

has continued in Morocco, which remains one of the world's main sources of cannabis resin.

270. Cannabis is cultivated in Morocco to satisfy domestic demand and to produce cannabis resin that is smuggled into Europe. There are no reliable estimates of the extent of cannabis cultivation. The Government of Morocco has recognized that there is an urgent need to initiate action aimed at eradicating cannabis. The Board would like to emphasize that the eradication of the cannabis plants from which drugs are extracted is the responsibility of the Government. The Board urges the Government of Morocco to elaborate a concrete eradication plan. At the same time, as Europe constitutes the main market on which Moroccan cannabis is sold, the Board calls upon the Governments of European countries to provide adequate assistance to those eradication efforts.

271. The Board notes the willingness expressed by the Government of Morocco to ratify the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention and expects that Morocco will quickly proceed to become a party to the 1961 Convention in its amended form. Morocco ratified the 1988 Convention in 1992; however, almost 10 years later, legislation translating the provisions of the 1988 Convention into national law has still not been adopted. The Board urges the Government of Morocco to accelerate the enactment of such legislation.

272. In May 2001, the Board reviewed the progress by the Government of Gabon on recommendations made by the Board pursuant to its 1998 mission to that country. The Board is pleased to note that, after nearly 10 years, Gabon has resumed submitting data related to the licit trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as required under the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol and under the 1971 Convention.

273. The Board notes that Gabon has not yet deposited its instrument of accession to the 1988 Convention and that the country continues to lack the necessary legislation to control precursor chemicals. The Board encourages Gabon to act on those issues without further delay.

## **B. Americas**

274. At the Summit of the Americas held in Québec City, Canada, in April 2001, States pledged to cooperate on regional measures against organized crime, money-laundering, diversion of precursor chemicals, and trafficking in drugs and arms, all of which pose major challenges to the Americas.

275. Under the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission (CICAD) of OAS has issued several recommendations for member States, including one on strengthening international cooperation with countries outside the Americas and international organizations, in order to respond more effectively to transnational developments in the drug problem. Moreover, in the recommendations, States are encouraged to adopt and ratify international conventions and other instruments on drug control and related matters, in particular those addressing corruption and organized crime. Bilateral and multilateral agreements are also promoted, including agreements for the exchange of expertise and intelligence in law enforcement and demand reduction. States are also encouraged to make use of and support regional mechanisms such as the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs. The Board requests all States to carefully review the recommendations and take the necessary steps to improve regional cooperation in matters concerning drug control and the prevention of drug abuse.

276. The first hemispheric report of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, approved by CICAD in December 2000, provided an initial frame of reference for further evaluation of the progress made by individual OAS member States, and the Americas in general, in the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere, agreed upon by OAS member States in 1997. The report emphasized the need to assess the human, social and economic cost of the drug problem in the Americas. The Inter-American System of Uniform Drug-Use Data (SIDUC) is providing support to the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism by establishing a framework for unifying and comparing data from different sources. The Board welcomes the extensive data collection by CICAD; however, the Board wishes to remind Governments that reporting to CICAD is not a substitute for the reporting obligations of countries under the international drug control treaties.

277. Combined operations by law enforcement agencies of nearly 30 countries in Central America and the Caribbean and South America, part of a joint task force initiated by the United States, continue to be successful. During 2000, drug trafficking organizations based in different countries in the Americas were dismantled and over 50 tons of cocaine were seized, representing a significant share of the total amount of cocaine reported seized in those regions in that year. Large amounts of assets, precursor chemicals, weapons, planes, vehicles and boats were confiscated, and several key criminals in drug trafficking were arrested.

278. The Board appreciates that the CICAD Meeting of the Group of Experts on Chemicals (Pharmaceuticals), held in Washington, D.C., in August 2001, proposed further study of the problems of diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals. Recommendations of the Experts included the development of model regulations to assist countries in updating their legislation, an integrated national information system for pharmaceuticals and a reference guide of elements that should be included in national control systems.

## **Central America and the Caribbean**

### **Major developments**

279. Main routes used by traffickers to transport illicit drugs from South America to illicit markets in North America continue to pass through Central America and the Caribbean. In addition to the smuggling of cannabis produced in the region and of cocaine and heroin from South America, traffickers have diversified their activities so that they also smuggle psychotropic substances, mainly MDMA (Ecstasy) from European sources.

280. There has been a noticeable increase in firearms trafficking along drug trafficking routes, together with an increase in other criminal activities associated with the illicit drug trade, such as trafficking in persons and motor vehicle theft. There is also evidence that drug abuse has increased as a spillover effect of the drug trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean. Governments of countries in the region are increasingly becoming aware of the need to have better information about the magnitude of the drug problem

and to make efforts at the national and international levels to respond to the problem in various areas, such as drug abuse evaluation, reduction of illicit drug supply and demand, interdiction, fighting money-laundering and corruption, and chemical and pharmaceutical controls.

### **Treaty adherence**

281. 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 accede 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**

282. The Caribbean Drug Control Coordination Mechanism continues to act as a forum for monitoring progress in implementing measures of the Plan of Action on Drug Control Coordination in the Caribbean (also known as the Barbados Plan of Action), which was agreed to by the Governments of Caribbean States in 1996 and reviewed in 2001. The Board trusts that Governments will carefully assess the progress made under the Barbados Plan of Action.

283. The increasing use by drug traffickers of new technology such as improved communications technology or the electronic transfer of funds is a particular challenge to States in the Caribbean. Significant progress has been made in combating transnational crime and money-laundering in the subregion, as well as in judicial reform and developing national drug control strategies, through coordinating bodies such as CICAD, the Caribbean Community and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

284. A computerized system that enables customs authorities to track small vessels, which was introduced by the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council in 1999, has been further extended. That Council has also assessed controls at major airports in the Caribbean and completed a number of training initiatives, including training in container profiling.

285. The Board notes that progress has been achieved in improving regional cooperation in combating

money-laundering; the Office of National Drug and Money-Laundering Control Policy in Antigua and Barbuda has been proposed as the base for a rapid response unit for handling drug-related crime. The Caribbean Council of Forensic Laboratory Heads has established an office in Barbados, and the capabilities of forensic laboratories in some Caribbean States and in Belize have been improved. The Board also notes several initiatives to coordinate and enhance activities aimed at drug abuse prevention and the reduction of illicit drug demand throughout the Caribbean.

