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## **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

### **REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR HAMID GHODSE, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD**

**Fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
(21-25 March 2011)**

**Agenda Item 4 B:  
Implementation of the international drug control treaties:  
International Narcotics Control Board**

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to stand before you today to introduce the Annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2010.

Before I commence, however, I would like to share my deep sympathy with the Government and people of Japan, following the tragic earthquake and tsunami. The Board stands ready to assist the Government of Japan, especially in ensuring the uncomplicated supply of controlled medicines for the treatment of pain and illness of victims of the disaster. In response to the tragic floods that struck Pakistan last August, the Board called on the cooperation of all Governments in facilitating the supply of controlled medicines to Pakistan to meet the needs of flood victims. The guidelines for the provision of medicines for emergency medical care, developed by the Board and the World Health Organization in 1996, set out the simplified procedures for the import and export of controlled medications in emergency situations.

Madam Chair,

Let me congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Commission and commend your efforts - and those of the bureau - in the preparation of the 54<sup>th</sup> Session.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. It is therefore an appropriate time to reflect on the achievements made in the implementation of the convention. Only eight states have not acceded to the 1961 Convention, reflecting the importance and relevance accorded to the Convention by Member States. Implementation of the Convention has been successful in almost fully eliminating the diversion of narcotic drugs at the international level. However, as I will mention in my statement, much work needs to be done to prevent diversion at the national level.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

During the fifty-third (53<sup>rd</sup>) session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2010, the Board was invited to include in its report for 2010 information on the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical requirements. The Board has also been aware of the growing interest of the international community in this issue and therefore decided to devote to this matter a special supplement to its annual report for 2010.

Madam Chair,

As the Commission is aware, most of the narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances controlled under the international drug control conventions are essential for medical treatment. Opioid analgesics are indispensable for the treatment of pain while psychotropic substances are crucial in the treatment of mental conditions and illnesses. Correctly implemented, the international drug control system ensures the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion to illicit uses.

The supplement presents a thorough analysis of the global situation, highlighting variations in the consumption of internationally controlled substances within and across regions. The supplement also identifies the major impediments to the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and makes a number of recommendations for addressing the situation. I will address the issue of availability in more detail under agenda item 4 c.

Madam Chair,

Each year, the Board devotes the first chapter of its Annual Report to a specific topic of concern. For the 2010 report, the Board decided to highlight its concern that corruption is undermining international efforts to fight illicit drug manufacture and trafficking.

The Board recognizes the heroic efforts of the officers working to protect society from drug trafficking, whose lives are placed in danger on a daily basis. Unfortunately, their efforts and sacrifices are often compromised by corruption and intimidation. Indeed, corruption and intimidation are the tools most effectively used by organized crime to counter drug control efforts and ensure an unimpeded flow of illicit drugs. In cases where a public official cannot be influenced by corruption, drug traffickers may use intimidation, threatening the official and his or her family with violence or even death. It is no accident that areas with intense drug trafficking generally experience a very high level of violence and corruption.

Post-conflict states and countries where drug-trafficking exists are particularly vulnerable to drug-related corruption. In some locations, the financial value of the illicit drug markets can exceed that of the local economy. In extreme cases, criminal organizations that have established drug trafficking empires have become political forces with power and authority equivalent to that of legitimate institutions.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

I have painted a stark picture, indeed, of drug-related corruption. However there is much that can be done and the Board recognizes the efforts already being undertaken by Governments. In its report, the Board sets out strategies for addressing drug-related

corruption and for putting in place preventive measures. The recommendations include strategies aimed at the general public, the judiciary, and the law enforcement and criminal justice systems, also covering money laundering and international and regional cooperation.

Chapter Two of the Board's report outlines the status of adherence to and compliance with the international drug control treaties, and provides an overview of action taken by the Board to ensure the implementation of the treaties.

Each year, the Board undertakes 15 to 20 country missions as part of its ongoing dialogue with Governments. Aiming to visit each country approximately every ten years, the missions provide a unique opportunity for the Board to gain a better understanding of the drug control situation in each country and discuss with competent national authorities the measures taken and progress made in drug control. The report includes summaries of the Board's country missions that have taken place since the last report of the Board was prepared.

The report also includes evaluations of recommendations made by the Board in its Annual Reports for 2005, 2006 and 2007, as well as the recommendations made following country missions in 2007.

