

III. Analysis of the world situation

A. Africa

Major developments

244. The main illicit drug of abuse in Africa is cannabis, which is abused by over 34 million people in the region. The cannabis plant is illicitly cultivated throughout Africa, and cannabis is smuggled within the region and beyond, mainly into Europe and North America. While cannabis herb is illicitly produced in all subregions of Africa, Morocco continues to be one of the world's largest suppliers of cannabis resin. It is, therefore, encouraging to note that, as a result of intervention by the Government, both the total area under illicit cannabis plant cultivation and the total potential production of cannabis resin in Morocco decreased by 10 per cent in 2004 over the previous year.

245. Drug traffickers are increasingly using West African countries along the Gulf of Guinea for smuggling cocaine from Latin America into Europe and, to a lesser extent, into North America, as evidenced by the record seizures that have been effected in that subregion during the past two years. Moreover, two recent seizures of cocaine in Kenya, totalling over 1 ton, may indicate that cocaine traffickers have also begun using Eastern Africa as a transit area. While cocaine continues to be abused mainly in cities and tourist centres in Southern and Western Africa, there is concern that the increased trans-shipment of illicit drugs through the area of the Gulf of Guinea might have a spillover effect, resulting in increased drug abuse in countries in those subregions.

246. Although the abuse of opiates has remained limited in Africa, the increasing abuse of such drugs, including by injection, is becoming a cause for concern, particularly in African countries along the Indian Ocean.

247. In Africa, the continued availability of illicitly manufactured and diverted pharmaceutical products containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in unregulated markets has, for many years, been a major problem for national regulatory authorities in ensuring the safety and efficacy of medicine. At the

same time, controlled substances for legitimate medical purposes, in particular opiates for the treatment of pain, are often not available.

248. In Southern Africa, one recent worrying development is the rapidly emerging abuse of methamphetamine in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape area. While the substance is mainly smuggled from China, some of it is also illicitly manufactured in laboratories in South Africa, as evidenced by the increasing number of illicit methamphetamine laboratories dismantled in that country. While the abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) has so far been largely confined to South Africa, there is some concern that the uncovering of an MDMA laboratory in Egypt in late 2004 might indicate the emergence of illicit MDMA manufacture in Northern Africa.

249. As mechanisms for the monitoring and control of precursor chemicals are being tightened in many countries of the world, traffickers have started to take advantage of weaker mechanisms for precursor control in African countries. That development is reflected in the increased number of reported attempts to divert precursor chemicals in Africa. In 2005, a number of multi-ton shipments of controlled precursor chemicals destined for African countries, for diversion into illicit markets, were stopped.

Treaty adherence

250. In October 2005, Angola became a party to the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention and the 1988 Convention. Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia acceded to the 1988 Convention in October 2005 and September 2005, respectively.

251. Equatorial Guinea remains the only State in Africa that is not yet a party to any of the three main international drug control treaties. In addition, Chad has not yet acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention, Liberia is not yet a party to the 1971 Convention and Gabon, Namibia and Somalia are not yet parties to the 1988 Convention.

Regional cooperation

252. The Board notes with appreciation that the African Union takes drug control issues very seriously. The African Union has assigned to the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, an advisory body of the Union established in Addis Ababa in March 2005, the responsibility of advising it on drug-related matters while promoting the economic, social and cultural development of African States. The Board notes that the second Ministerial Conference on Drug Control in Africa, the theme of which was “Mainstreaming drug control in socio-economic development into Africa”, was held in Grand Baie, Mauritius, in December 2004. The Conference was attended by African experts from 28 African Union member States and representatives of relevant international and regional organizations. Subsequently, the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, held in Abuja, in January 2005, adopted a decision in which it requested those African Union member States which had not yet submitted reports on the implementation of the Plan of Action on Drug Control in Africa: 2002-2006 to do so without delay.

253. A regional meeting of the International Drug Enforcement Conference was held in Abuja in February 2005. The meeting, which was hosted by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria and attended by representatives of a number of countries in Europe and the Middle East, formulated a common position on money-laundering, international drug trafficking organizations and the control of precursor chemicals.

254. The Fifteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, was held in Ouagadougou in March 2005. The Meeting formulated recommendations on regional and subregional cooperation; the threat posed by illegal cannabis production in Africa; and the protection of witnesses in investigating and prosecuting crime syndicates.

255. The Government of Algeria hosted the seventeenth Summit of the League of Arab States in Algiers in March 2005. The members of the League of Arab States may use their meetings as an opportunity to, inter alia, share their experiences in fighting drug abuse and illicit trafficking, with a view to harmonizing their policies and strategies related to countering illicit drug trafficking in the region.

256. A regional youth network of non-governmental organizations focusing on drug abuse prevention was established in eight countries in Eastern Africa in 2004. Non-governmental organizations from Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the first regional workshop of the youth network, on the elaboration of networking and collaboration, which was held in Mombasa, Kenya, in April 2005.

257. An operational meeting on drugs for Eastern African heads of criminal investigation departments and anti-narcotic units was held in Kigali in May 2005 with a view to strengthening collaboration in drug law enforcement between the member States (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) in the area of drug law enforcement.

258. In June 2005, the Arab Conference for Protecting Youth from Drug Abuse was held in Cairo. Delegations from Northern Africa and the Middle East, comprising high-level government officials, heads of drug control agencies and representatives of civil society, participated in the Conference. The Conference formulated the Cairo Action Plan, containing recommendations on enhancing coordination among participating Arab countries in drug abuse prevention. On the occasion of the Conference, the Government of Egypt launched a new national strategy on protecting youth against drugs.

259. The Board notes that, for the first time in Africa, a subregional workshop on precursor control was held. Regulatory and law enforcement authorities from 11 countries in Eastern Africa, as well as representatives of trade and industry, attended the workshop, which was organized in Mombasa, Kenya, in July 2005 by UNODC, in cooperation with the Board. The workshop participants discussed the inadequate controls over precursors in Eastern Africa and developed measures to prevent the diversion of precursors into illicit channels.

260. The seventh meeting of the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, aimed at enhancing collaboration among its member States, was held in Mombasa, Kenya, in August 2005. A model subregional train-the-trainer workshop for pharmaceutical inspectors was held in Dar es Salaam in September 2005. The participants discussed ways to

improve the monitoring and surveillance of national drug distribution channels.

261. A Round Table for Africa was hosted by the Government of Nigeria and organized by UNODC in Abuja in September 2005. The Round Table, which was attended by government representatives of African countries and development partners, adopted a programme of action for the period 2006-2010, aimed at integrating a drug control dimension into official development assistance policies and practices.

262. A number of African countries have undertaken further initiatives against money-laundering. In Northern Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have joined the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, established in November 2004 to promote best practices in combating money-laundering and terrorist financing in those subregions. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has stepped up action against money-laundering: in May 2005, its Groupe intergouvernemental d'action contre le blanchiment d'argent en Afrique de l'Ouest (GIABA)³⁹ met in Abuja to work out an integrated approach to countering money-laundering, as experience has shown that money-laundering kingpins are moving away from countries with rigorous legislation against money-laundering, such as Nigeria, to countries in Western and Central Africa where action against such criminal activity is deemed weak.

National legislation, policy and action

263. National drug control master plans have been adopted by Algeria and South Africa. The Government of Algeria has also set up a secretariat under the office of the Prime Minister to implement the plan. Furthermore, in December 2004, Algeria promulgated a new law on the prevention and repression of the use of and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances together with a law specifically on preventing and fighting money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In Morocco, the national strategy against drugs drafted by the National Committee on Narcotics is expected to be adopted in 2005.

264. In March 2005, the Government of Lesotho prepared a comprehensive programme framework for drug abuse prevention in the country. The Government of Malawi has taken several important initiatives to

address drug control issues in the country, such as the completion of a UNODC-funded rapid situation assessment on drug abuse, the drafting of a drug abuse bill and the conducting of a survey of cannabis abuse.

265. The Board notes that the authorities of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya have taken measures to enhance programming and implementation capacities in the area of drug demand reduction, with a view to developing a national prevention programme in schools, covering all aspects related to drug abuse, including HIV/AIDS.

266. The Board calls upon the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to implement without delay the precursor control law enacted in 2004. In Kenya, in response to a series of attempted diversions of ephedrine (see para. 280 below), the Government appointed a precursor control steering committee within the Ministry of Health in May 2005 to address the inadequate controls over precursors and to draft appropriate precursor control legislation. The Board appreciates those efforts and encourages the Government of Kenya to put in place as soon as possible an adequate mechanism for monitoring and controlling precursors.

267. The Board notes with appreciation the measures taken by the Government of Tunisia to reduce illicit drug demand through awareness-raising programmes in schools and welcomes the steps taken to establish a national rehabilitation centre for drug addicts. The Board also notes that legal and law enforcement measures taken against corruption have helped to curb illicit drug abuse and trafficking in Tunisia.

268. A number of Governments have taken further legislative and administrative measures to combat money-laundering. In Egypt, the Anti-Narcotics General Administration has opened a special office for investigating financial crime and combating money-laundering. The Board notes that, in 2004, as a result of this and other measures taken to counter money-laundering, Egypt was removed from the list of countries and territories considered by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to be "non-cooperative" in efforts to counter money-laundering or to have critical deficiencies in their systems for countering money-laundering. The Kenyan Cabinet approved in February 2005 a bill against money-laundering that is before Parliament; once passed, the legislation will enable the identification, tracing and freezing, seizure and potential confiscation of proceeds

of crime, including drug trafficking and corruption. The Government of Morocco has prepared a draft law against money-laundering that is now before Parliament. In Nigeria, the Money Laundering Act was revised and updated in 2004 to facilitate asset recovery.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

269. Cannabis continues to be the most widely grown, trafficked and abused drug in the African region. Africa is the world's second largest producer of cannabis herb (after North America), accounting for approximately 12,000 tons, or 28 per cent of global production. In Morocco, illicit cannabis plant cultivation decreased by 10 per cent in 2004 compared with the level of the previous year. More than 40 per cent of the world's cannabis resin is produced in Morocco. In addition, Morocco is the source of 80 per cent of the cannabis resin abused in Europe, the world's largest market for cannabis resin. Illicit trafficking in cannabis resin continues to be a major problem in the Rif area. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government of Morocco launched a cannabis plant eradication campaign in the Rif area in early May 2005. Of the approximately 1,500 tons of cannabis resin seized throughout the world in 2004, 87 tons were seized in Morocco. Weak control measures at seaports and land border crossings and inadequate drug control legislation have continued to contribute to the trafficking problem in that country. The Board commends the Government of Morocco for its efforts and calls upon it to continue its efforts to achieve the total eradication of cannabis plant cultivation on its territory. At the same time, the Board calls upon the international community to support the efforts of the Government of Morocco where possible.

270. Cannabis herb production is taking place in all subregions in Africa. In Egypt, where cannabis plants continue to be illicitly cultivated in the northern Sinai, there has been an alarming increase in the seizure of cannabis herb; seizures of cannabis herb increased in 2004 by 40 per cent over the 2003 level. The increase in cannabis production was accompanied by an upsurge in the abuse of cannabis herb. In countries in Western and Central Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Senegal), seizure data suggest that cannabis plants continue to be cultivated for commercial purposes.

Cannabis plants are also cultivated in most countries in Eastern Africa, not only fuelling local demand but also constituting a significant commercial crop, especially in the Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The largest producers of cannabis herb in Southern Africa are (in decreasing order) South Africa, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland. According to data published by UNODC, cannabis herb was the most commonly seized drug in Africa in 2003, the most recent year for which such data are available. Also in that year, the bulk of all demand for drug abuse treatment in Africa (64 per cent) was linked to cannabis.

271. The African region, particularly Western and Northern Africa, continues to be used for smuggling cocaine from South America into North America and Europe. In 2004, the total amount of cocaine seized while being transported through countries in Western Africa (mainly Nigeria and other countries in the area of the Gulf of Guinea) exceeded 14 tons. In the first half of 2005, authorities in Spain seized a total of 5.5 tons of cocaine originating in South America and destined for Europe: one single seizure of 2.5 tons of cocaine was made on a vessel off the coast of Ghana that had been registered in that country. Furthermore, in September 2005, 3 tons of cocaine were seized on a vessel off the coast of Cape Verde. Since the beginning of 2004, seizures of cocaine totalling some 40 tons have been effected on the high seas on ships coming from Western Africa. Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria reported having seized cocaine bound for illicit markets in the United States of America. Investigations made in conjunction with those seizures reveal the presence in Western African countries of foreign criminal networks from Europe and Latin America, giving rise to speculation about Western Africa being used not just as a transit area but as a stockpiling logistics base for drug trafficking. Cocaine destined for Spain is also smuggled through the islands off the coast of Mauritania and Senegal, mainly Cape Verde. The shift in the traditional trafficking routes leading to Western Africa is attributed to tightened controls in the Netherlands and Spain (see also para. 599 below). Other developments in Africa relate to increased interdiction of cocaine (shipped from Brazil) in South Africa and, most recently, on the eastern coast of Africa, where Kenyan authorities seized a total of over 1 ton of cocaine in two seizures: one in the coastal town of Malindi and the other in Nairobi. The two

seizures in Kenya were made possible by operational information received from Belgium; the seized cocaine, believed to be of Colombian origin, was destined for illicit markets in Europe.

272. Despite the increase in the volume of cocaine seized in Africa, the level of abuse is still relatively low. Cocaine abuse in Africa seems to be confined mainly to Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, where it continues to be abused in the form of crack cocaine. There is some concern, however, that, as cocaine trafficking routes evolve and new routes emerge, there will be a spillover effect and cocaine abuse will spread. As a result of the growing illicit trafficking in Nigeria and Togo, for instance, the cost of cocaine has already dropped significantly in those countries. Also, according to data provided by the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU), demand for cocaine abuse treatment increased in the period 2002-2004 in South Africa.

273. In Africa, heroin interdiction rates remained low. In Western Africa, according to reports on heroin seizures made in 2005, heroin continued to be sent mainly in small quantities on couriers and in mail parcels. In Eastern Africa, however, significant seizures of heroin were made at the international airports in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa and, to a lesser extent, Zanzibar City. As countermeasures are being taken in those airports, heroin traffickers appear to be shifting their operations to airports near large cities in other African countries, including Malawi (Lilongwe), Rwanda, (Kigali), Uganda (Entebbe) and Zambia (Lusaka). From there, the heroin is often smuggled back into Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania through the inadequately controlled land borders and subsequently into countries in Europe and North America. The quality of the heroin transiting Kenya has increased markedly in recent years, from (lower-quality) "brown heroin" to "white heroin". As heroin is increasingly becoming available at affordable prices in the United Republic of Tanzania, heroin abuse is also increasing in that country.

274. The abuse of heroin continues to be at a low level in Africa. According to the available data, the annual prevalence of abuse of opiates (mostly heroin) in Africa was 0.2 per cent among persons aged 15-64 in the period 2002-2004, which is below the global average of 0.3 per cent. The abuse of opiates increased in Eastern and Southern Africa. In Eastern Africa, the

increase in heroin abuse was particularly significant in Kenya, Mauritius and the United Republic of Tanzania (countries where drug abuse by injection also increased), as well as in Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda. According to the SADC Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SENDU), high levels of heroin abuse by injection were reported by patients in Mauritius (94 per cent), South Africa (28-55 per cent in selected sites), the United Republic of Tanzania (29 per cent) and Mozambique (23 per cent in Maputo). In Nigeria, a survey revealed that there was growing drug abuse by injection, as well as higher HIV/AIDS prevalence among persons who abuse drugs by injection, in big cities such as Kano and Port Harcourt. In Northern Africa, there is significant heroin abuse in Egypt, where the total number of heroin addicts is estimated at 20,000-30,000 and the practice of needle-sharing has been reported.

Psychotropic substances

275. In most African countries, it is possible to purchase drugs in unregulated markets. A wide range of licit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are sold both by licensed pharmacies without a prescription and on street markets following their diversion from licit into illicit channels. Those substances include sedatives, codeine-based syrups and phenobarbital, which are also used in combination with other products to enhance the effects of cannabis and alcohol, including locally brewed alcoholic drinks. In Northern Africa, the abuse of benzodiazepines, such as diazepam, clonazepam (Rivotril), lorazepam (Temesta), clorazepate (Tranxene), and the opioid analgesic buprenorphine (Subutex) has gained in popularity, as those preparations are relatively cheap and easily obtainable. Several countries in Western and Central Africa have reported that there is growing concern about the smuggling into their territories of fake and counterfeit medical products. In Southern Africa, the abuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicines, such as slimming tablets, analgesics and benzodiazepines (diazepam and flunitrazepam), continues to be a matter of concern.

276. The availability of controlled substances in unregulated markets and the circulation of counterfeit medicines create serious public health problems, including the abuse and misuse of drugs, and undermine public confidence in health services and in drug control and drug law enforcement regimes. The

Board calls upon all the Governments concerned to take remedial action by strengthening mechanisms for the monitoring and control of licit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including licensing systems, record-keeping, the collection and reporting of statistical data, the import and export authorization regime, inspections and sanctions. The Board also urges the Governments concerned to assess their real needs for controlled drugs, as well as constraints that contribute to those drugs not being available for medical purposes in sufficient quantities. The outcome of such an assessment could be beneficial in addressing the non-availability of those drugs for medical purposes. WHO and international and bilateral donors would then be in a better position to assist African countries in implementing their strategies for the rational use of controlled drugs.

277. The illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, mainly cathinone, methcathinone, MDMA (Ecstasy) and methamphetamine, continues to take place in South Africa. There has been a rapid increase in laboratories for the illicit manufacture of cathinone and methcathinone during the past few years: while one such laboratory was detected in 2001, that number rose to over 30 by 2003. Of particular concern is the emergence of abuse of methamphetamine (commonly called "tic") in South Africa's Cape Town area. According to SACENDU, a dramatic increase in the demand for treatment for methamphetamine abuse was noted in Cape Town: 1 out of 5 patients reported that methamphetamine had been their primary or secondary drug of abuse and 41 per cent reported having used the drug daily in 2004. Almost 60 per cent of patients seeking treatment for methamphetamine abuse during the second half of 2004 were under 20 years of age.

278. Despite vigorous law enforcement efforts by the South African police, the abuse of methaqualone (Mandrax) has continued unabated in South Africa, where most of the world's illicitly supplied methaqualone is abused. Methaqualone is also abused in other countries in Southern Africa, but to a lesser extent. Methaqualone is smuggled out of India and China and transported along the coast of Eastern Africa and, to some extent, Western Africa to countries in Southern Africa. Some methaqualone is also manufactured in South Africa. In 2004, as a result of intensified police efforts, the total volume of methaqualone seizures rose sharply in South Africa, reaching the record level of 12 tons. In the same year,

15 illicit methaqualone laboratories were dismantled in South Africa.

279. Some abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) is taking place in South Africa. While most of the MDMA (Ecstasy) is smuggled into that country, some is illicitly manufactured locally. For the first time ever, an MDMA laboratory was uncovered and dismantled in Egypt in late 2004; four persons were arrested and the chemicals and equipment were seized. While illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants (under the brand name Maxim forte) had reportedly taken place in Egypt some years ago, the discovery of an MDMA laboratory in that country is a matter of concern, since it might indicate a shifting of the illicit manufacture of MDMA to Northern Africa.

280. African countries are increasingly being used by traffickers to divert precursor chemicals. Following an attempt in early 2004 to divert to Kenya 6 tons of ephedrine, a precursor of amphetamine-type stimulants, two further attempts to divert to that country large amounts of ephedrine (500 kg and 800 kg) were prevented in 2005. There were other attempts to divert large amounts of precursors to African countries in 2005: one involved several multi-ton consignments of potassium permanganate destined for Egypt; another attempt involved almost 7 tons of acetic anhydride destined for Nigeria; and two others involved large consignments of pseudoephedrine destined for Angola (1.2 tons) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (26 tons). The Board calls upon the Governments of all countries in Africa to take the measures necessary to adequately control the precursor chemicals listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention. The Board also calls upon UNODC to provide technical assistance, including in the form of training, to the African countries at risk.

