

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,

both of which reported record-high seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants in 1999. The stimulants are loaded onto boats along the coastline of mainland China, to be transported to Japan and the Philippines, as well as to Taiwan Province of China. Stimulants destined for Japan are also loaded onto boats in the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

331. Youth in practically all of the major cities in East and South-East Asia are the principal abusers of amphetamine-type stimulants. The Board is concerned about the easy availability of illicitly manufactured methamphetamine and the growing number of young people who abuse that substance in several countries in the region.

332. Another disturbing trend in stimulants is the recent sharp increase in the seizures and the number of abusers of MDMA (Ecstasy) in some countries in East and South-East Asia and the possibility that the increased illicit demand for that psychotropic substance in the region will trigger its large-scale local manufacture. Most of the MDMA (Ecstasy) seized in the region had been clandestinely manufactured in countries in Europe, mainly the Netherlands. Some laboratories in the border area between Myanmar and Thailand may already be manufacturing relatively inexpensive MDMA (Ecstasy) for local abuse.

Treaty adherence

333. Mongolia became a party to the 1971 Convention in March 2000.

334. Cambodia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to be the only two States in East and South-East Asia that have not yet become parties to any of the international drug control treaties. Cambodia is the only State that is not a party to any of those treaties despite being a signatory to the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control between the countries in the Mekong area (Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and UNDCP. The Board expects Cambodia to demonstrate its commitment to drug control by becoming a party to those treaties without delay. The Board also calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to join the efforts of the international community by acceding to the treaties.

335. The Board is concerned that Thailand has not yet acceded to the 1988 Convention despite the fact that the required domestic legislation on money-laundering, which had been regarded as the main barrier to its accession to that Convention, has been in place for over one year.

336. Viet Nam continues to maintain its position regarding its reservations on the extradition provisions of the 1988 Convention. The Board is of the view that withdrawal of those reservations would not in any way diminish the ability of Viet Nam to deal with offenders of domestic drug laws and, for that reason, urges Viet Nam to reconsider the issue.

337. The Board urges the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia to make efforts to update their legislation and administrative systems and, if necessary, to request international assistance to enable them to comply fully with the provisions of and to become parties to the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

338. In January 2000, the Government of Japan organized in Tokyo conferences on operational drug law enforcement, on maritime drug law, on the collection and analysis of intelligence on illicit drug trafficking and on amphetamine-type stimulants in East and South-East Asia. The conference on amphetamine-type stimulants was aimed at facilitating improved coordination of action against the growing problem of the illicit manufacture of and trade in amphetamine-type stimulants, as well as against the diversion of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of stimulants.

339. In 2000, the signatories of the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control continued to hold meetings to review the progress made and prepare new initiatives.

340. The Board welcomes the fact that the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), at its ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in July 2000, emphasized the importance of drug control, in particular in efforts to reduce the threat that drug abuse and illicit trafficking posed to the security and stability of the ASEAN member States. As part of the follow-up to that meeting, an international congress held in Bangkok in October 2000 endorsed a plan of action for ASEAN member States and China that sets down targets with time frames and measures to be taken in

order to realize the goal of making those countries drug-free.

341. In May 2000, the Office of the Narcotics Control Board of Thailand agreed to train officials in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in the use of remote-sensing technology to map areas under opium poppy cultivation within their borders. Cooperation between government authorities in Beijing and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China enabled law enforcement authorities to make a record 17-ton seizure of crystallized methamphetamine (commonly called "ice"). China and the United States signed an agreement in June 2000 that will strengthen cooperation aimed at curbing the flow of illicit drugs across the border between China and Myanmar.

National legislation, policy and action

342. In May 2000, China further strengthened its monitoring of the domestic distribution of ephedrine to prevent it from being diverted to clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in that country and in south-east Asia. Governments in East and South-East Asia should be aware, however, that clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in Myanmar may be trying to find substitute chemicals or additional supply sources.

343. In Jakarta approximately 200 non-governmental organizations joined forces to establish, in February 2000, a consortium designed to consolidate their resources with a view to dealing more effectively with drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

344. In Japan, the police authorities have updated their strategy for dealing with drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The revised strategy ensures that police procedures are more in line with the provisions of the 1988 Convention, enabling authorities to make better use of the technique of controlled delivery and to seize assets in cases involving drug-related criminal offences.

345. A new programme targeting illicit opium poppy cultivation and opiate addiction has been launched in the northern parts of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The programme is part of a six-year strategy to eradicate opium poppy that was announced by the government authorities in 1999.

346. In August 2000, the cabinet of Thailand endorsed a proposal by the Office of the Narcotics Control

Board for a comprehensive strategy to deal with drug problems in each province. The proposal is unprecedented in scale: it involves 10 government ministries, local communities and independent organizations. It will entail an increase in the part of the national budget allocated to drug control. The Government also strengthened controls over caffeine, which, in addition to its legitimate uses, is used as an adulterant in the illicit manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine. Under the new ruling, it is not permitted to import caffeine into the border provinces of Thailand.

347. In Viet Nam, the National Assembly adopted comprehensive legislation on the control of narcotic drugs in October 2000.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

348. Cannabis grows wild in many countries in East and South-East Asia. The countries in the region that are significant sources of illicitly cultivated cannabis destined for other countries in the world include Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines. In the Philippines, cannabis is illicitly cultivated in the extreme north and south of the country, and it appears that proceeds from the sale of such cannabis are used to finance the activities of insurgent groups. Australia continues to be one of the primary destinations of cannabis cultivated in East and South-East Asia.

