

control legislation and the adoption of a national drug control master plan.

264. The legal framework for drug control in the Gambia is comprehensive and generally in compliance with the provisions of the three main international drug control treaties, although some further updating might be warranted. The Board is concerned, however, that the controls exercised over licit narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals are not adequate and that the Government's compliance with its mandatory reporting obligations pursuant to the treaties has not been satisfactory. The Board urges the Government to take all steps necessary to enhance coordination and cooperation among the institutions and agencies, both regulatory and law enforcement, that are responsible for drug control issues, and to ensure full implementation of its treaty obligations, as a matter of priority.

265. The Board notes with appreciation the efforts of the newly established multidisciplinary drug control administration in the Gambia to combat the smuggling of drugs through the country, and its active role in fostering and supporting cooperation in the field of drug control at the national, regional and international levels. The Board encourages the Government to allocate the necessary resources to that administration to further strengthen its capacity to fight drug trafficking and abuse and calls upon UNODC to provide assistance in that regard.

266. In August 2006, a mission of the Board visited Malawi. The Board notes that the Government is committed to addressing all aspects of the drug problem. A survey on drug abuse and HIV/AIDS and a survey on cannabis were carried out in 2004 to assess the magnitude of the drug problem in the country. The National Drug Control Master Plan, 2005-2009, approved by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Drug Control in 2005, provides the administrative framework to counter drug abuse and covers a range of measures for supply and demand reduction, including alternative development programmes. As the national drug control legislation currently in force is not fully in line with the international drug control treaties, the Board encourages the Government to enact without delay the draft drug control policy and the drug abuse bill, and to resume its reporting obligations pursuant to the international drug control treaties.

267. Illicit cannabis cultivation takes place throughout Malawi. More than 50 hectares of illicitly cultivated cannabis were eradicated in 2006. The detection capacities and drug control activities of the national law enforcement authorities, however, are hampered by a lack of financial and technical resources. The Board encourages the Government to strengthen its efforts to counter the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants and to introduce alternative development programmes, in cooperation with other countries in Africa and with the support of the international community, where possible.

268. The Board notes that the availability of opioids, their selection and quantities available for the control of pain do not always meet the requirements of the medical institutions in Malawi. The Board recommends that the Government accurately assess the national medical and/or scientific requirements for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to take all steps necessary to ensure that those substances are available for treatment purposes.

B. Americas

Central America and the Caribbean

Major developments

269. Central America and the Caribbean continues to be used as a major trans-shipment area for cocaine from South America destined for North America and Europe. The main smuggling routes are the maritime corridor of the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea. Cocaine is, to a lesser extent, also smuggled by land across Central America along the Pan-American Highway and by air. Institutional weaknesses and corruption seriously undermine efforts by the Governments of countries in Central America and the Caribbean to combat the drug problem. The link between local drug trafficking and organized crime perpetrated by youth gangs or *maras* in several countries in the region, especially El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras, continues to be a problem. The smuggling of arms and ammunition in exchange for drugs continues to prevail in the region, as reported in Honduras and Panama.

270. Trafficking in precursors of ATS is becoming a problem in Central America and the Caribbean.

Because of the lack of controls, there have been cases where a large amount of pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled precursors, such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, has been legally imported into a country in the region and then smuggled into North America or South America, to be used for the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Regional cooperation

271. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) has developed a regional framework for drug control plans and policies, as well as an evaluation system for the region. The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism enables OAS member States to assess their own policies and those of other OAS member States and make recommendations to improve them.

272. CICAD has also developed hemispheric guidelines on school-based prevention programmes³⁷ aimed at standardizing interventions for preventing drug abuse in schools. The guidelines deal with issues such as the political framework, theoretical foundations, principal characteristics of a plan and examples of existing prevention programmes.

273. To tackle the problem of maritime drug smuggling, Governments of countries in Central America and the Caribbean signed in 2003 the agreement concerning cooperation in suppressing illicit maritime and air trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the Caribbean area. However, the agreement has yet to be ratified by several countries in the region.

274. In order to prevent the smuggling of drugs by land, the United States has assisted Central American States in improving their border inspection facilities by establishing mobile inspection and law enforcement teams. Moreover, a database called the regional information and intelligence-sharing system is being developed to collect data on the movement of persons in Central America and the Caribbean. It will connect the 24 countries and territories that are part of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, facilitating the screening of arrival and departure of

travellers, and will be also linked to Interpol. Furthermore, the ministers of defence of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua agreed on a cooperative control framework that will include information-sharing and the review and updating of national and regional legal systems.

275. Representatives from Mexico and countries in Central America held a meeting in San Salvador in September 2006 to discuss the creation of a regional centre to fight drug trafficking. During the meeting, experts from various national drug control agencies discussed the terms of reference of the centre and the functions that it should have. The centre would be established in El Salvador and would be operated by prosecutors, police officers and military personnel from Central American countries and Mexico.

276. During a regional workshop organized by UNODC in Panama City in March 2006, national experts and government representatives from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama developed a strategy for Central America and the Caribbean based on national studies of the services available for the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug-dependent persons in the region. The strategy enables countries to work together on particular topics such as training to reinforce common issues, in order to improve the services for drug-dependent persons.

277. After testing the methodology in Barbados and Jamaica in 2004, UNODC has since mid-2005 expanded its computer-based training programme in the Caribbean to include eight additional countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of the computer-based training programme is to implement self-sustaining training programmes to counter drug trafficking and organized criminal activity affecting island States.

National legislation, policy and action

278. In the Bahamas, the Cabinet is currently preparing new legislation to improve controls and ensure compliance with standards and regulations for preventing the diversion of pharmaceutical products containing controlled substances.

³⁷ Organization of American States, *CICAD Hemispheric Guidelines on School-Based Prevention* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

279. Belize started to participate with other Central American countries in a cooperative national information exchange system. The system helps to find and intercept civilian aircraft and facilitates the detection of drug trafficking routes and the arrest of drug traffickers. A new act for the control of pharmaceuticals is expected to be enacted in Belize by the end of 2006. The Ministry of Health has set up a unit to monitor and control pharmaceutical products.
280. Costa Rica has implemented a national database system, which, together with complementary computer programs, will make possible the cross-checking of sales reported by distributors of controlled substances and pharmacies, as well as prescriptions written by doctors for medicine distributed in pharmacies. Moreover, the Government has enacted the Regulations on Granting and Oversight of Licenses to Handle Psychotropic Substances and Narcotics in the context of the national drug control plan for the period 2005-2007.
281. In Cuba, as part of Operation Aché III, efforts to counter drug trafficking are being further strengthened by increasing air, sea and radio reconnaissance and the number of border troops. Those efforts are helping to consolidate the success of Operation Aché III in preventing maritime drug trafficking, seizing a large volume of illicit drug consignments and maintaining information exchange with regional drug control agencies.
282. In Dominica, the draft pharmacy bill on the control of pharmaceutical products has yet to be adopted, but it is anticipated that the bill will be enacted in 2007.
283. Joint cooperation between the Governments of El Salvador and the United States has led to the imprisonment of a former Salvadoran legislator, extradited to the United States for drug trafficking. The Government of El Salvador is introducing more comprehensive approaches to prevention, education, public safety and the development of life skills, in order to deal with the persistent problem of youth gangs.
284. In Guatemala, high-level police officials were arrested in November 2005 and charged with conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States. The Government of Guatemala has restructured the procedures for approval of the production, import and sale of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and is working to update the customs communication network to control the imports of those products into the country.
285. In Haiti, armed gangs continue to be a serious problem, mainly because they are linked to organizations involved in drug trafficking. The coast guard of Haiti has again begun to patrol the territorial waters of the country, achieving an important goal in the prevention of maritime drug trafficking.
286. In Tegucigalpa, cooperation among the Government of Honduras, the private sector and different organizations continues to be given priority in order to ensure the consolidation of the UNODC "labour integration programme", an innovative vocational scheme for youth at risk. Honduras must carry out a nationwide survey to assess the extent of drug abuse and approve the minimum standards of care for drug-dependent persons.
287. In Jamaica, the Government-appointed Precursor Chemical Committee, which had worked on the preparation of subsidiary legislation to the Precursor Chemicals Act, 1999, has been re-established to finalize such regulations.
288. In the Netherlands Antilles, efforts at the international airport at Curaçao focusing on detecting "mules" (passengers who hide illegal drugs inside their bodies) continued to produce results during 2006. However, there are indications suggesting that the "mules" may be shifting their activities to other airports in the territory. To prevent that, the Government is starting to carry out "anti-mule" operations in those airports. Following the recommendation of the Board, the territory has started to address the problem of the illegal sale of drugs through Internet pharmacies.
289. In Nicaragua, the Government approved the Minimum Standards of Care for Users of Psychoactive Substances through ministerial agreement No. 41-2006 of 3 February 2006.
290. Panama has strengthened its controls over precursor chemicals. The Government passed on 13 June 2005, the Special Chemicals Law (Law No. 19) and its regulations. In addition, a new project to evaluate and improve drug control in the Colón Free Zone is to be implemented during 2006. Despite the efforts of the Government, corruption is a persistent

