

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