349. Opium poppy continues to be cultivated in the mountainous border areas of Myanmar and, to a lesser extent, in the mountainous areas of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Illicit opium poppy cultivation remains relatively limited in Thailand and Viet Nam. Significant seizures of opiates continue to be made in Myanmar, as well as in its neighbouring countries, including along a key drug trafficking route leading through China. Thailand is used as a key trans-shipment point for opiates from the Golden Triangle; it is also used to trans-ship heroin from south-west Asia, as evidenced by recent seizures made in the country. The abuse of opiates is widespread in all of the countries in the Mekong area. Heroin abuse appears to be rather limited in other countries in East and South-East Asia, such as Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

350. Trafficking in and abuse of cocaine continue to be limited in East and South-East Asia.

Psychotropic substances

351. In East and South-East Asia, some drug trafficking groups appear to have shifted their activities from the illicit trade in opiates to the illicit trade in stimulants, as the latter is becoming increasingly profitable for such groups. Most countries in the region reported substantially increased seizures of methamphetamine in 1999 compared with 1998, a development that appears to have continued in 2000. Seizures of methamphetamine solution were made for the first time in late 1999 at control points between mainland China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. In both China and Thailand, there are key trans-shipment points and markets for methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in the Golden Triangle. Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic are also adversely affected by illicit trafficking in stimulants and are seeing more seizures and abuse of stimulants and more stimulant-related arrests.

352. In East and South-East Asia, the trends in the abuse of stimulants are just as troubling as the trends in illicit trafficking in stimulants. In Thailand, there have been reports of a new type of drug containing methamphetamine mixed with MDMA (Ecstasy). In some parts of the region, such as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Malaysia, there were reports in 1999 of significantly increased availability of MDMA (Ecstasy), compared with 1998, most of which had been illicitly manufactured in Europe, and also reports of significantly increased abuse of the substance among youth.

353. Singapore reported that its first seizure of ketamine took place in 1999. In East and South-East Asia, more and more young people are abusing ketamine, a substance that is not under international control. The abuse of ketamine appears to be prevalent among persons in many large Asian cities who attend "rave" parties, where both MDMA (Ecstasy) and ketamine are popular.

Missions

354. In September 2000, the Board sent a mission to the Philippines. The Government of the Philippines is taking very strict measures against all types of drug-

related offences, including drug abuse. Drug abuse appears not to be as significant in that country as in some other countries in East and South-East Asia. The abuse of methamphetamine hydrochloride has been increasing in the past few years. Most of the methamphetamine hydrochloride in the Philippines has been smuggled out of China or is illicitly manufactured in the Philippines with precursors smuggled out of China. The Board encourages the authorities concerned to cooperate in drug profiling and other law enforcement efforts to prevent the trafficking in methamphetamine and its precursors.

355. The authorities of the Philippines have responded to this development by expanding their law enforcement and prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts. That has been done largely by pooling capacities and increasing the level of inter-agency cooperation, the involvement of local communities and the participation of families of drug abusers in treatment and rehabilitation programmes. The Board notes that those concerted efforts have resulted in good success rates in prevention and treatment programmes.

356. The Board commends professionals in the Philippines for the level of competence that they have shown in developing cost-efficient drug control strategies and measures for demand reduction, as well as for supply reduction. The Board considers that the experience gained by the Philippine authorities may be of benefit to the authorities of other countries with a similar level of economic and social development.

357. The Board also notes that the Philippines is in the process of adopting legislation against money-laundering that, in addition to the regulations already issued by the Central Bank, should prevent the use of banking institutions for criminal activities.

358. The Board sent a mission to the Republic of Korea in September 2000. Because of its law enforcement efforts and vigilance, as well as its effective programmes for the prevention of drug abuse, the Republic of Korea has managed to avoid almost all of the negative effects of developments elsewhere in trafficking in and abuse of drugs.

359. Authorities in the Republic of Korea have demonstrated how the clandestine manufacture of stimulants, which has become an increasing threat to drug control worldwide, can be eliminated. The Board commends the Government for its exemplary efforts.

360. While, in recent years, the abuse of stimulants in the Republic of Korea appears to have spread, requiring the continuous attention of the authorities, drug abuse levels have remained extremely low. Drug abusers are given the option of being treated instead of being punished. The Board notes that the combined approach of judicial and health measures has yielded good results.

361. For many years, the authorities of the Republic of Korea have cooperated well with the Board, and the data that they have submitted show that the provisions of the international drug control treaties are being effectively applied.

362. In May 2000, the Board reviewed the progress made by the Government of Viet Nam on recommendations made by the Board pursuant to its 1997 mission to that country. The Board is pleased to note that the Government has taken into full consideration those recommendations.

363. The Board notes with appreciation that, in November 1997, Viet Nam became a party to the three international drug control treaties. Furthermore, the Government established a national coordinating body for drug control, with a view to strengthening leadership and coordination in drug control matters, including national programmes on the eradication of opium poppy and cannabis.

364. The Board notes with satisfaction the progress made in Viet Nam with respect to the control of precursors, as well as improvements in the submission of data on licit activities related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, as required under the international drug control treaties. Regular communication between the Government and the Board was established and has been maintained.