problem in the country. In 2005, a high-level official of the counter-narcotics unit was detained and accused of corruption.

291. The authorities of Trinidad and Tobago, in cooperation with United States authorities, have developed a computer system that will give the Ministry of Health the capacity to track chemical shipments, with a view to preventing their diversion for use in illicit drug manufacture. Moreover, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago appointed a special Precursor Chemical Team that has completed a review of the current legislation and is in the process of drafting a new law.

292. The use of cash couriers and of money transfer services to pay for consignments of illicit drugs is increasing. Cash couriers have been detained in Antigua and Barbuda, El Salvador and Honduras. In addition, cash couriers from Antigua and Barbuda have been detained in other countries, particularly in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where links to drug traffickers have been established by the police.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

293. In spite of being used as major transit and trans-shipment areas, all countries in Central America and the Caribbean, with the exception of El Salvador, have relatively low levels of drug abuse. The most commonly abused drug in the region is cannabis, followed by cocaine hydrochloride and “crack” cocaine.

294. Central America and the Caribbean is not a main drug-producing area, although some countries in the region, such as Guatemala and Jamaica (see paras. 299-300 below), are threatened by increasing production of illicit drugs.

Narcotic drugs

295. About 90 per cent of the cocaine entering North America every year passes through Central America. Moreover, the Caribbean is situated along one of the main cocaine trafficking routes leading to Europe. The authorities of the Netherlands made about 40 per cent of their total seizures in the waters of the Netherlands Antilles in 2004. Jamaica and Martinique continue to play an important role in the trans-shipment of cocaine to the United Kingdom and France, respectively.

296. In El Salvador, law enforcement authorities seized over three times more illicit drugs during the period 2000-2005 than during the previous five-year period. Six out of 10 Salvadorans have abused an illicit drug at least once in their lifetime, particularly during adolescence. Between January and November 2005, 2,394 persons in El Salvador were arrested for drug trafficking and the possession of drugs.

297. In Nicaragua, a joint operation implemented in February 2006, involving the police and the army and coordinated by the prosecutor’s office, led to the seizure of 547 kg of cocaine that were being shipped from Costa Rica to Guatemala.

298. In Costa Rica, the abuse of drugs, particularly “crack” cocaine, has increased; there has also been an increase in violent crime linked to drug trafficking and abuse.

299. In Guatemala, almost 490 hectares of illicit opium poppy cultivation were eradicated in 2005, which represents an increase of more than 250 per cent compared with the figure for 2004 (181 hectares). During 2005, 6,400 persons were arrested for possession or illicit use of drugs, of whom 3,334 were young persons of between 15 and 25 years of age. In contrast, only 46 persons were arrested for drug trafficking during the same period.

300. Jamaica is the main illicit producer and exporter of cannabis in Central America and the Caribbean. However, there is no precise estimate of the quantity of cannabis plant illicitly cultivated in the country. The illicit cultivation of cannabis plants, which was carried out on a large scale in the past, is now being done on smaller plots of land hidden in inaccessible mountainous areas. Cannabis is the most commonly abused drug not only in Jamaica but also in the region as a whole.

301. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also an important illicit producer of cannabis in the Caribbean subregion. Illicit drug trafficking has penetrated the licit economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, making parts of the population dependent on the illicit cultivation of cannabis plant and on trafficking in cannabis.

Psychotropic substances

302. During the first half of 2006, law enforcement authorities of Costa Rica confiscated 3,450 tablets of

MDMA (“ecstasy”) that were being smuggled by Colombian nationals. That was the largest quantity of synthetic drugs ever seized by the police in that country.

303. The Dominican Republic continues to be used as a major trans-shipment area for MDMA (“ecstasy”) from Europe destined for the United States. In 2005, a total of 280,000 MDMA tablets were seized.

304. In Trinidad and Tobago, the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme, which is responsible for the coordination of demand reduction initiatives, has reported evidence of the abuse of MDMA (“ecstasy”) in the country, in addition to the abuse of cocaine, cannabis and heroin.

Missions

305. A mission of the Board visited El Salvador in August 2006. The Board notes that the Government is committed to combat drug trafficking and abuse and is making its best efforts towards those ends, as evidenced by a high degree of professionalism and good coordination among the state agencies in charge of drug control. However, some of those agencies, in particular the Supreme Council of Health, lack the financial and technical resources to fully carry out their mandate. The Board encourages the Government of El Salvador to join Project Prism.

306. Control over the licit movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in El Salvador is, in general, satisfactory. Nevertheless, the availability of controlled substances for medical purposes is very low. The Board encourages the Government to take the necessary measures to ensure sufficient availability of controlled medicines for medical purposes. The Board notes that the problem related to the youth gangs or *maras* (criminal bands organized to commit all kinds of offences, including drug trafficking) (see para. 269 above) is growing steadily. The Board encourages the Government to study the problem and to take the necessary measures to deal with it.

307. A technical visit of the Board to Honduras took place in August 2006. The Board notes that Honduras ratified the 1971 Convention in May 2005 and has thus become a party to each of the three international drug control treaties. The Board also notes the commitment of the National Council against Drug Trafficking (CNCN), which is comprised of the highest-level

officials in Honduras, to the fight against drug trafficking and abuse. However, inadequate resources and coordination among drug control agencies have hampered the Government’s efforts to combat drug trafficking effectively.

308. The Board notes that the legal framework for drug control in Honduras is outdated. The Board requests the Government to enact a new, more comprehensive law, in line with the international drug control treaties, that will include the regulation of precursor chemicals and to fully implement the 1971 Convention. The Board also notes that the Unit for the Regulation of Pharmaceutical Products, the competent authority in charge of the licit movement of drugs, lacks adequate resources to carry out its basic responsibilities. The Government should take the necessary measures to solve those problems as soon as possible.

