

566. In January 2003 the Board made a technical visit to Slovakia. Cooperation between the Slovak authorities and the Board is functioning well, as is cooperation between the various government offices responsible for drug control matters in Slovakia. In recent years, two major legislative acts on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals have been adopted. Legislation presently in force in Slovakia for the cultivation of opium poppy and for poppy straw is in line with the position of the Board that all countries cultivating opium poppy should have a strict licensing system for opium poppy and strict control measures for poppy straw. The Board is of the opinion that the present legislation on precursors is in line with its recommendations; the Board would, therefore, strongly discourage any weakening of the existing legislation, especially at a time when European Union member States intend to strengthen controls further.

567. In recent years, Slovakia has been targeted for diversion of and trafficking in psychotropic substances, including flunitrazepam and temazepam. The Board appreciates the efforts of the Slovak law enforcement authorities, in cooperation with their Czech counterparts, in counteracting such illicit activities. Diversion of and trafficking in pharmaceutical products have to be considered by the judiciary with the same priority as trafficking in other drugs of abuse.

## **E. Oceania**

### **Major developments**

568. Australia and New Zealand remain among the main destinations for shipments of heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants from South-East Asia. The Board notes that both countries have strengthened legislation and action aimed at detecting and preventing the clandestine manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and to intercept consignments of such stimulants and their precursors. Cannabis abuse has declined but remains at a high level; cannabis continues to be the drug of choice in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, 72 per cent of all drug-related offences relate to cannabis. More sophisticated hydroponic growing techniques are contributing to increasing cannabis yields.

569. In recent years, successful law enforcement operations in Australia have led to a sharp reduction in the supply of heroin to illicit markets. This has resulted in price increases, lower purity levels and a decline in the rate of heroin overdose deaths. At the same time, there has been an increase in the abuse of cocaine and synthetic drugs, which have continued to be widely available despite record seizures at borders.

570. The Board notes the progress made in several Pacific island States to prevent money-laundering. Those States continue to be vulnerable to the drug transit traffic and to drug abuse.

### **Treaty adherence**

571. Of the 15 States in Oceania, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are not parties to any of the three international drug control treaties. All nine of the remaining States in the region are parties to the 1961 Convention and eight of them are also parties to the 1971 Convention; however, only Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Tonga are parties to the 1988 Convention. The Board urges the States that have not yet acceded to the international drug control treaties to do so without delay.

### **Regional cooperation**

572. The Pacific Islands Forum continues to play an active and essential role in coordinating drug control efforts in Oceania. The leaders attending the thirty-fourth session of the Forum held in Auckland, New Zealand, in August 2003 agreed to increase awareness among law enforcement officials about the spread of trafficking in and abuse of drugs, in particular amphetamine-type stimulants. The Board notes the increasing use of the Customs Asia Pacific Enforcement Reporting System, the Internet-based secure communication platform for customs administration, which makes possible the exchange of information to help detect and prevent transnational crime, including drug trafficking.

573. The Board notes the signing of a memorandum of understanding in March 2003 by Australia and Indonesia for cooperation in the exchange of information to better enforce customs laws.

574. The Board welcomes the key role played by the Australian Federal Police and the New Zealand Police in terms of regional technical assistance. The police

and customs of Australia and Papua New Guinea continue to participate in joint border patrols.

575. Successful joint operations involving the Australian Federal Police and police authorities from outside of Oceania, such as Argentina, Malaysia and Taiwan Province of China resulted in major seizures of heroin, cocaine and MDMA (Ecstasy), as well as precursors, and the arrest of many drug traffickers.

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

576. In previous reports,<sup>51</sup> the Board expressed its concern about the decision on the establishment in Australia of a drug injection room in the State of New South Wales. The Board notes that the Government of Australia does not support that decision but has no power to intervene since it leaves certain matters of health and law enforcement under the jurisdiction of its states and territories. That, however, puts into question the capacity of the Commonwealth of Australia to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the international drug control treaties throughout its territories.

577. Different jurisdictions within Australia also led to difficulties in the implementation of the control of certain precursors, as some states in Australia followed strictly the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 Convention, as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions, and other states did not.

578. The Board notes that New Zealand has tightened its control over domestic licit distribution of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine through close cooperation between police and pharmacists, in order to prevent the availability of those substances for clandestine methamphetamine manufacture. In May 2003, the Government of New Zealand announced a methamphetamine action plan that provides, inter alia, greater search and seizure powers for police and customs and includes provisions for demand reduction and treatment.

579. The Board encourages the Government of New Zealand to act on the recommendation of the parliamentary health committee to develop a policy to reverse the trend of heavy abuse of cannabis by persons 18-24 years old and its increasing abuse among persons 15-17 years old.