South Asia

Major developments

365. Drug problems in South Asia have been mostly related to its proximity to the two main regions illicitly producing opiates, namely West Asia, including Afghanistan, and East Asia, including Myanmar. In addition to that, countries in South Asia have experienced increased drug abuse and have become involved in supplying drugs to be used for illicit

purposes, mostly within the region but also in other regions.

366. Drug trafficking groups in countries in South Asia have expanded their network of cooperation to include cross-border cooperation and connections with international drug trafficking groups. The illicit activities of organized criminal groups have become more varied, involving the cross-border smuggling of drugs, counterfeit money and arms, ammunition and explosives. Traffickers are exploiting weaknesses of law enforcement systems caused by corruption, lack of concern over drug-related matters and lack of human and technical resources.

367. In Myanmar, some of the chemicals used in laboratories for the illicit manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine are smuggled out of neighbouring India; in turn, some heroin and, increasingly, methamphetamine from Myanmar, are smuggled into India, where the illicit market for those substances is growing rapidly. The Board notes that the authorities of both countries have been cooperating in an effort to overcome that problem. The Board appeals to both Governments to strengthen that cooperation in order to counteract those disturbing new developments.

368. The abuse of licitly manufactured narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, in particular codeine-based cough syrups and benzodiazepines, appears to have continued to increase in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The main reason for that increase seems to have been the lack of uniformity in monitoring compliance with prescription requirements. The growing abuse of pharmaceuticals has contributed significantly to the spread of polydrug abuse in South Asia. The Board urges all Governments in the region to establish or strengthen cooperation between pharmaceutical companies and drug regulatory and law enforcement authorities in order to develop appropriate measures.

369. Over the last six years, the Indian authorities have progressively strengthened their control system for precursors by establishing a number of legislative and administrative provisions to prevent diversion of controlled chemicals from both international trade and domestic distribution channels.

Treaty adherence

370. Of the six States in South Asia, five are parties to the 1961 Convention, four are parties to the

1971 Convention and six are parties to the 1988 Convention. Despite recurrent appeals by the Board, Bhutan is still not a party to the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention and Nepal is still not a party to the 1971 Convention. The Board welcomes the fact that Maldives is now a party to each of the international drug control treaties.

Regional cooperation

371. Bilateral efforts to combat drug trafficking have continued in South Asia. The Board notes with appreciation that, in April 2000, the Border Security Force of India and the Bangladesh Rifles signed an agreement on joint efforts against crime, including trafficking in women and children and smuggling of narcotic drugs.

372. The Board also notes with appreciation that the authorities of India and Myanmar, alarmed by the large seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine along the common border of those two countries, held several meetings to facilitate the exchange of intelligence on drug trafficking. In both countries, field officers were appointed who maintain regular contact with each other. The Governments of India and Pakistan have continued to hold periodic high-level talks on matters related to drug law enforcement, as well as quarterly meetings on operational matters.

373. The Government of India has entered into bilateral agreements and has signed memoranda of understanding with a number of countries in South Asia and in other regions to improve cooperation aimed at reducing the illicit demand for drugs and preventing drug trafficking.

374. The Board considers that the ongoing collaboration at the regional and subregional levels is contributing to concerted drug control efforts. Regional bodies, such as the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan Bureau and the secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, and non-governmental organizations all have vital roles to play in those efforts.

National legislation, policy and action

375. The Board notes with appreciation that, in India, Parliament passed foreign exchange management legislation that will enhance efforts to prevent money-laundering. In April 2000, Indian authorities

confiscated property worth over US\$ 700,000 that had been derived from drug trafficking.

376. The authorities in Nepal have proposed amendments to the Narcotics Drug Control Act of 1976 and draft resolutions on a witness protection act, a mutual assistance act, a proceeds of crime act, and a rule on controlled chemicals, equipment and materials. The Narcotics Control Act of Bangladesh is currently being reviewed by the Government with a view to bringing it in line with international and regional drug control conventions.

377. In India, the national survey on the extent of, patterns of and trends in drug abuse has been initiated and is progressing rapidly. Components of the survey include a household survey, a rapid assessment survey and a drug abuse monitoring system. The Board is looking forward to the results of the survey, which will be useful in focusing drug control measures on the areas and population groups most in need of them. The Board hopes that the survey will be conducted at appropriate intervals.

378. India has adopted a community-based multi-dimensional and multidisciplinary approach in its programmes for the reduction of illicit demand for drugs. The programmes include awareness-building and education; training of governmental and non-governmental officials; community-based action for motivation; and identification, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. In Sri Lanka, a system for monitoring drug abuse was started in hospitals; the system includes the analysis and treatment of drug dependence.

379. The Board welcomes the efforts of the Government of India to map areas under illicit opium poppy cultivation in that country using remote-sensing satellites. A pilot study has been carried out to identify illicit opium poppy cultivation sites in the state of Arunchal Pradesh.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

380. Cannabis is illicitly cultivated and also grows wild in nearly all of the countries in South Asia. While cannabis eradication campaigns are carried out regularly, they do not reach all areas where cannabis is

growing. In Nepal, for example, eradication of wild-growing cannabis in hilly areas is so difficult that eradication operations cannot be undertaken due to financial constraints.

381. In South Asia, illicitly cultivated cannabis is used to supply illicit markets not only within the countries in which the cannabis is cultivated, but also in neighbouring countries. In Bangladesh, a number of seizures of cannabis herb from India were made. In India, Afghanistan and Nepal are regarded as major sources of cannabis. In addition to being sold locally and elsewhere within South Asia, cannabis continues to be smuggled out of the region into Europe and North America.

