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INCB ANNUAL REPORT

Background Note No. 1

International Narcotics Control Board Releases Report Updating Illicit Drug Situation Worldwide

Sees Upswing in Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants in All Regions;
Weighs Strengths, Weaknesses of Countries' Criminal Justice Practices vis à vis Drugs

VIENNA, 4 March (UN Information Service) -- International trends in drug abuse and trafficking over the past year are among the chief topics of attention of the annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), which was released here today and simultaneously in thirty cities around the world.

Among the problems highlighted in the Report are emerging illicit markets for anorectic ("weight-reduction") stimulants and an increase in their abuse from both licit and illicit sources as well as a global surge in the prescription of other stimulant drugs in the treatment of behavioural problems in children. In addition to the spread of large-scale cultivation of cannabis in several regions and the spread of cocaine abuse to West Africa and Eastern Europe, the Vienna-based Board this year points to a rapid spreading of abuse of amphetamines, mainly of "Ecstasy".

The Board, which regularly reviews the world drug scene and international compliance with three international drug control conventions, in its current report notes some major successes in using treaty provisions to make it difficult for clandestine laboratories to obtain the chemicals they need to manufacture cocaine, heroin and stimulants such as amphetamine, methamphetamine and "Ecstasy". Regulatory authorities in 1996 were able to prevent the diversion of at least 300 metric tons of acetic anhydride -- enough to make 1 billion street doses of heroin -- and almost 1,800 tonnes of chemicals that would have been used to process more than 100 tonnes of cocaine, says the Report.

An absence of adequate national and international control measures for poppy straw boosted the abuse of alkaloids derived from such plant material, particularly in Eastern Europe, says the INCB, which plans to review the question later this year. But, the Board cautions that in seeking to prevent diversion of such substances to illicit markets, Governments need to do more to ensure an adequate supply of morphine and other opiates as legitimate pain-killers.

With regard to the widespread diversion of certain psychoactive pharmaceutical preparations to illicit markets, the Board underscores a "serious gap" in control posed by the failure of some countries, including Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg and New Zealand to meet all of their control obligations under the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The Board welcomes the decision by Switzerland, a major manufacturing and exporting country of psychotropic substances, to introduce controls on the import and export of a number of substances as of 1 January; it cites Austria, however, as the only highly industrialized country -- and only European Union member -- that has not yet ratified the treaty.

The Board expresses concern that authorities of some countries, including Cameroon, Senegal and Myanmar, failed to respond to repeated requests for confirmation of the legitimacy of suspicious import orders placed abroad by companies from those countries. It also warns that traffickers may attempt to take advantage of the non-implementation of some recommended voluntary controls of psychotropics exported by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France and the United Kingdom. In one case cited, a Danish firm sent more than 1,700 kilogrammes of diazepam (a tranquilizer) raw material to Nigeria, although the legitimate yearly requirement for the substance in that country is only 700 kilogrammes.

In response to reports received last year from several African countries on illicit traffic in preparations containing the stimulant ephedrine, the Board is encouraging the Governments concerned to bring such information to the attention of the World Health Organization (WHO) to facilitate its review of ephedrine for possible inclusion in one of the schedules of the 1971 Convention.

The Report contains numerous examples of how global economic integration, opening borders and deregulation of trade facilitated international drug trafficking last year: Several million tablets containing diazepam and chlordiazepoxide manufactured in Asia were seized from people trying to smuggle them into Nigeria; more and more reports reach the Board on the channelling of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals through free trade zones; khat, a stimulant plant originating from eastern Africa, has been seized repeatedly in Europe, North America and the South Pacific; large quantities of ephedrine were smuggled out of Asia and Europe, through Guatemala, and into Mexico and the United States for the manufacture of methamphetamine ("speed").

A special chapter of this year's Report is devoted to an evaluation of the role of countries' criminal justice systems in preventing and controlling the illicit supply and consumption of drugs. With the expansion of production, trafficking and abuse into regions not previously affected many police agencies and courts are flooded with cases, particularly involving low-level offenders.

