per cent of the opium poppy cultivation during the 1998/1999 growing season. The remaining area harvested in 1999 was about 280 hectares. Eradication was especially successful in the Dir district, where, as a result, almost no opium poppy was harvested in 1999. No more laboratories for the illicit manufacture of heroin have been detected in Pakistan; it is assumed that they have been moved to Afghanistan.

407. The Board appreciates the fact that the Government of Lebanon has prevented any upsurge of illicit opium poppy cultivation.

408. Poppy straw from licit cultivation is used for the extraction of alkaloids in Turkey. No diversion of opiates has been reported in that country.

409. A decree of the Taliban calling for a ban on laboratories for processing heroin was issued in December 1998, and a campaign to enforce the ban was launched by the Taliban in February 1999. It was believed that many laboratories for processing heroin existed; 34 laboratories in the Nangarhar area were destroyed, together with the precursors that were found there, but no heroin was seized or destroyed and no traffickers were arrested. In June 1999, opium poppy cultivation and heroin manufacture were declared illegal by the Northern Alliance, and two laboratories for illicit heroin manufacture were seized, together with the drugs that were found in them.

410. Despite the success of the Government of Pakistan in eradicating the illicit opium poppy cultivation and the manufacture of opiates on its territory, the national law enforcement authorities are increasingly encountering difficulties resulting from the large-scale production of and trafficking in opiates in neighbouring Afghanistan. Trafficking in opiates in Afghanistan, Pakistan and even CIS member States continues to be organized by multinational trafficking groups based in Pakistan, as is trafficking in chemicals.

411. There is now substantial evidence that countries in central Asia are being used as transit points to transport from east to west illicit consignments of opiates and cannabis originating in Afghanistan and that chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of heroin are being transported in the opposite direction. Drug traffickers have taken advantage of the absence of controls on the borders between CIS member States and transportation links established in West Asia, especially in central Asia. It has been reported that heroin with a high purity level, smuggled via central Asian countries and the Russian Federation, has been introduced on the illicit market in a number of European countries.

412. Many countries in West Asia have been used as transit points for the diversion of precursors that continue to be predominantly imported from or smuggled out of China, India and countries in Europe. While some States, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, have tightened their controls, more efforts have yet to be made by all States in West Asia to intercept consignments of precursors.

413. In the Islamic Republic of Iran and in many other countries in West Asia, seizures of opiates continue to increase. In Pakistan, there has been a significant decrease in the quantity of opiates seized, although the number of seizures of opium and

heroin has increased. The quantity of seized acetic anhydride, the main precursor used in the illicit manufacture of heroin, has increased substantially in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. In Turkey, the quantity of acetic anhydride seized continues to be large.

414. While a large portion of the opiates produced in West Asia is also abused in the region, the majority is destined for Europe and, to a lesser degree, South Asia. Heroin is increasingly being smuggled through Turkey but is no longer manufactured in large quantities on Turkish territory. Eight laboratories for the illicit manufacture of heroin were dismantled in Turkey in 1998. Seizures related to the transit traffic in heroin have also increased in other countries in West Asia (for example, Israel, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic). The majority of the heroin seized in Europe has been smuggled through Turkey along the Balkan route. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the quantity of opiates seized continues to be the largest in the world. Drug trafficking through Pakistan and the countries in the Persian Gulf area continues unabated.

415. In Afghanistan, the abuse of opiates appears to have increased. Heroin abuse, in particular, is sharply increasing in the cities as Afghan refugees are returning from Pakistan. The number of drug addicts in the Islamic Republic of Iran is also increasing, although the final results of the rapid assessment of the extent of drug abuse have not yet been made available. The increase in the number of HIV cases in the Islamic Republic of Iran is also related to drug addiction. In Pakistan, heroin abuse by injection is increasing, but overall illicit heroin consumption is decreasing because of the low quality—and recent increases in the prices—of the heroin available on the illicit market.

416. Drug abuse has spread rapidly in countries in central Asia and in some countries in the Caucasus. The main drug of abuse is cannabis, followed by opium and its derivatives. In Tajikistan, however, opium and heroin are believed to have become the drugs of choice. It has been reported that the consumption of opiates in Azerbaijan has been growing at an alarming rate. A major concern in the CIS member States is the rapid spread of HIV and other infectious diseases related to the increase in drug abuse by injection.

