

prevent the diversion of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as chemicals, into illicit channels. At the same time, steps must be taken to ensure that essential narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are made available to those who need them for medical purposes.

227. The Board notes that there is a proposal to designate the port of Zanzibar as a “free port”. Given that the coastline of the United Republic of Tanzania is part of a key drug trafficking route, the Board stresses that measures to suppress illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals in such “free ports” should be no less stringent than those applied in other parts of the country, as required under article 18 of the 1988 Convention.

228. The Board has reviewed the follow-up by the Government of Togo to the recommendations made by the Board after its mission to that country in June 1995. The Board is pleased to note that Togo has implemented several recommendations made by the Board. In particular, Togo adopted in March 1998 a comprehensive drug control law, based on the UNDCP model legislation, which provides for high financial penalties, long sentences and forfeiture of assets in cases involving illicit drug activities. The Government has already begun to enforce that law. In addition, a presidential decree issued in 1998 created an inter-ministerial body for drug control coordination. In June 1998, Togo reported at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly that it had initiated the preparation of a national drug control strategy. The Government has also significantly improved its reporting in line with the requirements of the international drug control treaties.

229. Noting with appreciation the above-mentioned developments, the Board urges the Government of Togo to complement those positive steps by addressing the problem of the parallel market of psychotropic substances.

B. Americas

230. The Board welcomes the significant advances made in implementing the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, which is being developed by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission (CICAD) of the

Organization of American States. At present, few regions have such a mechanism.

231. It is hoped that the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism will soon become an effective instrument for monitoring the progress of the individual and collective efforts of Governments to combat illicit trafficking in and abuse of drugs.

Central America and the Caribbean

Major developments

232. Drug traffickers continue to take advantage of the fact that the region of Central America and the Caribbean is located between major drug-producing areas and significant illicit drug markets, that the Caribbean is comprised of hundreds of relatively small islands with myriads of cays and that the socio-economic situation in most of the countries in the region is difficult. The relatively weak institutional and political situation in some of the countries and the large number of political entities in the Caribbean pose challenges to efforts to ensure strategic coordination in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and abuse. Nonetheless, substantial progress towards increasing cooperation and coordination has been made through various regional and subregional mechanisms.

233. In Central America, the smuggling of drugs, mostly cocaine hydrochloride, coca paste (*basuco*) and “crack” in large and (more and more often) small shipments by land, continues unabated. It appears that, in Central America, ports on the Caribbean Sea and on the Pacific Ocean are increasingly being used for the trans-shipment of illicit drugs. As the Board has stated in previous reports,⁴² the spillover of that drug traffic is having a noticeable impact on the abuse of drugs, in particular cocaine and “crack”.

234. In the Caribbean, a common practice is to airdrop illicit drug consignments into coastal waters and then have them picked up by speedboat. Private vessels, fishing boats, cruisers and pleasure ships are also increasingly being used in maritime drug trafficking. Because of the increased efforts by the authorities of some countries to combat drug-related crime, drug traffickers have turned to quickly moving their operations to weaker jurisdictions. In addition, illicit drug stockpiling in isolated locations has become a more common practice.

235. The use of the Caribbean for illicitly transshipping and storing drugs has led to increased drug abuse and drug-related crime in the countries concerned. The increased violence is another alarming signal. Although most countries in the subregion have expressed their strong will to cooperate in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and abuse, their efforts are often hampered by insufficient financial and human resources.

236. Tourism and foreign investment have become important sources of foreign exchange for Caribbean countries, especially for those with severe economic problems and high foreign debt. Joint ventures, offshore services, free trade zones and economic citizenship programmes are some of the strategies currently being used by some Governments in the subregion to overcome socio-economic difficulties. Differences between national economic interests and those of the international community often present an additional challenge to efforts to combat crime in such business areas. The Board wishes to reiterate its concerns about the often too liberal attitude of some Governments towards offshore banking and gambling activities, which, without the appropriate control machinery, is likely to be taken advantage of by persons who engage in money-laundering.

Treaty adherence

237. All States in Central America and the Caribbean are parties to the 1988 Convention. The Board calls once more on Belize and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to adhere to the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol and to the 1971 Convention. The Board also calls on Haiti, Honduras and Saint Lucia to become parties to the 1971 Convention and on Nicaragua to ratify the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention.

Regional cooperation

238. The Board welcomes the fact that Governments in Central America seem to be truly dedicated to finding common grounds for cooperation in the most urgently needed drug law enforcement efforts. Such cooperation has already led to multilateral law enforcement operations such as operation "Central Skies", which have so far yielded encouraging results. In July 2000, El Salvador reached an agreement with

the United States on the establishment of a regional centre to combat illicit drug trafficking.