The Board sees drug-related corruption, bribery and intimidation as threatening police, judicial officers, politicians, tax authorities and customs officers, through the "immense economic power" of drug traffickers. It suggests that countries set priorities in drug law enforcement and focus primarily on high-level drug criminals. For persons convicted of possessing small amounts of illicit drugs, alternatives to prison sentences should be considered. The Board recommends stepped up mutual legal assistance among States in investigations, prosecutions, extraditions and judicial proceedings; initiatives at the international level, such as joint task forces to combat transnational crime syndicates; and channelling of seized criminal proceeds to help finance international drug control.

Since the issuance of its last Report, the Board has sent investigative missions to: China, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Slovakia and Zambia

The international treaties which the Board is mandated to monitor are: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Key Areas of Concern

Among the general concerns given special attention in the Report is a revived marketing of "weight-reducing tablets" that offer a quick fix for obesity and a whole range of psychological syndromes and disorders but which contain amphetamine-type stimulants. Demand for the prescription drugs is fueled not only from promotional features in the media and the Internet but also by the attraction of the preparations' psychoactive side-effects.

Abuse of appetite suppressants for their stimulant properties has been reported in a number of countries around the world, as has been the diversion of such tablets to illicit markets and their smuggling from country to country. The Board received reports citing health clubs, fashion shops and beauty farms as places where such drugs can be illicitly obtained.

In the Americas -- particularly in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States -- stimulants under international control are consumed in much higher quantities than in other regions. Some Latin American Governments have expressed concern at the large-scale dispensing of this type of "diet pill", frequently in combination with other drugs affecting the central nervous system.

The Board stresses the strong abuse potential of these preparations, which are akin to the amphetamine-type stimulants that were prescribed as appetite reducers in the 1960s and 1970s and which led to widespread illicit demand. Adverse reactions range from elevated blood pressure to violent behaviour and paranoia.

World licit consumption of another stimulant, methylphenidate, which had jumped from 3 tonnes in 1990 to 10 tonnes in 1995, continued to rise in 1996. In the United States, which leads the world in demand for this amphetamine-type prescription drug in the treatment of attention deficit disorder (ADD) in children, is expected to see a rise in consumption to 10.5 tonnes in 1996 and nearly 13 tonnes in 1997. Methylphenidate-related emergency room cases among 10 to 14-year-olds increased 10 times over since 1990 and has now reached the level of cocaine-related cases among the same age-group.

In connection with treaty-recommended steps taken by Governments efforts to prevent the diversion into criminal channels of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, the Board now sees results taking hold. Thanks to control mechanisms leading to a number of arrests and seizure involving large shipments of precursor substances, drug traffickers are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain the chemicals they require for the illicit manufacture of heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, methamphetamine and "Ecstasy".

States parties to the 1988 Convention are expected to keep a close watch on the movements of such substances as acetic anhydride (a chemical readily available for the manufacture of a wide range of licit chemical and pharmaceutical products, but which is illicitly used to process opium into heroin), ephedrine (an ingredient in decongestants which is used in the illicit manufacture of stimulants) and such common solvents as acetone and methyl ethyl ketone (used to process cocaine hydrochloride from coca base).

Among the signs that the international control system is working are a rise in the prices of some

chemicals on the black market and the fact that in Mexico and the United States -- where authorities blocked the diversion of some 250 tonnes of conventional amphetamine precursors from illicit channels, traffickers are turning to alternative methods of manufacturing amphetamines.

Other Trends Identified in 1996

Among the other trends identified by the INCB in its analysis of the world drug situation in 1996 are the following:

-- In Africa, increasing amounts of cocaine are being smuggled out of South America -- mainly Brazil -- through eastern, southern and western Africa into Europe. An estimated 60 per cent of all cocaine shipped to South Africa passes through; the rest is consumed locally. Crack abuse is already creating problems in South Africa and in several western African countries.

-- Methaqualone abuse and trafficking are now widespread in eastern and southern Africa. In 1995, a methaqualone laboratory was dismantled in Mozambique. Controlled delivery of chemicals from Germany has led to the seizure of a laboratory in South Africa.

-- Cannabis abuse now abounds in every subregion of the African continent. Morocco remains the main supplier of cannabis resin to illicit markets in Europe, but eastern and southern African seaports are now frequently used for the transshipment of cannabis resin originating in Asia.

-- Heroin is transported from south-west and south-east Asia to African seaports and airports for routing to Europe and North America, a situation that is contributing to the spread of heroin abuse in a few central African capitals; abuse of the drug is already considered a serious problem in Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.