Substances not under international control

281. The Board notes with concern that the abuse of khat, a substance currently not under international control that is cultivated in several countries in Eastern Africa, is becoming a serious threat to reconstruction efforts in Somalia. In that country, which has suffered many years of civil strife and is one of the poorest countries in the world, the abuse of khat is widespread; as a result, the family structure is deteriorating and a large portion of the family income is used to buy khat.

Missions

282. The Board sent a mission to Cape Verde in September 2005. The Board commends the Government of Cape Verde for its political will and commitment to address the drug problem in its country, as exemplified by the national drug and crime control strategy adopted in October 2004.

283. Over the past two years, Cape Verde has emerged as part of a major transit route for consignments of cocaine originating in South America en route to Europe. It is estimated that each year several tons of cocaine pass through the archipelago of Cape Verde, which is situated off the coast of Senegal. The Board expresses appreciation to the Government of Cape Verde for its determination in addressing the smugglers of cocaine through its territory and encourages the Government to continue its work on strengthening the interdiction capabilities of its national drug law enforcement agencies. The Government should continue to seek international cooperation and assistance in that matter.

284. Drug abuse appears to have increased in Cape Verde. However, the actual extent, patterns and trends of drug abuse are not known, since no nationwide survey or even a rapid assessment of the drug abuse situation has ever been conducted. The Board therefore urges the Government to carry out, as a matter of priority, an assessment of the drug abuse situation, including the collection and analysis of data on the incidence, prevalence and other characteristics of drug abuse.

285. The consumption of narcotic drugs for medical purposes is considerably lower in Cape Verde than in other small island developing countries in Africa. The Board calls on the authorities of Cape Verde to continue their efforts to improve the access of the population to essential narcotic drugs, inter alia, by providing training to health-care professionals. The WHO guidelines on achieving balance in national opioid control policy can be used as a guide for that purpose.

286. The Board sent a mission to Ghana in January 2005. The Board notes with appreciation the firm commitment of the Government to the objectives of the international drug control treaties and its efforts to further develop the existing national drug control mechanisms with a view to vigorously combating the

drug menace. The Board welcomes the multidisciplinary approach taken by the Government, as reflected in the establishment of the interministerial Narcotics Control Board of Ghana, which guides and coordinates all drug-related activities of the various authorities and bodies responsible for drug control matters and directs their efforts towards achieving the common objective of fighting drug abuse and trafficking.

287. While the drug control legislation currently in place in Ghana provides a measure of control over substances scheduled under the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention, that legislation still requires updating. In addition, there is still no legislation on precursor control and no designated competent authority for the implementation of the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 Convention. The Board therefore encourages the Government to give priority to updating legislation on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and drafting adequate legislation on the control of precursor chemicals, as well as to establish an adequate mechanism for the monitoring and control of precursor chemicals, in order to prevent the country from being used for the diversion of those substances into illicit channels.

288. The Board notes the efforts by the law enforcement authorities of Ghana to combat the smuggling of drugs through their country, as well as the measures taken by the Government to eradicate cannabis plants and realize an integrated alternative development programme. In view of the increasing number and volume of seizures of illicit drugs, in particular cocaine, in Ghana and in its neighbouring countries, Ghana appears to be at risk of being used as a transit country by illicit drug traffickers, a development that could have a spillover effect, resulting in increased drug abuse. The Board therefore encourages the Government to continue its efforts and to elaborate appropriate programmes for drug abuse prevention and demand reduction, targeting young people in particular. The Board calls upon UNODC to provide assistance to the Government to enable it to further strengthen the capacity of its law enforcement authorities to intercept illicit drug consignments.

289. In August 2005, the Board sent a mission to Lesotho for the first time to review the drug control situation and the Government's compliance with the international drug control treaties. The Board notes the

efforts made by the Government in drug control and encourages it to continue to strengthen those efforts.

290. In Lesotho, current drug control legislation contains the relevant provisions for the control of licit and illicit drug movements. Two new bills are in the process of being drafted to replace the outdated legislation. The new legislation will include provisions to control precursor chemicals and equipment used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. The Board notes the efforts of the Government to update existing drug control legislation and encourages it to establish and implement the necessary precursor control legislation as soon as possible.

291. The Board notes the efforts of the law enforcement authorities of Lesotho to eradicate cannabis plant cultivation and combat drug trafficking. The Board urges the Government of Lesotho to strengthen its efforts to eradicate cannabis plant cultivation and to introduce alternative development programmes, with the assistance of international donors.

292. The Board notes that the Government of Lesotho has established a national focal point for drug control. The Board encourages the Government to allocate adequate resources to ensure that the focal point is able to carry out its functions effectively and efficiently. Staff at all levels of government involved in drug control require adequate training.

293. A drug abuse treatment centre and resource centre are providing invaluable services to Lesotho and have the potential to provide similar services to neighbouring countries. The Board urges the Government to pursue its efforts to provide a comprehensive drug abuse prevention and treatment programme.

294. The Board sent a mission to Swaziland in August 2005 to review the progress made by the Government in implementing the Board's recommendations following its mission to that country in 1985. In Swaziland, legislation currently being used to control the licit and illicit movement of drugs dates back to the 1920s. The Board notes that a new drug bill is currently before the parliament. It encourages the Government of Swaziland to adopt the bill without delay and to take measures for its speedy implementation, incorporating the provisions required to deal with the current drug control problems facing

the country. The Board notes with concern that there is currently no relevant legislation controlling precursor chemicals in Swaziland. The Board urges the Government to establish, adopt and implement as soon as possible the measures necessary to control precursor chemicals.

295. Despite the efforts by law enforcement officials, cannabis plants continue to be illicitly cultivated throughout Swaziland. The Board notes with concern that there is an ongoing privately sponsored national campaign aimed at the legalization of cannabis plant cultivation in Swaziland. The Board wishes to remind the Government that cannabis, as it is considered particularly liable for abuse, is in Schedule IV of the 1961 Convention, which requires Governments, pursuant to article 2, paragraph 5, of that convention, to adopt special measures having regard to the dangerous properties of that drug. Therefore, the Board urges the Government to continue to take a strong stand against the legalization of cannabis plant cultivation and, at the same time, to strengthen its eradication efforts and to introduce alternative development programmes.

296. Both cocaine abuse and heroin abuse have emerged as major problems in the city of Manzini, the industrial centre of Swaziland. The Board encourages the Government to conduct a rapid assessment survey of drug abuse in that city and its surrounding areas and to put into place programmes for reducing illicit drug abuse in the country. The Board notes with concern that there are currently no facilities in Swaziland that provide specialized treatment for drug abusers. The Board encourages the Government to establish such facilities as soon as possible.

297. The Board sent a mission to Zambia in August 2005 to review the progress made by the Government in implementing the Board's recommendations following its mission to that country in 1996. The Board notes with appreciation the continued commitment and efforts of the Government in combating drug abuse and trafficking in Zambia.

298. The legislation currently in force in Zambia contains provisions on control over the licit and illicit movement of drugs. The current legislation is in the process of being amended to include provisions on the control of precursor chemicals. The Board urges the Government to establish, adopt and implement as soon

as possible the measures necessary to control precursor chemicals.

299. Cannabis plants continue to be illicitly cultivated throughout Zambia, despite efforts by law enforcement officials. The Board encourages the Government to strengthen its efforts to eradicate the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants and to introduce alternative development programmes in cooperation with other countries in the region and international donors. The Board notes with concern that there are currently no treatment facilities in Zambia for drug abusers and encourages the Government to establish such facilities as soon as possible. The Board also encourages the Government to provide the drug law enforcement and pharmaceutical regulatory bodies in Zambia with adequate resources to enable them to carry out their functions properly.

300. As there is a particularly high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia, the Board is concerned that the current situation could be further exacerbated by insufficient drug abuse prevention programmes and urges the Governments concerned to take appropriate preventive measures to address those problems.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

Major developments

301. The region of Central America and the Caribbean continues to be used as a major trans-shipment point for consignments of drugs, mainly cocaine, originating in South America and destined for the United States and countries in Europe. While extensive coastal areas and difficult terrain may to some extent explain the situation, persistent negative social factors, such as high unemployment and institutional weaknesses, have played a major role as well. It is estimated that a large part of the 300 tons of cocaine entering the United States each year has passed through Central America and the Caribbean.

302. Several countries in Central America and the Caribbean have signed the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), a free trade agreement with the United States that would liberalize interregional commerce and remove barriers to trade in most goods.

The Board urges the Governments concerned not to weaken existing controls over drugs once CAFTA enters into force.

303. In its report for 2004, the Board expressed its concern over the link between drug trafficking and organized crime perpetrated by youth gangs in several Central American and Caribbean countries.⁴⁰ The Board welcomes the Meeting on Transnational Criminal Youth Gangs: Characteristics, Importance and Public Policies, organized in Tapachula, Mexico, in June 2005 by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States. The Board urges the Governments concerned to step up their efforts to fight that problem, while maintaining respect for human rights.

Treaty adherence

304. All States in Central America and the Caribbean are parties to the 1961 Convention and the 1988 Convention and, with the exception of Haiti, to the 1971 Convention. The Board calls on Haiti to accede to the 1971 Convention without delay. The Board welcomes the ratification by Nicaragua of the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention and the ratification by Honduras of the 1971 Convention.

Regional cooperation

305. In 2004, the CICAD Group of Experts on Pharmaceutical Products developed the Model Reference Guide for Health Professionals: Prevention and Detection of Abuse of Narcotics and Controlled Substances and Their Diversion to Illicit Channels and the Model Guide for Manufacturers to Control Pharmaceutical Products. The Group also analysed different mechanisms to enhance inspections, control measures and coordination, including with regard to the sale of pharmaceutical products on the Internet.

306. In October 2004, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), with the support of UNODC and CICAD, established drug information networks to guide the development of efforts to reduce illicit drug supply and demand in the Caribbean.

307. CICAD is working together with the Inter-American Development Bank to create and/or strengthen financial intelligence units throughout Central America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and the Financial Action

Task Force of South America against Money Laundering (GAFISUD) are also providing support in that endeavour.

308. An operation involving the cooperation of law enforcement agencies in Central America and the Caribbean and in the United States has resulted in 354 arrests and the seizure of a total of 26.5 tons of cocaine and about US\$ 86 million in currency and other assets. The operation was terminated at the end of 2004.

309. In October 2004, Operation Escandalo, conducted by United States law enforcement agencies, successfully dismantled an important cocaine smuggling network in Haiti involving several high-level officials of the previous Government.

310. The Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City from 11 to 15 October 2004, recommended that central law enforcement databases and standardized reporting should be encouraged and that Governments should consider the posting of judicial liaison officers in their diplomatic missions to ensure proper adherence to required legal procedures and the speedy gathering of prosecution evidence (see para. 399 below).

National legislation, policy and action

311. Almost all of the countries in Central America and the Caribbean have designed national plans to deal with the drug problem; at the same time, however, almost all of those countries have experienced difficulties in implementing the plans, mainly because of lack of human and financial resources.

312. Most countries in Central America and the Caribbean have no epidemiological studies on drug abuse among the general population, which makes it difficult to estimate the prevalence of the abuse of psychoactive substances at the national level, to determine trends in drug abuse and to assess the effectiveness of policies to reduce illicit drug supply and demand.

313. Measures for the control of pharmaceutical preparations, including rules regarding the prescription, distribution and sale of such products, need to be enhanced in Central America and the Caribbean. The need for stringent control measures has increased as pharmaceuticals, including substances

such as pseudoephedrine, amphetamine-type stimulants, phentermine, hydrocodone and oxycodone, are being sold over the Internet.

314. To deal with the growing problem of youth gangs in El Salvador, the Government is implementing the Super Mano Dura plan (super heavy hand plan) and the Mano Amiga plan (friendly hand plan). The Super Mano Dura plan established punitive measures against gang members, while the second plan established rehabilitation assistance for former gang members. The Super Mano Dura plan has been criticized by civil society and has led to protests and riots in prisons in El Salvador. Prison inmates have demanded more rehabilitation programmes to replace the severe penalties provided for in current legislation.

315. In Honduras, the implementation of drug control legislation by the judicial system appears to be hampered by, among other things, corrupt practices. The National Assembly in that country has not yet adopted legislation that would remove the immunity privileges of high-level officials, thereby allowing for them to be prosecuted (the Constitution was amended in 2004 to make that possible). The National Assembly has yet to adopt legislation to reform the statute that covers illegal drugs and to make money-laundering a crime.

316. In Costa Rica, the Government has promulgated decree No. 31684, aimed at strengthening drug control in the country. Costa Rica is the depositary of the multilateral Agreement concerning cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area, which was signed in 2003. The Board urges the parties to the Agreement to ratify it without delay.

317. In Cuba, operations Coraza Popular and Aché III resulted in a reduction in smuggling of narcotic drugs in 2004. In addition, Interpol has resumed its operations in Cuba.

318. In June 2004, the Government of the Bahamas signed a comprehensive maritime agreement that would provide law enforcement officers with a comprehensive framework for their work in the area of fighting maritime drug trafficking. The Government also launched its first national drug control plan. The Board notes, however, that national legislation to

improve the control of substances in the schedules of the 1988 Convention has not yet been approved.

319. In 2004, the Government of Jamaica launched Operation Kingfish, which targets the increasing drug-related crime and violence in that country (see also para. 598 below). That has led to disruption of the cocaine traffic; at the same time, however, other crimes have increased, as drug traffickers have turned to other sources of income. The Government has drafted several new laws to deal with the situation. The Board is concerned that illegal use of Ecstasy (MDMA), which is regulated by the Food and Drugs Act of Jamaica, is subject to light penalties. The Board encourages the Government of Jamaica to pursue its efforts to include Ecstasy in the list of drugs covered in the Dangerous Drugs Act, so that applying stricter penalties would apply in cases involving the use of that drug.

320. Despite the efforts of the United Nations, the situation in Haiti remains precarious, which means that the conditions are ideal for organized criminal activities, including drug trafficking, money-laundering and gang violence. However, some improvements appear to have been made. For example, a joint information coordination centre, a Maritime Interdiction Task Force and an anti corruption unit have been established. The Board encourages the interim Government to make full use of those bodies to fight drug trafficking.

321. The Government of the Dominican Republic implemented the revised criminal procedural code in 2004 that modified the country's penal system. The new system is expected to improve the administration of justice in the country. In addition, a new guideline on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse was issued. The new guideline is based on a CICAD recommendation.

322. The Government of Barbados has not yet placed under national control all the substances listed in the 1988 Convention. There are also some weaknesses in the national control measures; for example, no special licences or permits are required to prescribe certain drugs. The Board urges the Government to completely fulfil its international obligations and to strengthen control measures in the country.

323. Drug traffickers are taking advantage of the dire unemployment situation in Nicaragua by paying

members of the local population to illegally distribute drugs. The situation appears to have led to an increase in the number of addicts among the population.

324. The government of the Netherlands Antilles enacted two ministerial decrees on 28 January 2005 classifying as controlled substances all psychotropic substances in the schedules of the 1971 Convention. With the enactment of the new legislation, the government has complied with the provisions of the 1971 Convention. The requirement of import authorizations for substances in Schedules III and IV went into effect on 1 April 2005. Legislation on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention is still waiting to be enacted by the parliament.

325. In December 2004, the Government of Belize enacted new legislation concerning the coast guard and implemented measures to strengthen drug abuse prevention programmes at all levels of the school system in order to deal with the growing drug problem and the problems associated with it, including drug-related criminal activities. The Government, however, lacks funding to implement its programmes.

326. In Costa Rica, a 2004 study on drug-related crime, showed that 33 per cent of the crimes committed in the country were linked to some violation of the Law on Psychotropic Substances; furthermore, 34 per cent of the persons interviewed in the study admitted that they had committed crimes while under the influence of drugs and 22 per cent reported that they had committed crimes in order to obtain drugs.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

327. The total amount of cocaine seized in Central America and the Caribbean each year continues to be high (about 30 tons). Panama continued to account for the largest total quantity of cocaine seized in the region (7 tons). The most significant increase in total cocaine seizures was registered in Nicaragua (6.2 tons seized in 2004, compared with 1.1 tons in the previous year). Total cocaine seizures also increased in Belize, Costa Rica and El Salvador. The total amount of cocaine seized was reported to have decreased in Guatemala and Honduras.

328. Cocaine traffickers appear to be targeting countries in Central America more than countries in the

Caribbean, as reflected in seizure data for 2004. There are indications that new routes are being used to transport consignments of drugs, mainly cocaine, to Europe, for the most part through Western Africa but also through South America.

329. The total volume of cannabis seized has increased in Central America but declined in the Caribbean. In 2004, the largest total volume of cannabis seized (1,700 tons) was reported by Trinidad and Tobago.

330. Cannabis is produced in Central America and the Caribbean but on a small scale, mainly for local consumption. Jamaica continues to be the main country in the region that is producing and exporting cannabis on a larger scale.

331. To deal with the problem of opium poppy cultivation in Guatemala, the Government implemented during 2004 a successful eradication programme, eliminating more than 5.4 million opium poppy plants. Pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs have been diverted from licit distribution channels in Guatemala for illicit use; in addition, significant quantities of pharmaceutical preparations from El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico have been smuggled into Guatemala. In El Salvador and Guatemala, the trafficking in heroin appears to be on the increase.

332. Although the rate of cocaine abuse is low in Central America and the Caribbean as a whole, the abuse of cocaine and crack is reported to have increased in Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua. Cannabis abuse has continued to rise in the region.

Psychotropic substances

333. In 2004, cases involving Ecstasy from the Netherlands were reported in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic; in the Dominican Republic, about 50 per cent of the Ecstasy was seized while it was on its way to the United States.

North America

Major developments

334. The abuse of, trafficking in and illicit manufacture of drugs are major problems in North America, which is comprised of Canada, Mexico and

the United States. The Governments of all three of the countries in the region remain committed to the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking. All three countries devote substantial resources to counteracting the drug problem within and beyond their borders. The excellent regional cooperation, particularly in the area of law enforcement, has yielded significant results mostly with regard to dismantling major drug trafficking operations.

335. The abuse of prescription drugs is a major problem in all three countries in North America, in particular the United States, where the abuse of prescription drugs is increasing despite numerous initiatives by the Government and is reported to be taking place among persons in all age groups, including schoolchildren. The sale of controlled drugs from illegally operating Internet pharmacies is part of the problem.

336. Because of its geographical position, Mexico has long been used as a major transit country for illicit drug consignments destined for the United States. That has been one of the main areas of emphasis of its drug control efforts. The transit traffic has had a spillover effect: Mexico is no longer only a transit country but has also become a consumer country for illicit drugs and even a producer country for drugs such as cannabis, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants. Should that trend continue, Mexico could become a major source country for illicit drugs. The Board acknowledges the efforts of the Government of Mexico in countering drug trafficking and illicit drug production and in fighting corruption and encourages the Government to pursue the implementation of its policies in those areas.

337. The Board is concerned that in Canada draft legislation on cannabis (Bill C-17), which would provide for the issuing of a ticket for possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis and the imposing of an administrative penalty instead of imprisonment for cannabis plant cultivation, may send the wrong message, particularly in view of the increase in cannabis abuse in the country.

338. The Board notes that the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in June 2005 that all use of cannabis, including its use for medical purposes, was illegal throughout the territory of the United States.

Treaty adherence

339. All three States in North America are parties to the three international drug control treaties.

Regional cooperation

340. The excellent cooperation between the three countries in North America has continued, resulting in a number of effective measures being implemented against drug trafficking and organized crime.