239. The Board notes with satisfaction the launching in 2000 of proposals to develop a treaty to combat illicit drug trafficking and to harmonize drug-related legislation in Central America. The Board hopes that those initiatives will soon gain the support of the Governments concerned and that regional and subregional organizations will cooperate to that end.

240. The Board welcomes a number of positive subregional initiatives undertaken in Central America, for instance:

(a) The Permanent Central American Commission for the Eradication of Illicit Production, Traffic, Consumption and Use of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances has proposed to design a subregional plan of action. The plan of action is to be based upon the results of the first report of the multilateral evaluation mechanisms of CICAD;

(b) A tripartite agreement to combat all types of smuggling, including illicit trafficking in drugs, in the Pacific basin of Central America is being pursued by the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The participation of the Governments of all countries in the subregion with coastlines on the Pacific Ocean would improve the effectiveness of the agreement.

241. The Board notes with interest the subregional collaboration in the Caribbean, especially through the task force meetings of the Caribbean Drug Control Coordination Mechanism aimed at monitoring and reviewing the progress made in implementing the Plan of Action on Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean (also known as the Barbados Plan of Action). In line with the priorities set by the task force, all countries in the subregion that have not already done so are expected to work out integrated national drug strategies without delay.

242. At the initiative of the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council, a regional customs clearance system, designed to track the movement of small vessels in the Caribbean, was adopted at the end of 1999. A joint intelligence office and a regional airport anti-smuggling initiative have been set up to fill the communication gap between customs and police in many countries in the subregion.

243. The Board acknowledges the importance of regional and subregional initiatives such as the chemical control workshop organized in Barbados by CICAD for Caribbean countries in October 2000 and the United Nations Offshore Forum held in the Cayman Islands in March 2000. The Board has repeatedly emphasized the need for such a coordinated approach to providing technical and financial assistance to the subregion. It therefore notes with satisfaction that, at the third joint meeting, held in Barbados in May 2000, the Caribbean Drug Control Coordination Mechanism decided that its task force meetings would be regarded as a forum in which drug control issues could be discussed with international partners.

244. The main objectives and challenges in improving drug control in the Caribbean continue to be the implementation of effective drug control strategies for more comprehensive demand reduction and prevention of drug abuse, the establishment of drug control councils, improved law enforcement and more cooperation between law enforcement agencies and between States in terms of their maritime agreements. Further tasks include the conclusion of a subregional maritime law enforcement agreement and the negotiation of an intra-Caribbean treaty on mutual legal assistance.

National legislation, policy and action

245. The Board notes that during 2000, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic developed new national drug control plans. The Board hopes that the other countries in the subregion will soon prepare similar instruments for central planning and policy development.

246. Since the end of 1999, the Government of Belize has been implementing a plan for the extensive reform of its drug policy and law enforcement structures. So far, the Government has established new police units for countering drug trafficking and money-laundering and has reorganized the national police.

247. The Government of Costa Rica has continued its efforts to establish a system for countering money-laundering more effectively. The Board hopes that all the necessary legislation will soon be in place. In El Salvador, a financial investigation unit created in late 1999 has become operational. In October 2000,

Panama adopted a law updating and strengthening measures against money-laundering.

248. In the Caribbean, the development of law enforcement capabilities has been a major challenge to poorer countries with weak jurisdictions; the lack of statistical data and of facilities for drug testing has also posed serious problems. Many countries have no forensic laboratories. On some islands, even basic drug testing cannot be carried out; consequently, samples of seized drugs must be sent to the forensic centres in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago for testing. However, forensic laboratory and electronic data exchange facilities are being improved with international assistance. Difficulties are also encountered as a result of the absence of streamlined judicial procedures and computerized information exchange. In addition, the situation in prisons and the escape of a number of criminals who were serving sentences for drug-related offences, as well as the often insufficient treatment and rehabilitation services for drug addicts, continue to be a matter of concern in the subregion.

249. The Board notes with satisfaction that, in Antigua and Barbuda, the amendment of national legislation against money-laundering and the strengthening of administrative mechanisms have recently led to successful operations. In the Cayman Islands, a leading international finance centre, the legislation against money-laundering that is currently in place is among the most advanced in the entire Caribbean subregion and the Board expects that the government will continue its efforts to ensure its full implementation. In Barbados, the new Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) Act came into force in April 2000. The Board also notes the law against money-laundering adopted in the British Virgin Islands and the legislation against money-laundering that is being considered for approval in the Dominican Republic.

250. The Board is concerned about recent reports of money-laundering activities in Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The main problem areas are the absence of adequate drug control legislation and strategies, few if any measures against money-laundering and the spreading of offshore activities. The Board urges the Governments concerned to put more emphasis on taking measures to improve their efforts to combat money-laundering and other related crime, and it calls on the international

community to support the countries involved in those efforts.