309. The Board notes that no surveys on the extent of drug abuse among the general population in Honduras have been conducted recently, and no minimum standards of care have been approved yet. The Government should take measures to deal with those problems.

North America

Major developments

310. North America, comprising Canada, Mexico and the United States, continues to be one of the prime targets of drug traffickers. For more than 30 years, drug abuse and perceived risk of drug abuse among students in secondary schools in the United States have been monitored in the annual survey “Monitoring the Future”. According to the survey, the proportion of students using illicit drugs has been on the decline for four consecutive years; as a result, the annual prevalence rate for various drugs is currently 10-30 per cent lower than it was 10 years ago. There has been a significant decline in the percentage of students in secondary schools who reported lifetime use of cannabis; there have also been declines in their lifetime use of other drugs, such as methamphetamine, MDMA, cocaine and heroin. The Board notes that, according to the survey, those declines are largely related to a significant rise in the percentage of adolescents perceiving the abuse of amphetamines, cannabis,

“crack” cocaine, heroin and MDMA to be high-risk activities. However, the same survey reveals that the abuse of prescription drugs is increasing among students in secondary schools; for example, abuse of oxycodone preparations (OxyContin[®]) increased by almost 40 per cent from 2002 to 2005.

311. Substance abuse remains a matter of serious concern in the United States, particularly with regard to the high level of abuse of prescription drugs by adolescents and adults. The gradual increase in the abuse of sedatives (including barbiturates), tranquillizers and narcotic drugs other than heroin among the general population has resulted in prescription drugs becoming the second most abused class of drugs after cannabis. The abuse of prescription drugs such as fentanyl, oxycodone and hydrocodone has led to a rising number of deaths.

312. The spread in the abuse of prescription drugs is also related to the increasing use of the World Wide Web as a global drug market. International law enforcement efforts closed down thousands of illegal Internet pharmacies involved in drug trafficking. Despite those efforts, there is an increasing number of such Internet sites selling medicines containing opioids and stimulants without prescriptions.

313. Methamphetamine trafficking and abuse continue to be key problems in Canada and the United States. In some rural areas and a number of small cities in the United States, the abuse of methamphetamine has reached widespread proportions. Methamphetamine abuse has become a serious health, law enforcement and political concern and the fastest-growing drug threat: 58 per cent of counties rank it as their biggest drug problem. While United States drug law enforcement agencies have been successful in closing down illicit methamphetamine laboratories, domestic illicit manufacturers of methamphetamine have largely been replaced by transnational drug trafficking organizations, based in Canada and Mexico. In Canada, domestic illicit manufacturers account for the largest share of the trafficked methamphetamine.

314. The Board notes the significant legislative efforts made by all three States in North America to counteract the surge of methamphetamine in the region. The United States has enacted new legislation (the Patriot Act), which inter alia, restricts the sale of ephedrine and medications containing pseudoephedrine. Limits on imports of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine have

also been introduced in Mexico. Canada amended the 2003 Precursor Control Regulations, strengthening, inter alia, import and export licensing procedures.

315. The involvement of organized criminal groups has led to Canada being used as a source for cannabis, methamphetamine and MDMA sold on the illicit market in that country or in the United States. The importance of illicit methamphetamine exports to the United States has declined following the introduction of improved precursor controls in 2003.

316. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control most of the organized wholesale drug trafficking in the United States, in particular trafficking in cocaine, cannabis, methamphetamine and heroin that is illicitly manufactured in Mexico. They are expanding their control of drug trafficking to areas formerly under the influence of Colombian, Dominican and other criminal groups.

Regional cooperation

317. The Governments of all three countries in North America have responded to the threat of drug trafficking operations, particularly those operations run by organized criminal groups, with increased cooperation and mutual support. The close cooperation between Mexico and the United States has included major institution-building initiatives, as well as financial and technical support, as evidenced by the provision of training courses for Mexican law enforcement personnel and prosecutors at the national, state and local levels. The Attorney General of Mexico and the Attorney General of the United States hold meetings on a regular basis to discuss bilateral cooperation and border violence.

318. The extradition of drug criminals from Mexico to the United States is taking place more frequently. An increasing number of fugitives are being deported to the United States by Mexican police and immigration authorities. The Government of Mexico initiated Operativo México Seguro (Operation Secure Mexico) to counter violence that began in 2005 among criminal organizations fighting for control over smuggling routes in cities along the border of Mexico with the United States. The Governments of Mexico and the United States started in 2005 Operation Border Unity, a bilateral, multi-agency effort to address violence on both sides of the border in the Laredo/Nuevo Laredo area.

319. The involvement of criminal groups in drug trafficking between Canada and the United States is counteracted by close cooperation of the authorities of the two countries at the national, state (or provincial) and local levels. One example of that close cooperation is the Integrated Border Enforcement Team initiative, which has become one of the primary tools used to ensure that criminals cannot exploit international borders to evade prosecution. The Shiprider Agreement, concluded in 2006 between Canada and the United States, has strengthened law enforcement cooperation by providing transborder law enforcement authority to Canadian law enforcement officers operating along and across the border.

320. Cooperation between Canada and the United States has also been used to combat drug trafficking in the transit zone from South America to North America. Canada deployed “Maritime Patrol Assets” in support of “Joint Interagency Task Force South”, of the United States, one of three such task forces conducting operations to counter drug trafficking.

National legislation, policy and action

321. The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005, signed in March 2006, contains a number of important provisions to combat the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in methamphetamine. The provisions include: restrictions on the sale of medicines containing pseudoephedrine, ephedrine and phenylpropanolamine; increased criminal penalties for illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and smuggling of methamphetamine; and provisions for bilateral efforts at the border between Mexico and the United States.

322. In addition, individual states in the United States have responded to the new challenge posed by methamphetamines and enacted additional state-level legislation on precursor control. States with the strictest laws on pseudoephedrine have seen a significant reduction in the number of seizures of methamphetamine laboratories.

323. In November 2005, the Government of Canada enacted the first major amendments to the 2003 Precursor Control Regulations, which provided for strengthened licensing procedures. Canada also moved methamphetamine to a more strictly controlled national

schedule, increasing the maximum penalty for trafficking in or illicit manufacture of the substance (from 10 years of imprisonment to life imprisonment) and for possession (from three years of imprisonment to seven).

324. The Government of Mexico introduced a policy limiting the importation of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine to manufacturers only, thereby reducing imports of those precursors by 40 per cent. Wholesale distributors are no longer allowed to import base pseudoephedrine and ephedrine. In addition, the quantity that can be imported in a single shipment is limited to 3,000 kg. Import quotas were tied to estimates of national needs.

325. The Supreme Court of Mexico ruled in November 2005 that sentencing a person to life in prison without the possibility of parole did not violate the Mexican Constitution, which prohibited cruel and unusual punishment. The ruling has removed a significant obstacle to the extradition of fugitives from Mexico facing life imprisonment in the United States for offences involving major drug trafficking and violent crimes.

326. In November 2005, the Parliament of Canada passed the Proceeds of Crime Bill, which targets the illicit proceeds of organized crime, including serious drug offences, and authorizes the courts to order the forfeiture of property of those convicted of either membership in a criminal organization or certain drug-related offences.

327. The Board notes that the Government of Canada has decided not to pursue the proposed cannabis reform legislation that would have decriminalized possession of small quantities of cannabis.