286. In Central America, countries continue to participate in multilateral law enforcement and illicit crop eradication operations. The Board encourages the permanent Central American commission for the eradication of illicit drug production, trafficking and use, to finalize the agreed subregional plan of action, which is based on the first hemispheric report of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism.

287. There are numerous bilateral arrangements for maritime law enforcement in Central America and the Caribbean. Costa Rica and Honduras have each signed a bilateral agreement with the United States of America, and Guatemala and Nicaragua are each negotiating such an agreement with the United States. Considering the large number of island States and territories in the Caribbean and their vulnerability to maritime drug trafficking, the Board urges States to conclude the planned maritime law enforcement agreement for that subregion.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

288. In Central America and the Caribbean, significant progress has been made in preparing legislation and formulating policies on drug control, often with the assistance of regional or international organizations. That progress will provide the framework for enhanced law enforcement capabilities, improved monitoring of the movement of controlled substances and more effective action in drug abuse prevention and demand reduction.

289. Most countries in Central America and the Caribbean have adopted national drug control strategies in recent years. In 2001, Saint Kitts and Nevis adopted a national drug control plan with specific targets for reducing illicit drug trafficking over a five-year period. The Governments of the Bahamas, Barbados and Haiti are finalizing similar national plans

and the Board hopes that they will be adopted soon and effectively implemented. The Board urges Antigua and Barbuda, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to prepare and adopt comprehensive national drug control plans to ensure coordination between the different agencies responsible for national drug control policy.

290. Few of the island States in the Caribbean have undertaken studies to assess the drug situation, even when conducting such studies is included as a priority in their national drug control master plans. Reliable and comparable data on substance abuse in the subregion are still not available. States are urged to establish data collection systems, in order to determine patterns of drug abuse, and to disseminate such data, including the results of epidemiological studies. States are encouraged to take full advantage of regional and international technical assistance, where necessary. The Board notes that a Caribbean drug information network was launched in July 2001 to increase the available knowledge about drug abuse in the subregion and thereby improve responses to changing drug abuse problems and trends.

291. The Board encourages the Governments of countries in Central America and the Caribbean to ensure that adequate funds are allocated to initiatives for the reduction of illicit drug demand, including initiatives for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, as well as drug abuse prevention. It notes that some countries in the region have demonstrated their resourcefulness by using the seized assets of drug traffickers to implement drug control initiatives. Although many Caribbean countries depend heavily on donor aid to implement drug control policy, balancing domestic spending between supply reduction (interdiction) activities and demand reduction activities remains an important task of national coordinating bodies.

292. In Costa Rica, drug control activities have been streamlined by merging three separate drug control bodies into the national institute on drugs, which will be able to utilize seized assets.

293. The Board encourages the expansion of initiatives in Central America and the Caribbean that promote life skills to help young people resist pressure to become involved in drug abuse and illicit trafficking. While there have been initiatives throughout the region to introduce programmes for the treatment and

rehabilitation of drug abusers, some countries still lack programmes and have not yet adopted minimum care standards. The Board notes action taken on this issue by CICAD member States and trusts that further progress will be made in countries in which such programmes are inadequate.

294. Although there is hardly any illicit drug manufacture in Central America and the Caribbean, traffickers may use countries in the region for the diversion of precursors used to manufacture illicit drugs in North America or South America. The Board therefore urges those countries that have not yet done so to introduce adequate legislation on, and mechanisms for, monitoring international trade in precursors without delay. States without precursor control legislation should take steps to implement at least minimum levels of control, not only to prevent the diversion of precursors, but also to prevent the manufacture of synthetic drugs and their abuse from gaining a foothold in the region.

295. Further progress in the implementation of money-laundering legislation is crucial to Central America and the Caribbean. Recently, some countries in the region have succeeded in convicting criminals for money-laundering offences. The Board encourages States to adopt all the necessary instruments to prevent money-laundering. In June 2001, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering removed the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands and Panama from the list of countries and territories that it considered uncooperative in efforts to counter money-laundering, while Grenada and Guatemala were added to the list. Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain on the list, although Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis both introduced further legislation related to money-laundering in 2001. Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada have also strengthened their legislation against money-laundering. Haiti has introduced new legislation against money-laundering and a system for reporting suspicious transactions and has become a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. Following the enacting of various decrees in December 2000 to enhance measures against money-laundering, the Bahamas established a financial intelligence unit. In Barbados, an authority for combating money-laundering and a financial intelligence unit began operations in September 2001. Proposals for a financial investigation unit for the eastern Caribbean are being considered.

296. A number of countries in Central America and the Caribbean still do not have legislation in place to allow the transfer of court proceedings from one national jurisdiction to another, as recommended in the Barbados Plan of Action. Many States in the region have signed bilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance and extradition, but progress on signing an intra-Caribbean treaty has been slow. The Board welcomes the agreement by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States on ground rules for mutual legal cooperation and a checklist designed to expedite requests for legal assistance. There has been a proposal for a study to be conducted on the feasibility of establishing a regional pool of prosecutors to handle major criminal cases. Alternatives to criminal sentencing for drug offences are also being considered in the Caribbean; for example, in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, community service is being considered as an alternative. In Jamaica, special courts for hearing cases involving drug-related offences have been introduced. The Cayman Islands is preparing to introduce such courts, and Belize and Bermuda are also considering them. It is important that judicial personnel receive the necessary training; the Board notes initiatives such as mentor programmes in the eastern Caribbean and the training of drug control investigators in the Dominican Republic.

297. The Board welcomes the continued cooperation of the authorities in Cuba with their counterparts in other countries in the Caribbean and in the United States in drug law enforcement activities, including marine interdiction efforts. In 2000, 12 tons of illicit drugs were seized in Cuba. Cuba amended its penal code so that drug traffickers may be punished more severely.

### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

#### *Narcotic drugs*

298. Cannabis, the only drug crop cultivated in the Caribbean, remains an important source of income in Jamaica and on certain other islands in the subregion. The Board calls on all States in the Caribbean where cannabis is cultivated to ensure they have a mechanism in place to determine the cannabis cultivation sites in order to eradicate them and combat trafficking in the substance. All countries in Central America have also reported cannabis cultivation, although the extent of

that cultivation is limited. Small-scale opium poppy cultivation continues to be reported in Guatemala.

299. Cannabis trafficking and cocaine transit trafficking are predominant in Central America and the Caribbean. There is also increasing evidence that synthetic drugs from Europe and heroin from South America are being smuggled through Central America and the Caribbean and into the United States. The Caribbean route used for smuggling cocaine into North America continues to be important, as controls at the Mexican border with the United States tighten, particularly in reaction to the recent terrorist attacks in the United States. Drug traffickers have been taking advantage of the unstable political situation in Haiti by routing drugs through that country and the Dominican Republic to the United States, as indicated by the fact that the amount of cocaine seized in the Dominican Republic during the first six months of 2001 was three times higher than the amount seized during the same period of the previous year. Nonetheless, it is estimated that nearly one half of the cocaine that arrives in the United States each year (approximately 375 tons) comes through Central America and the Mexican land corridor. The fact that law enforcement authorities are intercepting illicit drug consignments weighing several tons on boats along the Pacific route shows how important that route has become.

300. Most of the drug consignments from Central America and the Caribbean that are smuggled into Europe are hidden on commercial airliners rather than in containers. At Schiphol airport near Amsterdam, seizures of cocaine totalled 4.3 tons in 2000; the seized consignments had been sent by airfreight or by courier, and one consignment from Netherlands Antilles weighed 750 kg. Costa Rica and Panama are also important transit points used for shipping on a small scale illicit drug consignments by air to Europe.

301. Governments of countries in Central America have expressed concern that Colombian drug trafficking organizations may establish laboratories for processing cocaine in the subregion, with a view to developing the subregional market as a response to the increased pressure created by Plan Colombia. All transit countries in the subregion have reported an increase in drug abuse, as middlemen are being paid in kind and the availability of illicit drugs at the local level has risen, as have drug-related crime and violence. The abuse of "crack" cocaine is of particular

concern. For example, the preferred drug of abuse among street children in the Dominican Republic is reported to be shifting from inhalants to cocaine and "crack" because they are more readily available. Heroin abuse is also on the increase. Although comparative drug abuse studies have not been carried out in countries in Central America and the Caribbean, existing data indicate that the average age of first use of illicit drugs has fallen and the annual incidence of new drug abusers has risen in several countries in the region.

#### *Psychotropic substances*

302. In Central America and the Caribbean, reporting on illicit activities involving psychotropic substances remains limited, but trafficking in such substances is increasing throughout the subregion. Traffickers smuggling cocaine into Europe return with MDMA (Ecstasy), most of which is then smuggled into the United States. Seizures of amphetamine, MDMA (Ecstasy) and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) have been reported in the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Netherlands Antilles. In 2000, law enforcement cooperation between Panama and the United States resulted in the dismantling of a trafficking ring based in the Netherlands that had been using Panama as a bridge for smuggling MDMA (Ecstasy) and heroin into the United States.

#### **Missions**

303. In March 2001, the Board sent a mission to the Dominican Republic. Its geographical position, including its border with Haiti, has made the Dominican Republic an important trans-shipment point for illicit drug consignments destined mainly for the United States.

304. Free trade zones, the strong gambling sector and government promotion of foreign investment in the construction and tourist industries make the Dominican Republic attractive to money-launderers. The Board notes the recent successes achieved in prosecuting money-laundering activities in the country and urges the Government to take all steps necessary to strengthen its prosecution capability. Controls in free trade zones are essential to ensuring that such zones are not exploited by drug traffickers.

305. The Board urges the Government of the Dominican Republic to formally adopt a five-year national master plan against drugs that had been prepared some years ago, including the modifications necessary to meet its criteria. Due attention has to be paid to the institutional framework for coordinating drug control policies and to reallocating sufficient resources for the implementation of the plan.

306. The Board commends the efforts made by the National Directorate of Drug Control and the National Drug Council of the Dominican Republic to meet drug control treaty obligations but believes that further efforts are needed to strengthen coordination with other agencies responsible for the control over licit activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The existing control mechanisms should be reviewed to prevent criminal activities such as falsifying prescriptions of controlled substances, the diversion of such substances from wholesalers and the operation of illicit laboratories or pharmacies.

307. In March 2001, the Board sent a mission to Jamaica. The Board notes the efforts made by the Jamaican law enforcement authorities to manually eradicate cannabis, the most widely available drug in the country, which is illicitly cultivated in mountainous and swampy areas that are difficult to access.

308. The Board is concerned about the widespread opinion in Jamaica that cannabis is not a harmful drug. This view, which is widespread among the younger members of the population, is believed to contribute to the high levels of cannabis abuse throughout the country, despite the fact that health education has been introduced in the school curriculum. The possession and abuse of cannabis should continue to be criminally sanctioned in accordance with the international drug control treaties. The Board is concerned over the high cannabis-related crime rate and the smuggling of substantial quantities of cannabis out of the country, mainly into the United States.

309. The Board shares the concern of the Jamaican authorities about the sharp increase in the smuggling of cocaine from South America through Jamaica into North America over the last 2-3 years and the related flow of smuggled firearms in the opposite direction. The Board is satisfied that, in order to address that situation, Jamaica is actively cooperating in drug control matters with its neighbours, especially with the

United States in the area of extradition and maritime law enforcement.

310. In May 2001, the Board reviewed action taken by Belize pursuant to recommendations by the Board after its mission to that country in April 1998. The Board notes with satisfaction the steps taken by Belize towards monitoring the trade in and movement of psychotropic substances, including the creation of an inspectorate programme in April 2001, and the drafting of legislation for the control of chemical substances. The Board notes that the Government has adopted a national drug control strategy that covers all areas of drug control and contains an evaluation component. However, despite repeated calls by the Board and other international bodies, Belize remains the only country in Central America that has not acceded to either the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention. The Board urges Belize to become a party to those treaties without further delay.