382. Effective countermeasures are difficult to implement considering the extent to which cannabis is growing wild and is being illicitly cultivated in South Asia. The situation has been exacerbated by cross-border criminal activities; in Nepal, for example, Indian smugglers lease directly from Nepalese villagers fertile land to be used for illicit cannabis cultivation. Such illicit cannabis cultivation is attracting a growing number of villagers who have lived from subsistence farming for generations. Effective action against such activities is difficult.

383. In both Bangladesh and Nepal, heroin abuse has increased. In Nepal, a growing number of young people are turning to the abuse of heroin by injection; it is estimated that more than 40,000 young people in the country are addicts, who often share needles. In Bangladesh, the police have alerted the citizens of Dhaka about the increased influx of heroin into the capital and have requested their cooperation in order to facilitate heroin seizures.

384. In Nepal, illicit opium poppy cultivation is limited; consequently, there is only an insignificant quantity of opium poppy plants to be destroyed by the local police each year. So far, there have been no signs of illicit heroin manufacture taking place in Nepal. The heroin smuggled into Nepal is destined mainly for other countries; only a small part of it is sold on illicit markets in the country. In Bangladesh, remote areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the movement of security forces is restricted, are being used for the illicit cultivation of opium poppy; the opium that is produced is abused by the local population.

385. In India, illicit opium poppy cultivation sites have been known to exist in Arunchal Pradesh for more than 10 years. Despite eradication campaigns (287 hectares were eradicated in 1999), illicit opium poppy cultivation has persisted because of traditional opium use in local communities and the increasing importance of opium as a source of income. Members of the local population refuse to abandon opium poppy cultivation, which they consider to be part of their culture.

386. With regard to licit opium production, in 2000, the Central Bureau of Narcotics of India recorded an all-time high average opium yield for all the opium-growing states in India; the high yield was attributed to strengthened control over the farmers' production and the weighing centres. Despite the strengthened control, some diversion of opium from licit opium poppy growing areas is suspected.

387. While India has traditionally been used as a transit country by smugglers of south-west Asian heroin, during the past year a number of makeshift clandestine heroin laboratories were detected and destroyed in the country. The illicitly manufactured heroin might have been intended for use within India, as there is widespread heroin abuse in that country.

388. Seizures of heroin in South Asia show that Afghanistan and Myanmar are major sources not only of the heroin that is being smuggled through the countries in the region, but also of the heroin destined for the illicit markets in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. Some consignments of heroin are making their way from the border of Myanmar into the north-eastern states of India, in particular through Moreh, Champai and Mokokchung. In India, the heroin prices at the border of Myanmar are low compared with the prices in other parts of India.

389. Drug seizures and drug-related arrests indicate that multinational drug trafficking groups are operating in South Asia. Indian authorities report that armed groups from several countries in the region are involved in smuggling drugs through India and smuggling weapons and explosives throughout the region. Seizure data and other information on arrests of drug couriers in the region show an increase in the active involvement of west Africans in smuggling heroin out of India into countries not only in Africa but also in Europe.

390. In Bangladesh, the abuse of the codeine-based cough syrup Phensedyl has continued and there has been an alarming increase in the smuggling of Phensedyl from India. During the first half of 2000, around 80,000 bottles of Phensedyl were seized by law enforcement officers in Bangladesh. In India, the preparation Spasmo Proxyvon, which contains dextropropoxyphene, a synthetic opioid used as an analgesic, continues to be used as a substitute for heroin (due to its lower price) and has led to a number of deaths in the state of Mizoram. The Board urges the Indian authorities to introduce as soon as possible measures to prevent the large-scale abuse of controlled pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

391. Of the 22 substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention, India has so far declared four substances (acetic anhydride, *N*-acetylanthranilic acid, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine) to be controlled substances under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and has monitoring mechanisms in place for a number of other chemicals. In Nepal, an inter-departmental coordination committee on precursor control has been established. All countries should closely assess whether they need to introduce or strengthen precursor controls in order to prevent their territories from being used for the diversion of chemicals. The Board notes with concern that there is still insufficient control in Bangladesh to prevent the diversion of precursors, particularly acetic anhydride, from the industrial sector.

Psychotropic substances

392. Licitly manufactured psychotropic substances, mainly diazepam and nitrazepam, continue to be smuggled out of India, not only into Nepal, but also into the Russian Federation and countries in central Asia. In Nepal, the increase in the abuse of those psychotropic substances has been attributed to the open border between that country and India and the relatively low price of such substances. Seizure data indicate a decline in the diversion and smuggling of buprenorphine as a result of efforts by the Indian authorities to prevent diversion from domestic distribution sources.

393. In India, vigorous efforts to enforce stringent regulations have resulted in a continuous, substantial decline in the illicit manufacture of methaqualone

(Mandrax). Indian law enforcement authorities continue to report the dismantling of illicit methaqualone manufacturing facilities. Seizures of methaqualone tablets of Indian origin have been reported by authorities not only in India, but also in South Africa. Nepalese authorities have reported that methaqualone from India is being smuggled into Nepal, to be sold there and in other countries, and that methaqualone in powder form is being sold on the illicit market in Nepal.