328. The Board is seriously concerned that several cities in Canada, in addition to the heroin injection site in Vancouver, have planned to distribute drug paraphernalia, including “crack” pipes, to chronic users. The Board has repeatedly mentioned in its annual reports³⁸ that such programmes are in

³⁸ *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XI.2), para. 590; *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2004* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XI.3), para. 510; *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2003* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XI.1), paras. 325-326.

contravention of the international drug control treaties. The Board urges the Government to make available adequate services to drug abusers in need of treatment and rehabilitation, rather than providing drug injection rooms, in order to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

329. The Board welcomes the Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund, established by the Government of Canada, which supports efforts in demand reduction and treatment for drug abuse carried out at the local community level, in particular initiatives for preventing the abuse of cannabis and methamphetamine.

330. The United States is responding to the increasing problem of abuse of prescription drugs, focusing on preventing the diversion of prescription drugs and providing treatment for abusers of such drugs. At the state level, the prescription-drug monitoring programme provides doctors, pharmacists and, when appropriate, law enforcement with information about patients' prescriptions. In late 2005, a total of 25 states had operational programmes for monitoring prescription drugs or were in the process of implementing them.

331. In Mexico, corruption continues to be a serious problem. The Agencia Federal de Investigación (federal investigative agency) is the central body coordinating efforts to fight corruption in the country, promoting professionalism and the effectiveness of law enforcement institutions. Mexico has taken a number of steps to reduce, if not eliminate, corruption among law enforcement and government officials, such as the establishment of a career path for investigators and the introduction of the concept of "culture of lawfulness" as part of the curriculum in schools. Authorities at the national, state and local levels have initiated training on the rule of law for police personnel. Investigations into possible misconduct by law enforcement officers and government employees are carried out regularly. The Board, while noting those efforts, again requests that Mexican authorities actively pursue the implementation of policies to counteract corruption.

Situation with regard to drug trafficking and abuse

332. Cannabis continues to be the most commonly abused and trafficked illicit drug in the region. North America accounts for the largest part of illicit cannabis production worldwide. According to available information, in 2005 Mexico produced more than 10,000 tons of cannabis and the United States produced nearly 4,500 tons.

333. According to the latest Canadian Addiction Survey, annual prevalence of cannabis use among persons aged 15 and above increased from 6.5 per cent in 1989 to 14.1 per cent in 2004. Illicit cannabis plant cultivation has become a thriving illegal industry in Canada. In addition to outdoor cultivation, more sophisticated indoor crop-growing methods are increasingly being used to produce high-potency cannabis (cannabis with a high tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content). On some of the plantations there are thousands of cannabis plants. Criminal groups are increasingly gaining control over the production and distribution of high-potency cannabis in Canada and have been identified as the principal suppliers of such cannabis to the United States. The total amount of Canadian cannabis seized by United States customs authorities was more than eight times greater in 2004 (more than 19 tons) than in 2000.

334. In Canada, cultivation of cannabis plants and trafficking in cannabis currently account for the bulk of the caseload of drug law enforcement authorities. Each year, approximately 1.3 million cannabis plants are seized; using that figure as a basis, Canadian law enforcement agencies estimate annual production of cannabis to be 1,070-2,676 tons.

335. Cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug in the United States, but a steady decline in its abuse by adolescents has been noted for almost a decade. A large part of the cannabis products available in the United States are smuggled into the country by Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups. More than 580 tons of cannabis originating in Mexico were seized by United States customs authorities in 2004. In Mexico, the eradication of cannabis plants remained at the same level in 2005 as in 2004 (30,882 hectares).

336. Mexican drug trafficking organizations have increased the size and sophistication of their cannabis

plant cultivation operations on public and private lands in the United States. New techniques are used on those well-protected cultivation areas to produce a larger, more potent outdoor cannabis crop with a THC content of at least 5 per cent and with an increased street value. Such higher-potency cannabis accounted for more than half of the total cannabis seized in 2005. Approximately 5.7 million cannabis plants were eradicated within the United States in 2005, which represents an increase of 1 million plants compared with the figure for 2004.

337. Another major problem in North America is the increasing methamphetamine manufacture, abuse and trafficking, involving mainly the United States market. Amphetamine abusers accounted for 8 per cent of all drug abusers admitted for treatment in 2004, compared with 3 per cent in 1994. Methamphetamine abuse has gradually expanded from the western states of the United States to the eastern states. It is particularly a problem in rural areas and small cities in that country.

338. While domestic illicit methamphetamine manufacture is still the main supplier of the United States market, it has declined in recent years as a result of law enforcement pressure and restrictions on the sale and use of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine. In the United States, the number of seizures of laboratories illicitly manufacturing methamphetamine, whether on a large or a small scale, declined significantly, from more than 10,200 in 2003 to less than 5,300 in 2005. The reduction in the manufacture of methamphetamine in the United States has been largely offset by sharp increases in the large-scale manufacture of that drug in Mexico, particularly in the western and north-western parts of the country. The latter trend has been confirmed by the increasing amount of methamphetamine manufactured in Mexico and seized on the border between Mexico and the United States (2 tons in 2004).

339. The prevalence of methamphetamine abuse is still relatively low among the general population in Canada; however, among youth, particularly among street youth and youth in the rave and club scenes, methamphetamine abuse is rising.

340. Most of the methamphetamine trafficked in Canada is manufactured in clandestine laboratories in the country itself. The number of seizures of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories increased from 13 in 2001 to 40 in 2004. While there are many

small methamphetamine laboratories operated by individuals in rural areas, there has been an increase in the number of "super laboratories" (manufacturing methamphetamine in excess of 5 kg per synthesis cycle). The level of sophistication of the laboratory set-ups, as well as the involvement of organized criminal groups in methamphetamine manufacture, has increased. In some parts of Canada, such as Quebec, most of the methamphetamine trafficked is in tablet form. The shift from powder form to tablet form is in response to the growing number of users in the rave and club scenes.

341. The Board is concerned about the increasing abuse in the United States of prescription drugs listed as controlled substances, including pain killers, stimulants, sedatives and tranquillizers. Levels of non-medical use and abuse of pharmaceuticals are higher than levels of use for most illicit drugs, second only to the levels of cannabis abuse. Pharmaceuticals commonly abused in the United States include cocaine, codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, methadone, methylphenidate, morphine, oxycodone, the amphetamine group and the benzodiazepine group. The abuse of several of those substances can have lethal effects, and there has been an increasing number of deaths related to such abuse in the United States. The Board calls on the United States authorities to raise public awareness and take more effective action with regard to the added risk for non-medical drug users who tamper with prescription drugs and formulations. The tampered medications include narcotic analgesics, stimulants and depressants.

342. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in the United States, 11 per cent of persons aged 12-17 reported lifetime non-medical use of pain killers. According to data from the study *Monitoring the Future*, OxyContin[®] abuse increased from 2002 to 2005 by almost 40 per cent, to an annual prevalence of 5.5 per cent among students in their final year of secondary school (aged 17-18). Hydrocodone (Vicodin[®]) is also widely abused: 7.4 per cent of college students (aged 18-22) abused that drug in 2005 (see also para. 56 above).

343. The Board wishes to draw to the attention of the United States authorities that the overall increase in the amount of prescription drugs abused appears to be related to an increase in sales of prescription narcotic drugs, depressants and stimulants. From 2000 to 2004,

the commercial distribution of pharmaceuticals in the United States increased by 109 per cent. One matter of particular concern is the sharp rise in sales of commonly abused pharmaceuticals such as hydrocodone and oxycodone.

