



For information only—not an official document.

EMBARGO:
24 February 2010,
1100 hours CET

INCB FACILITATES THE EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF MEDICINES TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN HAITI

VIENNA, 24 February (United Nations Information Service)—Responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the earthquake in Haiti, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has taken steps to hasten the supply of controlled medicines urgently needed by victims. INCB reminded all exporting countries that clear Guidelines are in place for the international provision of controlled medicines for emergency medical care.

The need to provide treatment to the many victims of the earthquake in Haiti has created an acute shortage of medicines. Many of these contain narcotic drugs, such as morphine, and psychotropic substances, like pentazocine, that are under international control. Under normal circumstances, the import and transport of these medications are subject to strict regulatory requirements. However, in catastrophic situations these regulations slow down the urgent delivery of medications for emergency humanitarian relief as national authorities may be too overwhelmed to take the administrative steps required. INCB, together with the World Health Organization, had long since found a solution to this problem and in 1996 devised simplified control procedures for the export, transport and import of controlled medicines for emergency medical care.

Soon after the earthquake struck Haiti, INCB sent a letter to all countries to remind them that they may apply these simplified control procedures to hasten the supply of urgently needed medicines to victims of the disaster. Under these simplified regulations, the need for import authorizations would be removed when the import and delivery of controlled medicines are handled by reputable humanitarian relief agencies.

INCB has also informed providers of humanitarian assistance on the simplified regulations, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxfam International.

The Model Guidelines for the International Provision of Controlled Medicines for Emergency Medical Care are available on the INCB website: www.incb.org