341. The Canada-United States Cross-Border Crime Forum is the principal bilateral cooperative initiative between the two countries in the area of fighting cross-border crime. The Forum announced in October 2004 the establishment of four new intelligence exchange sites to support the International Border Enforcement Team programme.

342. The Governments of Mexico and the United States have further improved cooperation in law enforcement matters. Anti-corruption initiatives and institutional reforms in Mexico have contributed to the sharing of information, the conducting of joint investigations and the extradition of fugitives to the United States.

343. A number of joint law enforcement operations have been successfully conducted by law enforcement authorities of Canada, Mexico and the United States. In January 2005, Operation Candy Box, a two-year operation involving cooperation between Canada and the United States and targeting a criminal organization illicitly manufacturing MDMA and supplying 15 per cent of the Ecstasy on the illicit market in the United States, culminated in the extradition of the organization's kingpin to the United States. In April 2005, Operation Cyber Chase, a one-year investigation targeting international Internet pharmaceutical traffickers, was successfully concluded; using more than 200 websites, the traffickers involved had, since July 2003, distributed each month approximately 2.5 million dosage units of controlled substances, including hydrocodone (a narcotic analgesic sold under the brand name Vicodin), anabolic steroids and amphetamines.

344. Operation Cold Remedy and Operation Aztec Flu, conducted in cooperation with law enforcement agencies of Mexico and the United States, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, resulted in the seizure of 67.26 million

pseudoephedrine tablets between September 2003 and December 2004. Operation Money Clip, a one-year investigation ending in December 2004, resulted in the dismantling of a money-laundering and poly-drug trafficking organization based in Mexico, the arrests of 90 persons involved and the seizure of US\$ 5.2 million, in addition to significant seizures of cocaine, methamphetamine, cannabis and heroin.

345. Operation United Eagles, an ongoing effort to apprehend Consolidated Priority Organization Targets, is being carried out by a "fugitive apprehension team" comprising Mexican and United States law enforcement officers. A number of other initiatives are being carried out jointly by Mexico and the United States at the south-west border of the United States to disrupt and dismantle poly-drug trafficking organizations based in Mexico, as well as their associates based in Colombia. However, a number of obstacles have been encountered during such operations because of legal provisions in Mexico. The requirement of approval of the Attorney General of Mexico for undercover operations complicates the implementation of such operations. Moreover, the Government of Mexico has not yet established a reliable routine procedure for seeking and obtaining court authorization for undercover operations. Furthermore, controlled deliveries are not permitted by Mexican law. The Board urges the Government of Mexico to take appropriate steps to remedy the situation.

346. All three countries in North America are members of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and of CICAD.

National legislation, policy and action

347. The Government of Mexico is currently involved in efforts to introduce legal reforms relating to the smuggling of small quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; the amendment of the federal law against organized crime; and the reform of laws related to national security and penal justice. Legal reform to strengthen measures aimed at preventing and punishing money-laundering was undertaken in 2004 and new laws have been adopted by the Government of Mexico and five states in that country. The laws are in compliance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force.

348. The National Drug Control Strategy of the United States Administration includes plans for increased drug abuse prevention and treatment efforts, such as support for student drug-testing programmes, assistance to local educational agencies for drug abuse prevention and school safety programmes, support for community coalitions' civic action for preventive efforts and increased drug abuse treatment resources through the Access to Recovery voucher programme and the Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment initiative, which emphasizes early intervention aimed at non-dependent drug users.

349. Other priorities of the National Drug Control Strategy of the United States include support for drug court programmes. The total number of drug courts in the country increased significantly during the past year to 1,621. The Strategy also addresses the abuse of prescription drugs, which ranks second only to cannabis abuse in the United States. Prescription drug monitoring programmes at the state level have taken a leading role in detecting and deterring the diversion of popular prescription drugs.

350. In the United States, the Drug Intelligence Fusion Center, under the programme of the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces, provides member agencies with a comprehensive data warehouse with access to investigative drug and related financial information. One highly successful investigation conducted by the Task Forces, Operation Cotton Candy, focused on the illegal distribution of pain medication containing controlled substances, including oxycodone, by 60-80 doctors, pharmacists and patients. One of the main traffickers involved, a doctor who had prescribed up to 1,600 oxycodone tablets each day that were subsequently trafficked, was sentenced in April 2005 to 25 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$1 million after having been convicted on charges of illegal drug distribution.

351. Canada is faced with a similar problem with regard to the abuse of prescription drugs. A task force in Atlantic Canada found that a small number of physicians were responsible for writing prescriptions for large quantities of OxyContin, an oxycodone-based drug, and other controlled substances such as benzodiazepines. The electronic monitoring and tracking of prescriptions are considered to be promising tools for reducing the abuse of prescription drugs. To date, five Canadian provinces have

implemented programmes for tracking multiple-copy prescriptions in an effort to reduce the diversion of drugs that are at a high risk of being diverted and abused.

352. The Board notes that Canada published in November 2004 the Canadian Addiction Survey, initiated in December 2003 to provide information about prevalence rates and trends in drug abuse. Since the renewal of its Drug Strategy in May 2004, Canada has established an accountability and evaluation framework to enable the progress made in achieving the objective of the Strategy to be monitored, documented and evaluated. In April 2005, the Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund was launched to provide funds for conducting activities for the reduction of illicit drug demand and the prevention of drug abuse.

353. The Government of Canada has recently initiated consultations with federal, provincial and municipal law enforcement agencies to discuss and develop a collaborative and strategic approach to enforcement of the Precursor Control Regulations. The consultations led to the identification of a collaborative action plan to improve the controls related to precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

354. In accordance with a recommendation made by the Board in 1996, the Government of Mexico has increased the resources to be set aside for control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Measures to interdict the illicit sale of controlled substances through Internet pharmacies will be carried out in cooperation with relevant agencies at the national level, such as consumer protection services, and with the Governments of the United States and other countries concerned.

355. In Mexico, a pilot project to study the use of remote sensing technology to assess the extent of illicit crop cultivation and to estimate illicit production from the identified cultivation is being planned with the help of UNODC. A satellite monitoring system is under way and preliminary results are expected to be available by December 2005. The Board welcomes that initiative of the Government of Mexico, as reliable data on the extent of illicit drug crop cultivation in Mexico are urgently needed and long overdue.

356. In addition to eradicating illicit crop cultivation, seizing illicit drugs and arresting the criminals

involved, the Government of Mexico has also been fighting corruption at all levels. Almost 30,000 persons, including high-ranking officials, have been arrested for corruption since 2003. Additional efforts will be required to further fight corruption, including in the area of law enforcement and in the correction system. Of particular concern are reports of drug gang violence and violent challenges to police efforts to deal with drug trafficking in several cities in northern Mexico.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

357. The Board notes the declining rates of abuse of cannabis, cocaine and Ecstasy in the United States, particularly among adolescents and youth. However, that positive development is partly counteracted by an increase in the abuse of prescription drugs, in particular painkillers, among young adults and an increase in the abuse of inhalants among youth. The Board is also concerned about reports that methamphetamine manufacture, trafficking and abuse seem to be on the rise, particularly in rural areas. The Board notes the recent announcement of an anti-methamphetamine initiative by the Government of the United States in response to this trend.

358. In the United States, a little less than 8 per cent of the population aged 12 and above are current (past month) users of illicit drugs; the main drug of abuse is cannabis, followed by prescription drugs and cocaine. The prescription drugs that are abused are, to a large extent, diverted from domestic distribution channels or illegally operating Internet pharmacies. Most of the cocaine and much of the heroin, cannabis and methamphetamine available on the illicit drug markets in the United States are smuggled into the country over the Mexican border in the south-west. Despite concerted efforts by the Government of Mexico to counter illicit drug manufacture and trafficking, Mexico continues to be the primary transit country for the cocaine and one of the main manufacturers of the heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis found on illicit markets in the United States.

359. The smuggling of drugs over the border between Canada and the United States has declined considerably; however, cannabis and methamphetamine continue to be smuggled into the United States, while heroin and cocaine continue to be

smuggled into Canada. Trafficking in and use of controlled synthetic drugs have become firmly entrenched in the drug culture in Canada. While the rave phenomenon served as the primary vehicle for the proliferation of Ecstasy trafficking and use, it also led to the introduction of other drugs associated with clubs and the resurgence of the abuse of established illicit synthetic drugs, notably methamphetamine. The illicit market for synthetic drugs has evolved from a relatively small market to a huge profit-making opportunity, enticing major organized crime networks to participate in the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in such drugs.

Narcotic drugs

360. Cannabis continues to be the most abused drug in all three countries in North America. In Canada and Mexico cannabis abuse is still increasing, while in the United States the rate for cannabis use in the past year for almost all age groups, in particular for adolescents, has been declining since the late 1990s.

361. Despite this positive trend, cannabis is readily available throughout the United States, and varieties of cannabis with higher potency have become more prevalent over the last 10 years. Domestic cannabis production appears to be increasing in part because of large-scale cannabis production by criminal groups. Tentative estimates indicate that approximately 10,000 tons of cannabis are produced each year in the United States.

362. Mexican cannabis is the principal type of foreign-produced cannabis available in the United States. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plants in Mexico is concentrated in the least developed parts of the country, predominately in the west.

363. While Canada is not a primary source of cannabis in the United States, exportation of cannabis to the United States has continued: Canada is the source of approximately 2 per cent of all cannabis seized on United States borders. In Canada, cannabis plant cultivation has continued to spread throughout the country due to the significant demand for cannabis, particularly among youth. For the last five years, Canadian law enforcement agencies have seized each year an average of 1.1 million cannabis plants, a sixfold increase since 1993. Operations with thousands of cannabis plants are no longer uncommon.

364. In the United States, it is estimated that 2.3 million persons are current users of cocaine. The Board considers it to be encouraging that, among adolescents, the overall trend in cocaine abuse, like that of cannabis abuse, has been downward since 1999. In Canada, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse increased during the period 1994-2004 from 0.7 to 1.9 per cent. Cocaine is the second most widely abused illicit drug in Canada and Mexico.

365. In the past, of the cocaine found in the United States, more than 70 per cent had entered the country through the corridor of Central America and Mexico, less than 30 per cent had entered the country through the Caribbean and about 1 per cent had been imported directly from the source country. Recently, the volume of cocaine passing through the corridor of Central America and Mexico to the United States has increased, accounting for 92 per cent of the total volume of cocaine entering the United States.

366. Most of the cocaine available on the illicit market in Canada is supplied by commercial trucks passing through the United States. There is a close relationship between the smuggling of cocaine from the United States into Canada and the smuggling of Canadian cannabis to the United States.

367. In the United States, current users of heroin represent 0.1 per cent of the population. The rate for heroin use in the past year appears to be relatively stable in the United States, but the rate for heroin use among adolescents is below the peak rates of the late 1990s. The most prevalent types of heroin in the United States continue to be Colombian and Mexican heroin, although the share of the heroin market accounted for by South-West Asian heroin may be increasing.

368. Despite the relatively small share of global opium production that it accounts for (less than 5 per cent), Mexico is currently the second largest supplier of heroin to the illicit market in the United States. About 60 per cent of the trafficked heroin is reportedly smuggled out of Colombia through Mexico, the remainder being manufactured in Mexico itself. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy in Mexico (like the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant) is concentrated in the least developed parts of the country, largely in the west. The Government of Mexico estimates that about 80 per cent of the illicit opium cultivation in the country has been eradicated.

369. While most of the heroin available on the illicit market in Canada continues to originate in South-East Asia and South-West Asia, heroin of Latin American origin is being encountered more frequently. South-East Asian, South-West Asian and other criminal organizations continue to be largely responsible for heroin importation and heroin trafficking activities in Canada.

370. All three countries in North America have experienced a significant increase in the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs. In Mexico, the abuse of pharmaceutical preparations is nearly as frequent as cocaine abuse. In Canada, an illegal street market for many prescription drugs has been confirmed, reportedly with large profit margins in the street value of various drugs.

371. In the United States, the results of national surveys indicate that the non-medical use of all major groups of prescription drugs has been increasing over the past 10 years and now rivals the abuse of all other drugs except cannabis. Most pharmaceuticals abused in the United States are diverted through forged prescriptions, theft or "doctor shopping" (individuals obtaining considerably more prescriptions than clinically necessary in the course of a year). Law enforcement agencies report that illegal sale of prescription drugs via the Internet, often through Internet-based pharmacies, has increased sharply since the late 1990s.

372. In 2004, approximately one out of five teenagers (18 per cent) in the United States was reported to have abused Vicodin (hydrocodone) in the past year and one out of 10 teenagers was reported to have abused OxyContin (oxycodone) in the past year; that represents a significant increase compared with the figures for 2002. A task force in Atlantic Canada found that a growing number of young people were abusing OxyContin.

373. In the United States, transdermal patches containing a slow-release dose of fentanyl are increasingly being used for recreational purposes. As a result, there has been an increase in overdoses: 115 deaths by overdose were attributed to the fentanyl patch in 2004. Some of the victims had removed the entire three-day supply of the drug from the patch and then injected, ingested or smoked it; others had used several patches at once.

Psychotropic substances

374. In the United States, it is estimated that there are over 3 million persons abusing prescription drugs containing psychotropic substances, mostly tranquillizers, stimulants and, to a lesser extent, sedatives. The rate of abuse of those drugs has remained fairly stable during the past two years. The abuse of sedatives among adolescents increased for a decade before levelling for the first time in 2003, a development welcomed by the authorities. Due to the high prescription level of stimulants used for the treatment of ADD (called attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the United States), the preparations are also found on the illicit market. One out of 10 teenagers has used prescription stimulants (Ritalin® and/or Adderall®) without a doctor's prescription.

375. In Mexico, the abuse of tranquillizers is higher and is growing faster among women than among men. There continue to be cases in which flunitrazepam is diverted not to be abused but to be used to commit "date rape" (drug-facilitated sexual assault); consequently, the substance has been reclassified in order to strengthen control over it.

376. GHB has become a matter of particular concern to United States law enforcement and public health agencies because of its increasing availability, the sharp increase in the frequency with which it was mentioned in emergency room cases since the mid-1990s and its use in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assault. In Canada, GHB has become a prominent law enforcement problem. Organized criminal groups in Quebec and Ontario engage in cross-border trafficking in GHB kits (including the precursor chemical GBL), selling the kits over the Internet and mailing them to customers in the United States and other countries throughout the world. Clandestine GHB laboratories, particularly in western Canada, provide supplies for traffickers.

377. In Mexico, the seizure of a total of 30.6 million tablets of psychotropic substances in the period 2000-2004 and the fact that the abuse of such substances is reflected in various surveys are indications that the problem is growing. In 2004 alone, over 40 tons of stolen medicaments were seized in Mexico, including some psychotropic substances, mainly in the form of medical samples, indicating that there is a sizeable illicit market for such products in that country.

378. In the United States, the availability of MDMA has decreased nationwide. Moreover, data on illicit drug demand show that the rate of use of MDMA in the past year peaked for most age groups in 2001 and has declined significantly since then. A considerable increase in the perceived risks involved in using Ecstasy no doubt accounts for most of the turnaround.

379. According to Health Canada, the demand for MDMA in Canada is increasing; the drug appears to be the preferred drug of abuse among adolescents and young adults. The total volume of MDMA seized each year at Canadian ports of entry soared from thousands of tablets in the 1990s to nearly 6 million tablets in 2003. Contributing to that increase was a shift towards the importation of large shipments of MDMA in powder form from Western Europe to be pressed into tablets in Canada. Clandestine synthetic drug laboratories have become larger and more sophisticated.

380. In the United States, the rate of use of phencyclidine (PCP), as well as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), in the past year has decreased to a very low level. In Canada, psilocybine, PCP and LSD continue to be available on the illicit market in small quantities.

381. While the declining abuse of methamphetamine among adolescents in the United States is an encouraging sign, the overall increase in such abuse, particularly in rural areas, remains a matter of grave concern. Moreover, the number of methamphetamine laboratories detected and dismantled in the United States increased from over 9,000 in 2002 to more than 17,000 in 2004. In Canada, the percentage of persons who have used "speed" (methamphetamine) in their lifetime increased from 2.1 per cent in 1994 to 6.4 per cent in 2004.

382. It appears that the illicit drug markets in the United States are increasingly being supplied with methamphetamine manufactured in Mexico, the largest foreign source of the methamphetamine found in the United States. The manufacture and distribution of a form of methamphetamine commonly called "ice" (it has a higher purity level and is therefore more addictive) by Mexican criminal groups have increased sharply over the past two years. Pseudoephedrine was previously diverted mainly in bulk quantities for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine; however, pseudoephedrine obtained from crushed

pharmaceutical preparations (tablets) is now being used for such manufacture. The majority of the clandestine methamphetamine laboratories detected and dismantled in Mexico were in the north of the country, close to the border of the United States.

383. The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine have dramatically increased in Canada and the abuse of that substance is reported to have greatly increased in some parts of the country. The bulk of the methamphetamine available on the illicit market in Canada has been manufactured in that country. Seizure data indicate that illicitly manufactured methamphetamine from Canada is being smuggled into other countries, in particular the United States and, to a small extent, Japan.

384. The Government of Mexico is monitoring the movement of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Pseudoephedrine has been moved to a different schedule to allow stricter control over its sale. Several national training workshops on the control of precursor chemicals have been held in Mexico since 2003 to inform industry of relevant control measures and of the need to remain vigilant with regard to attempts to divert such chemicals.

Substances not under international control

385. Ketamine abuse has been reported in all three countries in North America. The rate of use of ketamine in the past year has declined among adolescents and young adults in the United States. In Canada, ketamine is among the more popular drugs that have been introduced in the “rave” and “clubbing” subcultures. Because of problems in the past involving its diversion and abuse, stricter controls over ketamine have been implemented in Mexico.

386. Inhalants abused in Mexico and the United States are easily accessible in the form of household and office products, including glue, shoe polish, gasoline (petrol), aerosols, butane, paint thinner and nail polish remover. After 1995, there was a long and substantial decline in the abuse of inhalants among adolescents in the United States that was related to a media campaign against the abuse of such substances conducted by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America; then, in 2004, inhalant abuse in that country increased again. The proportion of young people who believe it is dangerous to abuse inhalants has declined over the past three

years, which could explain the resurgence in the abuse of such substances.

387. In the United States, one out of 11 teenagers has abused over-the-counter cough medications containing the active ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM). The recently reported deaths of five teenagers in that country may be associated with the consumption of DXM in capsule form. Though DXM abuse is not a new phenomenon, there has been a disturbing new development involving the sale of pure DXM in powder form. Such pure DXM is often put into capsules by the dealer before being sold on the street.

Missions

388. The Board sent a mission to Mexico in January 2005. The Board notes the significant efforts made by the Government of Mexico in combating illicit drug production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse. However, the Board is concerned that, despite important law enforcement successes, the trafficking organizations remain powerful and continue to strongly impede drug control efforts in Mexico and beyond. The Board urges the Government to curb the influence of organized criminal organizations on the Government and to fight corruption at all levels. With regard to illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and opium poppy, the Board recommends that the Government adopt effective means to prevent the resurgence of such cultivation, for example, by providing legitimate sources of livelihood for the farmers in question, in addition to intensifying law enforcement action.

389. The Board notes the changes of the legislative basis for drug control introduced or planned to be introduced to better combat trafficking in and misuse of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors and encourages the Government of Mexico to ensure concerted action involving the authorities at the federal level and the state level. In view of the continued diversion of psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals in Mexico, the Board requests the Government to investigate all cases of diversion and attempted diversion, with a view to identifying new trends and detecting and arresting the traffickers involved. With respect to demand reduction, the Board notes that the competent authorities ascertain regularly the extent and pattern of drug abuse and have improved the situation with regard to the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug

abusers. Although the extent of drug abuse in Mexico is small compared with the situation in other countries in the region, it has increased in recent years. The Board encourages the Government to continue to expand drug abuse prevention and treatment activities.

