

uses, with a view to providing Governments with a tool to put incidents involving such substances in context and to take the necessary action.

### Technical assistance, capacity-building and awareness-raising

442. Given the technical complexity of non-scheduled chemicals and despite the Board's efforts over the past decade, there is a continued need for awareness-raising and capacity-building to address the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors at the global level. Specifically, and considering the absence of legislation, the awareness-raising and training of criminal justice practitioners, in particular prosecutors and judges, on the specificities of drug-related crime involving synthetic drugs and precursors, including the role of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors, are critically important.

### The way forward: the international precursor control system – a living mechanism

443. The 1988 Convention was developed and adopted more than three decades ago, on the basis of the situation that prevailed at the time it was drafted. On several occasions, the Board has stated that, in its opinion, to make the precursor control system fit for the twenty-first century, there is a need to refocus international precursor control by placing more emphasis on preventive action (industry cooperation and domestic controls) and law enforcement action (stopping or seizing shipments of chemicals that are known to be or suspected of being used for illicit purposes).

444. In order to deal with series of chemically related substances and with substances that do not have legitimate uses and/or are not traded regularly for legitimate purposes, it is important to consider approaches that allow intervention in suspicious cases without requiring the application of all regulatory control measures, which might overburden authorities and industry alike.

445. A number of options are now available, including those that build upon national experiences, measures and approaches designed to control national markets and movements of substances. Recent examples of voluntary scheduling at the national level have been provided by Canada, China, India, Mexico and the United States. These approaches have proved to be greatly effective and efficient in the interim period.

446. The Board trusts that its contributions and the consultative process that it has facilitated over the past two years will lead to a set of concrete, practical actions that are agreed widely and enable the international community to reach consensus on a mechanism to prevent non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors from reaching illicit laboratories, thus preventing the proliferation of drugs, NPS and synthetic opioids, while minimizing the associated administrative burden. The Board looks forward to continued collaboration with Governments to further advance the issue.

## B. Africa

An increasing number of countries in Africa are permitting the cultivation of cannabis for medical or scientific purposes. Of those countries, some have authorized the use of cannabis for medical purposes domestically, while others allow cultivation only for export.

Determining the extent of drug use in Africa continues to be impeded by the limited amount of available information and prevalence data. Nonetheless, owing to demographic changes, the number of people who use drugs in Africa is projected to rise by 40 per cent by 2030.

### 1. Major developments

447. More countries in Africa are permitting the cultivation of cannabis for medical, scientific or industrial purposes. Among countries in the region that permit the cultivation of cannabis for such purposes, some permit cultivation only for export, while others allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes domestically. For 2022, three countries in Africa have submitted estimates to the Board on the cultivation or use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes.

448. On the basis of current prevalence rates, drug use in Africa is projected to rise by 40 per cent by 2030, according to UNODC. The increase is attributed to demographic changes over the decade as the population is comparatively young and the rate of drug use is higher among younger people. In addition, it is projected that the population of Africa will grow more rapidly than that of other regions.

449. Trafficking in cocaine continues to pose a major challenge to Africa, in particular North and West Africa, with the region being used as a trans-shipment hub along

the trafficking route into Europe. In 2021, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Morocco and South Africa reported seizing record quantities of cocaine along trafficking routes originating in South America. Most of the interdictions occurred in seaports or on cargo ships in the territorial waters of countries in North and West Africa.

## 2. Regional cooperation

450. In October 2020, the African Union, with the support of the UNODC Regional Office for Eastern Africa, launched the *Compendium of Good Practices on Drug Use Prevention, Drug Use Disorders, Treatment and Harm Reduction*. Key policies, programmes and other actions taken by countries from across the region are highlighted in the compendium, with an overview of the outcomes and lessons learned. It is expected that the compendium will help guide other countries in the region to develop policies or programmes to address their specific drug-related challenges.

451. Between 29 November and 19 December 2020, 13 countries from the region, namely Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania, participated in INCB Operation New Horizons, which was aimed at identifying key sources and redistribution points of tapentadol and tramadol. The objective was to identify and ultimately dismantle manufacturing, marketing and distribution points through the exchange of actionable intelligence. The operation brought together 164 officers representing 70 Governments and four international partners.