394. In India, the smuggling and abuse of methamphetamine tablets are relatively recent developments; however, since 1999, when the first seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants were made on the border between India and Myanmar, the flow of ephedrine into Myanmar from India, one of the biggest manufacturers and exporters of ephedrine in the world, and the flow of methamphetamine through the traditional heroin routes from Myanmar into India are indications that amphetamine-type stimulants may become a problem in India.

395. The total amount of ephedrine seized in both India and Myanmar increased from less than 1,000 kg in 1998 to nearly 7,000 kg in 1999. Within the past year, Indian authorities have reported several seizures of methamphetamine at the border of Myanmar. In India, the north-eastern states of Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland are the most vulnerable areas along the new trafficking route. The smuggled amphetamine-type stimulants are destined for large cities in India and, to a lesser extent, illicit markets in Europe. According to a signature analysis and compilation programme that began in 1999, there are links between groups manufacturing stimulants in Myanmar and the Netherlands. As the border between India and Myanmar could become a major illicit drug-producing area, the Board welcomes the intention of the Indian authorities to establish an operational drug profiling programme to collect and examine seized methamphetamine and ephedrine samples from the area and to investigate further intelligence obtained on drug trafficking routes and the precursors required for illicit drug manufacture.

396. To counteract the increasing smuggling of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine into Myanmar, the Central Bureau of Narcotics of India formulated the Voluntary Code of Conduct, which was subsequently adopted by manufacturers of the substances. As

ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were placed under control in India in December 1999, manufacturers, distributors and exporters of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are legally bound to abide by the restrictions imposed on the manufacture and distribution of those substances. Sanctions and fines for any contravention are stringent.

West Asia

Major developments

397. In Afghanistan, large-scale illicit cultivation of opium poppy continues. The area under cultivation, which had increased significantly in the previous year, crop year 1998/1999, decreased by only about 10 per cent, crop year 1999/2000; however, unfavourable weather conditions and the reduction in opium poppy cultivation may have resulted in opium production decreasing by approximately 30 per cent.

398. The Board is concerned that the continuing production of opium in Afghanistan and the resulting smuggling of opiates and related criminal activities in West Asia as a whole may undermine the economic and social stability and jeopardize peace and security in the region. There is growing evidence of links between firearms smuggling, insurrection and drug trafficking in the central Asian States. Furthermore, because of the record harvest in crop year 1998/1999, stocks of opiates are plentiful, prices are low and the supply is abundant, resulting in pressure to find new markets. One positive development, however, is the decree issued by the Taliban in July 2000 banning opium poppy cultivation.

399. Increasing quantities of opiates are being smuggled through West Asia, as evidenced by increasing seizures in transit countries. Despite those seizures, the availability of opiates, in particular heroin, has remained unaffected. Most countries in West Asia are used by traffickers as transit points for opiates originating in Afghanistan that are transported mainly to Europe but also to other regions. Precursors used in the illicit manufacture of heroin continue to be transported in the opposite direction. The amount of heroin seized has increased significantly in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tajikistan and other countries in West Asia, indicating that opium is increasingly being processed into other opiates in Afghanistan.

400. Illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking activities in West Asia have had serious repercussions for the extent of drug abuse in the region. Opiate addiction rates in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan appear to be among the highest in the world. Considerable amounts of the opiates produced in Afghanistan are abused in the region. The abundant supply suggests that heroin abuse in the region may increase even further, especially in areas along the trafficking routes through CIS member States, and that HIV/AIDS infection resulting from the sharing of needles by persons who abuse heroin by injection may also spread further.

401. Drug abuse in countries in the eastern Mediterranean, such as Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, appears to have remained limited; however, data on the actual extent of drug abuse in those countries are scarce and actual drug abuse is likely to be underestimated.

Treaty adherence

402. Of the 24 States in West Asia, 21 are now parties to the 1961 Convention in its amended form and 3 continue to be parties to the 1961 Convention in its unamended form. All of the States in the region are now parties to the 1971 Convention and 22 are parties to the 1988 Convention.

403. The Board notes with satisfaction that Georgia has acceded to the 1961 Convention in its amended form and that the Islamic Republic of Iran has acceded to the 1971 Convention. The Board notes that Kuwait has taken steps to accede to the 1988 Convention and that Turkey is taking steps to accede to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention. The Board encourages Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to become parties to the 1972 Protocol. The Board also encourages Israel to accede to the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

404. The Board welcomes many new activities aimed at fostering subregional cooperation in drug control efforts. The determination of the "Six plus Two" group, comprising China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, plus the Russian Federation and the United States of America, to deal with illicit drug problems involving Afghanistan and their implications for that country and

for the subregion as a whole, is demonstrated, inter alia, by its meetings to address the drug-related issues in a coordinated manner with a view to eliminating illicit drug production and smuggling out of that country through a comprehensive and balanced subregional plan. A comprehensive action plan was adopted in September 2000 to deal with the illicit drug supply and demand in the subregion.

405. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) continues to foster cooperation among its member States through its drug control coordination unit. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime, which will be responsible for training law enforcement personnel in ECO member States, was established in June 2000. Drug liaison officers in the subregion and the ECO drug control coordination unit will be linked to a regional information exchange centre and databank created at the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

406. The Board notes with appreciation that for the first time task force meetings of law enforcement agencies from countries in West Asia, in which drug liaison officers from several other countries participate, are being held in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Board welcomes the agreements reached by law enforcement agencies from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to assist their counterparts in the territory ruled by the Taliban.