## **North America**

### **Major developments**

311. In Canada and the United States, cocaine abuse appears to be stabilizing and, in many parts of those countries, even declining. The abuse of “crack” is diminishing in the United States as the addict population is ageing. While heroin abuse is generally stagnating in those countries, an upward trend among young people may be emerging.

312. The Board remains concerned about the health and social costs of cannabis abuse in North America. In the United States, cannabis is commonly used in combination with other illicit drugs such as stimulants, and the number of primary treatment admissions for cannabis abuse has increased.

313. In the United States, widely prescribed narcotic drugs such as oxycodone and amphetamine-type stimulants are finding their way to illicit markets. In Mexico, drug abuse continues to be much lower than in Canada and the United States; however, in the northern border area, drug abuse levels are as much as three times the national average.

314. Established drug trafficking organizations are involved in the synthetic drug market, and “polydrug trafficking” is spreading. A wide range of drugs have

become more easily available, and polydrug abuse has increased. MDMA (Ecstasy) from western Europe is increasingly being smuggled into North America, where the substance has started to be illicitly manufactured as well.

315. Mexico continues to be a major gateway for cocaine consignments from Colombia destined for North America. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government of Mexico has stepped up its law enforcement efforts, which include intensified patrolling operations by the Mexican Navy and law enforcement agencies in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Pacific coast.

316. The Government of Canada has passed a regulation allowing individuals to access cannabis for medical purposes, although the medical usefulness of the drug has not been proved and the action was explicitly opposed by the Canadian Medical Association. There has been legislative activity in the same direction in various states in the United States; however, United States authorities have forestalled moves towards such use of cannabis. The issue of control of cannabis is covered more extensively in chapter II of the present report.

#### **Treaty adherence**

317. 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**

318. The Board notes the high-level cooperation between the Governments of Mexico and the United States in the area of drug control policy. The Attorney General of each of those countries and the National Security Advisor of Mexico are leading a new working group on legal affairs and drug control cooperation. The Board welcomes confidence-building measures on both sides of the border that will be useful in joint operations against drug trafficking groups. The Board notes that anti-corruption measures have been strengthened in Mexico. A memorandum of understanding signed by the Governments of Mexico and the United States will allow each of them an equal share of seized drug assets, to be used in the fight against drug trafficking.

319. The Government of Mexico is promoting closer cooperation with other Latin American States to ensure adequate exchange of information on drug trafficking by air and sea. Such cooperation is not limited to combating the smuggling of cocaine through Mexico into the United States and Canada; it also includes combating illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine in Mexico and the western parts of the United States.

320. Close cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of Canada and the United States in intelligence-sharing and conducting joint investigations and operations continues to yield positive results. In 2000, those successes included the seizure of a total of over 2 tons of cocaine in the Bahamas and in Florida, in the United States, the arrest of airport employees involved in shipping illicit drugs from South America to Canada and the investigation of a methamphetamine trafficking group.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

321. A regulation allowing individuals to access cannabis for medical purposes came into effect in Canada in July 2001, after an appeal court ruled that prohibiting cannabis possession under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act was unconstitutional. Patients with certain terminal or chronic illnesses can now apply for exemption from prosecution if they use cannabis. The Board shares the concerns expressed by the Canadian Medical Association, pointing to the burden on physicians to approve the use of cannabis by patients in the absence of conclusive research into the safety of its use for medical purposes.

322. The Board, recalling the concerns expressed in its previous reports over the absence of adequate controls in Canada over precursors and other chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture,<sup>60</sup> welcomes the progress made by the Government of Canada in introducing legislation to control precursor chemicals. Consultations with the chemical industry and other interest groups have been conducted, and the Board now urges the timely adoption and implementation of that legislation. Clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in the United States often obtain chemicals from Canada; almost 43 million pseudoephedrine tablets of Canadian origin were seized at a border crossing in April 2001, enough to produce 2,300 kg of methamphetamine. The Board therefore also welcomes the establishment of the

National Precursor Chemical Diversion Program by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

323. In Canada, as a result of Operation Springtime 2001, 138 members and associates of motorcycle groups in Quebec were arrested for drug trafficking, and considerable assets and information concerning their operations were seized. The motorcycle groups are believed to have distributed at least 2,400 kg of cocaine in 2000.

324. The Board notes that the Government of Canada has included all benzodiazepines in its national legislation, thereby enabling the authorities to better prevent their diversion to illicit markets. The Board also notes that authorities in Canada and the United States have recalled, for health reasons, all products containing the controlled substance norephedrine.

325. In Mexico, additional national legislation against money-laundering has been adopted to facilitate the reporting of large financial transactions and automated systems have been introduced to assist in the investigations of cases involving money-laundering, although so far there have been few convictions. In Canada, the Financial Transactions and Report Analysis Center became fully operational in 2001; and police authorities hosted in Montreal in October 2001 the International Money Laundering Conference, where new trends in money-laundering were examined.

326. In Mexico, a decision of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation has resulted in the extradition of several well-known drug traffickers to the United States. Mexican police have also arrested key traffickers involved in smuggling cocaine and amphetamines into the United States.

327. Judicial and law enforcement bodies in Mexico are being restructured and strengthened. In 2002, three bodies dealing with organized crime, drug control and money-laundering will be brought together under the Office of the Attorney General to improve consistency in the judicial process and law enforcement powers. Other restructuring measures are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Federal Judicial Police, which has recently been renamed the Federal Investigation Agency.

328. The Government of Mexico is taking steps to ensure coordination between the various agencies responsible for implementing the national drug control programme, and numerous actions have been planned

to address drug dependency. A programme for the reduction of illicit drug demand was introduced in all schools, a media campaign to increase drug awareness was launched and controls on the sale of inhalants to minors are being enforced. The Government is looking at ways to make drug addiction prevention councils available in all districts.

329. The United States, in its National Drug Control Strategy, has set a number of targets for illicit drug supply and demand reduction under its performance measures of effectiveness, the first of which are to be achieved by the year 2002. The Board welcomes the continuation of demand reduction initiatives, including the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, and notes that significant additional government funds have been allocated to law enforcement participation in initiatives such as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The Board trusts that the findings from the evaluation of the next phase of the Media Campaign, to take place in 2002, will be shared with other interested Governments.