251. The Board hopes that Governments in the Caribbean will exercise more vigilance, adjust their legislation and institutions and introduce more coherent national policies and legislation in order to be better prepared to face the growing threat of money-laundering. Most countries in the subregion have laws aimed at preventing money-laundering; the Board encourages the Governments of those countries to ensure that those laws are implemented effectively, and it strongly urges the Governments that have not already done so to introduce such legislation. In some countries in the subregion, there is still no law requiring suspicious financial transactions to be disclosed to the authorities. Recent cases resulting in the closing of offshore banks and the arrest of account holders on charges of money-laundering and corruption have shown that Governments in the subregion can succeed in their efforts to deal with such problems.

252. The Board is concerned about the adverse political and economic situation in Haiti, which is hindering the country's development and its ability to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking. As a result, violence, drug trafficking (above all by sea but increasingly by air as well), money-laundering and other forms of drug-related crime continue to be serious problems in that country. Haiti, one of the poorest countries in that part of the world, is quickly becoming a major transit point for smuggling cocaine in the Caribbean.

253. In Jamaica, national and international efforts have resulted in a decline in criminal activity. In addition, the Corruption (Prevention) Act was recently passed in that country, and general drug legislation is in place. The country also has a forensic laboratory, and the newly created Port Security Corps deals specifically with seaport security. The political will to combat crime is evident in Jamaica; nevertheless, drug trafficking has increased significantly.

254. In Saint Lucia, criminal activity has declined in the past year. That development has been attributed to improvements in the national police force system, which resulted in intensified eradication activities and increased seizures.

255. Cuba has a strong institutional framework in place, but transit trafficking has led to increased

availability of drugs in the country. Therefore, measures are being developed to prevent the situation from deteriorating; those efforts deserve the support of not only neighbouring countries but also other members of the international community.

256. In Central America and the Caribbean, demand reduction activities have been continuing; however, there are still countries that lack adequate strategies in that area. The Board expects that, at the country level, authorities will take adequate steps to carry out periodic drug abuse assessments according to their needs.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

257. The illicit cultivation of cannabis, mainly for domestic illicit markets, is widespread in Central America and the Caribbean. Opium poppy cultivation is limited to Guatemala, where the area under cultivation has decreased to an insignificant level.

258. As in previous years, reliable data on levels of drug abuse in Central America and the Caribbean continue to be scarce. Therefore, the Board calls on further efforts to assess the situation. According to information furnished by Governments to CICAD, the most common drugs of first-time abuse are cannabis and, in Central America, also inhalants. In Costa Rica, however, "crack" ranks slightly above cannabis and well above inhalants as the most common drug of first-time abuse. In Honduras, tranquillizers are more than twice as popular as cannabis as a drug of first-time abuse. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Honduras has recently improved its controls over international trade in and domestic distribution of tranquillizers. In most countries in Central America, multiple drug abuse has been reported.

259. In all countries in Central America except Guatemala, seizures of coca paste decreased in 1999 and the first half of 2000. Seizures of cocaine hydrochloride and "crack", however, continued to increase in Central America and were much higher in Nicaragua and Panama than in the rest of the subregion. Belize is the only country in the subregion that has not reported seizures of heroin.

260. In Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is considerable illicit cultivation of cannabis destined for illicit markets both within those two countries and elsewhere. The cultivation and abuse of cannabis have become socially acceptable in those countries; cannabis cultivation has even become a major source of income. On several other Caribbean islands, as well as in Central America, cannabis is cultivated mainly to be abused locally. Cannabis eradication efforts have continued to be successful and considerable amounts of cannabis have been seized. In some countries in the subregion, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and in Saint Lucia, eradication efforts have led to a decline in cannabis seizures.

261. Drug traffickers have increased their activities, using the Caribbean as a transit point and taking advantage of the potential offered by the growing tourism industry; consequently, the availability and abuse of cannabis, "crack" and especially cocaine have increased significantly in the subregion. Cocaine seizures have increased in many countries in the Caribbean. Some countries in the subregion have also reported increased heroin seizures.

262. Because it is situated close to the main areas where the illicit manufacture of cocaine hydrochloride is taking place, the region of Central America and the Caribbean is especially prone to the diversion of precursor chemicals. In many countries in the region, one of the major problems is that the control system for properly identifying and tracking precursor chemicals is either inadequate or non-existent. In some countries, there is no national legislation on precursor chemicals.

Psychotropic substances

263. In countries in Central America and the Caribbean, information on illicit activities related to psychotropic substances is scarce. In some parts of the Caribbean, the abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) has been detected and the trans-shipment of MDMA (Ecstasy) from Europe to the United States has taken place. In Central America and the Caribbean, the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances appears to be non-existent and the diversion of such substances from licit into illicit channels has rarely been reported but may be occurring. Most countries in the region continue to experience problems involving the

enforcement of prescription requirements for anxiolytics and, to a lesser extent, stimulants used as anorectics.