-- Angola, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mozambique and Namibia have not yet ascribed to any of the three international drug control treaties. The Board comments that few African countries have made progress in updating their drug control laws.

-- In the Central American and Caribbean subregion, the Board welcomes a pledge by Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama to develop harmonized national laws on money laundering, precursor control and other drug-related matters. It reiterates its appeal to all States in the subregion to curb money laundering.

-- In view of repeated reports of the transshipment of ephedrine and other methamphetamine precursors through the region, the Board is urging countries to follow the example of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in introducing measures to monitor the import and export of such substances;

-- A Belize survey of 15,000 students found that 13 per cent said they had tried cannabis and 2.5 per cent had tried crack; crack abuse was noted even among primary school children. The Board warns authorities in that country that it is time for intervention.

-- In most countries of the subregion, pharmaceutical products containing psychotropic substances can be obtained too easily. The Board is urging countries to bring their pharmaceutical supply systems into conformity with the 1971 Convention.

-- With the recent addition of Belize, Cuba and Jamaica, all 22 States in the Central American

and Caribbean subregion are parties to the 1988 drug control treaty.

-- In North America, "the biggest illicit drug market in the world" is in the United States, with abuse of cocaine, cannabis and hallucinogens increasing among youth in recent years.

-- Illicit manufacture of amphetamine derivatives and indoor cannabis cultivation have become major problems in Canada.

-- Cannabis is cultivated to a large extent in all three North American countries. Mexico in 1995 eradicated 21,600 of an estimated 32,000 hectares of the illicit crop; the United States destroyed 373 million cannabis plants.

-- In Canada, about 50 per cent of the cannabis supply is from domestic, mainly hydroponic, cultivation.

-- As a result of referendums last November, two states in the United States could permit a broad use of cannabis for allegedly medical purposes; the Board sees those moves as indirect but evident attempts to legalize cannabis.

-- According to a National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, there were about 200,000 monthly heroin abusers in the United States in 1995. The survey did not include the marginalized population where heroin addiction tends to run higher.

-- In the same survey, 1.45 million Americans were reportedly abusing cocaine on a monthly basis, down from the 1979 figure of 5.7 million.

-- Seizures of methamphetamine precursors have more than tripled in the United States, reaching over 35 tonnes.

-- One of the largest and most sophisticated clandestine laboratories ever discovered in North America was dismantled by Canadian law enforcement authorities in 1996; it had been producing substantial amounts of MDMA ("Ecstasy") and LSD for at least four years.

-- In the United States almost two thirds of LSD abusers seeking treatment in 1995 were under the age of 20.

-- Abuse of flunitrazepam -- a short-acting tranquilizer -- is rapidly spreading in the United States, where penalties for illegal possession and sale of it have been recently increased. Nearly 70 per cent of emergency room cases involving licit narcotics or psychotropic substances involve benzodiazepines.

-- Abuse of clonazepam, another tranquilizer, rose by 650 per cent between 1988 and 1995.

-- South America is still the only region supplying cocaine to other parts of the world, above all the United States and Europe.

-- Large amounts of heroin are smuggled out of Colombia, where illicit opium poppy cultivation and the clandestine manufacture of opiates have become serious problems.

-- The Board is encouraging countries of the region to ratify and implement as soon as possible

an Inter-American Convention against Corruption which was signed in Caracas last March.

-- Increasing transborder law enforcement operations are being carried out in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

-- The authorities of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela last June agreed to create an Andean anti-drug intelligence unit, to exchange information on precursor shipments and to support alternative development projects in South America.

-- Chilean authorities, operating under a new law, worked with law enforcement services of Bolivia and the United States to dismantle a trafficking network that had been providing cocaine manufacturers in Bolivia with chemicals legally purchased in Chile. The new law also made possible the seizure of 55 tonnes of various chemicals.

-- The Board notes steps taken by Brazil to introduce an anti-money-laundering bill and to enable the use of forfeited criminal proceeds to finance drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation programmes, but urges the Brazilian government to move ahead with comprehensive drug control legislation.

-- The extent of opium poppy cultivation in Colombia was over-estimated in recent years. Some 5,000 hectares of opium poppies have been eradicated.

-- Opium poppy cultivation has been reported in Peru and Venezuela; about 1,660 hectares of the illicit crop were eradicated in 1995 Venezuela near the border with Colombia.