452. In December 2020, 10 African countries participated in an INCB Learning seminar with the aim of strengthening their compliance with the three international drug control conventions. Officials from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Morocco, the Niger, Senegal and Togo participated in the online capacity-building seminar. Government officials had an opportunity to further enhance their capacity in terms of monitoring and reporting on the licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, as well as in the use of I2ES.

453. UNODC launched its Strategic Vision for Africa 2030 in February 2021. The plan defines five areas of investment: (a) promoting health through balanced drug control; (b) securing the safety of people from organized crime, terrorism and violence; (c) protecting Africa's resources and livelihoods; (d) safeguarding people and

institutions from corruption and economic crime; and (e) making criminal justice systems more effective and accountable. In terms of the promotion of health through balanced drug control, UNODC seeks to further improve data collection and analysis of drug trends in the region, strengthen countries' responses to drug trafficking, improve countries' responses to drug use and access to controlled substances for medical purposes and improve the region's ability to protect people from falsified medical products. The plan will be reviewed on a biennial basis to assess its progress towards assisting countries in the region in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

454. In March and April 2021, INTERPOL coordinated two operations, codenamed "Lionfish", aimed at disrupting drug trafficking in Africa and the Middle East. The operations involved police and customs officials from 41 countries<sup>50</sup> and resulted in record seizures for the African continent, details of which are included in paragraphs 471 and 472 below.

455. On 14 April 2021, the African Union Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development participated as a key speaker in an INCB Learning online side event on the margins of the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The relevance of capacity-building for ensuring adequate access to and availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, as well as the disproportionate challenges of drug-related problems on the continent of Africa, were highlighted. The correlation between INCB Learning's work and the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019–2023), in particular the second of the nine pillars of the Plan of Action, dedicated to the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion, was also recognized.

456. In May 2021, the ECOWAS Commission held a workshop to validate the report of the West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use for the period 2018–2019. The report is a follow-up to an earlier report, covering the period 2014–2017, and is aimed at providing guidance and input for policymakers in the subregion. The report highlights the latest estimates and trends on drug use and drug supply and trafficking in falsified

<sup>50</sup>Angola, Bahrain, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, State of Palestine, Sudan, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

medical products in West Africa. It is based on data collected by the West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use national focal points in each ECOWAS member State and Mauritania.

457. The Treaty for the Establishment of the African Medicines Agency entered into force on 5 November 2021, after having been ratified by 15 African Union member States. The African Medicines Agency will aim to enhance regulatory oversight and facilitate access to safe and affordable medicines across the continent.

458. Under the INCB GRIDS Programme, a webinar was delivered to 70 international law and regulatory enforcement officers representing nine member countries from the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa. The participants represented postal regulators, operators, drug enforcement agencies, customs agencies and police forces from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Access to and training on the secure communications platform IONICS and the GRIDS Programme intelligence tool were provided. Participants were also given in-depth training and attended awareness-raising sessions on the safe handling of opioids and other dangerous substances in the workplace. Highlighting the key role of postal investigators in preventing trafficking in those substances in the region, many participants raised concerns about increased trafficking through postal channels during the COVID-19 pandemic and recognized the need for Southern African countries to address shared trafficking threats through improved communication and the sharing of best practices.

459. In the context of its partnership with the African Union Commission, representatives of INCB Learning will provide a technical briefing to the Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control of the African Union at its fourth ordinary session, to be held in 2022. The briefing will be aimed at providing guidance to member States to help address issues related to the availability of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals in Africa.

### 3. National legislation, policy and action

460. More countries in Africa have revised their national legislation to permit the cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes. Among the countries that permit the cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes, some countries are cultivating for export only, while others allow for the export of cannabis as well as the use of the substance for

medical purposes. For 2022, three countries in Africa have submitted estimates to the Board for the cultivation or use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes.

461. Several countries in Africa have launched new national drug control plans to address their respective drug control challenges. Beyond the typical drug control concerns of demand and supply reduction, some plans are aimed at better addressing the health consequences of drug use.

462. In December 2020, Zimbabwe released its National Drug Master Plan for the period 2020–2025 and treatment and rehabilitation guidelines on alcohol and substance use disorders. It is noted in the plan that 60 per cent of persons admitted to mental health facilities in the country experience problems with drug use (including alcohol or tobacco). The plan and related guidelines will focus the country's efforts to treat and rehabilitate persons suffering from substance use disorders.