Missions

264. A mission of the Board visited El Salvador in July 2000. Since 1996, when the previous mission of the Board took place, El Salvador has acceded to both the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention. The Board welcomes that development, as well as the recent adoption of new laws such as the law against money-laundering and the law on control of the sale of glue and solvents. The Board expects that the comprehensive national plan against drugs will be adopted soon in order to make available a programming tool for drug control activities.

265. A complete reorganization of drug-related governmental activities and functions is currently taking place in El Salvador. The Board encourages the Government to streamline coordination among all government agencies with responsibilities in the field of drug control and welcomes the establishment of a joint secretariat for the anti-narcotics trafficking commission and the anti-drugs commission. Securing adequate resources for the High Council on Public Health, which is in charge of controlling the licit movement of substances under international control, including precursor chemicals, should be given high priority, in order to facilitate its fulfilment of its national and international responsibilities.

266. The Board appreciates the nationwide initiatives in the area of drug abuse prevention undertaken in El Salvador. Conducting on a regular basis assessments of drug abuse in the country would greatly facilitate the evaluation by the Government of the real extent of the drug abuse problem.

267. A mission of the Board visited Honduras in July 2000. The Board appreciates the efforts of the Government aimed at strengthening its drug control capacity, despite the financial burdens imposed by the need to rebuild the country's infrastructure, which was seriously damaged by recent natural disasters.

268. The Board believes that, as part of such efforts, the capabilities of the national anti-narcotics council (CNCN) of Honduras should be enhanced, in particular with respect to the handling of drug policy matters. That would allow Honduras to better fulfil its

obligations under the international drug control treaties. There is a need to improve the coordination between law enforcement agencies and the health authorities on drug-related issues. The Board acknowledges the steps taken so far by the Government to incorporate the provisions of the 1971 Convention into its national legislation. With regard to control over the licit movement of precursor chemicals, the Government still needs to establish a regulatory mechanism and designate an agency responsible for precursor control.

269. The efforts made so far by the Government of Honduras need to be complemented by the financial and technical support of the international community in order for further progress to be achieved in drug control.

North America

Major developments

270. Cannabis remains the most common drug of abuse in Canada, Mexico and the United States. The spread of hydroponically grown cannabis with a high THC content in Canada and part of the United States continues to be a major concern to the law enforcement agencies of those countries. The law enforcement agencies of the United States have achieved successes in eradicating illicit cannabis. The impact of the cannabis eradication efforts by the law enforcement agencies of Canada, however, has remained limited; in some parts of the country, most illegal cannabis growers receive little or no punishment and it has been difficult to deter them from continuing their illicit activity; Mexico remains a major source of cannabis.

271. In the United States, while the overall level of cocaine abuse has remained unchanged, the rate of cocaine abuse among adolescents declined by 14 per cent from 1998 to 1999. Measures taken to educate people about the harmful consequences of drug abuse have contributed to that downward trend. Overall, heroin abuse has declined. In Canada, while there are no recent data on drug abuse nationwide, some surveys are showing an increase in drug abuse among secondary school students. Cocaine abuse in Mexico remains at a much lower level than in Canada and the United States, but appears to be increasing.

272. In addition to methamphetamine abuse, which continues to be widespread and is mainly taking place in the western parts of Canada and the United States, MDMA (Ecstasy) of western European origin is increasingly being abused by young people in North America. There was a sharp increase in seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) in the United States in 2000.

273. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Canada has now placed 44 substances within the scope of control of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The Board trusts that similar progress will be achieved soon in monitoring chemicals, since there is currently no monitoring mechanism to prevent Canadian territory from being used to divert chemicals for the illicit manufacture of drugs in other countries.

Treaty adherence

274. All States in North America are parties to the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

275. Canada, Mexico and the United States continue to cooperate closely with each other in their efforts to fight drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

276. Mexico and the United States, based on their Bi-national Drug Threat Assessment and the Alliance against Drugs signed by the two Governments in 1997, together developed procedures to evaluate progress made under their respective national drug control strategies. The Board notes that both heads of State, at their meetings in 1999 and 2000, endorsed the Bi-national Drug Threat Assessment and called for full implementation of the Alliance against Drugs, while focusing largely on reducing the illicit demand for drugs.

277. The Board notes with satisfaction that cooperation between Mexico and the United States involves all levels of government and a broad range of drug control aspects. For example, the customs authorities of both countries signed an agreement to work more closely together on a variety of issues, including money-laundering and drug trafficking. Intensive joint operations by the law enforcement authorities of those countries, in particular the Mexican Navy and the United States Coast Guard, have led to a significant increase in cocaine seizures. The two

countries have continued their cooperation aimed at reducing the illicit demand for drugs. Mexico also cooperates closely with countries in Central America. A subregional agreement to promote cooperation in demand reduction was approved at a recent summit of the Presidents of Mexico and the countries in Central America.

