

Summary

The present report provides the most comprehensive overview of the latest trends and challenges in precursor control. The Board relies on the cooperation of Governments to share information that is essential to preparing the report and maintaining the international precursor control system.

The Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system remains the cornerstone of international precursor control in terms of monitoring licit trade in and preventing the diversion of precursors. The system is now used by 146 States and territories, and more than 2,000 pre-export notifications are communicated through it each month. In addition, since its launch in March 2012, the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS) has rapidly established itself as an important tool in communicating actionable intelligence and strengthening the international precursor control regime. PICS allows relevant national law enforcement and regulatory authorities to report and share information on individual seizures of precursors, including numerous incidents involving chemicals previously not known to have been used in illicit drug manufacture. As at 1 November 2013, there were 350 registered users of PICS, including users from 78 Governments and 8 international and regional agencies. PICS has been used to communicate nearly 850 incidents involving 86 different countries and territories

Diversion of scheduled precursors from licit international trade is becoming less frequent, as traffickers divert substances from domestic trade channels, which are then smuggled out of the country, as is frequently the case for acetic anhydride. Traffickers are also turning to non-scheduled substances as highlighted by the rise in seizures of *alpha*-phenylacetone nitrile (APAAN), a substitute chemical that can be used in laboratories illicitly manufacturing amphetamine and methamphetamine with methods based on the use of 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P). Seizures of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, commonly known as “ecstasy”), appear to be rebounding, raising concern that MDMA may soon become readily available in major illicit markets. At the same time, cocaine manufacture is threatening to spread into Central America and other regions outside of South America.

It is encouraging that countries are reacting to these threats by introducing new responses at the national level and increasingly using international cooperation mechanisms to more effectively address them. That was witnessed in Australia, China, India, Peru and Viet Nam, where relevant national legislation was reinforced, and in Europe, where the European Commission continues to close gaps in legislation. Numerous international operations, as well as training activities aimed at countering diversion, have taken place, including under the auspices of Project Prism and Project Cohesion and international partners of the International Narcotics Control Board such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organization. Also of note is the increasing recourse to bilateral agreements, as was the case between China and Mexico.

Nevertheless, while the use of PEN Online and PICS is high, and Governments are taking action to address weaknesses in precursor control, the existing basic tools for countering the diversion of precursors have not been universally implemented, particularly in Africa. Several countries in Central America and the Caribbean also need to utilize some or most of the same basic tools and to improve controls over the import and export of precursors. Enhancing domestic controls, especially related to purchase limits, and/or cooperation with industry and retail suppliers to reduce the availability of precursor chemicals for illicit use should be a priority in North America. For countries in South America, there is a need to fully implement all

existing legislation and to improve the sharing of cross-border operational information on precursor incidents. In South Asia and in East and South-East Asia, the lack of basic information about precursor incidents has had an adverse effect on investigations in those regions, which continue to experience major problems with regard to the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants. West Asian countries should develop a better understanding of their domestic markets, including the role of manufacturing companies and end users of scheduled precursors. In Europe, the use of non-scheduled substances in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants has emerged as a major challenge. Finally, with regard to Oceania, all small Pacific island States should become parties to the 1988 Convention; in general, countries in that region also need to enhance cooperation, at the national and international levels.