330. Penalties for illicit manufacture of methamphetamine have been increased in the United States, where the abuse of that substance has spread from the western and south-western states to new areas and social groups. An inter-agency task force has proposed recommendations and research priorities for gathering information to be used to prepare a national strategy for prevention, education, treatment and law enforcement. Penalties for trafficking in MDMA (Ecstasy) have also been increased.

### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

#### *Narcotic drugs*

331. The level of abuse of cannabis, the most common drug of abuse in North America, has remained relatively stable in Canada and the United States; however, it is increasingly being used in combination with stimulants. Mexican authorities continue to seize large consignments of cannabis destined for Canada and the United States. Illicit cannabis cultivation in Canada and the United States continues to be a lucrative, well-organized industry and a major concern to the law enforcement agencies of those countries.

332. In the United States, there has been an increase in the number of persons admitted primarily for treatment



of cannabis abuse. Analysis of data on persons admitted for treatment will further clarify the cause of admission, such as judicial system referrals, use of more potent cannabis strains or multiple drug abuse.

333. After having stabilized in recent years, there is now evidence that heroin abuse may be increasing among young people in Canada and the United States. Heroin prices have plummeted and the increased purity of heroin has made it easier for addicts to snort or smoke the substance rather than inject it. In British Columbia, Canada, injection of heroin has led to high rates of overdose and HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C infection. Local authorities have reacted by introducing more drug abuse prevention and treatment programmes for youth. The Board encourages authorities to increase their efforts to reduce the demand for heroin but discourages them from considering proposals for opening sites where addicts can inject illicit drugs, which would be in contravention of the international drug control treaties.

334. On the west coast of Canada, much of the illicit heroin is smuggled into the country from South-East Asia. The criminal groups involved in those operations are becoming more and more organized. They are also becoming more active in cocaine trafficking in Canada.

335. The results of surveys and studies indicating stabilization of cocaine abuse in North America correlate with the fact that there was no increase in cocaine seizures in the region between 1999 and 2000. As law enforcement pressure in Mexico and the Caribbean increases, more of the cocaine being smuggled into Canada and the United States out of South America is arriving via the eastern Pacific route, in containers and aboard “go-fast” boats and fishing vessels. A number of seizures of several tons of cocaine each were made in the Pacific in 2001, including one that amounted to 13 tons—the largest maritime seizure of cocaine ever made. Trafficking groups that bring cocaine overland from the United States to British Columbia in Canada sometimes trade the cocaine for Canadian cannabis.

336. In Mexico, data show that the abuse of cannabis, cocaine and heroin is increasing, although it has remained at a level that is considerably lower than the level in Canada and the United States. In Mexico, seizures of cannabis and heroin have increased in recent years, while seizures of cocaine have fluctuated.

The level of drug abuse in Mexico is highest in the districts closest to the border with the United States.

#### *Psychotropic substances*

337. In North America, criminal groups are competing for control over a growing illicit market for MDMA (Ecstasy) that is mainly trafficked from western Europe but is also increasingly being manufactured locally. In Canada, clandestine laboratories found to be manufacturing MDMA (Ecstasy) and MDA were also manufacturing other synthetic drugs. MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets often contain other controlled chemicals or illicit drugs. Deaths resulting from the ingestion of MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets containing paramethoxy-amphetamine (PMA) continue to be recorded in the United States.

338. The availability and abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) have continued to spread beyond the “rave” scene to other settings, such as the military, and other age groups, such as schoolchildren as young as 12 years old. Multiple drug abuse is common. In the United States, a rise in the abuse of benzodiazepines and other prescription drugs to alleviate the stimulant effects of MDMA (Ecstasy) has been noted among adolescents; for the same reason, stimulant abusers also abuse cannabis.

339. There has also been a rise in the abuse of the “club drugs” ketamine and GHB. In Canada, cash sales of *gamma*-butyrolactone (GBL), the main precursor chemical for GHB, have increased significantly and there are also reports of GBL being sold through the Internet. Canadian law enforcement officers have seized ketamine, often together with methamphetamine, in shipments originating in China.

340. The illicit supply of and demand for methamphetamine continue to be widespread in North America. Clandestine laboratories in Mexico are still a primary source of the methamphetamine sold on illicit markets in Canada and the United States, but the number of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in Canada and the United States is also increasing. In the year 2000, 26 clandestine methamphetamine laboratories were dismantled in Canada and thousands were dismantled in the United States. In addition to the health problems caused by the abuse of methamphetamine, the laboratories themselves create a large amount of toxic waste that poses a significant threat to the environment.

341. In 2000, a national survey in the United States showed that 3.8 million people were abusing prescription drugs (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives), most of which were under international control. The Board notes an initiative launched by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, together with other organizations in the United States, to raise public awareness of the dangers of abusing prescription drugs; the Board urges continued action in that area. The Board also welcomes guidelines for doctors, pharmacists, law enforcement and regulatory authorities and the public concerning the use of the Internet for dispensing, purchasing and importing medications. In the guidelines it is explained that only properly licensed importers can use the Internet to import controlled substances and that consumers cannot.

342. The Board is concerned about legal loopholes in the United States that make possible public advertising of prescription drugs; in particular, methylphenidate is now being advertised. Methylphenidate, which is widely prescribed for the treatment of ADD in children, is being diverted for abuse by schoolchildren.

343. In Canada and the United States, the abuse of benzodiazepines continues to be common and the abuse of licit opiates, including hydrocodone, hydromorphone and, above all, oxycodone, is also increasing. The seizure in the United Kingdom of tablets of oxycodone from the United States is an indication that a global illicit market for that substance may be developing. The Board notes that one pharmaceutical supplier has agreed to reformulate its oxycodone product to prevent its abuse.

#### *Other substances*

344. Canadian police are concerned about the increasing number of operations involving hallucinogenic mushrooms of the genus *Psilocybe* that have emerged on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, fuelled by the trend towards psychedelic "rave" drugs. Spores and instructions for growing are easily obtained through advertising on the Internet.

