

*Check against delivery*

**Statement by Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, President,  
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)  
Sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,  
Item 5 (c): International Narcotics Control Board**

**15 March 2022**

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to report to the Commission on the work of the International Narcotics Control Board, and to present our 2021 reports<sup>1</sup>.

The thematic chapter of the 2021 Annual Report is on illicit financial flows related to drug trafficking and their impact on development and security.

Illicit financial flows serve as the lifeblood for organized criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking. Curbing them is therefore essential to addressing drug trafficking around the world. The adverse consequences of illicit financial flows are many and wide-ranging: from corruption to violence and instability, they stifle development. In Africa, approximately \$88.6 billion, or 3.7% of Africa's GDP, is lost to illicit financial flows yearly. This is almost equivalent to official developmental assistance and foreign direct investment.

A global issue in the Annual Report examines the link between social media use and drug use as these platforms can promote negative behaviours by glamourizing drug use and can also create opportunities to purchase illicit drugs. We encourage governments to work in partnership with social media platforms to reduce exploitation of the platforms and also recommend that Governments consider utilising social media for drug prevention programmes.

INCB also highlights the differences between 'depenalization', 'decriminalization' and 'legalization'. We recall that the legalization of non-medical use of drugs contravenes the conventions and reiterate that proportionality should be a guiding principle in drug-related criminal justice matters. Adoption of alternative measures, as provided for by the conventions, can form an integral part of a balanced and human-rights based approach to drug policy.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2021 (E/INCB/2021/1); Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2021 on the Implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (E/INCB/2021/4)*

Chapter III of the report summarizes regional and national developments, and trends in prevention and treatment and cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking. We note that Afghanistan remains by far the world leader in illicit opium poppy cultivation and opium production.

The 2021 Annual Report also discusses the work of various INCB initiatives such as INCB Learning and the INCB Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances (GRIDS) Programme. The work carried out through these initiatives is evidence of INCB's commitment to support Member States in meeting the objectives of the drug control conventions and resolutions of the Commission, Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

INCB highlights the value of article 13 of the 1988 convention as a complementary tool in addressing illicit drug manufacture through preventing trade in and diversion of essential materials and equipment. Yet this article remains underutilized. In 2021, INCB conducted several activities to provide guidance on the operational use of article 13. This culminated in the submission of a conference room paper to this session of the Commission which provides various options, measures, approaches and tools to guide international policy efforts and action in this area.

The 2021 Precursors Report highlights significant shortcomings in controls over domestic manufacture, trade and distribution, including Internet-facilitated trade in precursor chemicals. INCB is calling for enhancement of national precursors control and regulatory frameworks.

We also note that non-scheduled chemicals have now been encountered in all regions of the world. INCB has published a compendium of measures and approaches to address the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors with a view to further strengthening the chemical control system.

We have provided recommendations on all these issues, including focusing on supply and demand reduction strategies that also address illicit financial flows.

During the course of the week, the Board will also publish its 2021 technical reports on narcotic drugs and on psychotropic substances, which will also be available on the INCB website. These reports contain global data on licit production, manufacturing, international trade and consumption of substances controlled under the 1961 and 1971 Conventions.

Thank you for your attention, I look forward to your observations.