463. In April 2021, Nigeria launched its new National Drug Control Master Plan for the period 2021–2025. Developed with the support of UNODC, the plan is a results-based strategic planning tool for coordinating interventions against the use of and trafficking in drugs and related organized crime in Nigeria. The plan consists of four strategic pillars: (a) supply reduction; (b) drug demand reduction; (c) access to controlled medicines for medical and scientific purposes; and (d) governance and coordination. Implementation of each of these pillars is linked to at least one ministry, department or agency in the Government of Nigeria. The main goal of the plan is to contribute to improving the health and security of Nigerians, in the knowledge that drug use not only affects the user but also has wider consequences for families, communities and the nation.

464. Zambia enacted three new laws overhauling the country's drug control legislation and putting a formal legal framework in place to allow for the cultivation of cannabis for medical, scientific and industrial purposes. The Cannabis Act, 2021, establishes the legal framework to permit the cultivation and distribution of and trade in cannabis containing more than 0.3 per cent of *delta*-9-THC. The Industrial Hemp Act, 2021, puts in place a framework similar to that of the Cannabis Act but for cannabis containing no more than 0.3 per cent of *delta*-9-THC. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropics Substances Act, 2021, replaces the 1993 drug control law of the same name. The objectives of the new Act include revising and consolidating the law relating to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, as well as providing for special measures relating to the prevention and

treatment of drug use and the rehabilitation of persons who use drugs.

465. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development of South Africa introduced the country's Cannabis Master Plan to the National Economic Development and Labour Council ahead of plans to begin issuing licences for the licit cultivation of "hemp" in October 2021. The plan also forecasts that the Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill, tabled in the country's Parliament in September 2020, would be promulgated by the Government during the fiscal year 2022/23.

466. Rwanda began allowing the cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes but reaffirmed that consumption for recreational purposes remained prohibited. A ministerial order issued jointly by the Minister of Health and Minister of Justice outlines the regulatory framework under which the cultivation, transport, import, export and distribution of cannabis are permitted. The order also allows for the use of cannabis products for medical purposes in Rwanda, but only under prescription by a specialist medical doctor.

467. Morocco authorized the cultivation of cannabis for medical and industrial purposes. Bill 13.21, initially tabled in the Parliament in March 2021, will create a national cannabis agency and a regulatory framework to allow the cultivation of cannabis for export and for medical use in Morocco, subject to the country's regulations on medicines.

468. The Narcotics, Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) (Amendment) Act, 2020, was passed by the National Assembly of Kenya and is now awaiting presidential approval. The Act amends the penalties associated with the possession of and trafficking in drugs and strengthens punitive measures against those who operate illicit laboratories. The Act also allows physicians to prescribe controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes when no other medical options are available to the patient. In addition, the Act defines precursors and chemical substances that could be used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the penalties applicable to persons who manufacture, possess or transport precursor chemicals for the unlawful manufacture of a narcotic drug. The Act also designates the Cabinet Secretary responsible for internal security to make the necessary regulations related to precursor chemicals, including with regard to the scope of controls.

469. **The Board wishes to recall that Governments that permit the cultivation of cannabis plant for the production of cannabis or cannabis resin have an**

**obligation to establish control measures in accordance with the 1961 Convention as amended. Such measures include the establishment of an agency responsible for designating areas and issuing licences for cultivating, purchasing and taking physical possession of such crops as soon as possible and having the exclusive right of importing, exporting and wholesale trading and maintaining stocks other than those held by manufacturers. Such measures do not apply to the cultivation of the cannabis plant exclusively for industrial purposes (fibre and seed) or for horticultural purposes.**

#### 4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

470. Trafficking in drugs continues to pose a major challenge to countries in Africa. The record amounts of cocaine seized along the trafficking route from South America suggest that the region remains a major trans-shipment hub for smuggling the drug to Europe. Illicit cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis within Africa and to Europe appear to have continued at the same rate as previous years, with all countries that provided data reporting seizures of cannabis or cannabis resin. Countries in North Africa reported seizing significant amounts. Trafficking in synthetic stimulants appears to be on the rise in Southern Africa, with more countries reporting seizures of methamphetamine and other synthetic stimulants than in previous years.