## **South America**

### **Major developments**

345. Coca bush continues to be cultivated exclusively in South America, the overall levels of production of coca leaf remaining stable despite fluctuations in individual countries and the abuse of cocaine increasing for the most part, particularly in transit countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela. Bolivia and Peru are the only countries in the region in which the abuse of cocaine appears to have decreased. Cultivation of coca bush has been significantly reduced in those countries in recent years. Opium poppy cultivation and heroin production appear to be on the increase in some countries in the Andean subregion, where the extent of cultivation and production capacity is uncertain. The level of abuse of heroin in South America is still low compared with that of other drugs and other regions, although the level of heroin abuse has increased in Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador. Cannabis cultivation continues to be widespread in South America. Cannabis cultivated in South American countries is mostly abused within those countries.

346. In Colombia, increased interdiction efforts within the framework of the Plan for Peace, Prosperity and the Strengthening of the State (Plan Colombia) have raised concerns that traffickers are moving some narcotics activities into neighbouring countries. A regional counter-drug initiative aimed at expanding the scope of Plan Colombia with related actions in other countries has been put forward to address those concerns. The initiative will cover interdiction, illicit crop eradication, alternative development, enhancing security and strengthening institutions in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela and will have the financial and technical support of the United States. National activities to counteract the displacement of narcotic activities, such as the programme for alternative development and social care launched by Ecuador in April 2001, are also under way.

347. Within the framework of Plan Colombia, aerial fumigation is being used to eradicate coca bush and opium poppy in those areas where access by land is difficult due to geographical or political reasons or where manual voluntary eradication has not been achieved. During the first half of 2001, the total area

sprayed amounted to more than 50,000 hectares. Fumigation has encountered many protests because it is claimed that high concentrations of glyphosate in combination with other chemicals may damage licit crops, the environment and human health. Colombian courts have ruled that indigenous land in the Amazon area is exempted from spraying pending further assessment of the environmental and health impact of fumigation. The Board hopes that an adequate and balanced assessment of the impact of the Government's fumigation programme, including the environmental impact of illicit cultivation, will be made.

348. The Board notes with satisfaction that treaties between countries in South America and with other countries for the extradition of individuals involved in drug-related crimes have been frequently applied during the past year.

#### **Treaty adherence**

349. All States in South America except Guyana are parties to the 1961 Convention. The Board calls once again on the Government of Guyana to accede to the 1961 Convention without delay. All States in the region are parties to the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention.

#### **Regional cooperation**

350. Regional cooperation in South America has continued in many areas of drug control. Many countries in the region are also cooperating bilaterally with each other and with countries in Central America and the Caribbean or in North America; for example, Colombia is cooperating with Mexico through a high-level group for sharing information on the control of chemical substances and pharmaceutical products. Bilateral cooperation frequently involves the Government of the United States, which is the main country outside of South America that is contributing resources to drug control efforts in the region. There have also been multilateral cooperation agreements. For example, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela have begun designing a common training programme for drug law enforcement agencies. The programme is aimed at improving electronic communication between agencies in those countries in order to facilitate the sharing of intelligence and other information on drug and crime

databases. The possibility of expanding the programme to include Chile is being discussed.

351. The Board notes with appreciation the active involvement of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela in Operation Purple, aimed at preventing the diversion of potassium permanganate for the illicit manufacture of cocaine. The Board hopes that, with their cooperation, the operation will continue to be successful. The results of tests conducted on cocaine samples indicate that cocaine traffickers have considerable difficulties in obtaining potassium permanganate for use in the illicit manufacture of cocaine. Some cocaine traffickers have tried to manufacture the chemical themselves, as evidenced by the dismantling of a number of clandestine laboratories by the Colombian authorities. The Board also appreciates the active participation of Argentina, Brazil and Colombia in Operation Topaz, aimed at preventing the diversion of acetic anhydride for the illicit manufacture of heroin. The Board requests all countries in South America that are not yet participating in those international programmes for the tracking of chemicals to consider their participation in the programmes.

352. The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering in South America (GAFISUD) was established in Colombia in December 2000. Since then, the Government of Colombia has signed several bilateral agreements with its trade partners for the control of capital flows and has provided technical assistance to neighbouring countries. The Board encourages other members of GAFISUD to follow this example and cooperate effectively with each other. The Board notes that the countries in the Andean subregion intend to harmonize their national legislation and systems for the prevention of money-laundering, focusing on the enforcement, financial and judicial aspects. At a workshop held in Lima in November 2000 a set of important recommendations were prepared, including one on the creation of a regional financial intelligence unit to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement authorities and the justice system to detect and prosecute cases involving money-laundering and financial crime.

#### **National legislation, policy and action**

353. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia has made important changes in the national legislative

and administrative framework for drug control, such as a new penal procedure code. A recently approved law allowing, inter alia, administrative careers in government will help to keep technical expertise among staff members, including those dealing with drug control. Activities being carried out under the Anti-Drug Strategy 1998-2002, the national drug control strategy that is also known as the Dignity Plan, include precursor control, the upgrading of institutional capacities in drug control and management of seized assets and the improvement of financial investigation.

354. The Board notes the appointment by the Government of Peru of a drug coordinator with ministerial status who will be in charge of formulating and implementing national drug control policy. The Board trusts that the Government will continue to forcefully address all aspects of illicit crop cultivation, illicit trafficking and drug abuse. In addition, legislation was adopted in December 2000 to enhance the investigative capabilities of law enforcement authorities in cases involving money-laundering and financial crime, and a decree was promulgated in July 2001 for the implementation of provisions of the 1997 General Health Law related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemicals.

355. In Brazil, chemical control systems have been strengthened in order to prevent the smuggling of precursors into other countries, mainly Colombia. As part of the activities being conducted under Operation Cobra, which calls for strengthened patrolling and law enforcement along the border between Brazil and Colombia, specific measures have been taken in Brazil to counter the spillover effect of drug trafficking activity in Colombia. The Board again calls on the Government of Brazil to improve the timeliness and accuracy of its reporting to the Board under the international drug control treaties.

356. The Board notes that a new law is to be adopted in Chile to make the fight against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemicals more effective and to sanction related offences. The Board welcomes the fact that the new law will provide for, inter alia, the establishment of a unit for financial investigation and analysis and the introduction of additional measures to prevent and counter money-laundering.

