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## **Five New Members Join International Narcotics Control Board**

VIENNA, 3 May (UN Information Service) -- Five new board members from Australia, Colombia, Ghana, Russian Federation and Turkey joined the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), as it began its 83rd session in Vienna, which is being held from 2 - 13 May.

The new composition of the Board is as follows: Joseph Bediako Asare (Ghana) Sevil Atasoy (Turkey), Madan Mohan Bhatnagar (India), Elisaldo Luiz de Araújo Carlini (Brazil), Tatyana Borisovna Dmitrieva (Russian Federation), Philip O. Emafo (Nigeria), Gilberto Gerra (Italy), Hamid Ghodse (Iran), Melvyn Levitsky (United States), Robert Lousberg (Netherlands), Rainer Wolfgang Schmid (Austria), Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia) and Brian Watters (Australia).

Professor Hamid Ghodse was re-elected President of the Board. The Board also elected Philip Emafo as First Vice-President, Rainer Wolfgang Schmid as Second Vice-President and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Robert Lousberg as Rapporteur. The officers serve in their individual expert capacity and are elected for a one-year term.

The Board, which meets in closed session, will review its cooperation with more than 200 countries and territories, discuss shortcomings in national drug control systems and formulate proposals to governments to overcome such deficiencies. The Board will make confidential country-level drug control assessments on Bangladesh, Mexico and Paraguay following its missions to these countries.

The Board will also review the extent to which countries and territories have implemented recommendations made to them, pursuant to missions undertaken by the Board during 2002 to Kazakhstan, Kenya, Namibia, Netherlands Antilles and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

During the current session, the President will inform the Board of some of the events since the last session in February 2005, such as the outcome of his annual meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at which discussions were held on, inter alia, the strategies to further improve the availability of opiates in developing countries and the need to ensure supplies of essential drugs in the wake of natural disasters such as the December 2004 tsunami. The President also met with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the President of the General Assembly in the intersessional period.

The annual meeting with the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) in March, which focused on the need for close cooperation between the two organizations and on the important role played by WHO in examining the health-related consequences of drug abuse and promoting rational use of controlled substances, will also be a subject of discussion during the session.

In addition, the Board will deliberate the findings and recommendations of the expert group meeting on the illicit trade of controlled drugs through the Internet which met in Vienna from 11 to 13 April 2005. It will decide on further action to prevent an increasing risk of misuse of controlled substances by children and adolescents and to protect individual consumers and public health.

Through its Standing Committee on Estimates, the Board will review the worldwide supply and demand of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes and establish or confirm quotas for narcotic drugs for every country in the world.

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 United Nations 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 closed.

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