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## INCB WELCOMES BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA'S ADOPTION OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL LEGISLATION

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) welcomes the adoption of comprehensive drug control legislation by the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the occasion of the release of its Annual Report today (1 March 2006). "Bosnia and Herzegovina has finally taken the first step in fulfilling its obligations under the international drug control conventions", said Professor Hamid Ghodse, President of the INCB. "Now it is time to make sure that they keep on this path, and implement the law adequately."

For many years, Bosnia and Herzegovina lacked drug control legislation at the national level. This was one of the main factors behind the near-total lack of coordination in the area of drug control between the authorities of the two entities of the country, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska. There was no agency in charge of drug control at the national level, and very little on-the-ground cooperation to deal with the major drug trafficking problem in the country.

"INCB has been monitoring the situation closely for years, and recently, in cooperation with the High Representative in Sarajevo, has been urging the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt this legislation. It is a major step for drug control in the region that Bosnia and Herzegovina has finally shown the resolve to take this issue seriously, and, in accordance with the new law, will be establishing a new agency to combat drug trafficking", Professor Ghodse said.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the trans-shipment points on what is commonly known as the "Balkan Route", the main trafficking route of heroin from Afghanistan through the Balkan countries, to major markets in Western Europe. As with most countries along major trafficking routes, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also facing an increase in drug abuse. "INCB will keep a close eye on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and work together with the Government and the international community, particularly the European Union, to make sure that the drug control situation improves", Professor Ghodse added.

As the guardian of the international drug control conventions, INCB closely monitors the situation in all countries, and maintains a continuous dialogue with Governments to ensure that drug trafficking and abuse is combated effectively. INCB conducts around 20 country missions a year, where Board Members engage in direct contact with Government officials responsible for drug control, and provide recommendations to promote overall treaty compliance by Governments.

INCB visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2000 and December 2004, and discussed the necessity of adopting comprehensive legislation on drug control with the authorities. In August 2005, the President of INCB met with the High Representative in Sarajevo, and urged the Government once again to adopt legislation without further delay.