South America

Major developments

390. In South America, the level of illicit coca bush cultivation remained significantly lower in 2004 than in the peak year of 2000, although it increased in 2004 compared with 2003. The Board notes that intensified eradication and law enforcement efforts by the Government of Colombia have led to a decrease in illicit coca bush cultivation in that country; however, cultivation is increasing in other countries in the region, in particular in Bolivia and Peru. The Governments of most countries in the region have continued to be successful in their efforts to suppress trafficking in drugs, mainly cocaine, as evidenced by reports of record drug seizures, the dismantling of increased numbers of cocaine laboratories and increases in seizures of precursor chemicals.

391. In 2004, coca bush cultivation in South America increased by 3 per cent compared with 2003 and continued to spread to areas that were previously not affected by such cultivation. Authorities identified extensive areas that had been newly cultivated with coca bush, including areas with high levels of insecurity and violence and in national forests and parks. Coca bush is also illicitly cultivated on small plots of land in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Cocaine manufacture and drug trafficking have continued to spread in the region despite intensified interdiction efforts. The Board notes with concern that the consistently high volume of seizures of cocaine, both in the region and elsewhere, and of coca paste and the precursor chemicals needed to manufacture cocaine have not yet led to a reduction in the availability of cocaine worldwide.

392. Illicit cultivation of opium poppy and trafficking in heroin have not diminished in South America. The abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has increased in most countries in the region. There are signs that the international syndicates involved in drug trafficking in the region are also becoming involved in

trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants and are experimenting with the illicit manufacture of such drugs. Money-laundering and corruption seriously affect most countries in South America and may reduce the impact of drug control efforts in the region.

393. Political and social tension increased in many countries in South America, including in countries that had previously been less affected by it. In Bolivia and Peru, the Governments did not succeed in enforcing the law because of resistance on the part of coca bush growers; in both countries, the total area under coca bush cultivation has increased, although the transitional measures regarding the licit cultivation of coca bush and consumption of coca leaf under the 1961 Convention ended a long time ago and it is a known fact that coca leaf harvested in the areas concerned is used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine. In addition, studies have been undertaken or will be undertaken in Peru and Bolivia, respectively to assess the demand for coca leaf used for local consumption.

394. The Board is concerned that the Governments of some countries in South America, in view of the perceived difficulties in fighting illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking, are considering ways to reduce their efforts in those areas, thereby sending the wrong message to the public. The Board urges all Governments to ensure that the provisions of the 1961 Convention concerning illicit crop cultivation and illicit drug production and trafficking are fully implemented.

395. At the same time, the Board believes that measures to alleviate poverty, accompanied by sustained law enforcement efforts to prevent the re-emergence of illicit crop cultivation, are essential to the achievement of a lasting reduction in the production of coca or other narcotic drugs in South America.

Treaty adherence

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

Regional cooperation

397. South American countries continue to participate actively in multilateral cooperation mechanisms of CICAD for countries in the Americas. CICAD is

assisting those countries in the preparation of reports under the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism and the development of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs. CICAD also carries out, among other things, drug supply reduction and control activities and provides guidance in the development of the integrated drug treatment system. Together with UNODC, CICAD is establishing a drug information network to ensure common standards among countries and comparability of national drug abuse surveys (see para. 409 below). Regional cooperation related to drug control also includes Operation Andes II, a regional tracking initiative for precursors carried out in collaboration with Interpol and the World Customs Organization, and joint activities carried out by the member States (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and associated States (Bolivia and Chile) of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR).

398. In addition, multilateral and bilateral agreements on drug control between States with common geographical traits or shared borders continue to be upheld. For example, an intelligence centre coordinated by the Federal Police of Brazil was created in 2005 in the border area where the borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet. To assist law enforcement agencies of Colombia in establishing connections with their counterparts in the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Office central de répression du trafic illicite des stupéfiants of France, two meetings were organized in Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique, in March and May 2005.

399. The Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2004, recommended that Governments should examine the possibility of sharing the proceeds from the forfeiture of illegally acquired assets upon the conclusion of investigations of drug trafficking activity undertaken in multiple jurisdictions, to facilitate the prosecution of persons involved in illicit activities.

400. Leaders of drug control agencies from 70 countries held a conference in Santiago in April 2005 to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and money-laundering. One of the main issues discussed was the increased use of the Internet by drug traffickers.

401. The United States and countries in Europe continue to provide resources for drug control in South

America through bilateral and multilateral agreements in a variety of areas such as law enforcement, criminal and fiscal investigation and judiciary matters, alternative development assistance, and programmes for drug abuse prevention. Recent examples include the agreement between Colombia and the United States and the agreement between Bolivia and the United States to maintain in 2006 the assistance provided for alternative development, strengthening institutions and creating social infrastructure, as well as the Lima Declaration, on strengthening cooperation between regions to reduce the supply of and demand for illicit drugs, agreed on during the VII High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima in June 2005.

National legislation, policy and action

402. The Government of Argentina approved in January 2005 the Federal Plan for Integral Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking for the period 2005-2007, which provides for reduction of illicit drug demand and supply; control measures; strengthening of institutions; and evaluation programmes. In Brazil, the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress approved in February 2004 a new law amending Act No. 6368 of 21 October 1976, on measures for the prevention and suppression of the illicit traffic in and abuse of narcotic drugs or those substances which cause physical or psychic dependence; the new law is still awaiting approval by the Senate. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a revised law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (including the control of precursor chemicals) is still awaiting approval. The Board urges the Governments of those countries to take all the steps necessary to ensure that the new laws are enacted as soon as possible.

403. In Ecuador, a new national drug strategy for the period 2004-2008 and its implementation plan came into effect in 2004. The Strategy includes provisions to strengthen the legal framework and institutional capacities to address drug trafficking. The first agreement to establish joint customs and police port control in Guayaquil, Ecuador, was achieved under a container control pilot programme aimed at reducing drug trafficking and increasing port safety without hampering legitimate container trade.

404. The Government of Guyana published in June 2005 the long-awaited five-year drug control strategy for the period 2000-2005. The strategy should lead to improvement in coordination by various agencies and a balanced approach to reducing the illicit supply of and demand for drugs; key elements are increased resources for law enforcement and greater bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries, together with training of judges and magistrates on laws relating to drug control, improved facilities for the prosecution of drug cases and a revision of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act of Guyana, to provide for speedier forfeiture of assets related to drug trafficking.

405. A multi-year criminal justice reform project continues to be implemented in Chile. In Colombia, a new criminal prosecution system with adversarial, oral and public trial features was initiated in January 2005, to be implemented gradually until December 2008. In Peru, the new code of criminal procedure will implement a similar accusatory system commencing in early 2006. The Board invites other countries experiencing similar problems with their criminal justice system to take appropriate measures to allow proper sentencing of drug-related crimes. For example, in Ecuador, drug traffickers appeared to operate with impunity following the dismissal of the Supreme Court in December 2004. In several remote regions of Ecuador and Peru, drug-related crimes go unpunished as there is no government presence and no public prosecutors.

406. The Board notes that Colombia continued to strengthen its efforts in the area of law enforcement, in particular against the powerful drug trafficking organizations in that country. In late 2004 and early 2005, Colombia extradited several high-ranking drug traffickers to the United States.

407. New legislation against money-laundering was approved in Uruguay in September 2004. Draft legislation against money-laundering is to be approved in Ecuador and Paraguay (see also para. 432 below) by the congress of each of those countries. The Board urges the Government of Ecuador to expedite the approval and entry into force of the proposed legislation. The Board urges the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to approve the Organized Crime Bill, which has been ready since 2002 and which would address the problems of money-

laundering and corruption and foster judicial cooperation; the Government is reviewing its agreement on drug control cooperation with the United States.

408. In South America, activities aimed at combating the illicit use of chemicals in the manufacture of cocaine and heroin continued under Operation Seis Fronteras, a regional initiative involving Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), as well as the United States. The Parliament of Chile adopted in November 2004 a law that includes strengthened measures for the control of precursor chemicals. In Peru, where a new chemical precursor law was enacted in July 2004, a draft regulation on the implementation of the new law is before the congress. The Board invites Suriname, the only country in the region without legislation on precursor control, to enact such legislation as soon as possible. The Board urges all Governments in the region to strengthen their cooperation with a view to preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals across their borders and to identifying the attempted diversion of such chemicals.

409. The Board welcomes the fact that during 2004 and 2005 a comprehensive survey of drug abuse among school-aged persons was conducted with the assistance of CICAD and UNODC in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay, using common methodologies and procedures to enable comparisons to be made between countries. The Board notes that programmes for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse in some countries in South America appear to be inadequate to deal with the increasing drug abuse in those countries. The Board invites Governments of countries in the region to increase their activities for reducing illicit drug demand and to strengthen their programmes for the treatment and social reintegration of drug abusers, as necessary. Governments should establish appropriate policies in this regard and provide adequate resources for such activities.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

410. Illicit cultivation of cannabis destined mainly for local or regional markets continues to be detected in most countries in South America, as evidenced by increasing seizures of cannabis. For example, cannabis

plants are cultivated in northern and north-eastern Brazil, where eradication efforts are ongoing. Paraguay continues to be the principal source of the cannabis resin found in the region. In Paraguay, the good soil and high prices for cannabis and for cannabis resin on the illicit markets are ideal conditions for the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and trafficking in cannabis. Only 10 per cent of the cannabis cultivated in Paraguay is abused locally; most of the rest is destined for markets in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. More than 5,000 tons of cannabis were destroyed in Paraguay with the assistance of Brazilian authorities. Seizures of cannabis were reported to have increased in 2004 in Bolivia, where they rose by 250 per cent (to over 28 tons) compared with 2003, and in Colombia.

411. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plant, like the illicit cultivation of other drug crops in South America, is concentrated in areas where poverty prevails. Although a small number of countries in the region are experiencing serious problems with illicit cannabis plant cultivation, until now, sustainable legitimate livelihood programmes have been practically non-existent in areas where cannabis plant is cultivated. The Board urges those countries to carry out sustainable legitimate livelihood programmes in conjunction with eradication and other effective law enforcement measures in areas that are already affected and those likely to be affected by illicit cannabis plant cultivation.

412. Cannabis abuse is the driving force behind illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking in South America. A comparative study of drug abuse in Bolivia between 1992 and 2005 showed that cannabis continued to be the most frequently abused narcotic drug and that the abuse of cannabis was growing faster than the abuse of other internationally controlled substances. The Board urges the countries concerned to take cannabis abuse into account when considering measures to reduce the illicit demand for drugs.

413. In 2004, the total area cultivated with coca bush in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, after having decreased for three years, increased by 3 per cent (to 158,000 hectares) over 2003, and coca bush cultivation continued to spread to areas previously not affected by it. Whereas the total area under coca bush cultivation in Colombia continued to decrease, from 86,000 hectares in 2003 to 80,000 hectares in 2004, about 60 per cent of the coca bush fields identified in

that country were new. Significant replanting of coca bush was reported in Colombia at the end of 2004; that has not yet been included in the coca bush cultivation survey for 2004. In 2004, crop spraying reached a record level in Colombia for the fourth consecutive year, contributing to the continued decrease in coca bush cultivation. However, the vegetation cover of some of the sprayed coca bush fields had time to grow back. In addition to crop spraying, manual eradication of coca bush fields is also taking place in Colombia.

414. In Peru, which continues to be a major producer of coca leaf, the total area under coca bush cultivation was estimated in 2004 at 50,300 hectares, an increase of 14 per cent over 2003. More than 10,000 hectares of coca bush were eradicated in 2004 and a further 8,000 hectares are expected to be eradicated in 2005; however, opposition to illicit crop eradication is growing. Almost one quarter of the total area cultivated with coca bush in Peru in 2004 was in national parks and other areas where the conditions are not suitable for agriculture. In 2004, studies on coca leaf yields revealed that field management practices had improved. The many coca bush seedlings and newly prepared fields, in particular in areas with high levels of insecurity and violence, where eradication is difficult, indicate that coca bush cultivation in Peru could increase further in 2005. Moreover, in 2005, several local governments issued ordinances that, in effect, legalized the cultivation of coca bush for traditional purposes, such as chewing and making infusions. Those ordinances have been vigorously rejected by the Government of Peru, as they are deemed to be unconstitutional and in breach of Peru's international drug control commitments and responsibilities. The Board is concerned that that action could serve as a precedent if it is allowed to stand.

415. In Bolivia, political and social tension has severely limited the ability of the Government to deal with the increasing coca bush cultivation; moreover, the eradication policy has been undermined by short-term agreements with coca growers. UNODC estimates that in Bolivia a total of 27,700 hectares were under coca bush cultivation in 2004, which represents an increase of 17 per cent over the total for 2003; 41 per cent of the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation was in national parks. A total of 8,437 hectares of coca bush were eradicated in Bolivia in 2004, less than the amount eradicated in any of the three previous years.⁴¹

The increase in coca bush cultivation in Bolivia took place mainly in Chapare, where coca leaf yields were estimated to be more than twice as high as elsewhere in the country; more than 50 per cent of the increase took place at the expense of forest areas.

416. In addition, the illicit cultivation of coca bush continues to be reported in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), near those countries' borders with Colombia, although it is very limited and sporadic compared with such cultivation in the major producing countries. In both Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) the first surveys of illicit crops were launched in mid-2005, focusing on provinces in those countries adjacent to the Colombian border; the results of those surveys are expected in December 2005. The Board hopes that the Governments of those two countries will take vigorous action against illicit coca bush cultivation so that it can be stopped before it spreads and becomes much more difficult to eliminate.

417. The Board wishes to re-emphasize that the continued success of efforts to reduce illicit crop cultivation, as well as interdiction efforts, will depend on the political will of Governments to enforce a policy of not tolerating illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking even in times of difficult circumstances such as social and political tension. However, that policy should be accompanied by programmes offering sustainable legitimate livelihood to farmers in the producing countries.

418. Based on the estimated total area under coca bush cultivation, the potential total manufacture of cocaine in 2004 was estimated at 687 tons, an increase of 2 per cent compared with the total in 2003 (674 tons). That estimate is less reliable than the estimated total area under coca bush cultivation, in the absence of hard data on agricultural yields and also on the yields from processing coca leaf into cocaine. As noted by the Board already in its report for 2004, there are indications that coca leaf yields in some countries, as well as the assumed cocaine manufacture, might have increased considerably more than estimated, due to improved methods;⁴² moreover, better agricultural techniques, including irrigation, have been used. It is also believed that the manufacture of cocaine from coca leaf has become more effective since the late 1990s, as traffickers have become more experienced in the use of precursor chemicals. The relatively stable prices of coca base and cocaine in South America,

despite the success of efforts to reduce illicit coca bush cultivation, as well as law enforcement efforts, support the view that actual illicit manufacture of cocaine might have been substantially higher than estimated.

419. The bulk of the cocaine in the world continued to be manufactured in Colombia, but the illicit manufacture of cocaine is known to have taken place in recent years also in all other countries in South America except Paraguay (even in countries not previously affected by illicit cocaine manufacture, such as Argentina and Uruguay). For example, in the northern border area of Ecuador, a large laboratory for processing cocaine was found in February 2005. In Colombia, intensified law enforcement efforts resulted in an increase in the volume of detected and dismantled clandestine laboratories for cocaine manufacture during 2003 and 2004, as well as an increase in the total volume of seizures of coca base and cocaine hydrochloride. In May 2005, more than 15 tons of cocaine hydrochloride were seized at an illegal storage location near Tumaco, Colombia, the largest single seizure of that substance ever made in that country; during the same operation, precursor chemicals, speedboats and firearms were also seized and a centre for controlling drug trafficking activities throughout the country was destroyed.

420. Drug traffickers responded to intensified interdiction efforts in Colombia by gradually shifting the illicit manufacture of cocaine to other countries and by using new and diverse trafficking routes. International criminal groups involving Colombian and Mexican nationals are involved in drug trafficking throughout South America. Criminal organizations that previously focused their activities on trafficking only in either cannabis, cocaine or heroin are now trafficking in all of those drugs. There are some new trends in the smuggling of cocaine into Europe: the cocaine shipments involved are increasingly being transported through Southern Africa and, in particular, Western Africa; and the operations are often organized by criminal groups from Western Africa. In Ecuador, international trafficking networks with links to criminal groups in Lebanon and countries in Northern Africa have been identified as being involved in smuggling cocaine and heroin into the United States and have used corrupt airport officials for that purpose.

421. In Bolivia, the low prices of coca leaf and other illicit drugs noted in the last few months could have

led to Colombian and Mexican drug gangs being attracted to that country. According to information on law enforcement efforts in Bolivia during 2004 and the first half of 2005 and in Peru during 2004, there continues to be a large volume of seizures of cocaine base and precursor chemicals, as well as a large number of dismantled clandestine laboratories for large-scale cocaine manufacture; despite those successes, the low prices of cocaine in the streets in Peru indicate that cocaine is readily available in that country.

422. Although the abuse of cocaine is a problem in South America, the cocaine that is smuggled in the region continues to be mainly destined for the United States or, increasingly, countries in Europe. Brazil, Ecuador, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) are the countries in the region that are most affected by cocaine trafficking, although other countries, such as Argentina and Chile, have experienced growing transit traffic. In Chile, for example, in the second half of 2004, two consignments of cocaine were seized, each exceeding 1 ton. Other significant seizures of cocaine in 2004 were reported by Brazil, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (7 tons each).

423. Traffickers continue to attempt to circumvent the controls put in place within the framework of Operation Purple, the international tracking programme for the prevention of the diversion of potassium permanganate, the key chemical for the purification of cocaine. In 2004, 19 clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of potassium permanganate were detected and dismantled in Colombia (more than twice the number detected and dismantled in that country in 2003), and 3 clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of precursor chemicals were dismantled in Bolivia. In Colombia, the total volume of seizures of precursor chemicals for the manufacture of cocaine increased in 2004 compared with 2000.

424. The precursor chemicals smuggled in South America continue to be mainly from the region. For example, in Ecuador, law enforcement investigations in 2004 and 2005 confirmed a major incident involving transnational organized crime: the large-scale, systematic diversion through theft of petroleum ether for use as a precursor in Colombia. Progress is being made towards finding effective solutions to prevent

such theft in the future. Strengthened precursor control in Paraguay resulted in the seizure of 10,000 litres of toluene, a solvent used in the manufacture of cocaine, in November 2004. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, theft of precursor chemicals is reported to the Government. The Board urges each Government in the region to remain vigilant and strengthen its controls over the distribution and use of precursors on its territory.

425. The Government of Colombia estimates that almost 4,000 hectares were used for the illicit cultivation of opium poppy in 2004, similar to the total area under such cultivation in that country in 2003. It is assumed that the total area under such cultivation in that country has not changed much in recent years, despite crop spraying. Total potential heroin manufacture in Colombia in 2004 was estimated at 5 tons. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy continues to take place in Peru, where the Government has continued its eradication efforts. According to estimates by the Government of Peru, in 2004, a total of 1,400 hectares were cultivated with opium poppy; that area had the potential of yielding approximately 1 ton of heroin. In 2004, Peru reported the seizure of 450 kilograms of opium.⁴³ In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, opium poppy is illicitly cultivated; there are plans to begin an eradication programme once the results of the survey of the extent of that cultivation are known.

426. Heroin manufacture continues to take place mainly in Colombia and, to a lesser degree, in Peru. Eight clandestine laboratories for heroin manufacture were dismantled in Colombia during 2004. Most of the heroin manufactured in South America is destined for the United States. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, one of the main countries in South America used as a transit country for heroin shipments bound for the United States, cooperated in the dismantling of a heroin smuggling organization in 2004.