580. The Board appreciates the progress achieved in the fight against money-laundering in several States in

Oceania and notes with satisfaction that some States in Oceania, namely the Marshall Islands and Niue have been removed from the list of countries and territories that the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering considers uncooperative in efforts to counter money-laundering. The Cook Islands and Nauru remain on the list. While the Cook Islands has made significant steps by passing several new acts, the necessary regulation has yet to be promulgated, and Nauru still has to ensure that "shell banks" are no longer operational.

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

##### *Narcotic drugs*

581. Large-scale hydroponic cultivation of cannabis continues to be reported in Australia. There is also significant cannabis cultivation in Fiji, which contributes to the substance being widely abused. Cannabis cultivation also occurs on some other islands and is grown on a large scale in the highlands in Papua New Guinea for local illicit markets and for illicit markets in Australia.

582. The amounts of cocaine detected and seized in Australia and at the borders have increased sharply. Heroin abuse in Australia has declined since 2001, mainly due to successful interdiction activities at its borders and cooperation with national authorities in South-East Asia and the resultant shortage of supply.

583. In all countries in Oceania except Australia and New Zealand, heroin and cocaine trafficking and abuse have been sporadic and at a low level.

##### *Psychotropic substances*

584. In Australia, border detections of synthetic drugs, amphetamine-type stimulants and MDMA have steadily increased; the number of uncovered clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants has increased as well. Both in Australia and New Zealand, local illicit manufacture and distribution of amphetamine-type stimulants have increased.

585. In some parts of New Zealand, cannabis abuse is being surpassed by the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants. During the first half of 2003, custom seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine soared, indicating increasing demand for such precursors from overseas following the introduction of more stringent

controls in New Zealand. The abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) continues to spread.

586. GHB, ketamine and various anti-depressants have become popular party drugs in Australia. Control of GHB is of a significant concern, as large quantities of its precursor chemical *gamma*-butyrolactone (GBL) are imported for legitimate use. The combination of both the availability of GBL and its easy conversion into GHB means that those substances are inexpensive and is therefore a cause for increased concern. The Board calls on the Government of Australia to develop strategies to prevent the abuse of these substances.

### Missions

587. A mission of the Board visited Fiji in January 2003. The Board notes that regulatory controls for drugs and chemicals and law enforcement are coordinated and functioning well. Those authorities also have good working relationships with their counterparts in other countries in Oceania.

588. The Board invites the Government of Fiji to establish a comprehensive national master plan for drug control. There is a need to conduct an assessment of the drug abuse situation in the country and then to establish proper treatment and rehabilitation programmes. Further efforts of the Government are required to ensure adequate availability of drugs for medical purposes through rational prescribing, particularly those for pain treatment, and to provide more adequate scientific support for drug law enforcement.

589. A mission of the Board visited Papua New Guinea in January 2003. The Board notes with concern that the findings and recommendations made following its earlier mission to the country in 1995 remain valid. There is a pressing need for the Government to revise the current drug control legislation, which has been pending for over a decade. The Board also notes that the central policy-making body, the National Narcotics Control Board, is not functioning as provided for under current laws, and a clear definition of its roles and of its secretariat, the National Narcotics Bureau, is lacking. Furthermore, working mechanisms among relevant government agencies do not appear to exist. Lack of appropriate inter-agency coordination, coupled with legislative or institutional deficiencies, have frequently nullified, or otherwise undermined, ministerial authority. The Board is concerned that such a situation continued to affect the work of various drug

control authorities, resulting in compartmentalized activities and yielding insufficient or unsatisfactory outcomes.

590. The Government of Papua New Guinea should initiate, as soon as possible, collective consultations among relevant departments involved in drug control with a view to introducing necessary revisions to the current drug control laws by drawing up a consolidated bill that clearly defines the respective functions and establish the necessary working links between those departments. In so doing, the Government should accede to the 1998 Convention and introduce all necessary legislative and administrative measures to comply with the provisions of that Convention.

591. The Board also invites the Government of Papua New Guinea to conduct an assessment of the drug abuse situation with a view to introducing proper treatment and rehabilitation programmes. In view of the latest developments observed in attempts at diversion of precursors for amphetamine-type stimulants, the Board has requested the Government to re-launch its law enforcement investigations into the case of attempted diversion of large quantities of ephedrine uncovered in 2000 and transmit the findings to the Board as soon as possible.

(Signed)

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(Signed)

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(Signed)

Herbert Schaepe  
Secretary

Vienna, 14 November 2003

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Trevor Bennett, *Drugs and Crime: the Results of the Second Developmental Stage of the NEW-ADAM Programme*, Home Office Research Study 205 (London, Home Office, 2000).