344. Another matter of particular concern to the Board is the noticeable increase in the abuse of fentanyl since May 2006 in the United States, and, to a lesser extent, in Canada. The abuse of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 80 times as potent as heroin, is particularly dangerous, as evidenced by the recent dramatic increase in the number of deaths from fentanyl overdoses registered on the eastern coast of the United States. The fentanyl is either sold as heroin or mixed with heroin. Fentanyl abusers are unable to judge the strength of the substance they are injecting. There have also been cases of the abuse of a mixture of fentanyl and cocaine.

345. Fentanyl is diverted by means of pharmacy theft, fraudulent prescriptions and illicit distribution by patients, physicians and pharmacists. Lately, fentanyl preparations, in particular in the form of transdermal patches and lozenges, are becoming as popular as OxyContin® in pharmacy burglaries and robberies. Not all fentanyl found on the illicit market has been diverted. To date, over 12 different analogues of fentanyl have been manufactured clandestinely and identified in seizures of drugs trafficked in the United States. Recent developments involving large quantities of trafficked fentanyl, as well as raids of clandestine laboratories in Mexico and the United States, indicate the growing role of illicitly manufactured fentanyl in supplying the illicit market.

346. Cocaine abuse in the United States is stable, with a slight decline in the number of persons who abused cocaine at least once in the past month. The proportion of persons admitted for treatment for cocaine abuse declined from 18 per cent in 1994 to 14 per cent in 2004. Persons who smoked “crack” cocaine accounted for 72 per cent of all persons admitted for treatment for cocaine abuse in 2004. United States inter-agency and multinational forces in the transit zone from South America to North America (the Joint Interagency Task Force South) seized a record 254 tons of cocaine in 2005, compared with 219 tons in 2004 and 176 tons in 2003. However, the Board notes that, as traditional maritime routes of cocaine trafficking have been disturbed by joint law enforcement operations, drug traffickers have tried to evade interdiction efforts by

moving fishing-vessel operations farther out in the Pacific, as far as the Galapagos Islands. Vessels or yachts carrying cocaine intended for illicit markets in Canada and the United States have been seized in locations even farther away, such as off the coast of Spain.

347. The cocaine smuggled into the United States is derived from coca produced mainly in Colombia but also in Bolivia and Peru. Mexico continues to be used as the principal trans-shipment country for cocaine entering the United States. Cocaine abuse is increasing in Mexico.

348. Demand for cocaine in Canada remains strong, and large-scale illegal importations of the drug continue. Law enforcement operations have revealed close relations between organized criminal groups from Canada and Colombian cartels attempting to import to Canada bulk shipments of cocaine (several hundred kilograms each) on a regular basis. The most common areas used as trans-shipment points for smuggling cocaine into Canada are Antigua, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States. According to the Canadian Addiction Survey, cocaine is the third most widely used illicit drug in Canada, after cannabis and hallucinogens (such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and phencyclidine). According to survey data, annual prevalence of abuse of powder and “crack” cocaine in Canada increased from 0.7 per cent in 1994 to 1.9 per cent in 2004.

349. The Board regards the decrease in heroin abuse among adolescents in the United States as an encouraging sign: annual prevalence of such abuse was 0.2 per cent in 2004, compared with 0.6 per cent in the mid-1990s. As the current perception that the risks of heroin abuse are high is expected to continue, the rate of past year abuse of heroin is expected to decrease even further.

350. The total amount of heroin seized in the United States decreased from 2,773 kg in 2002 to 1,845 kg in 2004. Most of the heroin abused in that country is manufactured from opium poppy grown in Colombia and Mexico, though opium production in those countries accounts for less than 4 per cent of global production. Expanded aerial eradication efforts, as well as upgraded security screening and increased seizures at United States airports, has led to a decrease in the availability of Colombian heroin; however, Colombia

is still the main supplier of heroin to the United States, accounting for 60-70 per cent of the heroin sold in the United States.

351. In Mexico, opium poppy growers employ small, widely dispersed plots in remote, hard-to-access areas, hindering detection and eradication of crops. In addition, the favourable climate in 2005 permitted two or three opium poppy harvests. Opium poppy is mostly cultivated in areas on the Pacific coast and then transported to the centre and north of Mexico for processing. The eradication operations of the Mexican Army and the Attorney General's Office usually destroy at least 80 per cent of the opium poppy grown in the country. In 2005, the total area of eradicated opium poppy crops increased to 20,464 hectares, an increase of 28 per cent over the previous year.

352. In Canada, the total volume of heroin seized remained comparatively low (68 kg in 2004) but the volume of opium seized increased (from 27 kg in 2001 to 84 kg in 2004). According to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, consignments of opium and heroin from Afghanistan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan are usually routed through a European country or the United States to Canada. Since 2002, the total seizures of heroin originating in South-East Asia has somewhat declined, and the market share of Latin American heroin has been increasing.

353. The sharp increase in MDMA trafficking in the United States noted five years ago (11 million tablets in the peak year 2001) has been halted: the total amount of MDMA seized in that country has declined to less than 3 million tablets in the last two years. The number of past-year abusers of MDMA (aged 12 and above) declined by 40 per cent between 2002 and 2004. In Canada, significant seizures of MDMA from clandestine laboratories indicate the involvement of larger and more sophisticated operations involving organized criminal groups. Prior to 2004, MDMA arrived mainly in tablet or powder form from Europe. In 2004, importations of MDMA decreased as traffickers began to produce MDMA on a large scale within Canada. The total amount of seized MDMA increased to a record level of 15 million dosage units in 2004, compared with an annual average of less than 2 million dosage units in the period 2000-2002. The number of seized clandestine laboratories nearly tripled (to 17) in 2004. Most of the clandestine laboratories are polydrug laboratories, manufacturing more than

one single illicit drug (for example, a combination of methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) and MDMA, a combination of MDA and methamphetamine or a combination of MDMA and methamphetamine). Organized criminal groups are heavily involved in the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in such drugs.

354. In Canada, MDMA, MDA and *gamma*-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) continue to be widely abused in the rave scene. The abuse of those drugs has spread to far broader user groups, including youth attending clubs, private parties, secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Substances not under international control

355. Among students in their final year of secondary school in the United States, the proportion of students who abused inhalants in the past year was considerably lower in 2004 (4.2 per cent) than in the peak year 1995 (8.0 per cent). The abuse of inhalants in the United States, however, is on the rise again. It appears that, among adolescents, inhalants are the third most widely used class of illicit drugs.

356. In the United States, there have been reports on the abuse of high doses of dimenhydrinate, the active ingredient in Dramamine[®], with dangerous or even fatal effects.

357. Khat from various countries is smuggled into Canada, mainly via the United Kingdom, where it is not a prohibited substance. Under Schedule IV of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act of Canada, khat is designated a "controlled substance" and as such it is a criminal offence to import, export or traffic in khat.

South America

Major developments

358. The total area under coca bush cultivation in the Andean subregion increased slightly, from 158,000 hectares in 2004 to 159,600 hectares in 2005, but the figure for 2005 still represented a decrease of 28 per cent compared with the figure for 2000. Slight decreases in the total area under coca bush cultivation in Bolivia and Peru were offset by an increase in Colombia despite intensified eradication efforts. The ability of coca bush growers to move their operations from one area to another adversely affected the results

of eradication efforts by the Government of Colombia. Potential cocaine manufacture in the Andean subregion decreased by 3 per cent. Cocaine continues to reach the principal markets of the United States and Europe through the main trafficking routes in Central America and the Caribbean, as well as through Africa, as evidenced by increased seizures in Western and Central Africa (see para. 401 below).

