

Universal adherence to the international drug control treaties

1. The Board continuously reviews the adherence to and implementation of the international drug control treaties by Governments with a view to promoting universal application of the treaties. Universal action against drug trafficking and abuse is a prerequisite for achieving the “health and welfare of mankind,” which is one of the main aims of the international drug control treaties.
2. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, in their preambles state that “effective measures against abuse of substances require coordinated and universal action.” The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 recognizes that “eradication of illicit traffic is a collective responsibility of all States.” Thus, universal adherence and implementation by all States of the international drug control treaties are key to the functioning of international drug control system.
3. There is commanding support by the international community of the international drug control conventions, as it can be seen from near-universal adherence and ratification of these conventions. The global community reaffirmed its commitment to the goals and objectives of the international drug control conventions and reiterated that the international drug control treaties are the cornerstone of national, regional and international efforts to address drug-related challenges in the outcome document adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in April 2016, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.” Also, General Assembly resolution 53/115, adopted following the Assembly’s special session on the world drug problem in 1998, “urges all States to ratify or accede to and implement all the provisions” of the international drug control conventions.
4. Each year, in its Annual Report, the Board provides an overview of the status of ratification or accession to the international drug control treaties highlighting the countries that have yet to accede to the treaties. In its Annual Report for 2017¹, INCB notes that Africa and Oceania remain the regions of the world with the largest proportion of States yet to ratify one or more of the international drug control treaties. In the same report, the Board “reiterates its call to all States having not yet become Parties to one or more of the international drug control conventions to do so at the earliest opportunity, and to take all legislative and policy action necessary to ensure their comprehensive implementation at the national level.”
5. In the absence of accession to the international drug control treaties, States remain vulnerable to drug trafficking, laundering of proceeds of drug-related crimes as well as other associated organised criminal activities. Criminals and organised criminal groups may take refuge in the territories of States that are not Parties to the conventions, place their illicit proceeds there and commit offences in those countries without fear of prosecution. Since the international drug control conventions can be used as the legal basis for international cooperation in criminal matters, such as extradition, mutual legal assistance and law-enforcement cooperation, there is a danger that in the absence of such legal means to cooperate, the cross-border investigation and prosecution of drug-related criminality may not be effective or even possible. The conventions also offer means to cooperate in preventing and addressing drug abuse through the provision of technical assistance, information exchange and training.
6. The three international drug control treaties are mutually supportive instruments and alone none of them is a comprehensive instrument to cover all aspects of international drug control. Therefore, the Board encourages States to become parties to the three international drug control treaties to ensure that they benefit from the entire range of tools they offer in support of their drug control efforts.
7. The drug control conventions represent the international consensus on minimum requirements for the control of the licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals that can be diverted to the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and on the measures needed to facilitate access to and availability of controlled medicines needed for legitimate medical and scientific purposes while, at the same time, preventing their diversion into illicit channels. By becoming parties to the conventions, States demonstrate their common and shared responsibility for meeting those

¹ See: <https://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report.html> (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Chinese).

minimum requirements and adopting legislative, institutional and policy measures with a view to achieving the ultimate aim of the conventions, which is the health and welfare of humankind.

8. Through its various programmes and activities, and its global [INCB Learning initiative](#), INCB has so far provided training to officials of competent national authorities of States in Africa, Central America, Europe and Oceania with a view to improving their capacity to monitor the licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and promote access and availability to controlled medicines for licit use. INCB Learning is contributing to enhancing capacity, and as a result some of the countries have begun the process of acceding to the international drug control treaties. The Board also calls upon all stakeholders, including international organisations and other countries in and outside these regions, to assist those countries to accede to and fully implement the provisions of the international drug control conventions.

INCB is the independent, quasi-judicial body charged with promoting and monitoring Government compliance with the three international drug control conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

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