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FIVE NEW MEMBERS JOIN INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD TO APPRAISE DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS IN MEETING FROM 6-17 MAY

VIENNA, 6 May (UN Information Service) -- Five new members of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) from Austria, Brazil, India, Netherlands and Peru will be attending their first meeting of the INCB when it begins its 74th session in Vienna from 6 - 17 May.

The main focus of the Board session, which meets in closed session, will be the assessment of the measures taken by Member States to comply with the international drug control treaties. The Board will review its cooperation with Member States and will discuss any shortcomings in national drug control systems. The Board will also make confidential country-level drug control assessments, based on its most recent findings during missions to selected countries.

A wide range of issues and activities will be reviewed during the session, including national approaches in drug substitution treatment of opiate addiction and the preparation of a major conference in June in Washington, D.C. on international actions to stop the diversion of chemicals for the illicit manufacture of stimulants, such as MDMA (ecstasy).

The situation of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan will be one of the key issues discussed at the Board session. The President of the Board, Professor Hamid Ghodse has already welcomed the second decree on eradication of drugs issued by the Interim Administration but the Board remains concerned that widespread illicit cultivation of opium poppies is continuing and urges the authorities of Afghanistan to make every effort to ensure that the ban is effectively enforced.

The Vienna-based Board is an independent body, established by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs to monitor governments' compliance with the international drug control treaties. The three treaties are: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Its 13 members are elected by the Economic and Social Council to serve in their individual capacities for a term of five years. Its meetings are held in private.

The new composition of the Board is as follows: Edouard Armenakovich Babayan (Russian Federation), Madan Mohan Bhatnagar (India), Elisaldo Luiz de Araújo Carlini (Brazil), Rosa Maria del Castillo (Peru), Philip O. Emafo (Nigeria), Jacques Franquet (France), Hamid Ghodse (Iran), Nüzhet Kandemir (Turkey), Robert Lousberg (Netherlands), Maria Elena Medina-Mora (Mexico), Alredo Pemjean (Chile), Rainer Wolfgang Schmid (Austria) and Jiwang Zheng (China).

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