-- Bolivia eradicated 5,500 hectares of coca bush between January and September 1996; Colombia seized 292 tonnes of coca leaves in the first half of 1996. In the opinion of the Board, Peru -- the main producer of coca leaves -- needs to expand its eradication efforts which now focus almost exclusively on seedlings.

-- In East and South-East Asia, the surrender of Myanmar insurgent leader Khun Sa -- considered the key person in the illicit trade in opiates -- has created a new situation in the Golden Triangle (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand), particularly in Myanmar's Shan State, where most of the region's opium is produced. Early signs that some clandestine laboratories are shutting down have been a heroin shortage on the Thai black market and a drastic increase in the price of heroin along the Myanmar-Thai border.

-- Opium smoking is diminishing in the subregion, but is being replaced by the far more dangerous practice of injecting heroin, and the trend has been accompanied with increased needle sharing and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

-- Illicit manufacture of methamphetamine and traffic in that substance and its precursors are widespread in the region, as is abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants. There have been reports in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam of former heroin laboratories converting to methamphetamine production.

-- Hong Kong, one of the world's largest financial centres, tightened its anti-money-laundering laws in 1995 and beginning in January 1996 placed all substances listed in the tables of the 1988 Conventions under strict control. The Board has been assured by China that Hong Kong's current drug and precursor control systems will continue to function efficiently after China assumes control of the territory in July.

-- The Lao Government revised its drug control law in 1996 to increase drug trafficking penalties, prohibit opium production and enable close controls over precursors and other chemicals.

-- Large quantities of cannabis are produced in northern Sumatra, primarily to supply the illicit domestic market in Indonesia.

-- Some illicit opium poppy cultivation and opium production, mainly for domestic markets, have been reported in border areas of Cambodia and China.

-- A decline in opium production is reported in Viet Nam.

-- Japan noted further propagation of methamphetamine abuse, even among teenagers.

-- Abuse of "Ecstasy" and other hallucinogenic amphetamine derivatives reportedly smuggled from the Netherlands is on the rise in Hong Kong, Indonesia and Singapore.

-- China reported having seized some 90 tonnes of chemicals and precursors, including large seizures of acetic anhydride which was believed to be destined for heroin laboratories in the Golden Triangle.

-- Abuse of cough syrups containing codeine, especially in combination with ephedrine, is creating problems in the subregion, particularly in Malaysia and Myanmar.

-- In a raid on a single Lao clandestine laboratory, authorities seized enough chemicals and equipment to manufacture 400 kilogrammes of methamphetamine.

-- Twenty-four methamphetamine smuggling groups were dismantled in the Republic of Korea in 1995.

-- Seizure by Philippine drug control agents of a large illicit laboratory led to the seizure of more than 600 kilogrammes of methamphetamine and 1.6 tonnes of ephedrine, the most widely used precursor for that stimulant.

-- In Thailand, more than 5 million methamphetamine tablets were seized in the first six months of 1996.

-- Drug abuse trends in South Asia in 1996 reflect a shift from opium to heroin and, more recently, also to buprenorphine, a potent synthetic opioid manufactured in India. India's newly established export/import regime for the latter drug does not appear to have prevented illicit traffic nor its spread in Bangladesh and Nepal, nor in India itself. Ninety per cent of injecting drug abusers in Bangladesh abuse buprenorphine. The Board is appealing to the WHO and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to review the status of international control of buprenorphine without delay.

-- India and Pakistan agreed in 1996 to undertake joint investigations of cross-border trafficking in narcotic drugs and chemicals used in their manufacture. Authorities in both countries are exploring ways of working together to detect persons smuggling acetic anhydride out of India into Pakistan and those carrying heroin out in the reverse direction.

-- Nepal adopted a national drug control policy in May 1996, but as yet has no laws or regulations

against money laundering.

-- The Board is encouraging Maldives -- which is party to none of the three major drug control treaties -- to adopt a new draft drug control law as soon as possible.

-- In response to some diversion of opium in India from licit cultivation areas to illicit markets, the Government has toughened controls and has withdrawn the licenses of farmers not complying with regulations. Licensed opium farmers declined from 104,000 to 78,000 between 1995 and 1996.

-- The amount of heroin of South-West Asian origin seized in India increased by over 300 per cent in 1995.