407. The signatories to the memorandum of understanding on drug control cooperation in central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as UNDCP and the Aga Khan Development Network⁴⁴), have continued their cooperation aimed at countering illicit drug trafficking. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Azerbaijan decided to join the group of signatories to the memorandum of understanding.

408. The Board noted that a number of meetings and summits have been held in central Asia to foster subregional cooperation in combating drug trafficking and crime, such as a presidential summit in which Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were represented, a summit of the "Shanghai Five" group, which includes China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, and seminars in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, and in Tashkent on measures to

counter the worsening situation with regard to drug abuse and illicit trafficking. An international conference on enhancing security and stability in central Asia was held in Tashkent in October 2000 to develop an integrated approach to countering drugs, organized crime and terrorism in the subregion. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat has been instrumental in initiating such multilateral meetings and summits and has fostered subregional cooperation on drug control issues.

409. The Arab Council of Ministers of the Interior continues to promote regional and international cooperation and harmonization of efforts by Arab countries. The Board notes the good relations between drug control agencies in Israel and their counterparts in Egypt and Jordan, as well as in the Palestinian Autonomous Areas, and encourages them to assist each other at the operational level.

410. The Board notes with appreciation the signing of agreements between Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Islamic Republic of Iran on cooperation in activities against money-laundering. The Board welcomes the subregional seminar on prevention of money-laundering held in Abu Dhabi in May 2000, in which financial, judicial, regulatory and law enforcement authorities from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates participated.

411. The Governments of many countries in West Asia have signed bilateral and multilateral agreements to improve cooperation on drug control matters.

National legislation, policy and action

412. The Board notes with satisfaction the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to counter corruption and to combat drug trafficking. The Board welcomes the plans in that country to amend legislation so that law enforcement agencies may utilize assets confiscated from drug criminals and so that assessments may be made of the extent of money-laundering. The Board also welcomes the fact that the Government intends to complement those steps by establishing special courts in five major cities and to continue its efforts to upgrade its judicial system, thereby enabling it to proceed with drug-related cases in a more expeditious manner. The Board notes the continuing disparity of sentencing for drug-related offences under the Customs Act 1969 and the Control of Narcotics Substance Act 1997 and encourages the Government to harmonize the

relevant provisions of those acts. The Board also encourages the Government to provide the necessary resources for the programme for reducing illicit drug demand, giving higher priority to that activity in accordance with the national drug control master plan for the period 1998-2003.

413. Operational activities of the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, established in June 1999, have already led to significant seizures. The Drug Control Agency is establishing cooperation mechanisms with its counterparts in neighbouring countries such as Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Activities carried out by the Russian Federation Border Forces on the basis of an agreement with Tajikistan have led to significant results.

414. In Kazakhstan, a drug control agency was established by a presidential decree in February 2000 as a national institution for coordinating efforts to deal with drug-related issues. The Board notes with satisfaction the adoption of a national drug control programme in Kazakhstan for implementing the national law on fighting illicit drugs and for ensuring coordination of the drug control activities of government bodies. In Turkey, a new law on combating criminal organizations that came into force in 1999 has enabled the police to use new techniques and equipment against drug traffickers.

415. The Government of Azerbaijan recently created a national committee on drug control. In Armenia and Georgia, various initiatives should soon lead to more comprehensive drug legislation.

416. In many countries in West Asia, the extent of drug abuse is not known. The Board therefore urges the Governments of those countries to continue their efforts to assess the nature and extent of drug abuse in their territories. The Board welcomes the administration of an annual drug addiction questionnaire to assess drug abuse in Turkey, the assessment of drug abuse in Pakistan, which started in 2000, and the rapid situation assessment in central Asian countries, which also started in 2000, as well as the basic situation assessment in the Palestinian Autonomous Areas. The Board also welcomes the participation of cities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel and Tajikistan (namely, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Dushanbe) in the global study on illegal drug markets that is being undertaken by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and UNDCP.

417. The Board continues to be concerned about the lack of adequate treatment centres in the countries in West Asia most affected by drug abuse, which in some instances has led to the exploitation of drug abusers by private institutions following questionable treatment practices. The Board encourages the countries in question to provide proper guidance and urges the Governments concerned and the international community to provide additional resources for such purposes. The Board commends the recent initiative in Pakistan to establish a centre for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers that could serve as a model for other centres throughout the country.

418. The Board continues to be concerned that many countries in West Asia have not yet adopted effective measures against money-laundering. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government of Turkey has set up a financial intelligence unit to implement a new law to combat money-laundering and that law enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors are being trained on how to implement the law. The Board also welcomes the initiation of the discussion on a draft model unified Arab law to combat money-laundering at the fourteenth conference of heads of Arab drug control agencies, held in Tunis in July 2000. The Board notes with appreciation that the Israeli parliament has approved legislation to counter money-laundering. The Board urges the Government of Israel to take the steps necessary to enable it to accede to the 1988 Convention and to set up a financial investigation unit.