427. Cannabis and cocaine, in that order, continue to be the main narcotic drugs abused in South America; however, the extent of the abuse of those drugs varies from country to country. For example, the level of drug abuse is fairly low in Paraguay (see para. 433 below): a survey released in August 2004 revealed that only 0.7 per cent of the surveyed population had tried cocaine in their lifetime. In contrast, surveys undertaken in Peru in 2004 showed that abuse of drugs

had increased among men and women, especially among young people, that the abuse of cocaine base and cannabis had nearly doubled between 2002 and 2004, and that about 4 per cent of the surveyed population over 12 years of age had used cocaine at least once.

428. The abuse of morphine and heroin is not a major problem in South America; however, in Argentina and some Andean countries, the abuse of those drugs is reported to be increasing, especially among youth. The Board urges the Governments concerned to alert their population about the risks associated with the abuse of such drugs.

Psychotropic substances

429. According to reports, the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances in South America remains limited. Seizures of illicitly manufactured stimulants, still smuggled mainly out of Europe, continue to be effected in countries in the region. However, in September 2005, Colombian police dismantled for the first time a clandestine laboratory used for the manufacture of methamphetamine. In Colombia, some of the Ecstasy smuggled out of Europe is pressed into tablets and there are trafficking organizations specializing in Ecstasy. The availability and abuse of Ecstasy are increasing in Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Ecstasy is also becoming more readily available in Ecuador and Peru. In Suriname, the volume of seizures of Ecstasy rose sharply in 2004.

430. The diversion and overprescription of a variety of pharmaceuticals containing psychotropic substances have continued. For example, the latest drug abuse surveys conducted in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay show that the rate of abuse of sedatives (benzodiazepines) is ranked second after cannabis abuse and that the rate of abuse of stimulants (such as femporex) is similar to or even higher than that of cocaine. The Board reiterates its appeal to Governments to strengthen their control over prescriptions for controlled pharmaceuticals and to inspect records on relevant sales (see, for example, the report of the Board for 2003).⁴⁴

Substances not under international control

431. Ketamine, a substance currently under review by WHO to determine whether it should recommend that

it be placed under the control of the 1971 Convention, is readily available in Peru on the illicit market and therefore abused extensively, despite the fact that officially its sale is restricted to hospitals. The abuse of ketamine has also been detected in Uruguay.

Missions

432. The Board sent a mission to Paraguay in April 2005. The Board notes the commitment of the Government of Paraguay in combating illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse. The mission found that in Paraguay the legislative basis for the control of drugs in general and for the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in particular was adequate. Nevertheless, the Board notes that the resources for drug control remain inadequate and coordination and cooperation between the agencies involved are still lacking. The Board recommends that the Government provide more human resources, training and equipment with a view to making more effective the agencies involved in drug control. The Board urges the Government to continue to implement its policy of zero tolerance of corruption and to increase the effectiveness and transparency of the law enforcement and judicial systems by providing appropriate human resources and training. In addition, the Board encourages the Government to take all steps necessary to ensure that changes to be introduced into the national legislation against money-laundering will be implemented as soon as possible.

433. The Board advises the Government of Paraguay to keep a balanced approach in its overall drug control policy, ensuring the reduction of both the demand for and the supply of illicit drugs. The Board notes that the Government has recently undertaken surveys to ascertain the extent and pattern of drug abuse, which have shown that there is relatively little abuse of psychotropic substances and cannabis in the country, and is planning drug abuse prevention activities. The Board notes the measures already taken in Paraguay, as well as those planned to be taken, to suppress the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and trafficking in cannabis and other drugs and encourages the Government to maintain its efforts in those areas.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

434. The total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic declined considerably. Although illicit opium poppy cultivation has continued to decline in Myanmar, that country remains the main source of illicit opium in East and South-East Asia.

435. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has now joined Thailand and Viet Nam as countries that are no longer significant suppliers of opiates on the world's illicit markets. However, there are indications that it may be emerging as a transit country used for smuggling amphetamine-type stimulants and heroin.

436. The illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants continue to be a problem in East and South-East Asia. In countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Thailand, methamphetamine is reported to be the drug of choice. Large seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants continued to be reported in most countries in the region, including Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine is concentrated in China and Myanmar, but has been increasingly detected in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Significant amounts of MDMA (Ecstasy) continued to be seized not only in countries such as Indonesia and Japan, but also in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the Macao SAR of China.

437. Opiates, followed by amphetamine-type stimulants, continued to be the main drugs of abuse in East and South-East Asia. Heroin was the most commonly abused drug in the majority of countries in the region, with the exception of Myanmar, where opium was the main drug of abuse, and Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, where methamphetamine was the main drug of abuse. Heroin is the drug of choice in China (including the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao SAR of China), Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam. HIV infection continues to be a major problem in many of the

countries where heroin is the preferred drug among persons who abuse drugs by injection.

Treaty adherence

438. The Board welcomes the accession of Cambodia to the three international drug control treaties in April 2005.

439. The Board notes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste have not yet become a party to any of the international drug control treaties. The Board calls on those States to ratify the treaties without further delay.

440. The Board calls on the Lao People's Democratic Republic to become a party to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention without further delay.

Regional cooperation

441. The Board notes that, in May 2005, the signatories of 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) adopted the Siemreap Declaration. The Declaration focuses on collaboration in a wide range of areas, including the control of precursor chemicals and amphetamine-type stimulants, the treatment and prevention of drug abuse, the development of a comprehensive package of interventions related to drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, sustainable alternative development and technical and financial assistance.

442. The Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held in Bangkok from 18 to 25 April 2005. The Congress adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,⁴⁵ which calls for an integrated approach, including measures against illicit drug trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism.

443. The Seventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific was held in Kobe, Japan, in July 2005. The Congress noted the lack of access to prevention services for persons who abuse drugs by injection.

444. The second International Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous

Drugs (ACCORD) Congress was held in Beijing in October 2005. The main objective of the Congress was to review the ACCORD Plan of Action, endorsed by the Congress in 2000, and to update it to reflect the current drug control needs and responses of the region.

445. Within the framework of ACCORD, the Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific was established in 2004. The 11 ACCORD partner countries electronically submit their national drug control data in quarterly and annual reports; those data appear in a common database.

446. Thailand hosted the Seminar on Illicit Traffic by Waterways for ACCORD Partner Countries in June 2005. The United States Coast Guard, the Australian Federal Police, the Japan Coast Guard and the Royal Thai Navy also participated in the Seminar, which was held in Phuket, Thailand. Effective drug control approaches related to waterway interdiction and investigations were presented at the Seminar.

447. Cooperation in the form of joint drug control operations in East and South-East Asia continued to yield good results. In February 2005, Japanese authorities seized 80 kg of "crystal" methamphetamine and 250,000 MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets and arrested three suspects following an investigation carried out jointly by law enforcement agencies of Japan and the Hong Kong SAR of China. In March 2005, authorities in China arrested four suspects and seized 7 kg of heroin as a result of a law enforcement operation carried out in cooperation with the Hong Kong SAR of China.

National legislation, policy and action

448. China announced that it would launch a three-year nationwide "war against drugs" starting in 2005. The objective of the campaign is to reduce illicit drug supplies, drug-related harm and the number of new drug abusers.

449. China has adopted a new law on narcotic and psychotropic substances, as well as a new law on precursor chemicals, both of which went into effect on 1 November 2005. The laws are intended to further strengthen control over narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

450. Japan continues to place high priority on drug control in its national planning, which remains focused on the strengthening of drug control measures to

combat drug smuggling and on the prevention of drug abuse by organizing awareness-raising campaigns and providing support for the rehabilitation of drug abusers.

451. In March 2005, Viet Nam approved a national drug control master plan for the period up to 2010. The master plan is aimed at reducing the number of drug abusers by at least 20 per cent compared with the figure for 2001 and to significantly reduce the number of the communes, city wards, townships, workplaces, schools and armed force units affected by drug problems, as well as to increase treatment services for drug addicts.

452. In December 2004, Cambodia approved a drug control master plan for the period 2005-2010. The plan is focused on reducing illicit drug supply and demand, strengthening law enforcement, reducing the risk of drug abuse and strengthening international cooperation in drug control.

453. The Board notes that in February 2005, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea established an interministerial committee to ensure effective coordination of drug control activities and adequate implementation of drug control legislation. The Board expects that this positive development will enable the Government to take swift action to ratify the international drug control treaties. In order to strengthen the capacity of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for carrying out drug control activities, the Board encourages the Government to allocate sufficient resources to such activities.

454. Viet Nam has approved a plan to combat cross-border drug trafficking in the period 2005-2010. The plan includes measures for tightening the inspection of suspected goods, means of transport and people along border areas, including along road, air and sea routes and in the postal services. The plan also includes the introduction of punishment for administrators who have allowed drug abuse and trafficking.

455. During a period of several months beginning in June 2005, nine countries in East and South-East Asia (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) each held a national workshop focusing on building a partnership between the Government and the chemical and

pharmaceutical industries to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals from licit trade. As a result of the workshops, it was agreed to establish partnership committees; the priority tasks to be undertaken included educating the industries, drafting a code of conduct and promoting cooperation between the industries and the Government.

456. Several countries in East and South-East Asia have implemented policies to provide employment opportunities for rehabilitated drug addicts. In the Philippines, non-governmental organizations are involved in providing jobs in the service industry to former drug addicts. More than 10,200 rehabilitated addicts in Viet Nam have been given jobs under a project on organizing and managing vocational training and job creation. Over 90 enterprises, cooperatives and individuals are participating in the initiative. The beneficiaries are involved in the garment, wood product and food processing industries, in fine arts and handicrafts, and in agricultural production and animal husbandry.

457. The Board is pleased to note that Indonesia and the Philippines have been removed from the list of countries and territories considered by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to be “non-cooperative” in efforts to counter money-laundering or to have critical deficiencies in their systems for countering money-laundering. The Board notes with concern that Myanmar remains on that list. The Board encourages Myanmar to put in place the relevant legislation and administrative structures to prevent money-laundering, which play an important role in efforts to fight drug trafficking.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

458. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plants has continued throughout East and South-East Asia. Several countries in the region have continued to seize substantial quantities of cannabis. Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar and the Republic of Korea reported for 2004 a large increase in the volume of cannabis seized. Malaysia reported having made its largest seizure of cannabis in recent years.

459. The Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic succeeded in further reducing illicit opium

poppy cultivation, from 6,600 hectares in 2004 to 1,800 hectares in 2005. As a result of continued eradication efforts by the Government of Myanmar, illicit opium poppy cultivation declined to 32,800 hectares in 2005, a decrease of 26 per cent compared with the figure for 2004.

460. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic has succeeded in virtually eliminating illicit opium poppy cultivation. However, it is faced with problems involving other drugs. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and trafficking in cannabis are matters of great concern to the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; cannabis is grown on a large scale in certain areas of the country. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic is also emerging as a transit country used for trans-shipping consignments of heroin originating in Myanmar and destined for Cambodia, China, Viet Nam and Thailand.

461. In 2004, several countries in East and South-East Asia, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, reported a significant increase in the volume of opium seized. Myanmar, which usually reports having seized a large quantity of opium every year, reported having seized a total of only 1 ton of opium in 2004.

462. In many countries in East and South-East Asia (China, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam) the total quantity of heroin seized continued to be large. Although Singapore had seized significant amounts of heroin in the past, the quantity of such seizures had recently decreased dramatically. During a raid on the largest drug cartel in Viet Nam in August 2005, police arrested dozens of suspects and seized highly specialized equipment designed for the large-scale manufacture of heroin. On numerous occasions in 2004, the police in Viet Nam seized large amounts of heroin. In 2004, Malaysia reported having dismantled six clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of heroin.

463. Recent seizures in East and South-East Asia indicate an increase in drug trafficking using water routes. In July 2004, authorities of Myanmar seized over 592 kg of heroin in the Andaman Sea; eight months later, in March 2005, Thai authorities seized in the Gulf of Thailand 522 kg of heroin and 10,000 methamphetamine tablets destined for the Hong Kong SAR of China. Furthermore, Cambodian authorities reported having seized in September 2004 600,000 methamphetamine tablets along the Mekong

near their country's northern border with the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand.

464. Authorities in East and South-East Asia continued to report the seizure of small quantities of cocaine. In the Hong Kong SAR of China, a significant amount of cocaine was seized in 2004 (compared with the figure for the previous year) and five clandestine cocaine laboratories were dismantled.

465. Some countries are making progress in preventing the abuse of opium; for example, a survey of villages in the Lao People's Democratic Republic showed that there has been a decrease of 32 per cent in the abuse of opium since 2003.

466. Although the abuse of cannabis is not widespread in East and South-East Asia, the Hong Kong SAR of China reported a new trend: the abuse of cannabis buds.

467. The transmission of HIV infection through drug abuse by injection continues to be a major problem in many of the countries in East and South-East Asia. Heroin is the drug of choice among persons who abuse drugs by injection in countries such as China (including the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao SAR of China), Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. In China, the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan and the autonomous region of Xinjiang have reported a high prevalence of HIV infection transmitted through drug abuse by injection. In 2004, there were 1.6 million registered drug abusers in China, the majority of whom were abusers of heroin; over 41 per cent of the 89,000 reported HIV cases involved drug abusers. The Macao SAR of China reported an increase in the percentage of females and youth among newly reported HIV cases. HIV infection among persons who abuse drugs by injection in the Macao SAR increased dramatically from 0.7 per cent in 2003 to 6.5 per cent in 2004; in order to combat the epidemic, the government announced that it would introduce substitution treatment for drug abusers in 2005. Persons who abuse drugs by injection account for approximately 30 per cent of all new cases involving HIV infection in Myanmar and 20 per cent of such cases in Thailand. Drug abuse by injection continues to be one of the main routes of HIV transmission in Viet Nam; over 56 per cent of new HIV cases involve persons who abuse drugs by injection and have adopted the practice of needle-sharing.

Psychotropic substances

468. The illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants continued to take place mainly in China and the border area between China and Myanmar and, to a lesser extent, in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Drug dealers in Viet Nam have been known to be involved in the illicit manufacture of tablets of amphetamine-type stimulants using amphetamine powder and crystal methamphetamine from other countries. Some of those tablets also contain caffeine, paracetamol and ketamine.

469. Many countries in East and South-East Asia, including Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar and Thailand, again reported the seizure of a large volume of amphetamine-type stimulants. In April 2005, a clandestine laboratory with the capacity to produce 7.5 million MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets a month was dismantled in Indonesia; the police arrested several suspects in connection with that case and seized a considerable amount of MDMA tablets, precursor chemicals and equipment. In 2004, Malaysia reported the dismantling of three clandestine methamphetamine laboratories. The Hong Kong SAR of China dismantled in 2004 two laboratories involved in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Contrary to the upward trend implied by the above-mentioned reports in the region, preliminary data for 2004 indicate a decline in global seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants. In China the total volume of seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants declined from about 6 tons in 2003 to 3 tons in 2004.

470. Some countries in East and South-East Asia reported having seized a significant quantity of sedatives and hallucinogens in 2004. Japan seized 310 kg of benzodiazepines and Indonesia seized over 1 million tablets of hallucinogens.

471. In East and South-East Asia, sizeable quantities of MDMA (Ecstasy) continued to be seized in Indonesia (251,000 tablets) and Japan (469,000 tablets), as well as in the Hong Kong SAR of China (284,000 tablets). In Viet Nam, police arrested the leaders of the country's largest MDMA trafficking ring and seized a large amount of that drug. Those arrests were the result of police interdiction following the arrest of their accomplices and the seizure of a considerable quantity of MDMA tablets and ketamine.

472. Although over half of the methamphetamine smuggled into the Republic of Korea originates in China, the Philippines is rapidly emerging as a significant source. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is emerging as a transit country for consignments of amphetamine-type stimulants originating in Myanmar and destined for Cambodia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam.

473. Pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, precursors frequently used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, continued to be seized in East and South-East Asia. In August 2004, 90 kg of ephedrine were seized in Myanmar. In 2004, the authorities in the Philippines dismantled 11 clandestine laboratories and seized over 4 tons of ephedrine. In addition, those chemicals are being diverted from East and South-East Asia to other regions. In August 2005, 400 kg of ephedrine concealed in statues from Viet Nam were seized in Australia, the country of destination. That is an indication that, as controls over those precursor chemicals become increasingly stringent, traffickers are turning to methods of concealment previously used in smuggling illicit drugs. Furthermore, traffickers are increasingly attempting to divert preparations containing pseudoephedrine. In February 2005, for example, capsules containing a pseudoephedrine-based product originating in the Hong Kong SAR of China were seized in New Zealand. In November 2004, authorities in New Zealand seized over 240,000 capsules containing pseudoephedrine originating in China. In 2004, Malaysia reported the diversion of 456,000 tablets containing pseudoephedrine.

474. The second most commonly abused group of drugs in East and South-East Asia (after opiates) continues to be amphetamine-type stimulants. Most countries in the region reported increases in the abuse of methamphetamine and MDMA (Ecstasy). The abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants is increasing in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in part because of their increased availability in the country since it has become a transit country for such stimulants.

475. In Japan, the majority of methamphetamine abusers are persons who abuse drugs by injection. Although HIV infection through drug abuse by injection remains low (0.5 per cent), the Government continues to promote nationwide awareness-raising campaigns in order to prevent an HIV epidemic. Among high-risk groups in Thailand, HIV prevalence

is highest (50 per cent) among persons who abuse drugs by injection, the majority of whom abuse heroin. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, people who used to grow opium poppy are reportedly being recruited as traffickers of amphetamine-type stimulants and are becoming infected with HIV through drug abuse by injection.

South Asia

Major developments

476. The drug trafficking and abuse problems in South Asia continue to be both serious and multifaceted. Owing to its proximity to opium poppy cultivation areas in West Asia and in South-East Asia, where most of the world's illicit production of opiates takes place, there continue to be significant trafficking in and abuse of opiates, in particular heroin, in South Asia. Despite the strict controls that are in place, some diversion from licit opium poppy cultivation in India continues to take place. Some of the diverted opium is abused, either as opium or in the form of heroin, in India and some is smuggled into other countries. Cannabis plants are illicitly cultivated (and widely abused) in the region as well.

477. In South Asian countries, in particular Bangladesh, India and Nepal, lapses in the control of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have led to widespread abuse of such preparations among all segments of the population. Those pharmaceuticals are generally diverted from domestic distribution channels and are sold without prescription in pharmacies and other retail outlets in the region.

478. Drug abuse by injection is becoming one of the driving forces of the increase in the HIV/AIDS infection rate in countries in South Asia, in particular in India and Nepal.

479. The Board welcomes the resumption of talks between India and Pakistan, which has given impetus to efforts to combat drug trafficking, particularly along the border between the two countries.

Treaty adherence

480. All six States in South Asia are parties to the 1988 Convention. In August 2005, Bhutan acceded to

the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention, thereby becoming a party to all three international drug control conventions. As Nepal is not yet a party to the 1971 Convention, the Board urges it to take speedy action to become a party to that convention.

Regional cooperation

481. In June 2005, the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific published a guidebook on minimum standards of treatment and rehabilitation programmes for drug abusers in Asia. The guidebook provides practitioners with informative and practical information on strengthening capacity for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

482. In Maldives, the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan also organized the Second South Asian Law Enforcement Training Course on Counter Narcotics in Male in November and December 2004. Law enforcement officials from seven South Asian countries attended training courses on a large number of subjects, ranging from drug identification and testing to controlled deliveries.

483. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation organized the second meeting of the Coordination Group on Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in South Asia in Male in August 2004. The participants discussed joint efforts against drug trafficking and ways to ensure effective cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the region.

