

I. OVERVIEW

1. During the last two decades, the world has witnessed the "globalization" of the drug abuse problem and the situation has worsened drastically. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs no longer discusses individual situations such as the smuggling of heroin into China, the illicit traffic in opium from Turkey to Egypt or the supply of heroin to New York through the "French Connection". Some decades ago, the abuse problem was the concern of only a limited number of countries, but today countries that are not suffering from the harmful consequences of drug abuse are the exception rather than the rule.

2. The economic power and political influence of drug cartels are rising. While drug abuse has been "globalized", internationalization and cooperation among drug cartels have also increased. There is also clear evidence that trafficking organizations barter different types of drugs among themselves. Drug trafficking syndicates are increasingly becoming involved in other forms of organized and violent crime, making use of sophisticated technical aids and modern communication systems. Criminal organizations control drugs from the cultivation and production phases to the storage and distribution phases. Large amounts of drugs are stored at staging posts in certain countries to take advantage of weak or ineffective laws in those countries. There is evidence that drug trafficking organizations frequently make use of the territories of countries (a) that are not parties to the international drug control treaties; (b) that have formally ratified conventions without implementing their provisions; (c) that suffer from civil war, terrorist activities, political instability, ethnic conflict, economic depression or social tension; (d) that are not in a position to ensure governmental control over some parts of their territories; (e) and that are not able to maintain adequate law enforcement, customs and pharmaceutical control services.

3. More and more Governments are beginning to realize that international cooperation in drug control, which in the past was an expression of solidarity, has now become a matter of urgent self-defence. The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held at Vienna from 17 to 26 June 1987, was an important sign of the changing philosophy of the international community. It was followed in 1990 by the adoption by the General Assembly, in its resolution S-17/2, of the Global Programme of Action, an instrument facilitating international action through voluntary cooperation between sovereign States and international organizations.

4. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988¹ is an even more important instrument. It created a global mechanism against international drug-related criminal activities by extending the scope of the international drug control treaties from basic drug control measures to concrete provisions against the activities of criminal organizations. The increasing number of countries that are becoming parties to the 1988 Convention is a reflection of the growing commitment of Governments to its compulsory application. It is not by chance that initiatives leading to the adoption of that Convention were taken by those countries in South America that are the main targets of criminal organizations.

5. In 1993, Governments have demonstrated again that the closest international cooperation possible is required to fight the worldwide scourge of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The General Assembly therefore convened five high-level plenary sessions to examine the status of such international cooperation. Its adoption in October 1993, of resolution 48/12, on measures to strengthen international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities, may prove to be a significant step towards the further development of a common strategy and international machinery against drug abuse and illicit traffic. General Assembly resolution 48/12 is a clear manifestation of the determination of Governments to

increase their cooperation with international organizations and each other in the fight against drug problems, which threaten the basic fabric of society and the political stability of nations.

6. The International Narcotics Control Board notes with satisfaction that the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/12, stressed the importance of national and international action to implement the provisions of the international drug control treaties. In response to the requests made by the General Assembly in that resolution, the Board will continue to fulfil its basic responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the international drug control treaties, cooperating with the Commission in identifying areas of progress and weakness, and assisting the Commission in formulating recommendations to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

7. The functioning of the international drug control system depends on the universal application of the provisions of the international drug control treaties. Deficiencies in national legislation and/or in the implementation of national laws and regulations create loopholes in the global network of protective measures. The Board invites Governments to update their national legislation in line with the international drug control treaties and to ensure the implementation of that legislation and encourages them to request assistance from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for those purposes.

8. The Board notes with concern that there continue to be deficiencies in Governments' compliance with reporting obligations established in the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961,² that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol,³ the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971⁴ and the 1988 Convention, as well as in numerous Economic and Social Council resolutions. The Board stresses that it is important that parties to those conventions, as well as non-parties, furnish in a timely manner the data required under those conventions or requested in those resolutions, in order for the international drug control system to function properly and in order for the returns and estimates to be comprehensive and accurate. In particular, the Board was compelled to defer its assessment on the present scope of control of precursors* under the 1988 Convention as requested by the Commission, because only a few Governments provided the necessary data.

9. The Board is deeply concerned that, more than 20 years after the adoption of the 1971 Convention, some of the major manufacturing and exporting countries have not yet become parties to it and have not introduced control measures for international trade in many psychotropic substances. This situation is undermining the functioning of the international control system for psychotropic substances and has had a particularly negative impact on numerous developing countries where the abuse of those substances is prevalent.

10. There is striking evidence that the abuse of stimulants is increasing in all regions of the world. Substantial quantities of fenetylline tablets have been seized in West Asia; the smuggling of amphetamine and pemoline into western Africa has continued; the regular abuse of amphetamine tablets by bus drivers has been reported in south-east Asia; amphetamine is the main drug of abuse in Scandinavian countries and in some other European countries; the abuse of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), commonly known as "ecstasy" has been the cause of many night-time road accidents in Europe; many clandestine methamphetamine laboratories have been

*The term precursor is used to indicate any of the substances in Table I or II of the 1988 Convention, except where the context requires a different expression. Such substances are often described as precursors or essential chemicals, depending on their principal chemical properties. The plenipotentiary conference that adopted the Convention did not use any one term to describe such substances. Instead, the expression "substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances" was introduced in the Convention. It has become common practice, however, to refer to all such substances simply as precursors; although that term is not technically correct, the Board has decided to use it in the present report for the sake of brevity.

dismantled in North America and in east Asia; the abuse of ephedrine (methcathinone) constitutes a major drug problem in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the same compound is synthesized in clandestine laboratories in North America. Increasing quantities of khat (*Catha edulis*) are being exported from producer countries to Australia and to countries in Europe and North America. The Board invites Governments to cooperate in preventing large-scale illicit trafficking in stimulants and to study the extent and patterns of the abuse of those substances listed in the 1971 Convention or other substances not subject to international control, such as ephedrine or khat.