357. In June 2001, Uruguay modified legislation against money-laundering to include provisions

covering proceeds from activities other than drug trafficking. In February 2001, the Central Bank of Uruguay adopted measures aimed at preventing money-laundering through capital markets. Those measures followed the creation in December 2000 in Uruguay of a financial information and analysis unit. Specialized training for investigators, prosecutors and judges in investigative techniques and cases involving money-laundering was carried out in Ecuador. The Board appreciates the progress achieved in Argentina in activities to prevent money-laundering, including the adoption of amendments to the penal code for the prosecution of financial crime, the promulgation of a law establishing a national financial information unit and the creation of a special investigative commission against money-laundering. In Colombia, law enforcement operations have resulted in arrests and significant seizures of financial assets related to drug trafficking and money-laundering.

358. Most countries in South America have established comprehensive strategies for reducing illicit drug demand. The Board is pleased to note that there is increasing awareness in the region about the importance of evaluating the incidence of drug abuse in order to prevent it more effectively. In Chile, for example, governmental and non-governmental institutions are currently evaluating community-based drug abuse prevention and education programmes, as well as treatment and rehabilitation programmes for drug abusers. The Board encourages the Governments of Guyana and Suriname to support with adequate resources the effective implementation of their demand reduction strategies. The Board also encourages the Governments of Paraguay and Venezuela to develop an evaluation system for their national drug control policies. The Board further encourages Guyana, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname to develop their capabilities to collect and integrate statistical information on reducing the demand for and supply of illicit drugs, which will support the evaluation of drug abuse.

### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

#### *Narcotic drugs*

359. The successes of coca bush eradication and alternative development efforts in Bolivia and Peru have been offset by renewed cultivation in formerly eradicated areas in Peru and an increase in coca bush

cultivation in Colombia, despite both countries' interdiction efforts. During the 1990s, coca bush cultivation in Colombia almost tripled; however, from 1999 to 2000, there was a modest increase in the area under cultivation: from 160,000 to 163,000 hectares. The Board notes the importance of the efforts of the Government of Colombia in establishing a more accurate system for measuring the total area under coca bush cultivation. Such technologies may also be considered for evaluating the extent of opium poppy fields.

360. Seizures of cocaine and its derivatives in Colombia, which amounted to nearly 64 tons in 1999, increased by more than 100 per cent in 2000, while seizures of coca leaf increased by almost 200 per cent. In addition, significant quantities of both solid and liquid chemicals for illicit drug manufacture were seized and numerous clandestine processing laboratories were dismantled. Coca leaf is converted into cocaine mostly in Colombia but also in other countries in the Andean subregion. According to Interpol, in 2000, the countries in the Andean subregion produced an estimated 700-900 tons of cocaine, approximately one half of which was destined for illicit markets in North America.

361. Almost all countries in South America are used by traffickers as transit points for transporting illicit drug consignments destined for illicit markets in other countries in the region, in Europe and in North America. Law enforcement authorities in countries in South America, mainly in Colombia, continue to seize significant amounts of cocaine; the total quantity seized has fluctuated between 100 and 160 tons over the past five years. During 2000, law enforcement operations discovered that Colombian and Mexican drug trafficking groups were making increased use of the Pacific trafficking route. Shipments of cocaine originate in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and are mostly unloaded on the Pacific coast of Mexico to be transported onward to the United States and Canada. In addition, concerns have been raised over the misuse by drug traffickers of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) trade pact, which allows the free flow of goods between Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay and may make it easier for precursor chemicals and illicit drugs to be smuggled across borders. The Board notes with satisfaction that the member States of MERCOSUR have already addressed the matter: an agenda for action was set at the first specialized meeting of drug control and

abuse prevention authorities from MERCOSUR member States, held in Buenos Aires in April 2000.

362. The abuse of cocaine is increasing in transit countries in South America. Argentina and Chile appear to have the highest annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in the region. In Brazil, cocaine abuse among youth is increasing and urban centres in Brazil are increasingly being affected by drug-related crime. For example, in Rio de Janeiro, approximately 3,000 street children are estimated to be involved in drug trafficking. The only countries in the region in which the abuse of cocaine has not increased since 1999 are Bolivia and Peru. The Board, bearing in mind the increase in cocaine manufacture in Colombia since 1996, urges the Government of Colombia to update its overall evaluation of the situation regarding the abuse of cocaine, with a view to supporting its demand reduction efforts.

363. Heroin seizures have significantly increased in recent years in Colombia. In June 2001, 67 kg of heroin were seized on the Pacific coast of Colombia, the largest single heroin seizure ever made in the country. In 2001, a regional law enforcement operation uncovered a new heroin trafficking route leading from Colombia, through Central America, to the United States. Traffickers may be organizing the growing of opium poppy also in Peru, where a morphine laboratory and 710 kg of latex gum were seized in 2000. South American heroin is increasingly affecting the main illicit market in the United States, where it offers commercial advantages over Asian heroin because of its higher purity levels and shorter distances to the supply source, which may be reflected in lower prices or higher profits.

364. The cultivation and abuse of cannabis continue to be widespread in South America, according to recent seizure data. The cannabis cultivated in the region is mainly destined for illicit markets in the countries of cultivation and in their neighbouring countries. According to seizure data, Colombia continues to be the main producer of cannabis that is smuggled into Europe or North America, although significant seizures of cannabis have also been made in Brazil and Paraguay. The total amount of cannabis seized in Colombia decreased from more than 200 tons in 1996 to 70 tons in 2000, while the amount of cannabis seized in Paraguay has fluctuated widely over the past five years, ranging from 17 tons to 200 tons. The only

countries in South America that have followed a consistently upward overall trend in cannabis seizures are Argentina and Brazil; that trend coincides with the apparent increase in cannabis abuse in those countries. Brazil appears to be the country in South America with the highest annual prevalence of cannabis abuse.

365. The precursors smuggled into South America are transported mainly to Colombia, where most drug processing laboratories are located. In addition to potassium permanganate, the more common substances seized in Colombia are gasoline, acetone, sodium carbonate, grey cement and motor oil; significant amounts of those substances originate in Mexico, the United States and Venezuela, in European countries and in some Caribbean countries. In spite of the increasing heroin manufacture, seizures of acetic anhydride are still not significant compared with seizures of substances used for cocaine manufacture. Colombia has noted that improved controls at the local level have reduced diversion from the licit market, resulting in a significant decrease in the importation of controlled chemical precursors. As a result of reduced diversion, Colombian traffickers have attempted to refine gasoline and produce their own potassium permanganate for the manufacture of cocaine.