417. While the extent of cocaine abuse and trafficking in West Asia is still relatively insignificant, in many countries in the region (for example, Israel, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey) seizures of cocaine have increased.

#### *Psychotropic substances*

418. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the clandestine manufacture of methcathinone continues. The drug is made in

small home laboratories. The principal precursor, ephedrine, is illicitly extracted from the *Ephedra* plant, which grows wild in the area. In recent years there has been increasing evidence of the abuse in central Asia of MDMA that has been smuggled out of Europe.

419. The large-scale smuggling of stimulants from Europe into the Persian Gulf area continues, as evidenced by seizures in transit countries such as Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey; however, information on the actual abuse of those substances in that area, on the origin and composition of the products involved and on the trafficking routes used, remains scarce. As in previous reports, the Board encourages all countries concerned to cooperate in obtaining that information so that the necessary action may be taken by the countries of origin of the products involved, which are being smuggled mainly under the brand name Captagon.

420. In September 1998, a significant quantity (about 70 kg) of amphetamine was seized in Pakistan for the first time.

#### Missions

421. In April 1999, a mission of the Board visited the Islamic Republic of Iran. The cooperation of the Government with the Board has been excellent.

422. The Board notes that legislative procedures to enable the Islamic Republic of Iran to become a party to the 1971 Convention have recently been completed. The Board therefore trusts that the Islamic Republic of Iran will soon deposit with the Secretary-General its instrument of accession to the 1971 Convention. The Board urges the Government to introduce, as a matter of priority, measures to enable the Islamic Republic of Iran to become a party to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention.

423. The Board notes with concern that the situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to the abuse of drugs, in particular opiates, appears to be deteriorating and that a lack of resources has prevented the authorities from dealing with the problem more effectively, despite the fact that the Government is using confiscated funds derived from drug trafficking for such purposes (see paragraph 401 above). The Board recommends that the assessment of the drug abuse situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran should be finalized and that, on the basis of that assessment, the international community should consider supporting appropriate projects to reduce illicit drug demand.

## D. Europe

### Major developments

424. The availability of cannabis in Europe has increased considerably. This is partly the result of intensified cannabis cultivation in countries in southern Europe, mainly Albania, and soaring indoor cannabis cultivation in western Europe. The surge in indoor cannabis cultivation has been facilitated by the unrestricted sale of cannabis seeds and cannabis-growing accessories in so-called "hemp shops" and on the Internet. The increasing and, in many cases, uncontrolled availability of cannabis, coupled with a tolerant attitude towards the substance, has led to increases in cannabis abuse. Most European countries have reported that cannabis abuse is flourishing. For example, a study undertaken in Switzerland in 1998 revealed that the prevalence of cannabis abuse among 15-year-old pupils in secondary schools had quadrupled in the previous 12 years. Unless Governments take action against indoor cannabis cultivation, there will continue to be increases in both cannabis abuse and the sale of that substance on the illicit market.

425. Cocaine seizures throughout Europe have increased. Significant seizures of cocaine, amounting to more than 1 ton each, have been made in several countries in western Europe, indicating that the illicit demand for the substance remains high. Although there have been few comprehensive studies on its prevalence, surveys undertaken in secondary schools in western Europe have revealed an upward trend in cocaine abuse, brought about, in part, by lower prices.

426. The abuse of synthetic drugs, in particular amphetamine and amphetamine-type stimulants, has risen. While the abuse of MDMA ("ecstasy") is no longer increasing in those countries in Europe where it had appeared earlier, there has been an upward trend in the abuse of amphetamines in almost all countries in the region. Measures to prevent the abuse of those substances have been difficult to implement since most synthetic drugs are considered fashionable and harmless by young people, who also constitute the largest group of abusers of such substances. The abuse of synthetic drugs is viewed as commonplace by many young people frequenting dance locales, and fatalities resulting from the abuse of synthetic drugs, although still limited, have increased significantly.