484. In August 2005, the Governments of India and Pakistan agreed that their drug control agencies should enter into a memorandum of understanding to intensify mutual cooperation and liaison on drug control issues. Other efforts at strengthening cooperation between the two countries have been made. For example, the Governments of India and Pakistan agreed in May 2005 to establish a formal channel of communication between the coast guard of each of the two countries for the exchange of information on various issues, including drug trafficking. Moreover, border officials of India and Pakistan held a meeting in April 2005 to discuss a proposal on joint border patrols and ways to combat drug trafficking on both sides of the border between the two countries.

485. At a meeting held in June 2005, the foreign ministers of China, India and the Russian Federation

agreed to strengthen coordination in efforts to counter drug trafficking, terrorism and other cross-border crimes. The foreign ministers issued a statement in which they emphasized that their Governments would continue to cooperate in combating new threats and meeting challenges.

486. In April 2005, a major international trafficking organization involved in illegally distributing pharmaceuticals via the Internet was dismantled in a joint operation conducted by Indian law enforcement authorities in cooperation with the authorities of Canada, Costa Rica and the United States. According to the United States authorities, the organization had used more than 200 websites to illegally distribute pharmaceuticals worldwide and had been repackaging controlled substances from India and other countries that had been smuggled into the United States.

National legislation, policy and action

487. It continues to be easy to obtain many pharmaceuticals without a prescription in South Asia. In 2005, the Government of India imposed strict measures to control the sale of medicines in retail and wholesale establishments. Arguing that the stricter control measures constituted harassment, retail and wholesale pharmacists subsequently threatened to stop stockpiling drugs, including many drugs commonly used for medical treatment. While the Government has since amended the relevant rules by simplifying documentation to facilitate the transport of medical preparations containing psychotropic substances, the Board hopes that that step will not lead to a weakening of control measures or an increase in drug abuse.

488. With the assistance of UNODC, the Government of India plans to integrate drug abuse prevention elements into school curricula and textbooks in several parts of the country.

489. Legislation adopted in 2002 to prevent money-laundering entered into force in India in July 2005. The legislation defines a number of acts as offences and establishes a multidisciplinary unit for gathering intelligence on suspicious financial transactions and connections with criminal activities.

490. Drug control legislation in Nepal needs strengthening in a number of areas. Nepal is the only country in South Asia with no legislation to regulate precursors. That is a cause for particular concern,

especially considering that the country is situated between China and India, two large manufacturers of precursors. In addition, current national legislation in Nepal does not criminalize money-laundering and is not adequate to deal with complicated financial crimes. The Board urges the Government of Nepal to adopt and implement legislation in both of those areas.

491. In June 2005, the Government of Sri Lanka announced that the capabilities of its coast guard would be extended to include patrolling coastal areas where there was a high incidence of drug trafficking. The lack of maritime interdiction capacity has long hindered the efforts of Sri Lanka to counter drug trafficking, as large amounts of heroin from India are smuggled into Sri Lanka by sea, mainly in small boats. The Government of Sri Lanka also announced that controls would be strengthened at the international airport in that country through measures such as the introduction of sniffer dogs.

492. In Bangladesh, work continued to expand significantly the capacity of the main centre for the treatment of drug abuse, operated by the Government. The Board notes, however, that drug abuse treatment facilities in the region in general continue to be inadequate. The Board urges the Governments concerned to take remedial measures in that area. The Board notes that treatment programmes for female addicts are lacking in some countries in the region, such as Bangladesh, and urges the Governments concerned to take female addicts into account when formulating measures in the area of drug abuse treatment.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

493. In South Asia, illicit cannabis plant cultivation and cannabis abuse continue. Cannabis plants also grow wild in several countries in the region, including India and Sri Lanka. Illicit cannabis plant cultivation takes place on a large scale in India and in some provinces in Sri Lanka.

494. The cannabis plant also grows wild in Nepal, mainly in areas where the terrain makes its eradication difficult. Cannabis resin is produced in large quantities in the country. Cannabis resin, in addition to being abused locally, is smuggled into other countries,

primarily India. According to Nepalese law enforcement authorities, the production of cannabis resin in Nepal has risen in recent years.

495. The total volume of cannabis seized in Sri Lanka decreased in 2004 (for the second time in recent years) to the level for the entire period since 1998; the current cannabis seizure level in Sri Lanka is one of the highest levels among the countries in South Asia. In Bangladesh, the decrease in the volume of cannabis seizures in 2004 was offset by a significant increase in trafficking in heroin and buprenorphine.

496. According to a national household survey conducted in India, there are approximately 8.7 million cannabis abusers in the country.

497. Most of the illicit heroin laboratories dismantled in India were near opium poppy cultivation areas. The Government of India continues to take stringent measures against the diversion of licitly cultivated opium poppy. Measures currently under consideration by the Government include the issuing of cards with microchips to opium poppy growers so that relevant information can be easily retrieved, with a view to ensuring the effective control and monitoring of opium poppy crops. In addition, the use of satellite imagery to estimate the area under opium poppy cultivation is to be expanded further. The total area under licit opium poppy cultivation in India decreased in 2004 as a result of self-imposed restrictions by the Government.

498. Large quantities of heroin of West Asian origin are increasingly being seized in India. Significant quantities of heroin manufactured in India also continue to be seized in that country. Heroin consignments seized in India had been destined for illicit markets not only in that country but also in Sri Lanka and countries in other regions, including Europe. The number of heroin manufacturing facilities dismantled by the Government of India in recent years has been small. The Board urges the Government to strengthen its law enforcement efforts in that area.

499. Low-quality heroin base known as "brown sugar" continues to be abused widely in India. It is also abused in Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. After declining for several years, the volume of heroin seized along the border between India and Pakistan appears to be increasing again.

500. There appears to have been a shift in drug abuse patterns in India in recent years, from inhaling to

injecting drugs (mainly heroin and buprenorphine). Though the national household survey of India indicated a lifetime prevalence of drug abuse by injection among adult males of 0.1 per cent, the Board notes that household surveys generally have had difficulty assessing the situation in marginalized communities, where drug abuse by injection is more likely to occur. The Board calls on the Government to include such communities in future household surveys.

501. The Government of Maldives is concerned about growing social disorder caused by young drug abusers in some areas of the country. Drug-related offences have increased significantly in Maldives in recent years and have become the most frequent problem faced by the criminal courts in that country. This is a matter of particular concern, especially considering that the majority of drug abusers in Maldives are between 16 and 30 years of age and that over one half of the national population is under 16 years of age. In response to that situation, the Government, with the assistance of UNODC, is formulating a national drug control master plan.

502. Data regarding seizures of heroin in Sri Lanka and in neighbouring countries indicates that Sri Lanka continues to be used as an important trans-shipment point for heroin consignments from Afghanistan and India destined for countries in other regions, in particular Europe. The Board urges the Government of Sri Lanka to continue strengthening its efforts against drug trafficking.

503. In South Asia, drug abuse by injection has been an important contributing factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS infection. Though HIV prevalence among adults is not high in India (0.8 per cent), the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the different parts of the country varies widely. In some north-eastern states in India, drug abuse by injection is the predominant mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS infection and the HIV infection rate among persons who abused drugs by injection was as high as 56 per cent in 2003, the last year for which data are available. In many urban areas with a large number of persons who abuse drugs by injection, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among the general population is around the critical level of 5 per cent.

504. In Nepal, HIV/AIDS infection among persons who abuse drugs by injection has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2002, the last year for

which data on the subject are available, HIV prevalence among males who inject drugs by injection in Nepal ranged from 22 to 68 per cent. Many of those drug abusers were under 25 years old.

505. The HIV prevalence rate among persons who abuse drugs by injection in Bangladesh continues to be relatively low (estimated at 4.4 per cent) and the rate has not changed in recent years. According to a recent study, however, the HIV prevalence rate among persons who abuse drugs by injection in central Dhaka is 8.9 per cent.

506. Approximately 8-10 per cent of the over 12,000 inmates in the largest prison in India are addicted to drugs, mainly heroin. Many of the inmates had been addicted to heroin before they were incarcerated.

507. The abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances diverted from licit channels continues to be one of the main drug control issues in South Asia. India is a major manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, accounting for approximately 10 per cent of global pharmaceutical manufacture. Despite strict controls exercised by the authorities, pharmaceuticals continue to be diverted in India and subsequently smuggled into countries in South Asia and other regions. Trafficking in such substances, in particular codeine-based cough syrups, dextropropoxyphene and buprenorphine, in India is a major concern for its neighbouring countries, such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. There is also evidence of pharmaceuticals from India being smuggled into Myanmar, Pakistan (via Dubai), and States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Diazepam and nitrazepam are also being diverted, to be abused in India or smuggled into other countries.

508. There are indications that drug abuse is increasing in Bhutan, particularly in Thimphu, the capital. The main drugs of abuse include cannabis and pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs (in particular dextropropoxyphene and codeine phosphate) and psychotropic substances (in particular nitrazepam).

Psychotropic substances

509. India remains the main illicit manufacturer of methaqualone. Most of the methaqualone illicitly

manufactured in India is not abused in that country but is smuggled into other countries, primarily South Africa, the main consumer of methaqualone. In 2004, authorities in India dismantled a laboratory in the southern part of the country that had been manufacturing methaqualone on a large scale. Drug trafficking organizations in India may be using acetyl chloride for the illicit manufacture of methaqualone. Using acetyl chloride, which is currently not under international control, as a substitute chemical makes it more difficult for the authorities to identify illicit methaqualone manufacturers.

510. The Board notes the growing illicit trade in the substance commonly called “synthetic heroin” in India. “Synthetic heroin” is a drug prepared by crushing tablets of phenobarbital, a psychotropic substance in Schedule IV of the 1971 Convention. While “synthetic heroin” is much cheaper to manufacture than organically derived heroin, it is sold by drug traffickers in India at approximately the same price as heroin. It is believed that “synthetic heroin” is manufactured mainly in cities in the north of the country. The Board urges the Government of India to take measures to combat this development.

Missions of the Board

511. A mission of the Board visited Bangladesh in April 2005. The Board notes that, in spite of the dedication of its individual officers, the Department of Narcotics Control of Bangladesh, within the Ministry of the Interior, did not appear to be receiving sufficient resources from the Government. The Board also notes that cooperation between government agencies involved in drug control in Bangladesh is not adequate and that, as a result, the Department has been unable to perform its coordinating function. The Board urges the Government of Bangladesh to take immediate steps to address those issues and to ensure that the Department has the necessary resources to play a lead role in drug control in Bangladesh.

512. The Board notes that, despite efforts by the Government of Bangladesh to expand the main drug abuse treatment centre, near Dhaka, treatment facilities for drug addicts in the country continue to be inadequate. The Board encourages the Government to take measures to continue strengthening its capacity in the area of drug abuse treatment and to conduct at the

earliest opportunity a survey to assess the scope of the drug addiction problem in the country.

513. The Board also urges UNODC to provide assistance to the Government of Bangladesh to enable it to strengthen drug control in that country and to fulfil its obligations under the international drug control treaties.

West Asia

Major developments

514. Figures released in September 2005 show that, though progress is being made in the eradication of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, much work remains to be done. Afghanistan continues to be the main producer of illicit opium poppy, accounting for 87 per cent of global production in 2005. Moreover, Afghanistan’s share of the illicit manufacture of opiates, mainly heroin, has been increasing since the 1990s, indicating that Afghanistan continues to be a supplier of illicit morphine and heroin, as well as illicit opiate raw materials.

515. In Afghanistan, the abuse of drugs, not only opiates but also prescription drugs smuggled into the country in the absence of proper licit control mechanisms, continues to be on the increase, creating a further obstacle on that country’s path to stability.

516. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and countries in Central Asia continue to be the main countries used as transit points for consignments of Afghan heroin, destined for illicit markets primarily in Europe but also in North America. Despite the best efforts of the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey to halt that trade, an estimated 60 per cent of Afghan opiates pass first through the Islamic Republic of Iran and then Turkey before reaching illicit markets in Europe. Approximately 20 per cent of Afghan opiates pass through countries in Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, with 20 per cent being smuggled through Pakistan. The increased availability of heroin and opium continue to fuel the abuse of narcotic drugs in West Asia and beyond.

517. In Central Asia, drug abuse has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS infection. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the incessant flow of Afghan opiates has increased the level of drug abuse many times over.

518. Illicit opium poppy cultivation has continued in Pakistan, although not on the same scale as in Afghanistan. The persistence of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan is believed to be associated with the displacement of trafficking organizations from Afghanistan to Pakistan.

519. On the Arabian peninsula, the drug problem has generally consisted of the transit traffic in illicit drugs such as cannabis destined for European markets. The Board is concerned about the apparent increase in drug trafficking, notably along the border of Iraq with Jordan and Kuwait, as evidenced by the fact that seizures of cannabis and psychotropic substances in West Asia have recently increased to unprecedented levels.

520. The southern Caucasus is emerging as an important transit area for drug trafficking. The Board is concerned that the continuing lack of funding, technical equipment and human resources may hinder the effectiveness of border control. Recent epidemiological surveys conducted in Azerbaijan and Georgia have revealed a significant increase in drug abuse in those countries.

Treaty adherence

521. All States in West Asia are parties to all three international drug control treaties. However, Afghanistan has not yet acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention. The Board encourages the Government of Afghanistan to take immediate steps to accede to the 1972 Protocol.

Regional cooperation

522. The fight against trafficking of Afghan opiates has remained central to cooperation between countries in West Asia and other countries. For example, at the third annual Afghanistan Development Forum, the annual meeting of the Government of Afghanistan and donors to review the country's development priorities, held in Kabul in April 2005, particular emphasis was placed on the development of legitimate alternative livelihoods in rural areas in Afghanistan.

523. At the sixth annual meeting of the parties to the Memorandum of Understanding on Subregional Drug Control Cooperation, held in Moscow in December 2004, the Governments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan,

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan reiterated their commitment to make further efforts to strengthen drug control security belts around Afghanistan and to suppress the supply of precursors used for the illicit manufacture of heroin.

524. Under the auspices of the Paris Pact,⁴⁶ a consultative mechanism for countries affected by trafficking in opiates from Afghanistan, three round-table meetings of experts were held in 2005: in Islamabad, in Istanbul and in Tehran. The meetings brought together representatives of donor countries and assistance agencies and government representatives to review the current patterns of smuggling drugs into and across West Asia and to discuss priorities in border control, as well as drug and precursor control.

525. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) organized several activities to assist its member States in strengthening drug control. ECO organized two workshops in 2005 on the reduction of illicit drug demand: one in Baku and the other in Ankara. A meeting of national focal points and liaison officers of the Drug Control Coordination Unit, established in 1999 as part of the ECO secretariat, was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in June 2005.

526. The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering has established the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force as a mechanism for coordinating efforts to fight money-laundering and other forms of financial crime.

527. The Board is concerned that the regional cooperation among the countries in the southern Caucasus continues to be inadequate, as there is no comprehensive framework that includes all countries in the area. The Board stresses the need for concerted regional and international cooperation against drug trafficking.

528. In 2005, Governments of countries in West Asia entered into a number of bilateral agreements to combat drug trafficking. In 2005, the Government of Turkey entered into agreements with the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan and Kuwait to strengthen efforts against drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime. In May 2005, the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum of understanding to combat drug trafficking. Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic concluded a security agreement that provided

for the redrawing of their common border and resulted in the seizure of large quantities of illicit drugs along that border.

529. The States of Central Asia plan to establish the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, which is to promote the sharing of border intelligence, training and effective coordination of supply reduction measures in Central Asia in the forthcoming months. The heads of States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), including some Central Asian States, decided, during a meeting held in Moscow in June 2005, to establish a centre for coordinating mechanisms for combating organized criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking in CSTO member States.

530. In 2005, Turkmenistan participated in various regional cooperation mechanisms and activities. Of particular interest was its participation in a UNODC-funded precursor control project for Central Asia, as well as the exchange of drug seizure statistics. The competent national authorities of Turkmenistan attended several regional meetings and conferences on the problems of drug addiction, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse by injection. Turkmenistan continued to be involved in bilateral and multilateral project activities in the areas of reducing illicit drug supply and sharing information (setting up databases and mechanisms for the exchange of information).

National legislation, policy and action

531. Upon his inauguration in December 2004, the President of Afghanistan declared a "holy war" against the growing influence of Afghan drug lords. The President described the illicit cultivation of opium poppy as a dishonour to the country and urged the people of Afghanistan to recover their dignity by ridding the country of the illicit drug trade.

532. The Board notes that there have been proposals for legalizing opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan as a solution to the current drug trafficking situation in that country. As noted in paragraph 208 above, the Board is encouraged by the Government's strong stance against those proposals. The Board trusts that the Government will continue to stand by its policies and swiftly implement the existing programmes.

533. The Government of Afghanistan has continued to strengthen its administrative structures in the area of

drug control. Following the establishment of the new Ministry of Counter-Narcotics in late 2004, the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Counter-Narcotics was formed. One of the key tasks of the Sub-Committee in 2005 was the preparation of the alternative livelihood development plan, in which key areas requiring urgent assistance were identified.

534. The Board notes that the Government of Afghanistan has also created the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund, administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Fund will give priority to support for legitimate alternative livelihoods for opium poppy growers, in accordance with priorities identified in the Alternative Livelihood Development plan.

535. The Government has also strengthened its efforts in supply reduction, as evidenced by the effective operation of the newly established Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan. The Government created the Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force, composed of specialized investigators, prosecutors and judges, so that criminal cases involving narcotic drugs can be dealt with quickly within the criminal justice system.

536. The Government of Afghanistan is in the process of revising its legislative framework to strengthen drug control in the country, with the assistance of UNODC. The Board trusts that the revision will take place with the involvement of all relevant players within the Government and that any revision will take due account of the international drug control treaties.

537. In March 2005, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began a comprehensive expansion of its peacekeeping forces in western Afghanistan. NATO reportedly plans to create provincial reconstruction teams, aimed at extending the authority of the Government and helping with reconstruction efforts in the country. The United States more than tripled its funding for drug control efforts in Afghanistan in 2005, to US\$ 780 million. The Board reiterates its call to the international community to provide assistance to the Government of Afghanistan so that the provisions of the international drug control treaties will be adhered to fully.

538. The Board welcomes the commitment of the Government of Iraq to fight illicit drug trafficking and other criminal activities. The Iraqi authorities have

established a national drug control committee, chaired by the Ministry of Health, and are working to develop a national drug control plan. The Board also notes with concern numerous media reports of increasing abuse of drugs, including heroin, in the country, and urges the Government to ensure that adequate measures in the area of demand reduction are implemented. The Board calls upon UNODC and the international community to provide assistance to the Government in that area.

539. In Kyrgyzstan, the parliament is reviewing a draft law that would amend the national law on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. Once adopted, the amended law will enhance drug control, the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment of drug abusers.

540. The Board notes that Turkmenistan has not yet implemented the provisions of the new drug control law that came into force in November 2004. The Board urges the competent national authorities of Turkmenistan to adopt national regulations to ensure the implementation of all provisions of the international drug control treaties without delay.

541. In Israel, the Money Laundering Prohibition Authority, a unit specialized in investigating cases involving money-laundering, was established in the Ministry of Justice, and a unit for countering money-laundering was established within the intelligence branch of the Israeli Police. In Uzbekistan, the national law against money-laundering, which had been enacted at the end of 2004, entered into force on 1 January 2005. The Board notes that current legislation in Armenia, Georgia and Turkmenistan is insufficient to deal with the problem of money-laundering; the Board urges the Governments of those countries to remedy the situation without delay. In September 2005, the Government of Kyrgyzstan established a financial intelligence unit to combat crime involving money-laundering.

542. The Board welcomes the assistance being given to the Palestinian authorities by UNODC in strengthening the interdiction capabilities of the Palestinian Anti-Narcotics General Administration and the legal framework for drug control. UNODC is also exploring ways to establish a working framework for cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli drug control authorities.