-- In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, where abuse of codeine-based cough syrups abounds, weak pharmaceutical controls have given rise to an array of counterfeit and fake syrups. The Board, which has received contradictory information on the codeine content of the latter products, is urging Governments in the region to clarify the situation and crack down on this type of opiate abuse.

-- Despite India's efforts to close down clandestine laboratories manufacturing methaqualone, and success in control of an important precursor, substantial amounts of the hypnotic are still being smuggled out of India into eastern and southern Africa.

-- In Western Asia, the major sources of supply of traffickers are illicit cultivation of cannabis and opium poppy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, central Asia and the Caucasus and illicit production of hashish in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the clandestine manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey.

-- Political turmoil and civil war in Afghanistan -- the main source of opium supply in the region -- have made it impossible to implement control measures. Prevention of drug smuggling out of Afghanistan now depends mainly on the efforts of authorities in neighbouring States.

-- Heroin smoking is widespread in Pakistan.

-- Injection of poppy straw extracts is a problem in the central Asian former Soviet republics.

-- Illicit trafficking and abuse of stimulants are causing concern in the Middle East and the Arab peninsula, and now seem to be on the rise in central Asia.

-- An urgently needed programme of cooperation was launched by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at a ministerial summit held in Tashkent in May 1996. The five countries agreed to work with the UNDCP to modernize their laws and police practices to cope with emerging drug transit in the subregion. A subregional arrangement was also established last year among Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, and a new strategy was being developed among States in the Persian Gulf area.

-- The Board is appealing to the United Arab Emirates to strengthen measures to prevent the diversion of precursors and is urging all States in the region to institute regulations to prevent money laundering.

-- The Board acknowledges a drastic decrease in illicit opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan and has received no reports of opium production in Iran.

-- Opium poppy is cultivated in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and there is evidence that crude heroin is being produced in Kazakhstan, because of the easy availability of opium in the area and of locally manufactured acetic anhydride.

-- In mid 1996, two tonnes of heroin were seized in Pakistan, and Turkey believes that 75 per cent of the heroin passing from Western Asia to Europe transits Turkey.

-- Illicit traffickers are taking advantage of a lack of border controls along the roads from Afghanistan through the CIS member States.

-- While cocaine abuse is reportedly negligible in the region, there has been a slight increase in seizures in Turkey.

-- Stimulant abuse -- already a problem in the Arab peninsula and the Middle East -- appears to be on the rise in central Asia and the Caucasus. Some precursors for those drugs are smuggled out of Asia and Europe through Israel, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates and into countries outside the region.

-- Cases involving abuse of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and "Ecstasy" have been reported in Israel.

-- With regard to Europe, the Board observes that while large amounts of heroin, cocaine and hashish are being smuggled into the region from other continents, prevalence of heroin and cocaine abuse in most of the Western European countries is declining.

-- There is a clear upward trend in abuse of synthetic drugs manufactured in clandestine laboratories in Europe. These operations are supplying amphetamines and "Ecstasy" to illicit drug markets in and outside of Europe.

-- With advances in hydroponics and other indoor growing technologies, illicit cultivation has now become an important element of the European drug scene. Indoor growers of cannabis varieties have become major suppliers of the European black markets.

-- While precursors and other chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of various substances are manufactured in many European countries, only certain precursors are being seized and in only a limited number of countries in Western Europe.

-- The Board finds the current drug control capabilities of the CIS members and the Baltic States to be not satisfactory and sees a need to speed up development of the necessary administrative and legal structures in the new socio-economic frameworks in those countries.

-- The Board notes with satisfaction the elimination of "open drug scenes", which it feels were giving drug abusers and traffickers an impression that the authorities of several big cities were permissive towards drug abuse.

-- The Board is concerned about the statements of some Swiss officials and others about the preliminary results of a Swiss heroin distribution project and its evaluation by WHO. In reality, the project has not been completed or evaluated, and the Board says political pressure groups are trying to exploit the project to push for wider distribution of heroin.

-- Hungary last year adopted legislation on precursor control and the Board hopes that the Czech Republic and Slovakia will soon take similar steps.

-- Luxembourg last year contributed \$200,000 seized from drug dealers to the UNDCP. Spain has created a governmental fund derived from seized criminal assets that will be used to repress trafficking, support prevention and rehabilitation programmes and promote international cooperation to fight drug problems.