359. With a view to monitoring the total area under coca bush cultivation, field research measuring coca leaf yields and cocaine yields from coca leaves was conducted in Colombia in 2006. The research confirms the findings of the Board that the cocaine yields are higher than reported in 2005. Those new findings are reflected in the 2005 figure for potential cocaine manufacture in Colombia (640 tons). In Peru, work to update the methods used to measure coca leaf and cocaine yields started in 2006 and will be applied in 2007. A similar review is also expected in Bolivia.

360. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia is considering the introduction of a new drug control policy with a view to using coca leaf for a wide range of products, as evidenced by the inauguration in June 2006 of a plant for processing coca leaf. The plant will manufacture packed coca tea, for local consumption and, according to proposals, also for export to other States parties to the 1961 Convention.

361. The Board wishes to reiterate its position reflected in its report for 2005³⁹ and urges the Governments concerned to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of the 1961 Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol concerning the production of coca leaf, its industrial uses and international trade. The Board is concerned that that action could serve as a precedent and may send the wrong message to the public if it is allowed to stand.

362. In Peru, coca bush growers are putting pressure on the new Government to stop manual eradication of coca bush and to remove coca leaf from international control. In Argentina, under current legislation, the possession of coca tea or coca leaf in a natural state for chewing purposes is not considered to be possession or personal use of a narcotic drug. The Board wishes to remind Governments that it is the responsibility of the

States parties to the international drug control treaties to ensure that the provisions concerning the cultivation of coca bush and the possession and use of coca leaves are adhered to, and the Board is ready to assist Governments in their efforts to fulfil that responsibility.

363. The implementation of measures aimed at countering drug trafficking, reducing illicit crop cultivation, preventing and fighting corruption related to drug trafficking and extraditing drug traffickers has met with resistance by violent groups in some countries in South America. The Board urges all Governments not to reduce their efforts to enforce their drug control policies, despite difficulties that they may be experiencing in that area.

364. Large amounts of precursor chemicals required for the illicit manufacture of drugs continue to be seized in most countries in South America, which indicates the availability of those precursor chemicals to be used for such purposes. Measures to counter smuggling, including measures used in controlling domestic distribution networks and investigating diversions of precursor chemicals, need to be further strengthened.

365. Cocaine abuse continues to account for most of the demand for treatment for drug abuse in South America, though the share accounted for by cocaine abuse has declined since the late 1990s. Several countries in the region carried out activities specifically aimed at the establishment of minimum standards of care for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug-dependent persons and the evaluation of the effectiveness of existing programmes for the treatment and prevention of drug abuse and conducted studies on the prevalence of drug abuse.

Regional cooperation

366. To advance efforts in drug control and supply reduction, CICAD continued to provide its member States with support in the form of training and technical assistance. The establishment of a network of national drug observatories in South America, to ensure that Governments are supplied with high-quality information on drug production, trafficking and abuse and related crime, was one of the priorities of CICAD. For example, in Peru, the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas (national commission for development and a drug-free lifestyle)

³⁹ *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005 ...*, para. 394.

submitted to the Government in February 2006 a draft decree providing for the establishment of the Observatorio Peruano de Drogas (Peruvian drug observatory), which also received support from Belgium.

367. The VIII High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Vienna on 6 and 7 March 2006. The mechanism is of particular importance within the framework of relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, as it is an institutional forum at the interregional level for identifying new approaches and exchanging proposals, ideas and experiences in addressing illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption.

368. At the Fifteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santa Marta, Colombia, from 17 to 21 October 2005, participants reported on the latest drug trafficking trends and distribution networks and links between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime. The meeting recommended, inter alia, regular revision of the relevant legal instruments to counteract new trends in the use of technology by organized criminal groups and regulation of ownership of speedboats, a means of transportation frequently used by drug traffickers.

369. Experts from countries in the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe participated in the Latin American conference on cocaine trafficking via maritime routes, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 17 February 2006. The experts analysed maritime routes used for smuggling cocaine into the United States and Europe, the structures of the criminal organizations involved and interdiction operations in international waters. It was recommended that the capacity of law enforcement agencies be strengthened in particular through better utilization of investigative techniques such as controlled delivery.

370. The Board notes that South American countries continued to adopt specific measures to strengthen the security of their borders. A pilot programme to identify cars and trucks in real time was developed at the land border crossing between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay with a view to supporting the sharing of information among the law enforcement authorities of those countries. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and

Uruguay are among the countries that have been implementing the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPC Code) of the International Maritime Organization.

371. South American countries continued to participate in regional projects, such as Drogas Sintéticas and Seis Fronteras, and in international projects initiated by the Board, such as Project Cohesion and Project Prism. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), the five countries participating in a project for the control of precursor products in Andean countries (PRECAN), which is financed by the European Commission, decided in October 2005 to establish a joint regional web portal for use by administrative control authorities. The portal is expected to be operational before the end of 2006.

372. Colombia and Ecuador signed, in December 2005, a joint declaration on the strengthening of border cooperation, which includes measures to counter trafficking in essential chemicals and arms. The Governments of the two countries also agreed on a 10-kilometre buffer zone to protect the border of Ecuador from the effects of aerial spraying of illicit crops in Colombia; the agreement went into effect in January 2006.

373. The first international meeting of drug observatories of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Caracas from 28 to 30 November 2005. The Board is pleased to note that participants from more than 40 countries shared experiences in the field of drug demand reduction, information on recent trends in drug abuse and methodologies used for the processing and analysis of epidemiological data. The Board welcomes the first comparative study of drug abuse in secondary schools in South American countries, an initiative of the subregional system for drug abuse information and investigation, comprising Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, as well as CICAD and UNODC. The Board also welcomes a study on the human, social and economic costs of drugs in certain countries in the Americas, including Chile and Uruguay.

National legislation, policy and action

374. New national drug strategy plans were adopted in Guyana in June 2005 and in Suriname in January 2006.

In Guyana, the national drug control master plan for the period 2005-2009 includes the implementation of school-based and occupation-based surveys to determine the prevalence of drug abuse in targeted areas.

375. The Board notes that, in Ecuador, there is closer cooperation between the National Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Control Board (CONSEP), the drug control directorate of the police and the customs authorities (see para. 405 below).

376. In Bolivia, Ministerial Regulation 112/06 (Reglamento de Circulación y Comercialización de la Hoja de Coca en su Estado Natural), adopted in June 2006, allows coca producers to trade their coca on licit coca markets. Furthermore, two draft laws, one on coca in its natural state and the other on controlled substances, are being prepared to replace law No. 1008 of 19 July 1988 on the Regimen de la Coca y Sustancias Controladas (regime applicable to coca and controlled substances).

377. The Board notes that the Government of Bolivia intensified its interdiction efforts in 2006. The Board urges the Government to ensure that, in addition to strengthening its measures for countering drug trafficking, all provisions of the new drug control legislation, including those relating to the cultivation of coca bush and the use of coca leaf, are in line with the international drug control treaties.

378. In October 2006, the Government of Peru decided on the decentralization of the national coca leaf enterprise. The Board urges the Government to ensure that that measure does not violate the provisions of the 1961 Convention on establishing a government agency to control coca bush cultivation and coca leaf production and does not undermine efforts in Peru to combat illicit coca bush cultivation and drug trafficking.

379. In Brazil, law No. 11.343 of 23 August 2006, which establishes the Sistema Nacional de Políticas Públicas sobre Drogas (national system of public policy on drugs), was promulgated in August 2006. The law also stipulates procedures related to the investigation of drug-related crimes and sanctions, as well as measures for the prevention of drug abuse. The law distinguishes between drug traffickers and drug users and establishes alternative sanctions for drug abuse without decriminalizing it.