#### *Psychotropic substances*

366. Colombian drug traffickers have diversified their operations, as evidenced by increased seizures of substances other than cocaine and heroin, such as MDMA (Ecstasy). It appears that South American cocaine is smuggled into Europe, where it is exchanged for MDMA (Ecstasy) that is then smuggled back into South America. That MDMA (Ecstasy) is destined for the growing illicit market for the substance in South America, as well as for the established illicit market for that substance in North America.

367. The Board wishes to remind all States in South America that are parties to the 1971 Convention of the importance of complying with their obligations to report to the Board in accordance with article 16 of that Convention. In particular, the Board has noted a lack of reporting on the part of Uruguay. Lack of reporting may indicate deficiencies in national control systems for psychotropic substances, which may result in diversion of those substances into the illicit markets. The Board notes that the authorities of Brazil have

started to improve their exchange of data with the Board.

#### **Missions**

368. In June 2001, the Board sent a mission to Bolivia. In Bolivia, the chewing of coca leaf and related coca leaf production continue. Provisions of the 1961 Convention, which call for the phasing out of that practice, at the latest within 25 years from the coming into force of that Convention, continue not to be applied since the production of coca leaf for chewing continues to be considered licit under national law. Illicit production of coca leaf is currently taking place only to a limited extent. In the past, illicit production of coca leaf was an important source for illicit cocaine manufacture in South America. The Board notes with satisfaction that, pursuant to the Dignity Plan's goals of taking Bolivia out of the international illicit market for coca/cocaine and of reducing illicit coca bush cultivation to zero, the Government has almost succeeded in eradicating illicit coca bush cultivation in the Chapare area. As a consequence, the illicit manufacture of cocaine in Bolivia and in other countries with coca leaf of Bolivian origin has been reduced significantly, and Bolivia is now mainly used as a transit country for smuggling coca leaf and cocaine from Peru into Brazil. The Board encourages the Government of Bolivia to maintain its efforts to eliminate the remaining illicit cultivation of coca bush and to ensure that such cultivation does not reoccur in those areas or emerge in other areas of the country.

369. In Bolivia, coca leaf production that is considered licit under national law may result in coca leaf being diverted for use in the illicit manufacture of coca paste (cocaine sulphate) in Bolivia or to be sold on illicit markets in neighbouring countries. The Board therefore urges the Government of Bolivia to take the steps necessary to prevent such diversion, including introduction of stricter controls over all activities related to such coca leaf production.

370. In Bolivia, controls over precursor chemicals to prevent them from being diverted for use in the illicit manufacture of cocaine are well implemented. However, controls over narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to be used for medical purposes in Bolivia continue to be insufficient. The Board trusts that the Government will take the action required under the international drug control treaties.

371. In June 2001, the Board sent a mission to Chile. The Board notes with satisfaction that the policies of the Government of Chile concerning drug abuse and illicit trafficking provide for a balanced system of measures for the reduction of illicit drug demand and supply. Procedures for assessing the extent and nature of drug abuse are in place. Control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to be used for medical purposes is strict, allowing for early detection of drug abuse patterns. Drug law enforcement authorities have been successful in seizing significant quantities of illicitly manufactured drugs entering or passing through Chile.

372. Chile is an important manufacturer and importer of precursor chemicals. Some of those precursor chemicals have been diverted for use in the illicit manufacture of cocaine, mainly in neighbouring countries. During the year 2000, two clandestine laboratories for processing coca paste (cocaine sulphate) into cocaine hydrochloride were detected in Chile. The Board therefore welcomes a new law in Chile that deals more effectively with offences related to precursors; at the same time, the Board urges the Government to review and strengthen existing mechanisms for precursor control in order to prevent the diversion of precursors and facilitate the detection and prosecution of attempts to divert such substances.

373. In March 2001, the Board sent a mission to Venezuela. The Board notes the important and effective role of the Comisión Nacional contra el Uso Ilícito de las Drogas (CONACUID) in the overall coordination of all drug control activities in Venezuela. The Board trusts that the several legislative, judicial and administrative reforms, including the restructuring of several institutions involved in drug control, will strengthen the national drug control system.

374. The Board appreciates that the Government of Venezuela will review the practices that may prevent easier access to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes while efficiently preventing their diversion into illicit channels by streamlining distribution channels and control procedures. The Board notes with satisfaction the active role played by the Venezuelan authorities in cooperating in the area of drug control with their counterparts in other countries in South America and in other regions.

375. In May 2001, the Board reviewed action taken by the Government of Argentina pursuant to recommendations by the Board after its mission to that country in September 1998. The Board is satisfied that most of its recommendations have been implemented. While recognizing the economic difficulties that the country is currently facing, the Board wishes to underline the importance of maintaining the ability of the Secretariat for Planning the Prevention of Drug Abuse and the Fight against Drug Trafficking (SEDRONAR) to effectively coordinate drug control activities in the country and the ability of the National Administration for Medicaments, Food and Medical Technology (ANMAT) to control all licit activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

## **C. Asia**

### **East and South-East Asia**

#### **Major developments**

376. Eradication efforts by the Government of Myanmar and ongoing alternative development activities resulted in illicit opium poppy cultivation decreasing by one third from 1996 to 2000; however, there are indications that such cultivation increased again in 2001. Myanmar accounted for most of the world's illicit opium poppy cultivation in 2001, taking into consideration the results of the ban on such cultivation in the areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban and the prolonged drought in that country. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, there was a reduction in the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation. Opium poppy cultivation in Thailand remains at negligible levels. In Viet Nam, illicit opium poppy cultivation, which is concentrated in the mountainous areas in the north-west part of the country, has been significantly reduced in the past decade.

377. In some countries in East and South-East Asia, illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants appear to have become matters of greater concern than illicit activities related to opiates. A number of countries in the region, including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan and Thailand, have reported that the abuse of opiates such as raw opium, codeine and heroin has declined while the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants has increased. The spread of HIV infection is closely