substances, reported seizures mostly concerned *gamma*-butyrolactone (GBL) and precursors of ketamine.[43]

204. GBL is abused as such, but it is also used as a precursor in the illicit manufacture of *gamma*-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB). Seizures of GBL were reported in 2013, mostly by European countries, namely Belgium (5.5 litres), Estonia (81 litres in 13 incidents, allegedly originating in the Netherlands and Poland), Finland (more than 360 litres in 40 incidents), Greece (more than 1,600 litres, 1 seizure), Hungary (6.3 litres), Latvia (5.6 litres in 5 seizures) and Sweden (55 litres in 3 incidents). The Netherlands reported the largest seizures: almost 50,000 litres in six incidents. GBL laboratories were reported by the Russian Federation, with seizures of the substance amounting to more than 400 kg. Outside Europe, only the United States reported having seized GBL: a total of 285 litres. Australia reported having seized almost 9 kg of 1,4-butanediol, another precursor of GHB. In addition, GBL seizures continued to be communicated via PICS in 2014; the amounts were usually small, with the exception of the Netherlands, which communicated a seizure of 1,000 litres in February 2014.

205. China continued to report seizures of an immediate precursor of ketamine, known by its common name: "hydroxylimine". In 2013, nearly 8 tons of that chemical were reported seized, almost double the amount reported seized in 2012. "Hydroxylimine" has been under national control in China since mid-2008.

206. Malaysia reported a seizure of *N*-isopropylbenzylamine, which may be used to cut crystalline methamphetamine ("ice") as it looks very similar to the drug.

V. Conclusions

207. The Board's reports on precursors are aimed at providing Governments with a comprehensive overview and analysis of the precursor control situation worldwide, together with observations and recommendations to prevent the diversion of chemicals into illicit trafficking and address the latest challenges. The present chapter builds on the Board's analysis in chapter II aiming to inform Governments and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in their preparations for the special session of the General Assembly in 2016.

208. The enforcement of laws on precursors is an important complement as the existing control system, namely its regulatory component, has a limited ability to deal with series of chemically related substances and with substances without legitimate use and/or trade: the approach to scheduling is on a substance-by-substance basis. That is, it requires the listing of individual substances by name; and the concept of diversion control, grounded in preventing the diversion from licit into illicit channels through monitoring national and international trade, requires that substances have at least some legitimate use and there is trade in them. Since increasingly often, neither of those conditions is met by the designer precursors, derivatives and intermediates that have recently emerged, it has become important to consider approaches that allow intervention in case of suspicion, without requiring the application of all regulatory control measures that might overburden authorities and industry alike. Concepts such as that known as "immediate precursors", or the reversal of the burden of proof, which are concepts that are to some extent also being discussed in connection with new psychoactive substances, would allow for the necessary refocusing of controls.

209. Moreover, approaches that no longer rely on the naming of individual substances would also prepare the international precursor control system for the challenges soon to arrive in connection with the precursors of new psychoactive substances. While some of these chemicals are critical for entire series of related new psychoactive substances, other chemicals are quite specific for individual new psychoactive substances and often have a range of legitimate applications and/or significant trade volumes. Applying the control measures of the 1988 Convention would overburden the system in a similar manner as is currently observed in relation to the new psychoactive substances end-products and their scheduling under the international drug conventions.

210. Solutions have been identified, and practical tools are available. However, it is a matter of political will to accept that diversion can, and does, happen at all stages of the distribution chain and that there is a shared responsibility to ensure that domestic control systems, which represent individual building blocks of an interdependent global precursor control system, are fit for their purpose. This includes all countries in which chemicals are either manufactured, domestically distributed, used, imported, exported, re-exported and countries through which those chemicals transit: in other words, virtually every country around the globe. It is also a matter of political will to balance the free movement of goods and control considerations. Above all, the ultimate goal of precursor control remains effective diversion prevention, while seizures are, in fact, only indicators of known diversions that have been successful.

211. The Board hopes that the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 2016 will provide the opportunity to achieve the necessary consensus, at the highest level, to make international precursor control fit for 2019 and beyond, and the Board expresses its willingness to fully take part in that endeavour.

[43] GBL and 1,4-butanediol were reviewed by the World Health Organization Expert Committee on Drug Dependence in June 2014, for possible international control.