278. The Board welcomes the support provided by the Government of the United States to the Government of Colombia in the form of resources to implement Plan Colombia, which contains a comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy to combat illicit drug manufacture and trafficking. The Board also welcomes the agreement reached by the Governments of China and the United States in June 2000 to increase cooperation in fighting drug-related crime, particularly by sharing evidence related to crime and drug trafficking.

279. Canada and the United States have continued their close and extensive cooperation in the field of drug control. Based on the Cross-Border Crime Forum, established in 1997, the law enforcement agencies of both countries have been working closely together in the past year on establishing a mechanism for enhancing the sharing of intelligence and developing priorities for the joint targeting of criminal groups involved in drug trafficking.

280. Drug law enforcement cooperation has been further strengthened in the Americas by a multinational drug law enforcement operation led by the law enforcement agencies of the United States and joined by law enforcement authorities from 25 countries in the Caribbean and South America. The operation resulted in the capture of thousands of suspected drug traffickers and the seizure of large amounts of illicit drugs, thus demonstrating that multinational collaboration in drug control efforts can be quite successful.

National legislation, policy and action

281. The Board welcomes the comprehensive review of the scientific evidence to assess the potential health benefits of and risks of cannabis and its constituent cannabinoids, which was completed in 1999 by the Institute of Medicine in the United States. In its study, the Institute noted that smoking cannabis delivered various harmful substances, including most of those found in tobacco smoke. It also stated that plants contained a variable mixture of biologically active compounds and could not be expected to provide a

precisely defined drug effect. It concluded that, for those reasons, any medical future of cannabinoid drugs did not lie in smoked cannabis but in its isolated components, the cannabinoids and their synthetic derivatives. The Board encourages further scientific research into the possible medical uses of cannabis.

282. In Mexico, under a national public security plan promulgated in February 1999, the Federal Preventive Police was created to fight organized criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking. As a result of international cooperation and the strengthening of the law enforcement agencies under the plan, seizures of illicit drugs increased significantly in 1999 compared with the previous year. Intensified action against drug trafficking cartels continued in 2000, resulting in the arrest of major drug traffickers and the dismantling of organized criminal groups.

283. A number of new laws came into force in Mexico in 1999, such as the federal penal code, a federal law on the administration of seized assets and a law on precursors.

284. The Board welcomes the fact that in the United States, the Government continues to closely assess national drug control measures by providing information on 97 specific performance targets used to gauge progress under the National Drug Control Strategy. The Board notes with appreciation the approach followed by the United States in defining its drug policies and activities, which is based on scientific evidence.

285. The Board appreciates the efforts made by the Government of the United States in conducting scientific research on drugs widely used as medicines or abused by young people and children. In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of children under the age of six for whom psychoactive drugs have been prescribed.

286. The Board appreciates the encouraging results achieved thus far in the United States through the ongoing National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which is an important programme for demand reduction under the National Drug Control Strategy. With the involvement of organizations in the public and private sectors and a variety of media, including television and the Internet, the proper messages have been effectively delivered to the target groups. Education programmes are used to alert parents and young people about the dangers of abusing drugs.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

287. Illicit cannabis cultivation continues to be one of the most challenging issues in the field of drug control in all three countries in North America. In addition to being smuggled into Canada on a large scale, cannabis is also cultivated within the country. Annual production of illicit cannabis in Canada appears to be around 800 tons, more than 60 per cent of which may enter the illicit market in the United States. In the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec, cannabis with a high THC content is grown indoors. In British Columbia, illicit indoor cannabis cultivation has become a widespread, lucrative undertaking. Though efforts to eradicate cannabis have been made by law enforcement agencies in Canada, the impact of those efforts has been reduced by Canadian courts giving lenient sentences to cannabis growers and couriers.

288. Drug trafficking continues to increase in Canada. Besides the cannabis and cocaine smuggled into Canada out of countries such as Mexico, there was also an increase in the amount of heroin smuggled into Canada. In 2000, law enforcement agencies in Canada intercepted an illicit consignment of heroin that weighed 156 kg, the largest seizure of heroin ever made in the country.

289. Mexico continues to be a major source of cannabis in North America. Cannabis seizures increased in 2000, especially on the Pacific coast of both Mexico and the United States. In 2000, the number of seizures of cocaine and heroin along the common border of Mexico and the United States increased, as did the quantity of cocaine and heroin seized along that border. There has been a noticeable increase in the abuse of heroin in some Mexican cities close to the United States border and in the abuse of cocaine and "crack" in Mexico City. Drug abuse has become a greater challenge to the authorities in Mexico.