471. Africa continues to be used as a transit region for cocaine trafficking from South America to Europe, with most of the trafficking occurring through West and North Africa. Several countries reported seizing record quantities of cocaine during the first half of 2021. For example, the Gambia seized nearly 3 tons of cocaine in January 2021 during a single operation, a record amount for the country. Law enforcement authorities in Côte d'Ivoire seized over 1 ton of cocaine, a record amount, in Abidjan in February 2021. In March 2021, the French Navy seized over 6 tons of cocaine from a cargo ship destined for Abidjan in the Gulf of Guinea in one of the largest drug interdictions ever recorded in that area. In October 2021, authorities in Morocco seized over 1.3 tons of cocaine at the Tanger-Med Port. As part of Operation Lionfish, authorities in South Africa seized 973 bricks of cocaine from a fishing vessel and arrested 10 people. The Algerian coastguard seized nearly 500 kg of cocaine floating in its territorial waters north of the Port of Oran in June 2021, the largest seizure by the country for several years. In July 2021, in two separate interdictions, South Africa reported seizing a total of approximately 1.7 tons. In 2020,

trafficking in cocaine was reported across Africa: Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia and Tunisia all reported seizures of the drug in that year.

472. Cannabis remains the most-trafficked drug within Africa; it is also trafficked into Europe. In June 2021, the Senegalese Navy reported seizing over 8.3 tons of cannabis resin from a cargo ship off the coast of Dakar. As part of Operation Lionfish in March 2021, the authorities of the Niger seized 17 tonnes of cannabis resin, the largest seizure in the country's history. The drug was seized in warehouses in the capital Niamey and was destined for Libya. According to INTERPOL, there has been a marked increase in drug traffickers using Libya as a transit hub for drugs. North Africa continues to see the most trafficking in cannabis, in particular cannabis resin, with Morocco reporting seizures amounting to over 450 tons during 2020. Trafficking in cannabis herb was reported in Benin, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia and the Sudan. The quantities seized during 2020 varied greatly between countries, with some seizing as little as a few hundred kilograms and others seizing hundreds of tons. Namibia reported seizing an exceptionally high quantity, 843 tons of cannabis herb, during 2020.

473. On the basis of data from countries in 2021, it seems that trafficking in heroin remains a major issue for African countries in the Indian Ocean region. Mauritius regularly reports making seizures of several kilograms of heroin that is trafficked through its airports and seaports. In addition, trafficking in heroin appears to be on the rise in East Africa, to where it is trafficked via the Red Sea. Egypt and the Sudan each reported seizing over 1 ton of heroin from smuggling operations in 2020 and smaller quantities of the drug were reported seized in other regions, with Benin, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique and Zambia reporting seizures of between a few grams to several hundred kilograms.

474. Seizures of "captagon" and other synthetic stimulants were reported by more countries in Africa in 2020; Egypt and the Sudan both reported seizing over 14 million "captagon" tablets that year. Trafficking in methamphetamine appears to be on the rise in Southern Africa, with Namibia reporting seizing more of the drug than in previous years and Mozambique reporting seizing several hundred kilograms in 2020.

475. Trafficking in tramadol, a synthetic opioid not under international control, and illicitly manufactured non-pharmaceutical preparations containing that substance, remains a challenge for the region. The Sudan

reported seizures of the substance during 2020 and Nigeria reported seizures during 2021. Trafficking in tapentadol, another synthetic opioid not under international control, was detected in Africa in May 2021 through INCB Operation New Horizons. The emergence of large-scale tapentadol trafficking was identified, with packaging and modi operandi bearing a striking resemblance to that of trafficked tramadol.

476. The African continent has not been spared from the emergence of non-scheduled chemicals, including designer precursors, as evidenced by seizures of acetantranyl, a designer precursor of methaqualone. So far, evidence relating to trafficking in acetantranyl and its use in illicit drug manufacture has been reported only in South Africa; however, other non-scheduled substances might also be used in the illicit manufacture of methaqualone or other drugs in other countries in Africa. A comprehensive review of the situation with respect to the control of precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Africa can be found in the report of the Board for 2021 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.

## 5. Prevention and treatment

477. Determining the extent of drug use in Africa continues to be impeded by the lack of available information and prevalence data. This lack of data hinders the region's ability to determine the scope and consequences of drug use. It also hinders Governments and the international community as they seek to respond effectively through evidence-based drug use prevention and treatment programmes. Nonetheless, the limited data available suggest that drug use rates continue to increase.