419. The Board notes that a number of countries in West Asia have not yet established or strengthened controls over chemicals used for illicit drug manufacture. The Board welcomes the agreements reached at the International Meeting on Acetic Anhydride, held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2000, in which the following countries in the region were represented: Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. The Board trusts that the agreements will lead to more effective control over acetic anhydride in the region.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

420. Cannabis continues to be the most widely abused substance in West Asia. In Afghanistan and, to a lesser degree, in Pakistan, huge quantities of cannabis are

illicitly cultivated or grow wild; however, no cannabis eradication efforts have been reported in those countries. Cannabis resin from Afghanistan and Pakistan is smuggled into other countries in West Asia and Europe. In March 2000, the Taliban banned the collection of taxes on cannabis resin and destroyed 4,500 kg of the substance, but the impact of those efforts has been limited. The amount of cannabis resin seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey increased in 1999.

421. Cannabis continues to be illicitly cultivated and to grow wild on extensive areas in Kazakhstan and, to a lesser extent, in Kyrgyzstan. In several other countries in West Asia, small-scale illicit cultivation of cannabis and cannabis eradication efforts have been reported.

422. In Afghanistan, the annual opium poppy survey conducted by the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in 2000 has shown that the area under illicit opium poppy cultivation has only been reduced by about 10 per cent since 1999, when it had increased to an unprecedented level. Because of bad weather conditions and the reduction of the area under cultivation, the total opium harvest in 2000 is estimated to amount to about 3,300 tons, which is 28 per cent less than the estimated amount harvested in the crop year 1998/1999. It is estimated that a considerable amount of opium from the last harvest has not been sold.

423. The Taliban issued in September 1999 a decree calling for a one-third reduction of opium poppy cultivation during the crop year 1999/2000, a reduction of 50 per cent in certain districts in Nangarhar and a ban on illicit crops cultivated on land owned by the Taliban. In April 2000, the Taliban started an opium poppy eradication campaign in Nangarhar, but the overall impact of the campaign on opium poppy cultivation has remained limited. In July 2000, the Taliban issued a decree banning opium poppy cultivation in all areas under its control. The Board notes that that important decision was the first time that the Taliban expressed its intention to enforce a ban on opium poppy cultivation on all territory under its control. However, because of the opium stocks from previous harvests, the ban, if implemented, will have no immediate impact on the prices or availability of opiates originating in Afghanistan.

424. In Pakistan, the goal of a zero-poppy harvest in 2000 was not achieved, mainly because of the re-emergence of opium poppy cultivation in the Khyber Agency in 1999, which has been partly countered. The Government is now committed to implementing the ban on opium poppy cultivation in the year 2001.

425. Illicit opium poppy cultivation continues to be limited in central Asia and the Caucasus. A survey of opium poppy cultivation in three countries in central Asia confirmed that fears concerning the possible existence of large areas under illicit opium poppy cultivation in that area were unfounded. Campaigns to eradicate illicit crop cultivation are conducted annually in all countries in central Asia.

426. In Turkey, poppy straw from licit cultivation continues to be used for the extraction of alkaloids. No diversion of opiates into illicit markets has been reported in that country.

427. In Afghanistan, the Taliban banned the collection of taxes on heroin, as well as on cannabis, in March 2000, and destroyed 350 kg of heroin; however, it appears that opiates are sold freely throughout the country. Laboratories for the illicit processing of heroin can be found in the north and south of the country, most of them manufacturing heroin of poor quality, but high-quality heroin believed to originate in Afghanistan is being seized more often in neighbouring countries. The huge increase in heroin seizures made in countries in West Asia is an indication that heroin processing in Afghanistan has increased substantially in the last two years.

428. The Board notes with satisfaction that heroin processing has virtually disappeared in Pakistan.

429. In the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey, morphine seizures have remained at the same level as before. Turkey continues to detect and dismantle clandestine heroin laboratories. Some heroin laboratories have recently moved from Turkey to Azerbaijan.

430. The ready availability of opium and locally manufactured acetic anhydride make it likely that heroin is also being illicitly manufactured in clandestine laboratories in some countries in central Asia; however, no such laboratories have been dismantled yet in those countries.

431. Some countries in West Asia are producing, or have the facilities to produce, the key chemicals required for the manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine. Many countries in the region are used as transit points for the diversion of those chemicals, which continue to be imported from or smuggled out of China, India and countries in Europe. The Governments of Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan have reported having seized significant amounts of those chemicals.

432. The Islamic Republic of Iran accounts for 80 per cent of the total amount of opium seized and 90 per cent of the total amount of morphine seized in the entire world. It has also reported for the first time having seized more heroin than any other country in West Asia. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the amount of opium and heroin seized increased in 1999, while the amount of morphine seized remained almost unchanged compared with earlier years. Thus, despite the tremendous law enforcement efforts in that country, trafficking in opiates from Afghanistan has continued.

433. The amount of opiates seized has increased in Pakistan since the second half of 1999. It is assumed that the traditional route used for smuggling opiates, through Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey into Europe, or a slightly varied route through Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey, continue to be the primary routes used; however, other routes lead to the south from Pakistan through the Persian Gulf area to Africa and Europe.

434. In recent years, drug trafficking routes that lead from Afghanistan through countries in central Asia appear to have gained in importance as those countries have reported increasing drug seizures. Over the past three years, Turkmenistan has been used as a transit point along one of the main routes in central Asia for smuggling opiates and cannabis resin produced in Afghanistan; some of the drugs smuggled along that route are first transported through Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Weak border control between Afghanistan and Tajikistan and between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and rugged terrain pose obstacles to effective drug control; however, there have been significant improvements in border control, especially in Tajikistan. Some of the drug consignments smuggled through central Asia are transported through the Caucasus and Turkey. The actual extent of drug trafficking in the CIS member States is difficult to

estimate, since the fact that drug seizures in those countries are below the level of seizures in countries along the traditional route may be due to poorer interdiction capabilities. As new transportation and trade options become available in countries in central Asia and more border crossings are opened, those countries must have in place more adequate control mechanisms for countering drug trafficking.