-- In Ukraine, the number of identified HIV cases rose from 183 in 1994 to 5,360 in May 1996; 70 per cent of infected individuals are intravenous drug abusers.

-- A rapid increase in the number of heroin abuse cases has been reported in Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia.

-- Noting that seizures of heroin have declined in most Western European countries, with purity on the increase and prices on the decrease, the Board is recommending that Governments carefully analyse the reasons for this development and pre-empt any consequences.

-- Some 75 per cent of heroin smuggled into Europe travels via the Balkan route, involving Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

-- A major British amphetamine laboratory -- with a capacity of 600 kilogrammes per week -- was detected last year by monitoring glassware and laboratory equipment.

-- In Austria, 10 times more "Ecstasy" was seized in 1995 than in the previous year.

-- In Oceania, most drug problems are reported in Australia and New Zealand. In a few countries, illicit cannabis cultivation is underway, and some islands are used as transit points for drug trafficking. In light of reports on money-laundering activities, the Board invites States in the region to strengthen their action against such dealings.

Background on INCB

The INCB was established in 1968 as an independent and quasi-judicial control organ for the implementation of the United Nations drug control treaties, replacing predecessor bodies that had monitored earlier conventions since the time of the League of Nations. Although the Board's work is financed by the United Nations, it functions independently of Governments and of that Organization on substantive issues. It endeavours to ensure that adequate supplies of drugs are available for medical and scientific uses and that leakages from licit sources to illicit traffic do not occur. At the same time, it seeks to identify weaknesses in national and international control of drugs.

The Board's tasks, among which is the preparation of an annual report, are mandated by the international drug control Conventions. Its 13 members serve in their individual capacities. They are elected by the Economic and Social Council, with three chosen from a list of candidates nominated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and 10 from a list nominated by Governments.

Criminal Justice Systems

Drawing on a variety of sources, the Board notes that seizures are up -- opiates more than fivefold since 1980 and cocaine over tenfold -- and there has been a surge in arrests and convictions of illicit

drug producers, traffickers and money launderers, figures that indicate not only an increased global drug problem but also better law enforcement.

It also recognizes the obstacles posed to drug law enforcement by such recent changes as reduced border controls, advances in communications and transportation and the development of high-yield agricultural methods. At the same time, the Board sees the global rise in drug-related seizures (opiate seizures increased fivefold and cocaine seizures tenfold since 1980), arrests and convictions as indicators, not only of growth in the world's drug problem, but also of better law enforcement and training.

The Board suggests that countries set a higher priority on apprehending and punishing high-level drug criminals. For persons convicted of possessing small amounts of illicit drugs, alternatives to prison sentences should be considered.

(For more details see Background Note No. 2.)

Adherence to Conventions

While more States are becoming parties to the international drug control instruments every year, the Board remains concerned that a considerable number of countries have not acceded to the Conventions. States are called on to file their required reports on time and to furnish the Board with reliable data.

As of 1 November 1996, 158 States are parties to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, with 19 of them parties only to the 1961 Convention and 142 of them parties to the treaty as amended by the 1972 Protocol. New parties to the Single Convention, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, since last year's Report are: Estonia, Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe, Turkmenistan and Yemen. Bulgaria, the Russian Federation and Switzerland, which were already parties to the 1961 treaty have now ratified the Protocol.

Some 146 States are parties to the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, six of them since last year's Report: Estonia, Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe, Switzerland, Turkmenistan and Yemen.

As regards the 1988 Convention, 137 States and the European Union are parties -- about 72 per cent of all countries in the world. Eighteen States have become parties since last year's Report: Belize, Botswana, Cuba, Gambia, Ireland, Jamaica, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Malta, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

INCB Membership

The current membership of the Board is: Sirad Atmodjo (Indonesia), Edouard Armenakovich Babayan, (Russian Federation), Hamid Ghodse (Iran), Dil Jan Khan (Pakistan), G. Lourenco Martins (Portugal), Gottfried Machata (Austria), Mohamed Mansour (Egypt), Bunsom Martin (Thailand), Herbert S. Okun (United States), Alfredo Pemjean (Chile), Manuel Quijano (Mexico), Oskar Schroeder (Germany) and Elba Torres Graterol (Venezuela). Mr. Schroeder serves as President of the Board.

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