380. In Paraguay, decree No. 5213/05 was enacted, updating the list of controlled substances and providing for the control of prescriptions for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

381. In Ecuador, the Ley para reprimir el Lavado de Activos (law against money-laundering) was promulgated and a new Corte Suprema de Justicia (supreme court of justice) was established in October 2005. The law defines money-laundering as a criminal activity, establishes a financial intelligence unit and includes provisions for mutual legal assistance and the exchange of information.

382. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, law No. 38.281 (Ley Orgánica contra la Delincuencia Organizada) was enacted in September 2005, inter alia, establishing money-laundering as an offence.

383. In several countries in South America, such as Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), new laws on precursors and regulations establishing further control mechanisms, defining codes of conduct for precursor traders and providing for the exchange of information were adopted.

384. In Peru, law No. 28305 (Ley de Control de Insumos Químicos y Productos Fiscalizados), which entered into force in October 2005, introduced controls over substances listed in the 1988 Convention over which there had previously been no control in the country. In addition, the Comité de Coordinación Interinstitucional was established by decree No. 053-2005-PCM to coordinate and assess policies and action in the area of chemical control.

385. In Colombia, the national drug regulatory authority initiated a survey on the access and availability of opioids in hospitals throughout the country. In addition, the results of a national study on the mental health of adults and adolescents and a national survey on drug use in schools have been completed in that country and are expected to be published in 2006.

386. In accordance with the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of CICAD, countries in South America such as Guyana and Suriname have carried out activities aimed at the establishment of programmes for drug abuse prevention and the development of standards for programmes for the treatment of drug abuse.

387. In Guyana, where the programmes for the treatment of drug abuse that are currently available do not meet the national requirements, the minimum standards of care for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers are currently being prepared and are expected to be ready for implementation in 2007.

Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

388. According to UNODC estimates, approximately 18 per cent of global illicit cannabis herb production occurs in South America. Though illicit cultivation of cannabis to be sold on the local market continues to be detected in most of the countries in the region, cannabis grown in Paraguay, and to a lesser extent, Colombia is also being smuggled into other countries, both in South America and in other regions. Between 2004 and 2005, the total volume of seizures of cannabis herb decreased in Argentina and Colombia, while in Bolivia it increased from 28.0 to 34.5 tons.

389. Paraguay remains a major producer of cannabis in South America: the total area under cannabis cultivation in the country is estimated to be 5,500-6,000 hectares. Owing to the weak economic situation, the high prices paid by traffickers for crops and the lack of effective drug control programmes, illicit cannabis production has spread to areas of the country previously not affected by such activity. In 2004, the discovery of a new hybrid of cannabis that had been developed by traffickers and was capable of growing during the dry months of winter was reported in Paraguay. The Board is concerned that year-round cultivation of cannabis may contribute to an increase in potential cannabis production; for that reason, the Board urges the Government of Paraguay to implement programmes to eliminate illicit cannabis cultivation.

390. In Brazil, cannabis is grown mostly in the north-eastern part of the country. While there are still no accurate estimates of the total area under illicit cannabis cultivation and the potential cannabis production capacity, it is believed that most of the cannabis abused in Brazil originated in neighbouring countries. For example, according to the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD) of Paraguay, approximately 85 per cent of the cannabis produced in that country is smuggled into Brazil, 10-15 per cent is smuggled into

other countries in the Southern Cone and only 2-3 per cent is for local consumption.

391. In Peru, the illicit cultivation of cannabis, for local consumption, but also for illicit markets in Chile and Ecuador, increased in 2005. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported cannabis eradication operations at its border with Colombia.

392. Though cannabis is regarded as the most widely abused drug in South America, data collected in the period 2001-2005 indicate significant differences in the annual prevalence of cannabis abuse by the population aged 15-64 in that region. For example, Chile, with a 5.6 per cent prevalence rate, is regarded as the most affected country, and is the only country in the region reporting an annual level of cannabis abuse that is above the global average. Though cannabis is produced in Paraguay, that country has a prevalence rate of only 0.5 per cent. In Argentina and Peru, an upward trend in the prevalence of abuse of cannabis herb was reported in the past year. According to a recent epidemiological study on drug abuse carried out by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, cannabis is the drug most widely abused among persons aged 15-70 in that country. The study also indicated a major difference in lifetime prevalence of drug abuse (use of illicit drugs at least once in a person's lifetime): the figure for males (3.9 per cent) was five times higher than the figure for females.

393. In 2005, the majority of illicit coca bush cultivation continued to take place in the following countries, in descending order: Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

394. In Colombia, despite eradication efforts, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in 2005 increased by 6,000 hectares to 86,000 hectares. That represents a decline of 47 per cent compared with the peak annual estimate of 163,300 hectares in 2000. Illicit coca bush cultivation in Colombia spread rapidly to areas where it had not been detected before. The most significant increase was noted in two areas bordering Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). A total of 170,070 hectares of coca bush were eradicated in Colombia in 2005, mainly through aerial spraying. The intensive eradication efforts in Colombia continued also in 2006. By mid-September 2006, 150,600 hectares of illicitly cultivated coca bush had been eradicated in that country.

395. In Peru, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation decreased by 4 per cent, to 48,200 hectares, between 2004 and 2005. The decline is attributable mainly to alternative development efforts in several valleys in which coca bush was grown and to manual eradication campaigns in other areas, most notably in parts of the Upper Huallaga valley (San Martín) and in San Gabán (Puno), where illicit coca bush cultivation dropped sharply, from 2,700 hectares in 2004 to 292 hectares in 2005. The total area under illicit coca bush cultivation eradicated in Peru increased in 2005 by 19 per cent, to 12,000 hectares. Between January and August 2006, an additional 8,000 hectares of coca bush were eradicated.

396. In Bolivia, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation dropped by 8 per cent, to 25,400 hectares, in 2005. The total area includes 12,000 hectares in the Yungas, where coca bush cultivation has been permitted under law No. 1008 for traditional uses, and an additional 3,200 hectares in the Chapare area, where such cultivation has been temporarily authorized by the Government.

397. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, following the use of a satellite monitoring system for the detection of illicit crop cultivation, 80 hectares of coca bush were eradicated at the country's north-western border with Colombia during Operation Sierra, conducted in November 2005.

398. In 2005, maceration pits and coca paste or coca base laboratories continued to be detected in all three illicit coca-producing countries in South America, whereas cocaine laboratories were found mainly in Colombia. The total amount of cocaine hydrochloride seized in Colombia (168 tons) was almost 50 times higher than the total amount seized in Bolivia and Peru together.

399. According to the information available on disclosures of clandestine laboratories in South America, some illicit manufacture of cocaine continues to take place in non-traditional illicit cocaine manufacturing countries. For example, in Argentina, the number of clandestine laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride has increased since 2000. In 2004, 16 cocaine laboratories and 4 coca paste or base laboratories were reported to have been dismantled. While the amount of cocaine illicitly manufactured in that country each year is still small, there are concerns

that traffickers are moving their activities into that country.

400. According to the European Police Office (Europol), every year almost 250 tons of cocaine enter the European Union, the second largest market for cocaine after the United States. Most of the cocaine is transported by sea from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) to the main European seaports. Sizeable amounts of cocaine are also smuggled into Europe by air courier.