In addition to its dialogue with Governments, the Board is committed to a constructive dialogue with non-governmental organizations. Just yesterday, the Board held an informal discussion with the Vienna NGO Committee. Assisted by the Vienna NGO Committee, the Board is also seeking to include meetings with relevant NGOs during each country mission.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

Chapter Two of the Board's Report also includes a number of special topics.

In response to the Commission's resolution 52/5 entitled "Exploration of all aspects related to the use of cannabis seeds for illicit purposes", the Board sent to all Governments a questionnaire on regulations pertaining to cannabis seeds in order to identify provisions in national laws and administrative regulations aimed at preventing the use of cannabis seeds for the illicit cultivation of the cannabis plant. Information was also sought from international organizations. The responses to the questionnaire showed a wide range of regulatory approaches.

Given that the wide availability of cannabis seeds contributes to illicit cultivation of the cannabis plant, the Board encourages all Governments to continue identifying best practices in addressing the use of cannabis seeds for illicit purposes and invites Governments to consider appropriate measures to prevent such use. Possible measures are trade restrictions on cannabis seeds capable of germination or on seeds of cannabis varieties with a THC content exceeding a particular level.

As requested by resolution 53/11 entitled "Promoting and sharing of information on the potential abuse of and trafficking in synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists", the Board sent a letter to the Governments of selected countries in all regions requesting information on recent trends in the abuse of these substances and the presence of new types of such substances on the illicit market. Based on the information received, the Board has found that the availability on the market of products containing synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists continues to be a matter of concern for Governments. To address these concerns, in 2010 a number of Governments introduced measures to prevent trafficking in such products. The Board encourages Governments to continue to monitor the abuse of these substances and to adopt measures to prevent their trafficking and abuse, as well as implement resolution 53/11.

The Report notes that Governments of some countries, especially in South America, have experienced problems with the abuse by inhalation of volatile organic compounds containing alkyl nitrites, commonly referred to as “poppers”, which were addressed in resolution 53/13 of the Commission. Given the adverse health effects of the abuse of “poppers”, the Board recommends in its report that Governments share with the World Health Organization information on related health issues.

Pursuant to the Commission resolution 53/7 on “International cooperation in countering the covert administration of psychoactive substances related to sexual assault and other criminal acts”, the Board requested all Governments to provide it with information on relevant experiences and research findings. The Board found that drug-facilitated acts have occurred in many countries and regions. The evidence suggests that psychoactive substances, when used for such purposes, have been used predominantly on young women for the purpose of committing sexual assault. For several countries there was information on drug-facilitated robbery and ownership fraud, in which the victims were predominantly men. The problem is assumed to be significantly underreported in most countries. The Board welcomes initiatives already underway in some countries, in cooperation with industry, to prevent the diversion and use of medicines for the perpetration of drug-facilitated crime.

The Board is gravely concerned about the increasing variety and availability of “designer drugs”, substances of abuse that have been designed to avoid control measures by means of a minor modification of the molecular structure of controlled substances, resulting in a new substance with similar effects. The report presents the example of 4-methylmethcathinone, commonly known as “mephedrone” or “4-MMC”, which has been reported as a drug of abuse in an increasing number of countries and regions. The abuse of new “designer drugs” can spread swiftly within and between regions. The Board therefore recommends that Governments closely monitor trends within their territories. In order to avoid delays in placing individual drugs under national control as they are identified, the Board invites Governments to consider generic scheduling, where the national legislation allows it. The Board calls on Governments and international entities to develop measures to address the problem of “designer drugs”.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

As customary, the third chapter of the Board’s Report presents an analysis of developments in drug control, which serves to identify weaknesses in the international and national drug control systems. In carrying out the analysis, the Board examines a wide array of data obtained from official government sources and reports of international organizations.

The Report draws attention to the increase in cocaine trafficking through Africa to Europe, after a decline in the previous two years, illustrated by large-scale seizures in West Africa in 2010. The Board is particularly concerned about the increasing abuse of virtually all types of drugs in Africa. This is of grave concern given that the health care systems of many African countries do not have adequate resources for prevention, drug demand reduction and treatment. Counterfeit medicines are a major problem in Africa and pose a significant health risk.

The Board is pleased that in South America in 2009, the total area of coca bush cultivation decreased for a second consecutive year. The Board remains concerned about drug trafficking through Central America and the Caribbean, and the related violence and corruption. In North America, drug abuse and drug trafficking remain a significant concern.