290. In the United States, cannabis is mainly smuggled into the country out of Canada, Mexico and countries in other regions; however, much of the cannabis in the United States is illicitly grown indoors or outdoors by commercial and small-scale operators within the country. The intensified efforts to eradicate illicit

cannabis cultivation continued in the United States. Seizures of cannabis in the United States were 40 per cent higher in 1999 than in 1998. Cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug in that country. Since 1994, there has been no significant change in the number of cannabis abusers in the country.

291. Seizures of cocaine in the United States have increased in the past year, probably due to enhanced international cooperation. As it has become more difficult to smuggle drugs into the United States by air, South American traffickers now ship more cocaine and heroin by sea to Central America and the Caribbean and then smuggle the drugs into the United States by land.

292. In general, the abuse of cocaine in the United States has remained at a stable level in recent years. The decline in cocaine abuse among students in 1999 was the first decline in recent years. Heroin abuse has continued to decrease slightly in the United States; however, the mean age of first-time abusers of heroin has decreased since 1995.

Psychotropic substances

293. In Canada, there are indications that the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine has increased. Law enforcement agencies have uncovered a record number of clandestine laboratories in the past year. MDMA (Ecstasy) laboratories were detected in middle-class suburban neighbourhoods, especially in central Canada; the laboratories were run by people with no criminal records or connections. In some provinces, the sharp increase in the number of deaths related to MDMA (Ecstasy) reflects the increase in the abuse of that substance.

294. In Mexico, the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine continued in 2000. The level of methamphetamine abuse is lower in Mexico than in Canada and the United States. There has been a significant increase in MDMA (Ecstasy) abuse in North America. Mexican drug trafficking groups have been involved in illicit trafficking in MDMA (Ecstasy), exchanging cocaine from Latin America for MDMA (Ecstasy) manufactured in Europe.

295. The spread of MDMA (Ecstasy) abuse is a matter of increasing concern to the Government of the United States. Among students in their final year of secondary school, the abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) in the previous

year increased by 67 per cent between 1998 and 1999. The substance is smuggled into the United States out of western Europe, mostly by air. In the United States, seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) have increased by 700 per cent since 1997; over 3 million MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets were seized in 1999 and law enforcement agencies have projected for 2000 a 15-fold increase in seizures of that substance. The manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy) is relatively uncomplicated and clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of synthetic drugs already exist in the United States; for those reasons, it is likely that the illicit manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy) may emerge in that country as a result of the increase in the domestic demand for that substance.

296. In the United States, the abuse of methamphetamine continues to be more common in the western part of the country. The abuse of methamphetamine at least once in a person's lifetime ("lifetime abuse of methamphetamine") remained at a stable level in 1999, and a decline in methamphetamine abuse among young people was recorded in 1999 and 2000. Principal sources of methamphetamine are Mexico and the United States. The number of clandestine laboratories seized by the Drug Enforcement Administration of the United States increased sharply from 1,387 in 1998 to 1,919 in 1999.

297. In North America, the spread of information by the media on methods used to manufacture illicit drugs continues to be a significant concern, in particular in Canada and the United States. Messages about indoor cannabis cultivation and the manufacture of synthetic drugs, especially methamphetamine, are common on some web sites.

Other substances

298. In the United States, the abuse of *gamma*-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is spreading rapidly. In March 2000, the United States placed GHB in schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. The Government has been directed to develop and implement a plan for a national education campaign on the dangers of that substance.

South America

Major developments

299. South America continues to be the sole source of illicitly manufactured cocaine hydrochloride, which is primarily smuggled into North America and, increasingly, into Europe. The drug trafficking methods being used vary, but it appears that all countries in South America are being used as trans-shipment points. In countries in the northern part of South America, there are mainly reports of large-scale trafficking in cocaine destined for North America and, increasingly, for Europe; however, in the southern part of South America, mainly smaller quantities of cocaine are being smuggled by courier, above all, into Europe. Most countries in South America are also the final destination of some of the cocaine being smuggled in the region.

300. The Board expects that the Governments of Bolivia and Peru will continue to do their utmost to safeguard the positive results that they have achieved in recent years in the reduction of illicit coca bush cultivation. The substantial results achieved by the Government of Bolivia in the reduction of illicit coca bush cultivation in the Chapare area deserve the support of the international community. However, the Board also wishes to reiterate its concern over the risk that illicit coca bush cultivation in Bolivia may shift to the Yungas area. The Board calls on the Government of Peru to continue ensuring that illicit coca bush cultivation does not increase in the area of the upper Huallaga. The Board trusts that the Governments concerned will pay particular attention to those areas.

301. In most countries in South America, the abuse of cocaine continues to be on the rise. In some countries in the region, the abuse of cocaine base continues to increase. The abuse of heroin continues to be negligible; however, Governments should continue to keep in mind the dangers associated with the growing trafficking in heroin and the increased availability of that substance in the region.