**478. The Board reiterates its call to all States in the region to develop mechanisms to improve the collection of information on drug use prevalence, with the aim of developing drug use prevention and treatment strategies that are based on evidence and tailored to each country's specific needs.**

479. According to UNODC, drug use in Africa – assuming unchanged prevalence rates – is projected to rise 40 per cent by 2030, accounting for most of the expected 11 per cent increase in drug use globally by that date. The increase in Africa is attributed to expected demographic shifts over the coming decade, given the expected high growth rate of the region's population and the fact that younger people tend to consume more drugs than older people. UNODC anticipates that existing drug challenges

in Africa, including the use of cannabis and the non-medical use of tramadol, are likely to be exacerbated by an increased number of people who use drugs. In addition, trafficking and manufacturing patterns are expected to shift to meet the increased demand for drugs in the region.<sup>51</sup>

480. In April 2021, authorities in Kenya released two publications related to rehabilitation and social integration for its Department of Children's Services: (a) "Assessment of rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes, services and practices for children in conflict with the law in Kenya"; and (b) "Blueprint for rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes for children in conflict with the law in Kenya". The assessment report describes the juvenile justice system in Kenya and examines the contribution of key agencies in the system. Particular attention is paid to offences related to drug and substance use and to the growing trend of the involvement of girls in crime. The blueprint provides a framework within which rehabilitation and reintegration programmes should be implemented in each institution within the juvenile justice system. The objectives of the blueprint are to promote structured and institutionalized rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for children in conflict with the law, harmonize programmes, practices and services across institutions in the child justice system, provide a framework within which rehabilitation and reintegration are streamlined in the entire continuum of the child justice system and enhance coordination among the agencies involved in rehabilitation and reintegration processes.

481. In Mozambique, the number of persons with substance use disorders seeking treatment increased by 7.9 per cent, from 9,065 in 2019 to 9,788 in 2020. The year-on-year increase is attributed to social isolation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Including alcohol and tobacco, the prevalence of drug consumption in Mozambique in 2020 was 84.95 per cent for men and 15.05 per cent for women.

482. Data for 2020 from Benin indicate that cannabis is the most commonly used drug in the country, after alcohol, and that tramadol is the most commonly used pharmaceutical product. The data also reflect high rates of polydrug use among those who use drugs, with most users consuming at least three different drugs (including alcohol).

483. As of November 2021, the United Republic of Tanzania had established 11 opioid substitution therapy

centres and four satellite clinics in hospitals across the country using methadone to treat people who inject drugs. Since their establishment, a total of 10,600 patients have been treated in those centres and clinics.

484. In June 2021, the Ministry of Health of Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria, UNODC and the European Union launched two publications aimed at enhancing the quality of counselling and treatment services for drug users in Nigeria: (a) standard policy and practice guidelines for National Drug Law Enforcement Agency counselling centres; and (b) national guidelines for the treatment of substance use disorders. Both guidelines provide comprehensive and evidence-based approaches for the treatment of substance use disorders in line with international best practices for the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and other drug use treatment practitioners in Nigeria.

485. Morocco issued guidelines on supporting the continuation of addiction treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring access to treatment services through telemedicine and the establishment of a take-home policy for methadone for those enrolled in opioid substitution therapy programmes. Morocco has also extended its opioid substitution therapy programmes in prisons, from one pilot centre to five treatment centres in prisons in different regions of the country. Moreover, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health of Morocco launched an e-learning module on drug use prevention for health professionals and non-governmental organizations.

486. Africa is among the regions of particular concern with regard to ensuring and monitoring the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes. Countries in Africa have been reporting consumption of narcotic drugs of, on average, just above the level defined by the Board as inadequate and Africa is one of the regions of the world with the least availability of the most widely used opioid analgesics. Similarly, determining levels of consumption of psychotropic substances for Africa remains a challenge, as fewer than half of the countries in the region have provided consumption data to the Board on any psychotropic substance for the past several years. More detailed information is available in the technical publications of the Board on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. **The Board stresses that there is insufficient availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in many countries in Africa and emphasizes the importance of ensuring the sufficient availability of and access to internationally controlled substances for medical purposes.**

<sup>51</sup> *World Drug Report 2021*, booklet 1, *Executive Summary: Policy Implications* (United Nations publication, 2021), p. 26.