435. A significant amount of opiates produced in West Asia is assumed to be abused locally; the remainder is destined for illicit markets in Europe and, to a lesser degree, Africa, east Asia and South Asia. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, rapid situation assessment has shown an alarming increase in the proportion of drug abusers who are heroin abusers (almost 40 per cent), while opium and opium residue still remain the most commonly abused drugs. Heroin addiction rates in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Pakistan appear to be among the highest in the world. In both countries, drug abuse by injection is a matter of particular concern because of the rapid spread of HIV and other infectious diseases related to such abuse.

436. A survey conducted by the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in 1999 showed that illicit drug prices had decreased in the CIS member States and that the availability of opium had decreased while the availability of heroin had increased; moreover, the patterns of drug abuse in those countries had changed accordingly. The Board is concerned that, in CIS member States, the practice of abusing drugs by injection will lead to a higher rate of HIV/AIDS infection, as it has in other parts of the world.

437. The extent of cocaine abuse and trafficking in West Asia remains insignificant. Seizures of cocaine were reported for 1999 for the first time in Pakistan, and they continue to be reported in some other countries in the region.

Psychotropic substances

438. Stimulants continue to be smuggled and abused in West Asia, and some countries in the region have witnessed growing illicit demand for such substances. For 1999, there were reports of significant seizures of MDMA (Ecstasy) in Israel and amphetamine in Saudi Arabia. Turkey reported that seizures of stimulants illicitly manufactured in southern and eastern Europe under the brand name Captagon increased in 1999 compared with previous years. In 1999, Turkey

reported for the first time the dismantling of a laboratory for the illicit manufacture of Captagon. Significant quantities of Captagon were also seized in the Syrian Arab Republic (1.4 million tablets) and Jordan (512,000 tablets).

439. The abuse of stimulants (mainly methcathinone sold under the name of ephedrone, but also other amphetamine-type stimulants) is also occurring in central Asia. Methcathinone can easily be manufactured in home laboratories from ephedrine, which is extracted from the *Ephedra* plant. There is an abundance of wild-growing *Ephedra* plants in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Ephedrine is converted into methcathinone (ephedrone) for injection or is used as a precursor in the manufacture of methamphetamine. For a number of years, ephedrine from China has been smuggled into countries in central Asia.

440. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the abuse of benzodiazepines in the form of pharmaceutical tablets is widespread. Benzodiazepines are often abused in conjunction with opium and heroin, indicating that controls over the licit distribution of such products are weak in those countries and in the countries adjacent to them. The abuse of benzodiazepines (Rohypnol) is also increasing in Turkey. In Pakistan, benzodiazepines (for example, diazepam) are also reportedly being added to heroin as adulterants.

Missions

441. In November 1999, a mission of the Board visited Lebanon. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government of Lebanon has prevented the re-emergence of opium poppy cultivation, has continued its campaign against illicit cannabis cultivation and has made efforts to curtail illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors. The Board trusts that the Government will promulgate a decree categorizing the substances to be controlled under the new law for precursors, thereby making it possible for the law to be fully implemented.

442. The Board notes with regret that the Government of Lebanon has shown no intention of lifting bank secrecy in cases involving drug traffickers. Under current legal stipulations in Lebanon, it is extremely difficult to investigate money-laundering and it is virtually impossible to confiscate assets of drug traffickers; that leaves the country vulnerable to attempts to use its banking system to "launder"

proceeds illegally obtained from drug-related activities. The Board therefore reiterates its call to the Government to withdraw its reservation regarding the provisions against money-laundering in the 1988 Convention.

D. Europe

Major developments

443. The availability of drugs in Europe has increased. While cannabis abuse appears to have remained stable in most countries, the availability and abuse of synthetic drugs and cocaine have continued to rise in most parts of the region. In many countries, the prevalence of the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants is second only to that of cannabis abuse. Despite public concern about synthetic drugs and the fact that scientific evidence has shown them to be harmful even to occasional users, few measures have been taken to prevent their abuse. It appears that some authorities in western Europe are firmly convinced that the abuse of such drugs cannot be prevented. Measures to reduce the illicit demand for such drugs therefore tend to consist of advising drug abusers on the "safe use" of such substances and providing drug-testing facilities at events where synthetic drugs are abused. Such action, although well-intended, leads to ambiguous messages and confusion. Thus, many drug abusers are not aware that there is no safe use of such drugs.

444. Drug policy discussions in western Europe have focused on the implementation of harm reduction activities such as the establishment of drug injection rooms or the effectiveness of heroin maintenance programmes. Following the attention given to harm reduction in western Europe, it appears that some countries in central and eastern Europe have also started to put more emphasis on harm reduction.

445. The Board acknowledged many years ago, in its report for 1993,⁴⁵ that harm reduction had a role to play in a tertiary prevention strategy for demand reduction purposes. However, the Board also drew attention to the fact that harm reduction programmes could not be considered substitutes for demand reduction programmes. The Board would like to reiterate that harm reduction programmes can play a part in a comprehensive drug demand reduction strategy but such programmes should not be carried out