302. In late August 2000, the first South American summit, held in Brasilia, opened a regional dialogue on common problems, including drug trafficking and related crime. The Board hopes that the political determination expressed at the summit and in other forums will facilitate further dialogue and foster cooperation in efforts to combat illicit trafficking and

drug abuse in South America in a more comprehensive manner.

303. After thorough consideration, the Government of Colombia has adopted Plan Colombia: Institutional Strengthening and Social Development 2000-2002, which contains a comprehensive multisectorial strategy to combat illicit drug manufacture and trafficking. Plan Colombia calls for a total investment of 7.5 billion United States dollars over the next four years, most of it (US\$ 4 billion) provided by the Colombian Government. The United States is making a significant contribution to the law enforcement and social aspects of Plan Colombia (US\$ 1.3 billion, some of which is for supportive activities in neighbouring countries). European countries and Japan are considering making contributions to Colombia to be used for the social and humanitarian aspects. The Board calls on Governments in South America to cooperate closely with the Government of Colombia in the execution of Plan Colombia.

Treaty adherence

304. The Board once again calls on the Government of Guyana, which continues to be the only State in South America that is not a party to the 1961 Convention, to do its utmost to accede to the Convention without further delay.

305. All States in the region are parties to the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

306. The Board takes note with appreciation of the fact that most Governments in South America use the same methodology to collect and report to CICAD data on drug seizures and drug abuse. That greatly facilitates the evaluation by Governments and other regional mechanisms of the development of the trafficking in and abuse of drugs in the region. However, the Board wishes to remind all Governments in South America that, in addition to their gathering and sharing of comprehensive data within the Americas, there are also treaty-based obligations to furnish data on seizures of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals directly to international bodies.

307. The Board notes with satisfaction that in 2000, as in 1999, coordinated law enforcement activities yielded positive results. In September 2000 alone, the combined efforts of 12 countries, including countries in South America, led to the dismantling of an extensive drug trafficking operation with connections in European countries and the United States, including the seizure of 25 tons of cocaine and the arrest of more than 40 suspects. Drug trafficking in South America can be effectively dealt with only through a continued, comprehensive and well-coordinated approach.

National legislation, policy and action

308. In South America, there are numerous recent examples of legal developments and policy initiatives aimed at facilitating efforts to fight drug trafficking and related crime. Bolivia has embarked on a thorough reform of its criminal justice system. In Brazil, congressional hearings on drug trafficking and related crime have sensitized public opinion to the dangers of corruption among officials. The Government of Chile has passed legislation to facilitate international cooperation in the investigation of drug-related crime and to establish a unit for the investigation of financial crime.

309. Guyana has introduced legislation against money-laundering. In Paraguay, a new penal code entered into force and legislation to implement specific provisions of the 1988 Convention, namely undercover operations and controlled deliveries, is being considered by the national congress. Peru has introduced regulations to enhance the monitoring of the movement of chemicals. In Suriname, a strategic drug plan was adopted in August 2000. In Venezuela, the Government has conducted an anti-corruption campaign and has made amendments to its penal code and restructured its law enforcement agencies.

310. The Board appreciates the willingness of Governments in South America to boost their capabilities to combat more effectively drug trafficking and related crime. While, throughout the region, national legislation appears to be quite comprehensive and policies are well formulated, difficulties in their implementation persist, due to institutional, organizational, political and/or financial impediments.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

311. Cannabis continues to be cultivated in South America, mainly for local consumption, although extensive cannabis cultivation for international trafficking purposes takes place in a number of countries, mainly in remote areas. There is a need for more reliable data on the extent of illicit cannabis cultivation in the region.

312. Coca bush continues to be extensively cultivated for illicit purposes in South America. Despite significant reductions in the extent of illicit coca bush cultivation in Bolivia and Peru in recent years, the overall capacity of the region to manufacture cocaine hydrochloride does not seem to have been significantly reduced. Judging by seizure and other data, illicit coca leaf production has continued to increase noticeably in Colombia, especially in areas where illicit trafficking provides a considerable source of income for guerrillas and paramilitary and criminal groups.

313. Record amounts of cocaine hydrochloride were seized in several countries in South America in 2000. Over the past five years, the amounts of coca leaf seized have generally decreased, while the amounts of cocaine and cocaine base (and cannabis and heroin) seized have generally increased.

314. While Governments continue to seize chemicals at an impressive rate, they are generally not in a position to provide information on the origin of the chemicals seized or on the methods by which they are being diverted, except in the case of potassium permanganate, for which "Operation Purple" continues to produce positive results. Governments should do their utmost to investigate their seizures, in order to obtain such information, which may prove useful in the development of countermeasures to prevent similar diversions from taking place in the future. The Board wishes to draw the attention of the international community once more to the environmental problems associated with the disposal of seized chemicals, which have yet to be resolved.