401. Traffickers from South America and criminal groups from Central and Western Africa have been smuggling large shipments of cocaine by sea to Europe and the United States, as evidenced by the large quantities of cocaine seized in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2006 (see para. 358 above).

402. According to law enforcement agencies in South America, the organizations traditionally involved in drug trafficking are becoming more specialized, also offering their services to other criminal groups. Criminal organizations often exploit new technological developments in communication and transportation to prevent disclosure of their criminal activities.

403. Criminal organizations also exploit certain vulnerable population groups. For example, in Ecuador, children have been used as street dealers. Increased drug trafficking in that country is also accompanied by waves of violent crime, including kidnapping and juvenile gang "warfare".

404. In Brazil, the total volume of cocaine seizures has doubled over the past year. The use of drug couriers for transporting drugs from Brazil to South Africa and from there to European countries and Australia has been identified. Since the introduction in 2005 of a new law permitting unidentified aircraft to be shot down in Brazil, drug trafficking using small aircraft in the Amazon area has decreased but there has been a substantial increase in drug seizures on boats and small ships in the river network.

405. Drug traffickers from Colombia and Mexico continued to use Ecuador for stockpiling and redistributing cocaine destined for illicit markets in North America and Europe. In Ecuador, following the implementation of a programme by the Government to strengthen the control of containers at the port of Guayaquil, more than 40 tons of cocaine were seized in

2005, eight times more than in the previous year. The cocaine was found mainly in sea freight containers and on fishing vessels transferring their illicit consignments to mother vessels waiting in international waters. In the first quarter of 2006, an additional 11 tons of cocaine were seized during Operation Pacific Storm, which resulted in the dismantling of a major trafficking organization. Although no similar seizures have been reported since that operation, cocaine trafficking continued, using other routes and methods.

406. Paraguay continues to be used to trans-ship cocaine consignments to other countries in South America and to Africa and Europe. Approximately 40-60 tons of cocaine are smuggled each year through Paraguay by criminal organizations, most of which are controlled by nationals of Brazil.

407. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the total volume of cocaine seizures increased in 2005 by 87 per cent, to 58.4 tons; a further 23 tons of cocaine were seized in the first nine months of 2006. Most of the intercepted cocaine shipments were destined for Spain and the United Kingdom.

408. According to UNODC data for the period 2004-2005, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in South America in the population aged 15-64 was 0.7 per cent. In two countries in South America, Bolivia and Chile, the prevalence rate for cocaine abuse was higher than the regional average. In Peru, the prevalence of cocaine abuse increased over the past year. However, this was not the case for all forms of cocaine. In 2005, the declining prevalence of the abuse of cocaine base was offset by the increased abuse of cocaine hydrochloride. The abuse of "paco" (coca paste) has risen sharply in recent years in Argentina (see para. 420 below).

409. According to the results of the sixth national study on the abuse of drugs among the general population in Chile, which was carried out in 2004, 0.8 ton of cocaine base and 1.9 tons of cocaine are abused each year in the country.

410. In Colombia, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation dropped by 49 per cent in 2005, to 2,000 hectares, as a result of continued eradication efforts by the Government. During 2005, six heroin laboratories were destroyed and 745 kg of heroin were seized. A record 1.6 tons of raw opium were seized in Colombia in 2005, compared with 27 kg in 2003 and

57 kg in 2004. Increasing amounts of heroin destined for North America and Europe continued to be trans-shipped through Ecuador. On a smaller scale, trafficking in heroin originating in Colombia was also reported in Argentina.

411. According to the Government of Peru, the total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation in the country in 2004 was estimated at 1,500 hectares. More than 92 hectares of opium poppy fields were eradicated in 2005, and a further 88 hectares were eradicated during the first eight months of 2006.

412. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, illicit opium poppy cultivation areas larger than 100 hectares were identified during eradication operations in 2005.

413. Heroin seizures have been reported in recent years in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The most significant increase in the volume of heroin seizures has been recorded in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: in that country, heroin seizures rose steadily from 196 kg in 2000 to a record 658 kg in 2004.

414. In South America, the prevalence rate for the abuse of opiates, in particular heroin (0.1 per cent of the population aged 15-64), is among the lowest in the world. In 2004, the latest year for which data are available, the abuse of opiates increased in Argentina (also in 2005), Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Precursors

415. Seizures of precursor chemicals, including potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride, were reported in South America. Furthermore, in 2005, 16 laboratories manufacturing potassium permanganate were destroyed in Colombia and 2 such laboratories were dismantled in Bolivia. There has been increased use of substances not listed under the 1988 Convention as substitutes for precursor chemicals. Recycling chemicals that can be reused as many as five or six times is one of the methods used by traffickers to circumvent controls. The Board urges the Governments concerned to further foster, in cooperation with the

chemical industry, the existing controls, particularly at the domestic distribution level.⁴⁰

Psychotropic substances

416. Although the total amount of ATS seized in South America is not significant, drug abuse surveys indicate that the popularity of stimulants is increasing in some countries in the region, including Argentina and Peru. MDMA, mainly from the Netherlands, is the synthetic drug most commonly abused in Brazil. In the first half of 2006, more than 900 amphetamine tablets and 7,500 “ecstasy” tablets were seized in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In 2005, “ecstasy” tablets were seized in Paraguay for the first time.

417. Several countries in South America have reported a rising trend in the non-therapeutic use of sedatives and tranquillizers. In Argentina and Peru, the prevalence of the abuse of those substances is slightly higher among the female population than among the male population. In Brazil, the licit use of amfepramone and fenproporex, stimulants listed in Schedule IV of the 1971 Convention, is increasing. Zopiclone and ketamine, two substances not under international control, were found to have been diverted into illicit channels and abused in Argentina.

418. Pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are often smuggled into countries in South America, such as Ecuador, and sold over the counter in non-licensed outlets.

Missions

419. The Board sent a mission to Argentina in May 2006. The Board appreciates the commitment of the Government to combating illicit activities related to drugs. The Board found that existing laws and regulations on drug control are not always in line with the international drug control treaties and noted that changes in the legislative basis for drug control and related areas had been planned or already introduced. The Board urges the Government to implement measures to comply with the provisions of the 1961 Convention concerning the use of coca leaf and to harmonize laws and jurisdiction between provinces

⁴⁰ *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2006 ...*, chap. III.

with a view to sending a clear message to the public on the dangers of drug abuse. The Board notes that, in addition to drug trafficking, the illicit manufacture of cocaine from coca paste that has been smuggled into the country has been increasing in recent years. The Board is aware of the measures already taken to suppress those activities and encourages the Government to ensure concerted action at the federal and provincial levels involving the relevant government agencies, including the customs authorities. In that connection, the gathering and analysis of intelligence on drug-related crime should be improved, in order to assist in the investigation and prosecution of illicit activities related to drugs; to that end, additional resources should be provided.

420. The mission of the Board found that the controls applied to the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors in Argentina appeared to be comprehensive. The Board welcomes the plan to establish a prescription monitoring programme to identify unusual consumption patterns and encourages the Government to continue to promote the rational prescription of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In view of the continued diversion of precursor chemicals in Argentina, the Board requests the Government to remain vigilant and 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 with satisfaction the recent efforts to ascertain the extent and patterns of drug abuse in the country. Since it has been found that drug abuse, in particular the abuse of “paco” (coca paste), has been rising sharply in Argentina, the Board advises the Government to continue its efforts to improve the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

C. Asia

East and South-East Asia

Major developments

421. Since 2004, there has been an increase in seizures of cocaine in the Hong Kong SAR of China.