

119. During that year, the authorities of Mozambique seized a shipment of 10 tons of anthranilic acid from India. The substance had been legally exported from India and was allowed to enter Mozambique, since that country currently does not exercise import controls over precursor chemicals. Inquiries initiated to identify the ultimate end-user determined that the substance was to be re-exported from Mozambique to South Africa and that the importing company in South Africa did not exist. The consignment was therefore seized. Investigations in South Africa identified the trafficker responsible for placing the order, who was subsequently arrested in connection with the discovery, in July 2002, of a major network intending to manufacture methaqualone in South Africa. In that operation, nearly 30 tons of acetic anhydride and 16 tons of anthranilic acid were seized, together with other non-controlled substances and industrial equipment used for synthesis. Some of the anthranilic acid seized was again identified as having originated in India, although how this particular consignment was diverted has not yet been determined.

120. The illicit manufacture of methaqualone has been largely prevented in India since the mid-1990s. In 2002, however, a major laboratory was dismantled and 2.5 tons of methaqualone were seized. In view of the strict controls exercised over both the domestic distribution and exports of acetic anhydride in India, the traffickers involved were using non-controlled substitute chemicals to replace acetic anhydride in the synthesis process. However, the seizure of the 50 kilograms of anthranilic acid at the laboratory site would indicate that the substance was being used. In view of the above seizures of anthranilic acid in Mozambique and South Africa, and taking into consideration the possibility of illicit manufacture taking place within their country, the authorities of India are urged to ensure that appropriate controls are introduced to prevent diversions of this substance from both domestic distribution channels and international trade.

*Stopped shipments, diversions and attempted diversions from international trade*

121. In addition to the above seizures, the competent authorities of China have been instrumental in preventing the diversion of over 20 tons of anthranilic acid from China to Swaziland. The Chinese authorities requested the assistance of the Board in determining

the legitimacy of the shipment and it was possible to determine, on the basis of information supplied by Governments voluntarily to the Board on licit trade, that no previous shipments of this substance had been made to Swaziland. In follow-up inquiries, the authorities in Swaziland were unable to conclusively identify the ultimate consignee and the Chinese authorities stopped the export. The information on licit trade provided by Governments under Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/20 is continually utilized by the Board in cases such as the above to identify suspicious orders and to initiate further inquiries.

122. Apart from the recent attempt to establish industrial-scale laboratories in South Africa, a smaller diversion attempt was uncovered when an order for 50 kilograms of acetic anhydride was placed with a company in the United Kingdom for delivery to South Africa. While a controlled delivery was planned, the order was cancelled before it could proceed. It is suspected that an employee of one of the companies involved may have warned the traffickers of the attention that law enforcement authorities were paying to the shipment in question.

123. Finally, the competent authorities of the United Arab Emirates stopped an export of 75 kilograms of acetic anhydride and 75 kilograms of anthranilic acid, that was placed by a company in Egypt. While the amounts ordered were not large, the ordering of those two chemicals together was itself a cause for suspicion. In the case in question, it was determined that the Egyptian company placing the order was not authorized to import either substance and the shipment was stopped. Although the order could not conclusively be linked to the illicit manufacture of methaqualone, it is such stopped shipments that need to be followed up and thoroughly investigated by the law enforcement authorities in order to develop intelligence that may later make it possible to identify and dismantle criminal networks.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

- <sup>2</sup> The term “precursor” is used to indicate any of the substances listed in Table I or II of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, 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 1988 Convention did not use any one term to describe such substances. Instead, the expression “substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and 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 convenience.
- <sup>3</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 on the Implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.XI.4), paras. 4, 52-57.
- <sup>4</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*
- <sup>5</sup> Those parties are the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Dominica, Georgia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mozambique, Niger, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Tonga and Zimbabwe.
- <sup>6</sup> This information is requested on a voluntary basis in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/20, which, inter alia:
- “Urges Governments ... to inform the Board on a regular basis ... of the quantities of substances listed in Table I of the 1988 Convention that they have imported, exported or transshipped, and encourages them to estimate their annual licit needs” (para. 8);
- “Requests the Board ... to collect information pursuant to paragraph 8 above, and to further develop and strengthen its database in order to assist Governments in preventing diversion of substances listed in Table I of the 1988 Convention” (para. 9);
- “Encourages Governments to consider strengthening, where necessary, the working mechanisms to prevent diversion of substances listed in Table II of the 1988 Convention, as described in the resolution” (para. 13).
- <sup>7</sup> China does, however, monitor all individual exports of *ephedrine*, *acetic anhydride* and *potassium permanganate* and regularly requests the assistance of the Board in verifying the legitimacy of such transactions.
- <sup>8</sup> Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand.
- <sup>9</sup> Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Hong Kong SAR of China, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.
- <sup>10</sup> The competent authorities of the following States and territories participate in Operation Purple: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Hong Kong SAR of China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. Furthermore, Interpol, UNDCP and the World Customs Organization support Operation Purple in their respective areas of responsibility.
- <sup>11</sup> A detailed description of how Operation Purple developed, its activities and the results achieved in the first phase can be seen in the report of the Board for 1999 on the implementation of article 12. The activities undertaken during the initial stages of phase II can also be seen in the report of the Board for 2000. The objectives of the operation, the procedural details and its results can further be found in the report prepared by the Steering Committee on phase I.
- <sup>12</sup> Ongoing studies carried out in the United States on samples of cocaine seized around the world indicate that the use of oxidizing agents, such as potassium permanganate, in the extraction and purification process continues to be lower than at any other time, with less than 10 per cent of samples analysed showing a high level of oxidation, as indicated by the presence of unwanted alkaloids usually removed by the oxidizing process. Furthermore, traffickers in Colombia are attempting to manufacture the substances themselves and, during 2002, the Colombian authorities successfully dismantled five such laboratories, bringing the total number dismantled throughout the country since 2000 to 15.
- <sup>13</sup> The following Governments are members of the Steering Committee: China, Colombia, Germany, India, Netherlands, Romania, Singapore, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan, along with the European Commission, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and the Board.

- <sup>14</sup> The following States and territories are participating in the operation: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Hong Kong SAR of China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.
- <sup>15</sup> Including the following: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, China, Hong Kong SAR of China, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States.
- <sup>16</sup> Including the following: Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Hong Kong SAR of China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia.
- <sup>17</sup> Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.
- <sup>18</sup> 3,4-MDP-2-P, P-2-P and safrole.
- <sup>19</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 64.
- <sup>20</sup> The Ukrainian authorities reported that the substance was intended for use in the illicit manufacture of methcathinone.
- <sup>21</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 71.
- <sup>22</sup> Including seizures of 36 tons by the Islamic Republic of Iran and 1.5 tons by the Russian Federation reported under Operation Topaz during 2001.
- <sup>23</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 84.
- <sup>24</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2000 on the Implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XI.4), para. 94, and *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 83.
- <sup>25</sup> Governments throughout the world, supported by Interpol and, in Europe, Europol, have initiated logo index projects, to establish links between tablets and capsules seized through law enforcement actions. Comparisons are made on the basis of the physical appearance, primarily the logo appearing on the tablet, but also including colour and physical dimensions, as well as the active ingredient. This information is used to establish links between tablets and capsules seized to, inter alia, specific manufacturing sites and to the networks involved in their distribution.
- <sup>26</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 93.
- <sup>27</sup> *ICPO-Interpol Worldwide Intelligence Message (WIM) No. 06/02 of 12 April 2001*.
- <sup>28</sup> *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2001 ...*, para. 94.