

## **INCB President welcomes renewed commitment of the international community to Afghanistan**

VIENNA, 13 June (UN Information Service) -- Welcoming the outcome of the international conference in support of Afghanistan in Paris held on 12 June, Professor Hamid Ghodse, President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), called on the Afghan Government to continue its drug control efforts and to take firm measures against corrupt officials at any level of Government who get involved in illicit drug activities.

“The commitment of the international community to support Afghanistan was impressive”, said the INCB President who participated in the Conference. “Governments are ready to assist Afghanistan which continues to face serious drug control challenges, particularly the illicit cultivation, illicit manufacture and trafficking of opiates. The recent seizure of a staggering 238 tons of cannabis suggests that cannabis cultivation has also taken hold in the country.”

In view of the serious drug control situation, INCB invoked article 14 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 with respect to Afghanistan in 2000. Article 14 is invoked when a situation in a country seriously endangers the aims of the 1961 Convention. INCB has since closely monitored the developments and held consultations with the Government.

The INCB President said: “I am confident that significant progress will be made by the Government of Afghanistan under article 14. The prevention of the cultivation of illicit crops, and their eventual eradication are crucial to the achievement of peace, security and economic development. Afghanistan also has to address its growing problem of drug abuse as this affliction, more than other illnesses, tends to rob society of its future: young people at their most productive age. However, measures can only be effective if the Afghan Government addresses the widespread drug-related corruption among officials.”

The President also welcomed the recently adopted Security Council resolution 1817, which acknowledges the leading role played by INCB in the implementation of the international drug control treaties and calls on Member States to implement the resolution in order to reduce the widespread smuggling of chemical compounds that are used to illegally refine heroin in Afghanistan.

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