315. In Colombia, illicit opium poppy cultivation is spreading and heroin seizures have increased sharply. Seizure data from the United States show that a significant part of its illicit heroin supply is from

Colombia. Heroin of Colombian origin is also appearing on illicit markets in European countries.

316. The Board notes that Brazil and Colombia are taking steps to monitor the movements of acetic anhydride in order to prevent it from being diverted for heroin manufacture. For example, those countries are participating in the international operation on acetic anhydride. The Board encourages the two countries to continue in that direction.

317. Although prevalence varies from country to country, cannabis remains by far the most common drug of abuse in South America. It is followed by cocaine and inhalants. The use of cocaine as a first-time drug is more common in transit countries such as Argentina and Venezuela than it is in source countries such as Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.

318. The abuse of cocaine base continues to spread in most countries in South America, where it appears to be contributing to the increase in violence and crime.

Psychotropic substances

319. Statistical data on the abuse of psychotropic substances in South America are rarely available. The abuse of psychotropic substances and trends in such abuse can only be measured through regular, comparable studies and such studies are not conducted in most countries in the region.

320. In recent years, most Governments in South America have improved their regulation of the utilization of magistral formulae for the prescription of amphetamine-type stimulants, but Governments need to remain vigilant. The Governments of Bolivia and Peru should also continue to pay particular attention to the abuse of tranquillizers, which, according to their most recent household surveys, is widespread.

321. Argentina is the only country in South America that reports seizures of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD); however, seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) have become more common in several countries in the region, as the drug has become fashionable among youth.

Missions

322. A mission of the Board visited Paraguay in February 2000. In that country, there already is comprehensive legislation on drug control and on

combating drug trafficking and related crime, including money-laundering. The Government, however, still has to overcome various political, financial and organizational impediments to such legislation and to ensure that the control structures become fully functional. The Board believes that the general situation in Paraguay, where there is hardly any control over the movement of any type of goods, greatly facilitates all kinds of smuggling, including the smuggling of drugs and chemicals.

323. The small size and instability of the domestic banking and financial system in Paraguay and the limited investment options that the country offers may have discouraged persons from using the country for money-laundering on a large scale in recent years. However, current tax laws and currency exchange policies urgently need to be reviewed and amended.

324. In Paraguay, more and better coordination and exchange of information with neighbouring countries are required, especially on the movement of precursor chemicals.

325. A mission of the Board visited Uruguay in February 2000. The Board congratulates the Government of Uruguay for the political will that it has demonstrated and for its efforts to implement more effectively the international drug control treaties and to develop the required legislation and national drug control institutions. The Government should now devote special attention to the preservation and further development of its well-functioning drug control structures, with a view to ensuring institutional and technical continuity.

326. In Uruguay, drug abuse levels in general appear to be low and comprehensive prevention campaigns are organized regularly. To enable the Government to adapt prevention and awareness programmes more effectively, drug abuse studies should be conducted in the country at more regular intervals using consistent methodology so that trends in drug abuse may be assessed better.

327. With regard to measures against money-laundering, there are comprehensive data on bank deposits and transactions in Uruguay. The central bank should be encouraged to monitor and evaluate such data on a continued basis, in order to facilitate the detection of money-laundering activities.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

328. While Myanmar continues to be the world's second largest source of heroin and opium, illicit opium production has declined in recent years. Illicit opium poppy cultivation has occurred to a lesser extent in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and has continued to be minimal in Thailand and Viet Nam. Heroin manufactured in the Golden Triangle is smuggled into Yunnan Province of China and transported eastward to the coast and beyond. It is also smuggled through the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam into the Guanxi Autonomous Region and Guangdong Province of China. Other important transit routes bring heroin from the Golden Triangle to major cities on the south-east Asian peninsula, where it is to be sold on the illicit markets there or transported to other parts of the world.

329. The abuse of opiates remains a serious problem in countries in the Mekong⁴³ area, in particular China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam, and there continues to be a correlation between trafficking in heroin and the prevalence of heroin abuse. According to recent research findings, virtually all cases of HIV infection along a particular heroin trafficking route in south-east Asia involved the same subtype of the virus, HIV-1, suggesting that HIV infection was spreading together with the practice of injecting heroin.

330. In East and South-East Asia, there has been a drastic increase in the manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants in the past few years. Illicit methamphetamine laboratories continue to operate in the border areas between Myanmar and Thailand and between Myanmar and China. Those three countries and the neighbouring countries have reported sizeable seizures, low prices and wide availability of stimulants. In China, clandestine laboratories used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, which have been operating mainly in the coastal area, are beginning to appear further inland. Seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants have increased substantially in Yunnan Province of China. Sea routes are frequently used to smuggle stimulants into Japan and the Philippines,