543. The Government of Jordan maintains an extensive drug abuse prevention programme, targeting children and young adults throughout the education system and modernizing treatment centres and hospitals, with the aim of strengthening the country's capacity to deal with drug abuse. In April 2005, the Government of Tajikistan endorsed the national programme for the prevention of drug abuse and the related HIV/AIDS epidemic among persons who abuse drugs by injection, enhancing the drug abuse treatment system for the period 2005-2010.

544. In the United Arab Emirates, police in Dubai have started an awareness campaign called "Bravery" where specially trained officers regularly visit schools in order to raise awareness among youth about the consequences of drug abuse. Drug demand reduction campaigns are also taking place in Lebanon, and the Government is developing a national action plan on drug demand reduction.

545. The Board notes that some countries in West Asia, including Bahrain, Israel and the United Arab Emirates, have adopted legislative and/or administrative measures to allow travellers carrying prescribed medical preparations containing narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances to enter their territory. The measures are in compliance with the guidelines for national regulations concerning travellers under treatment with internationally controlled drugs, which, as noted in paragraph 214 above, were developed jointly by the Board, UNODC and WHO in 2002. The Board urges the Governments of countries in the region that have not yet done so to take appropriate measures to adopt such control measures for travellers entering their territory.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

546. According to a UNODC survey released in September 2005, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan decreased by 21 per cent, from 131,000 hectares in 2004 to 104,000 hectares in 2005. Nevertheless, increased crop yields meant that the actual production of opium remained at almost the same level. Afghanistan continued to supply the overwhelming majority of the world's illicit opium, accounting for 87 per cent of the world's supplies in 2004.

547. Together, the central and provincial governments of Afghanistan were able to eradicate 5 per cent of illicit poppy crops in 2005. There were varying levels of decline in the area under opium poppy cultivation in the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, indicating that not all provincial governments were committed to the eradication efforts. According to the Government of Afghanistan, the failure to provide alternative livelihoods for opium poppy growers, the security situation in the country and the involvement of several provincial officials in drug trafficking are the main reasons for the continuation of illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country.

548. Illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan, while not on the same scale as in Afghanistan, has also increased in recent years. In Pakistan, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation was reduced dramatically in 1996, to under 1,000 hectares, and was further reduced in the years that followed. In 2003, however, the total area under such cultivation rose sharply, to 2,500 hectares. Illicit opium poppy cultivation remained at that level in 2004, and there are indications that it could increase again in 2005. The Board urges the Government of Pakistan to intensify its eradication efforts before the country becomes a major source of supply.

549. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and, on a much smaller scale, opium poppy takes place in Lebanon, despite the Government's eradication efforts and public information campaigns. In 2004, more than 6.7 hectares of opium poppy and more than 13.0 hectares of cannabis plant were eradicated.

550. In several countries in Central Asia, opium poppy continues to be cultivated on a small scale, and ephedra and cannabis plants continue to grow wild. The Board welcomes the fact that, in the last decade, government eradication campaigns have virtually eliminated the risk of such cultivation gaining importance in those countries.

551. In West Asia, the United Arab Emirates has become a trans-shipment point for heroin consignments coming from South Asia and South-West Asia and destined for Europe. Some of the heroin consignments are smuggled through Africa before being transported further to Europe. Cannabis, heroin and opium shipments originating in Afghanistan pass through the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and are then sent

overland through Oman and the United Arab Emirates to countries in Europe.

552. Turkmenistan, whose extensive borders with Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are inadequately controlled, continues to be used as a transit country by traffickers of Afghan opiates. The Afghan opiates are smuggled not only by land (in trucks and cars), but also by sea (on vessels from neighbouring countries passing through the Caspian Sea) and by air (on cargo planes passing through Azerbaijan and Turkey). In 2004, the total quantity of drugs seized in Turkmenistan reached 1.3 tons, almost tripling the figure for the year before. The seizures of heroin (266 kg) and opium (656 kg) each represented a fourfold increase over the figures for 2003.

553. Uzbekistan continues to be an important transit country for consignments of Afghan opiates destined for Europe; the consignments are smuggled mainly by road and rail through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as directly from Afghanistan. The total quantity of heroin seized in Uzbekistan almost doubled, from 336 kg in 2003 to 670 kg in 2004.

554. Analysis of the seizure data for countries neighbouring Afghanistan shows that there has been an increase in the illicit manufacture of heroin and morphine in Afghanistan since the 1990s. In 2003, 77 per cent of all opiates seized in South-West Asia and Central Asia was in the form of either morphine or heroin (compared with 40 per cent in 1995). In 2004, that proportion decreased to 64 per cent. Equipment used for the illicit manufacture of heroin and morphine is brought from China, Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

555. In Afghanistan, illicit heroin manufacture is taking place on such a large scale that it requires a large amount of the precursor acetic anhydride. However, as noted in paragraph 166 above, investigating the routes used for smuggling that substance into the country continues to be extremely difficult. Afghanistan has no licit requirements for acetic anhydride and no licit imports of the substance, indicating that the precursor is trafficked into the country and not diverted from licit sources in that country. Nevertheless, no seizures of acetic anhydride have been reported in the countries neighbouring Afghanistan since 2001.

556. Pakistan remains the country with the largest seizures of opiates (which include opium and all of its derivatives); in 2003, seizures of opiates in Pakistan amounted to 34.7 tons, or 31 per cent of global seizures. However, seizures of heroin in Pakistan decreased significantly in 2004, from 6.4 tons in 2003 to 3.5 tons. Seizures of opiates in Turkey almost tripled, from 5.7 tons in 2003 to 14.7 tons in 2004.

557. In 2004, seizures of opium in the Islamic Republic of Iran increased to 174 tons, nearly twice the high figure recorded in 2003 (98 tons). The Islamic Republic of Iran is the country with by far the largest volume of seized opium. In 2003, the last year for which data on global seizures of opiates are available, the Islamic Republic of Iran accounted for 73 per cent of global seizures of opium.

558. The drug abuse situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran appears to be worsening. The official estimate is that, out of a total population of 68 million, 2 million persons abuse drugs regularly; and of the 2 million drug abusers, 1.2 million are classified as addicts. However, those figures are based on a survey conducted in 1999, and the Board is concerned regarding the lack of more recent information. Some officials estimate that the number of drug abusers in the country is now at least 3 million. Though opiates are the main drug of abuse, reports indicate that the abuse of crystalline methamphetamine and MDMA (Ecstasy) also appears to be increasing. The Board urges the Government to take measures to accurately assess the current state of drug abuse in the country.

559. In countries in Central Asia, the drug abuse problem continues to worsen. The main drug of abuse has shifted from cannabis and opium to heroin. Needle-sharing remains one of the main modes of transmission of HIV in Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan being the worst hit of those countries. In 2004, over 70 per cent of new HIV/AIDS cases in Kazakhstan were persons who abused drugs by injection.

560. In Turkmenistan, the total number of officially registered HIV/AIDS cases is reported to be unchanged: two cases. The Board is concerned that that low official figure brings into question the accuracy of that information, especially in view of the persistent reports about the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country. The Board urges the Government of Turkmenistan to take immediate steps to make an assessment of the

extent of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS infection in the country.

561. Cannabis remains the main drug of abuse in countries on the Arabian peninsula, many of which continue to be used as transit countries for consignments of cannabis, as well as opiates, destined for Europe.

562. Although the volume of drug seizures remains low in the countries in the southern Caucasus, drug abuse is increasingly becoming a problem. In 2003, there were over 17,000 registered drug abusers in Azerbaijan, opiates being the main drugs of abuse. About one half of the persons infected with HIV/AIDS in Azerbaijan are persons who abuse drugs by injection. In Georgia, official estimates indicate that there are 275,000 drug abusers in the country, an increase of 80 per cent compared with the figure for 2003; that increase is mainly attributed to the import and illegal sale of buprenorphine tablets.

563. The abuse of cocaine is not a major issue in West Asia. The Board has no information regarding the illicit manufacture of that drug in the region. However, the Board has noted in recent years that a disproportionately large amount of potassium permanganate continues to be imported into the Islamic Republic of Iran. A large number of firms appear to be involved in that activity, making control and monitoring of the industry difficult and increasing the possibility of that substance being diverted. The Board requests the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to conduct a thorough assessment of the licit requirements for potassium permanganate and to remain vigilant regarding possible attempts to divert the substance to certain countries in Latin America, where it could be used to manufacture cocaine.

Psychotropic substances

564. The abuse of pharmaceuticals, in particular pharmaceuticals containing benzodiazepines, continues to be of concern in West Asia. Controlled substances are often easily available without prescription in pharmacies in many countries in the region. That is particularly the case in Afghanistan, where the licit control framework has yet to recover from decades of civil war and a wide range of pharmaceuticals are available without prescription in pharmacies, other retail outlets and even roadside stalls. Many of those drugs are adulterated or outdated and were illicitly

manufactured in India or Pakistan before being smuggled into Afghanistan. One survey has indicated that, in the eastern part of Afghanistan, pharmaceutical drugs are abused regularly by 10 per cent of the adult population.

565. In Israel, a recent survey indicated that 6.1 per cent of students in secondary schools abuse pharmaceuticals, a figure higher than the figure for cannabis or heroin. Since the results of the survey were made available, the Government of Israel has shortened the period of validity of prescriptions for pharmaceuticals. According to the Israeli authorities, there are 20,000-30,000 drug addicts in the country, and they are in every segment of society.

566. Fenetylline (Captagon) continues to be widely abused in countries on the Arabian peninsula. As the licit manufacture of Captagon has ceased, the substance is manufactured clandestinely, primarily in the southern part of Europe, and trafficked into the Arabian peninsula through the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan. Large seizures of Captagon tablets took place in 2005 at the borders of Jordan with Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in the United Arab Emirates.

Missions

567. In September 2005, the Board sent a mission to Saudi Arabia to assess the drug control situation and the progress made by the Government in implementing the recommendations of the Board pursuant to its 1992 mission to that country. The Board notes the commitment of the Government to drug control, reflected in its adoption of a new national drug control strategy in 2005. The Board was informed that the Government is reviewing the text of draft legislation on drug control that would introduce comprehensive controls over the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, in line with the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

568. The Board notes that in Saudi Arabia mechanisms for the collection and sharing of data, in particular those relating to statistics on drug seizures and abuse, as well as the Government's performance with regard to the provision of data to the Board, as required under the international drug control treaties are in need of improvement. The Board urges the Government to take immediate measures in those areas, in order to ensure

that Saudi Arabia fully meets its obligations under the international drug control treaties.

D. Europe

Major developments

569. Cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug in Europe. About 30 million people in the member States of the European Union and in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland have used cannabis during the past year. About 15 per cent of 15-year-old students in the European Union member States use cannabis more than 40 times a year. The European countries with high prevalence for cannabis abuse include the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

570. The total amount of cocaine seized in Europe continues to increase, indicating that there may be widespread abuse of the substance. Increased demand for treatment of cocaine abuse in Western Europe also indicates that the abuse of that substance may be widespread; however, it is difficult to say with certainty if that is the case because, unfortunately, trends in the abuse of cocaine have not been monitored consistently—there have been few national surveys on the abuse of that drug and, in some cases, the sample sizes have been small.

571. Almost all of the heroin encountered on the illicit market in Europe is from Afghanistan. The smuggling of Afghan heroin into the Russian Federation increased significantly. The total volume of heroin seized in that country reached a record level of 3.8 tons in 2004. Despite the increased availability of heroin in Europe as a whole, the abuse of that substance is reported to be stable or declining in most countries in Western Europe.

572. The Board notes the commitment of the Government of the Russian Federation to addressing the problems of drug abuse and trafficking. While the number of registered drug abusers is about 500,000, the total number of drug abusers in the Russian Federation is estimated to be as high as 6 million, or 4 per cent of the total population. About 2 million of the drug abusers are adolescents and people under the age of 24. However, as no systematic nationwide survey on drug abuse has been conducted in the Russian Federation, the reliability of those estimates is

uncertain. Persons who abuse drugs by injection continue to account for most cases involving HIV infection although the percentage of such persons among new cases of HIV infection is declining.

573. A number of countries in Europe continue to supply the world with MDMA. It is estimated that up to 80 per cent of the MDMA abused worldwide is illicitly manufactured in laboratories in European countries. MDMA from Europe is smuggled into Australia, Canada, Japan and South Africa. After a temporary decline, seizures of MDMA have been increasing again. The illicit manufacture of amphetamine also appears to be expanding, the main source of that substance being the Netherlands, followed by Poland and Belgium. The illicit manufacture and abuse of methamphetamine, on the other hand, continue to be limited throughout Europe.

574. The Board welcomes the adoption of Council of the European Union regulation No. 111/2005, laying down rules for the monitoring of trade between the European Community and third countries in drug precursors. The regulation, which entered into force in August 2005, strengthens control procedures for precursors.

Treaty adherence

575. Switzerland, which signed the 1988 Convention in November 1989, ratified that convention in September 2005. The Board urges the Holy See and Liechtenstein to become parties to the 1988 Convention.

576. Andorra remains the only State in Europe that is not a party to the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention. In September 2005, the Government of Andorra informed the Board that both conventions would be submitted to the forthcoming session of the parliament for approval.

Regional cooperation

577. In December 2004, the Council of the European Union endorsed the European Union Drugs Strategy for the period 2005-2012. The new strategy builds on the final evaluation of the European Union Drugs Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs for the period 2000-2004 and is complementary to national drug control strategies in the European Union. Confirming the European Union's integrated, multidisciplinary and

balanced approach to drugs, the strategy focuses on the reduction of illicit drug supply and demand, as well as on international cooperation and research, information and evaluation. It also emphasizes the importance of making optimal use of existing legal instruments and the need to ensure adequate consultation with a broad group of partners, including scientific centres and professionals, non-governmental organizations, local communities and other members of civil society. The eight-year strategy will provide the umbrella for two consecutive four-year European Union action plans on drugs. The strategy foresees annual progress reviews by the European Commission on the status of implementation of activities set out in the action plans, an impact assessment in 2008 (with a view to proposing a second plan of action for the period 2009-2012) and a final overall evaluation of the European Union Drugs Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs in 2012.

578. In June 2005, the Council of the European Union endorsed the European Union Action Plan on Drugs for the period 2005-2008. The Action Plan covers the four priority areas of the new strategy: demand reduction, supply reduction, international cooperation and research, information and evaluation. It lists specific measures to be implemented by the European Union and its member States by the end of 2008. Assessment tools and indicators, responsibility for implementation and deadlines are clearly indicated for each action.

579. The Board notes that the eighth European Conference on Drugs and Infections Prevention in Prison was held in Budapest from 7 to 9 July 2005. At the Conference, representatives of 41 countries, as well as WHO and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, exchanged practical and scientific knowledge and expertise on the prevention and treatment of drug dependence and infectious diseases in prisons. All participants agreed to continue to work together to respond to that challenge.

580. In July 2005, the Netherlands and the United States signed an agreement outlining areas for future collaboration in drug demand reduction. The agreement includes provisions on the exchange of information on drug abuse prevention programmes and the coordination of research, particularly on the health risks of cannabis with a high tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content.

581. In May 2005, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision on the exchange of information, the assessment of risks and the control of new psychoactive substances, which allows the European Union to take steps regarding psychoactive substances that appear in States members of the European Union and that may pose health or social risks similar to those posed by substances already controlled under the international drug control treaties. In order to ensure that substances that could constitute public health and social problems are placed under international control, the Board calls on States members of the European Union, pursuant to their obligations under the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention, to notify the Secretary-General of the substances scheduled under the new procedure so that they may be placed under international control as soon as possible.

National legislation, policy and action

582. In November 2004, the Parliament of Romania adopted legislation to reduce the penalty for possessing or cultivating drugs for personal use, from a maximum of five years to 6-24 months in prison. Under the new law, persons arrested for possession of illicit drugs may be released if they agree to undergo treatment.

583. In April 2005, the Drugs Act 2005 entered into force in the United Kingdom. The Act gives new powers to drug law enforcement agencies to test arrested persons for cocaine and heroin and to make drug trafficking near schools or involving children as drug couriers an aggravating factor in sentencing. The Act also facilitates action against suspected "drug swallows"⁴⁷ by remanding them in custody for up to eight days.

584. In Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers has proposed amending the list of scheduled drugs to reclassify methadone as a prohibited substance, thus barring its use for therapeutic purposes. Pursuant to article 39 of the 1961 Convention, a Government may adopt stricter measures than those provided for in the Convention. Nevertheless, the Board notes that WHO included methadone in its Model List of Essential Medicines in June 2005.

585. The Board calls on the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina to urgently adopt draft drug control legislation in order to facilitate action to address the situation with regard to drug and precursor trafficking in that country. The geographical location of Bosnia

and Herzegovina and the lack of adequate national legislation, a central control structure and trained personnel make that country an easy target for international criminal organizations.

586. In the Netherlands, a new regulation introduced in 2005 requires air passengers and aircraft arriving from South America and the Caribbean to be subject to thorough controls. As a result, more than 1 ton of cocaine has been seized, which underlines the importance of those routes to traffickers sending cocaine to Europe. The Board welcomes effective action taken in the Netherlands on that matter.

587. In September 2005, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted a national programme for the prevention of drug abuse and drug trafficking for the period 2005-2009, which is aimed at, inter alia, reducing significantly the extent and consequences of drug abuse by 2010. The Board urges the Government to ensure that sufficient funds are available to carry out the programme.

588. Several Governments of European countries are in the process of reviewing or evaluating their drug control strategies. In 2005, the Mid-term Review of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 of Ireland was published. Portugal has been undertaking a comprehensive review of its drug control strategy for 1999 and action plan on drugs for the period 2001-2004, evaluating their consistency, efficiency and effectiveness. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Governments of the majority of European Union member States now evaluate implementation of their actions, and the Governments of some of those States (France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) even evaluate the effectiveness of their policy regarding the drug problem. The Board calls on all Governments of all countries in Europe to make it a priority to evaluate national drug control strategies, programmes and action plans.

589. The Government of Spain has launched an action plan for the period 2005-2008 as part of the implementation of its national drug control strategy for the period 2000-2008. The action plan encompasses a number of measures to be completed in a set time frame. The measures incorporated in the action plan cover various areas of drug control such as international cooperation, the prevention of drug abuse,

the social reintegration of drug abusers and the provision of measures to control illicit drug supply.

590. The Board reiterates its position that drug injection rooms or other facilities, where persons may abuse drugs acquired illicitly, facilitate the illicit use of internationally controlled substances and violate the provisions of the international drug control treaties. Drug injection rooms contravene the major principle of the treaties, namely that the use of drugs should be limited to medical and scientific purposes. The Board therefore deeply regrets the opening of a drug injection room in Norway in January 2005 and urges the Government to take immediate and necessary steps to ensure full compliance with the international drug control treaties.

591. In the United Kingdom, the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse in England launched in June 2005 a new strategy to improve the effectiveness of drug abuse treatment for adults for the period 2005-2008. One of the objectives of the strategy is to ensure that, for persons voluntarily seeking drug abuse treatment, the waiting time for such treatment does not exceed three weeks; another objective is to ensure faster access for priority groups.

592. In the United Kingdom, Operation Crackdown, a three-month campaign by 33 police forces in England and Wales aimed at addressing the problem of drug trafficking, has led to the closure of 170 crack houses, as well as the seizure of 123 kg of cocaine, 3.4 kg of crack cocaine, 119.8 kg of heroin and 86,059 MDMA tablets.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

593. The cannabis plant continues to be cultivated in several European countries, in particular Albania and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, the number of shops where cannabis seeds can be purchased increased to over 300 in 2004. The Government of the Netherlands estimates that the cannabis industry in that country consists of 1,200 retail businesses, employing about 4,600 people. While the total revenue of the cannabis industry in the Netherlands is not known, the annual turnover of outlets where cannabis is sold and used (so-called "coffee shops") is estimated by the Government to be between €211 million and

€283 million. The number of so-called "coffee shops" continued to decline, from 1,179 in 1997 to 737 in 2004. The Board encourages the Government of the Netherlands to pursue its policy towards the elimination of those outlets.

