

UNIS/NAR/864
2 November 2004

International Narcotics Control Board Reviews Interaction between Drugs Demand and Supply

VIENNA, 2 November (UN Information Service) -- The interdependence between the demand and supply cycle of drugs will be highlighted at the 81st session of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) which is currently being held in Vienna. The session will conclude on 11 November 2004. This issue will also be highlighted in the Board's annual report for 2004, which will be adopted during this session and released in February 2005.

The forthcoming annual report will also review worldwide trends in drug abuse and trafficking and recommend measures that Governments and international bodies can take to improve controls. Three annual technical reports dealing with the issues of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors and chemicals will also be finalized during this session. "In dealing with the drugs demand and supply situation, the Board is attempting to break down this complex interaction, and find a starting point which will help in detangling the process," said Hamid Ghodse, President of the INCB, on the occasion. The Board will also review the results of an international expert group meeting which examined the problem of illicit sales by Internet pharmacies and drug trafficking via postal services which was held in October 2004.

Moreover, the Board will examine the progress made in preventing the diversion of licitly traded chemicals towards the manufacture of illicit drugs. It will deliberate on the results of its international operations aimed at preventing the trafficking of such chemicals. In particular, it will focus on Project Prism, a recently-launched international initiative to prevent the smuggling of chemicals needed for the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants such as MDMA (ecstasy.)

The situation in Afghanistan is also of concern to the Board. "The Board is alarmed by the increase in the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy in Afghanistan," said Professor Ghodse, "and expects the newly elected Government to take prompt and effective action against drugs to prevent a further spread of health and associated social problems which cause so much suffering to young people, their families and the community."

Through its Standing Committee on Estimates, the Board will review the worldwide supply and demand situation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes. It will also reaffirm, and where necessary, establish quotas for narcotic drugs for every country in the world. A representative from the World Health Organization (WHO) will discuss health-related issues in the field of international controlled drugs during this session with the INCB.

Since its last annual report, the Board has sent missions to seven countries. The countries visited since its May 2004 session are as follows: Belgium, Denmark, Madagascar, Mauritania, Pakistan, South Africa and Sweden. The Board will review the reports of these missions and examine how governments and territories are implementing the provisions of international drug control treaties.

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. Its 13 members are elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council to serve in their individual capacities for a term of five years. Its sessions are closed to the public. The current members of the Board are: Edouard Armenakovich Babayan (Russian Federation), Madan Mohan Bhatnagar (India), Elisaldo Luiz de Araújo Carlini (Brazil), Philip O. Emafo (Nigeria), Gilberto Gerra (Italy), Hamid Ghodse (Iran), Nüzhet Kandemir (Turkey), Melvyn Levitsky (United States), Robert Lousberg (Netherlands), Maria Elena Medina-Mora (Mexico), Alfredo Pemjean (Chile), Rainer Wolfgang Schmid (Austria) and Jiwang Zheng (China).

* * * * *