

79. In its report for 2005, the Board recommended that the current “project-by-project” approach to alternative development should be changed, with commitment being made towards long-term strategies for the provision of legitimate alternative livelihoods. The predominance of “project-by-project” implementation has not provided adequate opportunities for alternative development to have an impact on drug control on a larger scale. The vast majority of illicit crop growers have unfortunately not received direct alternative development assistance.¹⁸ In addition, Governments often neglect to provide for adequate infrastructure for the transport of alternative crops, which means that the crops have no easy access to markets. Lack of general education or literacy programmes may result in legitimate livelihoods being unsustainable in the long run. The provision of health care is often inadequate, in particular taking into consideration the fact that illicit drug crop cultivation is often followed by increasing drug abuse in the farming communities.

G. Cooperation with other international organizations

80. Governments cooperate with each other through the activities of organizations involved in drug control. In addition to UNODC, WHO, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization are involved in various areas of drug control. In addition, many regional organizations have established specialized structures to assist States in dealing with issues related to drug control and have played an important role in strengthening regional cooperation in combating illicit drug abuse and trafficking.

81. Joint projects of such regional and international organizations exist. However, the Board has observed that the joint efforts that take place at the regional and international levels tend to be in the areas of supply reduction and law enforcement. Although groundbreaking work has been done by individual organizations in the area of demand reduction, such efforts are too often carried out in isolation from one another. Arguably, demand reduction efforts are by nature more specific to the given country and context. Nevertheless, much knowledge and expertise could be shared in the area of demand reduction and the Board urges further development of cooperation in that area.

V. Challenges

82. The Board underlines that the goals for 2008 set by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session continue to be as relevant and as important as they were in 1998 and that new challenges to international drug control have surfaced. Some of the many challenges Governments are facing in that area are highlighted below.

83. Demand for illicit drugs continues to be high throughout the world. Measures in demand reduction must be further strengthened at the national and international levels. In particular, many Governments have not yet given priority to this issue, owing to a lack of capacity and resources, especially in the area of treating drug addiction.

84. Significant challenges remain in ensuring adequate control of ATS at the national and international levels. The diversion of pharmaceutical preparations

¹⁸ Ibid., paras. 30 and 49 (b).

containing controlled substances, including ATS, from licit domestic distribution channels is increasingly being used as a source for illicit drug suppliers.

85. The abuse of and trafficking in ATS continue to be problems. Measures taken at the national and international levels to reduce drug abuse and trafficking have not yet yielded noticeable results everywhere. In particular, the illegal sale of pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances through the Internet and the misuse of postal and courier services for such smuggling pose new challenges in addressing drug abuse. In many countries, the abuse of such preparations is second to the abuse of cannabis. The international community must take concerted action, and a mechanism for ensuring the sharing of experiences and the rapid exchange of information among Governments on specific cases has not yet been established.

86. A core objective of the international drug control system is to ensure the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical purposes and to promote the rational use of such substances. The consumption levels of psychotropic substances continue to differ widely by country and region. While such differences can sometimes be explained by cultural factors in medical practice and variations in prescription patterns, the issue of excessively high or low levels of drug consumption merits special attention.

87. Inadequate precursor control legislation, weak monitoring and control mechanisms and the lack of response to pre-export notifications and enquiries about the legitimacy of shipments of precursors in a timely manner continue to impede effective control of precursors in a number of countries. In most parts of the world, traffickers are increasingly trying to obtain large amounts of pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from licit national or international trade.

88. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy and trafficking in drugs continue to pose a serious threat to the political, economic and social stability of Afghanistan and other countries throughout the world. Corruption is seriously hindering drug control efforts in that country and should be addressed adequately if progress is to be made. Control of precursors, in particular acetic anhydride, remains a serious challenge in preventing that substance from being diverted to Afghanistan for the illicit manufacture of heroin.

89. The illicit cultivation of coca bush and cannabis plant continues to take place and must be addressed adequately at the national and international levels.

90. There continue to be countries that fail to comply with their reporting obligations under the international drug control treaties or to cooperate with the Board on drug control issues, because of the low priority given to such issues or because of lack of capacity in drug control.

91. Furthermore, the process of translating legal obligations from the international to the national sphere may introduce discrepancies between national legal concepts and international norms and may also be coloured by political considerations. The Board is concerned that differing interpretations of international obligations are weakening the overall efficacy of the control system.

92. The Board considers that certain harm reduction measures, such as the establishment of so-called “coffee shops” and “drug consumption rooms” or “drug

injection rooms”, are not in conformity with the international drug control treaties. The Board considers the existence of establishments where the illicit possession and consumption of drugs that have not been medically prescribed are legally condoned by Government or local authorities is in violation of the 1961 Convention and the 1988 Convention.

93. A legal impasse has also emerged between international and national law in a few countries with regard to the implementation of the treaty provisions concerning coca leaf. At the time when the 1961 Convention was drawn up, the phasing out of coca bush cultivation was seen as beneficial for the people of the Andean subregion, as well as a means to eliminate or reduce the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in cocaine at the global level. However, a few Governments have continued not only to permit such practices but even to encourage them.

VI. Recommendations

94. While recognizing the achievements made, the Board notes that the drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat, undermining socio-economic and political stability and sustainable development. The Board calls upon individual Governments and the international community as a whole to continue their efforts, in the years to come, to achieve further progress in addressing the world drug problem. The Board wishes to put forward the recommendations below for consideration and implementation by Governments and relevant international organizations. Additional recommendations are contained in annexes I-V.

A. Preventing the diversion of controlled substances including amphetamine-type stimulants

95. The Board recommends that all Governments introduce mandatory import and export authorizations for all psychotropic substances in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 1985/15 of 28 May 1985, 1987/30 of 26 May 1987, 1991/44 of 21 June 1991, 1993/38 of 27 July 1993 and 1996/30 of 24 July 1996, as that measure, combined with the system of assessments, has proved particularly effective in the identification of diversion attempts.

96. The diversion from domestic distribution channels and the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances pose problems in many countries. The Board recommends that the Governments concerned establish a mechanism for the systematic collection of data on the diversion and abuse of such preparations and use the data as the basis for taking appropriate countermeasures.

97. The Board urges the Governments of countries in which companies undertake direct-to-consumer advertising for drugs containing internationally controlled substances to adopt and implement regulations to ban such advertisements, in compliance with article 10 of the 1971 Convention. Governments should also consider invoking article 13 of the 1971 Convention to prevent substances that are not used for medical and scientific purposes from entering their territory.