594. Morocco continues to be a major source of cannabis resin abused in Western and Central Europe; other major sources of that drug are Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as countries in Central Asia. Cannabis resin from Albania can be found on the illicit markets of Greece and various countries in the Balkans. Large amounts of cannabis resin are smuggled through Portugal, as indicated by a single seizure in France of 4.7 tons of that drug arriving from Portugal.

595. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) found that the lifetime prevalence of cannabis among secondary school students 15-16 years old rose by an annual average of almost 25 per cent between 1999 and 2003. In the Czech Republic, for example, 44 per cent of students have abused cannabis or cannabis resin. A high prevalence rate for cannabis abuse has also been reported in France, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Other European countries in which more than one fourth of the school population has abused cannabis include Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Slovenia. The lowest level of cannabis abuse has been reported in Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Sweden. The countries with the highest prevalence rate for cannabis abuse in the previous month include the Czech Republic, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. A report on the health of Irish students,⁴⁸ containing the results of the College Lifestyle and Attitudinal National Survey, was published in April 2005. The Survey revealed that cannabis was the illicit drug most commonly used by students: 37 per cent of the students participating in the Survey stated that they had abused cannabis in the previous 12 months.

596. The Board encourages the Government of the Netherlands to develop and implement an action plan to discourage cannabis abuse, an initiative that the Government announced in an inter-ministerial policy paper on cannabis in 2004.⁴⁹ This is particularly important as research has shown that the concentration of THC in cannabis products from the Netherlands has increased significantly over the years, from an average of about 8 per cent in 1999 to 20.4 per cent in 2004.

597. The volume of cocaine seizures has increased, particularly in Western Europe. That is partly attributable to strengthened law enforcement measures in the Netherlands: the introduction of routine checks on flights from Latin America to the Netherlands resulted in the seizure of a total of 1,675 kg of cocaine and the arrest of 565 couriers. In addition, a total of 1,545 kg of cocaine that had been concealed in air freight was seized in the Netherlands. The total volume of cocaine seized in the Netherlands increased from 17.6 tons in 2003 to 21.4 tons in 2004.

598. Most of the cocaine that is smuggled into Europe enters the region through Spain or the Netherlands, though the use of other countries (notably countries with airports that are not so well controlled) as entry points has also increased in recent years. Exceptionally large individual seizures of cocaine were made in Portugal and Spain in 2005. The largest single seizure of cocaine in 2005, 5.4 tons, was made in Spain in cooperation with the Greek authorities. Another seizure of almost 5 tons was made south-east of the Canary Islands. In the United Kingdom, seizures of cocaine totalling 12 tons were made as a result of Operation Kingfish, a joint operation involving law enforcement agencies in Jamaica and the United Kingdom. In Switzerland, the total volume of cocaine seized almost doubled, from 188.6 kg in 2003 to 361.4 kg in 2004.

599. New trends in cocaine trafficking include the increasing importance of a trafficking route leading from the Andean subregion through Western Africa to Europe. That variation of the traditional trafficking route seems to be linked to better controls in the Netherlands and along the northern coast of Spain. Colombian trafficking groups are now shipping cocaine to Spain through the islands and countries off the coast of Mauritania and Senegal.

600. Increased seizures of cocaine in Europe reflect increased abuse of that drug, which is evident from the fact that more Europeans are seeking treatment for cocaine-related problems. In the Netherlands and Spain, cocaine is now the second most commonly reported drug in specialist treatment centres after heroin. Surveys show that the annual prevalence rate for cocaine abuse has risen among young persons in Denmark, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, as well as in some areas in Austria, Greece, Ireland and Italy.

601. In Europe, the illicit demand for heroin is estimated to be about 170 tons, about half of which is abused in Western and Central Europe. The bulk of the heroin entering Western Europe continues to be transported via the Balkan route to the Netherlands and from there, in smaller consignments, back to Germany and other Western European countries. Data analysed in 2004 indicate that there was an increase in the smuggling of heroin along the Balkan route, as well as through Italy. Most of the heroin continues to be smuggled in trucks. Analysis of seizures shows that the southern Balkan route (leading to Italy, via Greece, Albania or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) appears to be used as frequently as the northern Balkan route (via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria, in that order).

602. Most of the heroin is seized in the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, France and the Russian Federation (in that order). In the Russian Federation, 240 kg of heroin were seized in a single operation in July 2005. Russian officials have termed the flow of heroin entering their country a threat to national security. Most of the heroin seized in the Russian Federation originates in Afghanistan.

603. According to UNODC, in Europe the annual prevalence for the abuse of opiates is 0.8 per cent. In individual countries in Eastern Europe, the annual prevalence rate for the abuse of opiates is higher than the average for Europe as a whole; for example, in Estonia the rate is 1.2 per cent and in Latvia, 1.7 per cent. In the Russian Federation, the number is estimated to be about 1 million. The number of heroin abusers in Western and Central Europe is estimated at 1.5 million, or 0.5 per cent of the population aged 15-64. Italy and the United Kingdom continue to report a high level of heroin abuse.

604. In January 2005, there were 308,000 officially registered HIV/AIDS cases in the Russian Federation, an increase of 10 per cent over the figure of the previous year. (In 1999, only 10,000 cases of HIV infection were reported.) Drug abusers account for about 56 per cent of new HIV cases registered in 2004.

605. The number of drug-related deaths appears to be declining in many European countries. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, drug-related deaths in Europe decreased from 8,838 in 2000 to 8,306 in 2001, representing a small but significant decline (6 per cent). According to

an annual report of the Ministry of Health of Germany, in 2004, the number of drug-related deaths in that country was at the lowest level since 1989. Similarly, in 2004, there were 1,372 drug-related deaths in the United Kingdom, the lowest level since 1997.

Psychotropic substances

606. Europe remains the main source of MDMA abused in that region, as well as in the Americas and Asia. Most of the MDMA consignments seized by European drug law enforcement agencies is believed to originate in the Netherlands. German law enforcement authorities have reported that an increasing number of MDMA consignments are being intercepted on their way to countries in Southern and South-Eastern Europe.

607. European countries account for a third of global MDMA abuse. The recently published results of ESPAD indicate that MDMA is the second most commonly abused drug in Europe after cannabis. A report on the health of Irish students,⁵⁰ containing the results of the College Lifestyle and Attitudinal National Survey, revealed that MDMA was the second most commonly abused illicit drug among students in that country; it was followed by cocaine, "magic mushrooms" (psilocybin) and amphetamines.

608. The main sources of the amphetamine found on the illicit markets in Europe are located in the region itself (Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland). In addition Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania also play an important role in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine. Although there is significant illicit manufacture of amphetamine in Bulgaria, it is not mentioned as a source country for the amphetamine seized in Western Europe, which indicates that the finished product is smuggled into countries outside of Europe. The precursor P-2-P, which is used for the manufacture of amphetamine, is being clandestinely manufactured in the Russian Federation and Ukraine; there are also some indications of the illicit manufacture of amphetamine in Lithuania and Poland.

609. According to ESPAD, the countries in Europe with the highest percentage of students that have abused amphetamines (5-7 per cent each) are Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania and Poland. In 13 other countries, no more than 1 per cent of students reported that they had abused amphetamines.

610. The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in Europe continues to be limited to the Czech Republic and some of the Baltic States. In Germany, about 8 kg of crystal methamphetamine were seized in the area along that country's border with the Czech Republic.

611. While there has always been illicit demand for buprenorphine in those countries where there is licit demand for the substance (which is primarily used in drug substitution treatment), it appears that buprenorphine is being smuggled across borders in Europe. Preparations containing buprenorphine are being smuggled into Finland, mainly out of France. In 2005, Estonia emerged as a significant source of the buprenorphine preparations found on illicit markets in Finland. In Estonia, such preparations can be easily obtained in pharmacies with prescriptions. Finnish drug law enforcement authorities seize more than 30,000 tablets containing buprenorphine every year.

612. In Europe, the country in which tranquilizers or sedatives are most commonly abused is Poland (17 per cent), followed by Lithuania, France and the Czech Republic. The lowest prevalence rate for the abuse of such substances is in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (2 per cent each).

Missions

613. A meeting of the President of the Board, with the Secretary of the Board and the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in August 2005. The High Representative expressed concern over current national drug control legislation and administrative mechanisms, which have turned the country into a safe haven for traffickers of illicit drugs and precursors. Outdated and fragmented legislation that is not applicable throughout the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and outdated lists of internationally controlled substances, as well as the lack of central administrative and control bodies, are some of the factors that have prevented effective action by the authorities. As a result, most of the narcotic drugs produced in or smuggled out of Bosnia and Herzegovina are able to make their way into Western Europe. Moreover, drug abuse is becoming a serious problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. The Board welcomes the fact that the draft Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Narcotics Drugs, which will bring

national drug control legislation up to date and close gaps between the drug control laws of the entities of Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was approved by the constitutional committees of both houses of Parliament in September 2005. The Board urges the Parliament to adopt the draft law as soon as possible. The Board commends the High Representative for his commitment to achieving the aims of the international drug control treaties, to which Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party.

614. In June 2005, a mission of the Board visited Bulgaria. The Board notes that the Government of Bulgaria has the political commitment and the will to deal with drug abuse, drug trafficking and organized crime. Drug control policies, national drug control legislation and the institutional framework to carry out those policies and implement that legislation are well developed. The National Anti-Drug Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2003-2008 is implemented on the basis of an action plan that links the Strategy to other key national reforms and strategies relevant to measures to reduce illicit drug supply and demand. Cooperation between drug regulatory authorities, police and customs is well established. However, the institutional framework is compromised by corruption. The Government of Bulgaria will therefore need to intensify its efforts to detect and counteract corruption among government officials at all levels.

615. In Bulgaria, the annual prevalence rate for drug abuse is still lower than in most other European countries. Nevertheless, the high percentage of persons who abuse drugs by injection among both heroin abusers and amphetamine abusers is a cause for serious concern. The Board advises the Government of Bulgaria to focus its drug abuse prevention activities on both of those worrying trends and to devote increasing attention to the growing abuse of synthetic drugs by injection.

616. In order to address the problem of large-scale smuggling of counterfeit Captagon tablets from illicit laboratories in Bulgaria into countries on the Arabian peninsula, the Board urges the Government of Bulgaria to initiate, together with other countries concerned and with the support of Interpol, a multilateral operation to investigate trafficking in counterfeit Captagon tablets, with a view to dismantling the international criminal groups involved.

617. The Board sent a mission to the Russian Federation in May 2005 to review the drug control situation and the progress made by the Government following its mission to that country in 2000. The Board welcomes the fact that the Government continues to be strongly committed to addressing all aspects of the drug problem. The Board encourages the Government to provide additional resources for drug control and to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the use of those resources. The Board notes with satisfaction that the creation of the Federal Drug Control Service has led to the strengthening of the institutional network for drug control in the Russian Federation. The Board encourages the Government to further improve coordination and cooperation among the drug control bodies and urges the Government to ensure the effective flow of information between them.

618. The Board notes with concern the large extent of drug abuse in the Russian Federation. The Board requests the Government to facilitate the systematic collection and analysis of epidemiological data on drug abuse and to ensure the availability and quality of drug dependence treatment. The Board encourages the Government to ensure adequate coordination and cooperation between the services providing treatment for drug addicts and HIV/AIDS services. The Board urges the Government to provide adequate human resources and equipment to customs authorities and border guards to prevent drug smuggling. The Government should adopt effective measures to facilitate the confiscation of proceeds from drug-related crime.

619. The Board welcomes the continuous attention given by the Russian authorities to the control of precursors and encourages the Government to examine the present mechanism for their control with a view to further increasing its effectiveness. The Board urges the Government to strengthen cooperation among the various departments involved in the preparation of statistical reports for submission to the Board. The Government should promote the rational use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical treatment, including the use of opioids for the treatment of pain.

E. Oceania

Major developments

620. The illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis continue to be serious problems in most countries in Oceania, including Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

621. The illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants also continues to be a problem in Oceania. Australia and New Zealand have continued to detect and dismantle large numbers of clandestine laboratories. There is some evidence that clandestine laboratories are increasingly being used for the illicit manufacture of both methamphetamine and MDMA (Ecstasy), especially in Australia.

622. There are indications that Oceania may be emerging as a transit area for consignments of "crystal" methamphetamine (commonly called "ice"); the abuse of that drug may also be increased in the region. Both Australia and New Zealand have reported a substantial increase in seizures of crystalline methamphetamine, mainly from China.

623. Trafficking in and abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) are becoming significant problems in countries in Oceania, in particular in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, information gathered in an investigation of an attempt to smuggle a large amount of MDMA from Europe to Oceania indicates that the free flow of goods within the expanded European Union may present traffickers with new opportunities.

Treaty adherence

624. The Board continues to be concerned that the rate of accession to the international drug control treaties is lower in Oceania than in all the other regions of the world. Of the 15 States in Oceania, only Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand and Tonga are parties to all three of the treaties.

625. The Board welcomes the accession of Samoa to the 1988 Convention and encourages it to accede to the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention without delay. The Board also welcomes the accession of the Federated States of Micronesia to the 1988 Convention; that State is now a party to each of the three international drug control treaties.

626. The Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are not parties to any of the international drug control treaties. The Solomon Islands is a party only to the 1961 Convention, while the Marshall Islands, Palau and Papua New Guinea are parties to both the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention.

Regional cooperation

627. The Pacific Islands Forum continued to play a central role in promoting regional cooperation. At its annual meeting held in Auckland, New Zealand, in June 2005 the Regional Security Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum discussed various security issues, including the need to strengthen legislation to prevent illicit drug manufacture and trafficking. In Suva and Nadi, Fiji, in January 2005, the Forum hosted a seminar on terrorism, transnational crime and border security threats for frontline operational staff from customs, immigration and police officers from countries in Oceania.

628. Police, customs and other law enforcement officials from 15 countries and organizations in Oceania attended the South Pacific Defence and Security Seminar in Trentham, New Zealand, in March 2005. The officials discussed various regional issues, including drug-related transnational crime.

629. Oceania continued to benefit from the support of key regional agencies such as the Oceania Customs Organization and South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference.

630. In 2004, the Australian and New Zealand police assisted the police and customs of Fiji in an operation that resulted in the dismantling of a clandestine laboratory used for the illicit manufacture of crystalline methamphetamine. The raid resulted in the seizure of large amounts of drugs and precursor chemicals, as well as the arrest of six suspects associated with an organized criminal group operating throughout South-East Asia.

National legislation, policy and action

631. New Zealand strengthened its precursor control legislation by passing the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill in June 2005. Under the new Bill, sanctions for existing offences related to the possession and supply of precursors were increased. Moreover, a new offence was added, making persons who import precursor chemicals "without reasonable excuse" liable for a

maximum penalty of one year in prison. An additional amendment of the new Bill enables law enforcement officers to carry out controlled deliveries in cases involving precursors. In addition, New Zealand has spent US\$ 19 million on non-invasive inspection equipment, including mobile container inspection trucks, fixed site cargo inspection units and a “backscatter van”, which can scan moving vehicles.

632. In 2005, New Zealand launched its Illicit Drug Monitoring System, a database containing information on drug abuse, illicit drug manufacture and drug trafficking that is to act as an early warning system for policymakers. Information collected during 2005 will be compared with data for 2006 and 2007. In addition, New Zealand announced that, in 2005, it would be testing a pilot version of its Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring programme, an international monitoring programme, the objective of which is to measure drug abuse among individuals who have recently been arrested.

633. The Board is pleased to note that the Cook Islands and Nauru have been removed from the list of countries and territories considered by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to be “non-cooperative” in efforts to counter money-laundering. The United States provided financial assistance to the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat to support activities to combat money-laundering in Oceania.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

634. The illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis continue to be prevalent in most countries in Oceania, including Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. Cannabis originating in Papua New Guinea has been seized in Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand has reported a new form of cannabis resin commonly called “ice hash”, which is manufactured from cannabis buds and smoked in pipes. Cannabis is often abused in combination with other drugs. In New Zealand, the majority of cannabis abusers are between 15 and 24 years old. Cannabis continues to be the drug of choice among drug abusers throughout the region, due to its availability and low price.

635. Both Australia and New Zealand reported increased seizures of cocaine. Australia reported having seized a larger volume of cocaine along its borders in 2004 than in 2003; the bulk of that increase was attributed to a single seizure of 100 kg of cocaine in August 2004. It appears that New Zealand is increasingly being used as a major transit area for illicit drugs destined for Australia and the United States. In New Zealand, over 18 kg of cocaine were seized in 2004, compared with only 7 kg in the previous year. Follow-up investigations indicate that most of the cocaine seized in New Zealand originated in Brazil or Chile and was destined for Australia.

636. In Australia, authorities continued to seize heroin in small quantities. In 2004, the number of heroin detections increased, while there was a decline in the total amount of heroin seized. In April 2004, the Board was informed of the seizure by Australian law enforcement officials of an ocean freighter registered in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Australian Federal Police arrested eight suspects on charges of aiding and abetting the importation of 150 kg of heroin into Australia.

Psychotropic substances

637. Amphetamine-type stimulants continue to be illicitly manufactured in Oceania. In Australia, the authorities dismantled 358 clandestine laboratories during the period 2003-2004; the majority of those laboratories (221) had been used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. In 2004, authorities in New Zealand dismantled 182 clandestine laboratories used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine; although that figure is slightly less than the figure for 2003 (202), it is still high compared with the figure for previous years.

638. Australia made one of its largest seizures of crystalline methamphetamine in October 2004, when a consignment of 125 kg of that substance originating in China was seized. In New Zealand, while less than 1 kg of crystalline methamphetamine was seized in 2003, over 17 kg were seized in 2004 and 9.5 kg were seized already in the first half of 2005. Most of the seized crystalline methamphetamine originated either in China or Malaysia. In June 2004, six suspects were arrested and 5 kg of crystalline methamphetamine and 700 litres of liquid methamphetamine and a large amount of precursor chemicals were seized.

639. In New Zealand, seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, precursor chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, continued to increase. Over 1.8 million capsules of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were seized in 2004. Due to tightened controls over ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, there are indications that traffickers are finding it more difficult to procure those substances locally and are attempting to smuggle them instead. Furthermore, during November 2004, a large number of pseudoephedrine tablets were seized in a post office in New Zealand, which may signify that traffickers have turned to using the postal system to smuggle such precursors.

640. Australia and New Zealand continued to seize substantial quantities of MDMA (Ecstasy), in line with a worldwide increase in seizures of MDMA and other hallucinogens in 2004. In April 2005, Australia arrested four suspects in connection with the attempted smuggling of over 1 ton of MDMA tablets (worth an estimated US\$ 191 million) hidden in a shipping container of tiles from Italy. Australia reported a significant increase in seizures of MDMA in 2004. It seized over 800 kg of MDMA, which purportedly originated in Poland, in air cargo from Germany. Over 45,000 tablets of MDMA were seized in New Zealand in 2004. The majority of the seized MDMA originated in China, in particular in the Hong Kong SAR of China. The amount of MDMA seized in New Zealand in 2004 fell compared with the figure for the previous year; authorities attribute the decline to several factors, including the use of more elaborate trafficking and concealment methods. Australia reported the lifetime prevalence rate for the abuse of MDMA was higher than the rate for all other drugs except cannabis and methamphetamine.

641. Seizures of ketamine, GHB and GBL are also increasing in New Zealand. For example, while small amounts of GBL were seized in previous years, 43 litres of GBL were seized in 2004.

Substances not under international control

642. Increased seizures of khat (*Catha edulis*) were reported in New Zealand. Over 27 kg of khat was seized in 2004. The majority of the khat originated in Ethiopia and was sent through the international mail centre.