11. The efforts of UNDCP are highly appreciated by the Board. In 1993, UNDCP has cooperated with 59 countries through 183 regional and country-specific drug control programmes. In addition, its operational work programme for 1993 includes 32 global projects supporting a broad range of drug control activities, such as specialized training, research and advisory services. Those activities have been implemented in collaboration with various specialized agencies in the United Nations system, other international organizations and various non-governmental organizations. The budget for technical cooperation projects in 1992 and 1993 totals 135.9 million United States dollars. UNDCP also supports the work of the Board by providing a secretariat administratively integrated into its structure, as well as other support on request.

12. Concerning precursor control, as the Board noted in its report on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention, submitted to the Commission at its thirty-sixth session,⁵ the Chemical Action Task Force, set up in 1990 by the heads of State or Government of the Group of Seven major industrialized countries and the President of the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), would not be maintained and follow-up tasks would be assumed by the Board and by the competent United Nations bodies, as provided for under that Convention. Within the framework of its functions under the Convention, the Board already assists Governments in developing procedures and mechanisms to control precursors, including verification of the legitimacy of transactions. The Board intends to expand further its current work and will take up additional activities as it deems necessary, subject to the availability of resources.

A. The importance of demand reduction

13. The Board, encouraged both by General Assembly resolution 48/12, in which the importance of the fundamental task of the Board, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of provisions of the international drug control treaties, was properly acknowledged and by the positive response of Governments to its firm position against legalization of the non-medical use of drugs under international control, continues to issue warning signals to Governments and international bodies. In the present report, it wishes to draw the attention of Governments to the crucial importance of demand reduction programmes.

14. In the past, distinctions were made between supplier and consumer countries. It is now widely realized that such distinctions no longer have any meaning: consumer countries have become supplier countries and vice versa. The term "transit countries" has also lost its original meaning: they, too, are quickly becoming consumer countries and may also become supplier countries. The simplistic view that suppressing illicit drug production in some "supplier countries" and/or reducing illicit drug demand in "consumer countries" will automatically lead to the solution of the drug problem is no longer valid, if indeed it ever was.

15. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that demand reduction efforts cannot lead to success without substantially reducing the illicit drug supply: if drugs are readily available and easily accessible, new drug abusers will soon replace former ones. At the same time, there is evidence that

elimination of a given drug from the market does not mean the elimination of the drug problem but only a shift towards other drugs or substances of abuse. Consequently, without efforts to reduce illicit drug demand, actions aimed at reducing illicit drug supply will lead to only temporary successes.

16. The Board notes with satisfaction that this philosophy, this balanced approach, is reflected in the UNDCP strategy: assisting in the development of national legal instruments, strengthening law enforcement services, supporting alternative economic development, providing assistance aimed at improving social, educational and health conditions, are all included in the programmes and projects of UNDCP.

17. It is evident that, at the national level, supply reduction and demand reduction cannot be separated from each other. There is, however, a major difference at the international level. Measures against the illicit manufacture, production, traffic and diversion of drugs can be "codified" in international treaties, because their identical application constitutes the *sine qua non* criteria for the functioning of the international drug control system. Demand reduction methods, however, cannot be "standardized" by legal documents.

18. The Board invites Governments to consider demand reduction as one of their first priorities in the fight against drug abuse. It urges Governments to cooperate closely in exchanging information on the results (failures as well as successes) of their demand reduction programmes. The Board greatly appreciates the efforts of UNDCP and other United Nations entities such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), intergovernmental organizations and some non-governmental organizations. It invites Governments to cooperate with such organizations and to seek their assistance in developing demand reduction programmes.

19. The importance of demand reduction was initially realized by the international community 20 years ago: the idea was translated into the provisions of the 1971 Convention, followed immediately by the amendment of the 1961 Convention by the 1972 Protocol. It is noteworthy that the 1988 Convention, which was intended to be a convention explicitly against illicit traffic, also contains provisions for demand reduction.

20. The provisions of the international drug control treaties are aimed at preventing, or at least reducing, the illicit supply of drugs. Consequently, those provisions constitute the backbone of any national supply reduction programme. In the case of national demand reduction programmes, the situation is different: in most countries, alternative licit substances, above all alcohol, are available on the local markets. Creating a shift from the abuse of drugs under international control to the abuse of alcohol, organic solvents and other substances would constitute a questionable achievement of demand reduction programmes.

21. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that reduction of the demand for all substances of abuse be the goal of such national programmes. That philosophy is reflected in the WHO approach to the problem: the WHO Programme on Substance Abuse is comprehensive and not limited to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Board commends the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence for drawing renewed attention to the problems associated with the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs in its recently published twenty-eighth report. The Board welcomes the emphasis placed by the Expert Committee on the need for a comprehensive approach in combating the abuse of psychoactive drugs. The Board notes that such a comprehensive approach is also present in the UNESCO preventive education strategy.