In East and South-East Asia, the manufacture of, trafficking in and use of synthetic drugs has significantly increased since 2008, and illicit opium poppy cultivation increased in

2009. The Board is concerned that South Asia has become one of the main regions used by drug traffickers to obtain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, particularly in the form of pharmaceutical preparations, for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. In West Asia in 2010, illicit opium poppy production in Afghanistan declined to almost half the quantity of the previous year, mainly resulting from a fungus that affected opium poppy plants. However, there is no room for complacency given that opium stockpiles in the region are equivalent to 2.5 years of the global illicit demand for opiates.

In Europe, the abuse of cocaine is spreading from Western Europe into other parts of the region, while there has been an increase in the variety of drugs being abused, including a growing range of substances not under international control. The abuse of MDMA (“ecstasy”) in Oceania has been rising while the region is increasingly being used for the trafficking of drugs and precursor chemicals.

Madam Chair,

At this juncture, allow me to elaborate on the Board’s 2010 report on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The international precursor control regime has been increasingly strengthened over the past two decades. The accomplishments made in preventing precursor chemicals from reaching clandestine drug manufacturing sites show the efficiency of joint efforts by Governments. The response by Governments to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs Resolution 49/3 contributed to these results: over the past four years, 121 Governments have provided the Board with their annual legitimate requirements for precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants. Those estimates are published on the Board’s web site as an efficient tool for the prevention of diversion.

International initiatives such as Project Prism and Project Cohesion, facilitated by the Board and operational in nature, have enabled Governments to work together against the trafficking of precursor chemicals. Through these initiatives, Governments have - in cooperation - prevented tons of chemicals from being diverted to the illicit manufacture of heroin, cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants. Key results of the joint efforts include the large-scale seizures of acetic anhydride destined for the illicit manufacture of heroin. The initiatives have also provided valuable information on trafficking patterns and identified weaknesses in control mechanisms. The Board welcomes the plan of action developed by the Project Cohesion Task Force together with the authorities of South American countries to address the diversion of and trafficking in chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine in the region and urges all Governments concerned to implement the plan without delay.

The Board is satisfied that its Pre-Export Notification Online system, known as PEN-Online, has become a cornerstone of international precursor chemical control. With a rate of 1,500 notifications per month, 115 countries and territories use PEN-Online to monitor international trade in scheduled chemicals and identify suspicious shipments.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

While pleased with the progress achieved to date, the Board’s Report highlights the challenges that remain. For example, the Board is concerned that most African countries do not use PEN-Online and urges all Governments to use the system, and to rapidly respond to notifications in the case of suspicious transactions.

With traditional precursor chemicals being more effectively controlled, it has become more difficult for traffickers to obtain some of the main precursor chemicals. As a result, non-scheduled substances are increasingly being substituted in the illicit manufacture of drugs. For example, preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are now the major substances used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. National competent authorities should also pay attention to the emergence of derivatives of scheduled precursors, such as esters of phenylacetic acid. Governments are urged to refer to the latest version of the Limited international special surveillance list of non-scheduled substances, which is available on request and on the Board's restricted web page.

The Board is concerned about the vulnerability of West Africa to the trafficking of precursor chemicals. The European Union and East and West Asia continue to be targeted as sources of acetic anhydride for the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan. Despite law enforcement efforts in Europe, in and around Afghanistan, the chemical still reaches clandestine laboratories in the country.

The diversion of precursor chemicals from domestic distribution channels necessitates focused attention of national drug control authorities. Controlling precursor chemicals at the national and international levels requires the political will of all Governments. The appropriate mechanisms are already in place and the Board stands ready to continue to assist Governments in their efforts to halt the trafficking in precursor chemicals.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

While the implementation of the conventions by Governments has been successful in almost fully eliminating, at the international level, the diversion of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and, to a large extent, of precursors, the diversion of scheduled substances continues to occur at the national level. Effective national drug control systems are key to addressing the problems addressed in the Report, and international cooperation is essential in building the capacity of national competent authorities to address the weaknesses in their control systems.

In Chapter Four of its Report, the Board makes a number of recommendations aimed at supporting the implementation of the drug control conventions. The Board counts on the support of Governments and international and regional organizations in implementing these recommendations and stands ready to assist Governments in facilitating the implementation of the recommendations.

Thank you, Madam Chair.