

FOCUS on international drug control



Newsletter initiated by the International Narcotics Control Board **October ~ December 2011 Issue 11**

President of INCB meets President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma during a High-level political mission to Bolivia



Prof. Hamid Ghodse, President of INCB (left) with Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (right)

A high-level Board mission visited the Plurinational State of Bolivia on 15 and 16 December 2011. The mission was conducted by the President of the Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, and a member of the Board, Dr. Camilo Uribe Granja. They were accompanied by a member of the Secretariat of the Board and a United Nations legal officer. The previous mission of the Board to the Plurinational State of Bolivia had taken place in 2007. The purpose of the mission was to exchange views with the highest national authorities on matters relating to the implementation of the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

The mission was received by the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cults, Mr. David Choquehuanca Céspedes, in a private meeting. The mission also met the Ministers of the Consejo Nacional de Lucha contra el Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas (National Council for the Fight against Drug Trafficking) and other ministers with responsibility for drug control, including the Minister of Defence, Mr. Rubén Saavedra Soto; the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Wilfredo Chávez; the Minister of Justice, Mr. Nilda Copa Condori; the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cults, Mr. Juan Carlos Alur-

ralde Tejada; and the Vice-Minister for Social Defence and Controlled Substances, Mr. Felipe Cáceres García. In addition, the mission held a meeting with key decision makers and senior officials from the Fuerza Especial de Lucha contra el Narcotráfico (Special Counter-narcotics

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High-level INCB mission and Vice-Minister for Social Defense and Controlled Substances (left) observe a coca eradication exercise in Chaparé

Police Force) and observed a coca bush eradication exercise in Chaparé.

Discussions concentrated on the denunciation by the Plurinational State of Bolivia of the 1961 Convention in June 2011 and its serious implications for international drug control. The findings of the mission will be reviewed by the Board at its next session in February 2012.

Board completes its 102nd session

The 102nd session of the Board was held from 24 October to 11 November 2011. During the first two days of the session, the Standing Committee on Estimates reviewed national requirements for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and some precursor chemicals, in order to enable access to those substances for licit purposes worldwide while ensuring that the availability of the raw materials for the manufacture of those drugs does not reach excessive levels, which could pose a risk of diversion to illicit channels.

The Board identified developments and shortcomings in the international drug control system; these will be brought to the attention of Governments in its annual report for 2011, to be launched on 28 February 2012. The Board paid particular attention to the drug problem in marginalized communities, and the focus

of its thematic chapter was on addressing the relationship between social vulnerability and drug abuse and exploring how improved social cohesion could help to prevent drug abuse.

The Board reviewed the findings of its recent country missions to Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Mexico, Serbia and Zimbabwe; summaries of those findings will be included in its annual report for 2011.

During the session, the Board held a meeting with the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and representatives of the World Customs Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). The 103rd session of the

Recent and upcoming events

January 2012

- **30 January - 3 February** International Narcotics Control Board, hundred-third session

February 2012

- **1 February** INCB briefing for Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Vienna
- **16 February** Paris Pact 3rd Ministerial Conference
- **28 February** Launch of the INCB Annual Report for 2011

March 2011

- **12 - 16 March** Commission on Narcotic Drugs, fifty-fifth session

Forthcoming INCB missions

- Bangladesh

Board will take place from 30 January to 3 February 2012.

Board member Dr. Rajat Ray participates in the Thirty-fifth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

Dr. Rajat Ray, a member of the Board, made a statement at the Thirty-fifth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, held in Agra, India, from 22 to 25 November 2011.

In his statement, Dr. Ray indicated that, in the Asia and the Pacific region, traffickers were increasingly attempting to source precursor chemicals in the form

of pharmaceutical preparations. He outlined two tools that could help to improve the monitoring and control of precursor chemicals: the *Guidelines for a Voluntary Code of Practice for the Chemical Industry* and Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online), which was used to notify importing countries of planned exports of precursor chemicals. With regard to the former, a code of practice between Governments and the chemical

industry could supplement mandatory controls by providing a flexible means of accommodating commercial trade, identifying suspicious orders and preventing diversion of chemicals to illicit channels. With regard to the PEN Online system, Dr. Ray explained that only two countries in the Asia and Pacific region had requested notifications of precursor exports through the system and strongly urged other countries to make use of the system, which would help to coordinate control efforts and stop the diversion of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs in the region.

Dr. Ray also outlined regional trends in illicit drug crop cultivation, production and abuse in the region. He stressed that there must be a balanced approach to illicit drug control that addressed both demand and supply. He also emphasized the importance of ensuring that drug control efforts did not impede the appropriate availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.



35th Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, held in Agra, India, in November 2011

Appointment of Mr. Andrés Finguerut as new Secretary of the Board

Mr. Andrés Finguerut, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has been appointed Secretary of the Board and Chief of the Board's Secretariat. Mr. Finguerut succeeds Mr Jonathan Lucas, who took up the position of Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in Turin, Italy, in May 2011.

Prior to his appointment as Secretary of the Board, Mr. Finguerut served as Chief of the Secretariat to the governing bodies of UNODC. Mr. Finguerut has served in various capacities in

UNODC, including in the Office of the Executive Director and the Division for Operations, and in field positions in Colombia, Mexico and Central America. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in politics from the University of Reading and a master of science degree in economics from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (United Kingdom). He is fluent in English and Spanish.

Mr. Finguerut will take up his appointment as Secretary of the Board at the beginning of 2012.



Annual report for 2011 to be launched on 28 February 2012

The annual report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2011 will be launched in Vienna by the President of the Board on 28 February 2012. The Board has dedicated its annual report for 2011 to the centenary of the International Opium Convention signed

on how marginalized communities worldwide can become vulnerable to drug problems — illicit drug manufacture, drug trafficking and dealing, and drug abuse. The Board explores how various factors can affect social cohesion within communities and how this can be related to drug problems, and makes a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the problem. The report reviews the functioning of the international drug control system and the current global drug situation. Particular topics addressed include the denunciation by the Plurinational State of Bolivia of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, drug-facilitated crime, illegal Internet pharmacies and the use of non-controlled chemicals in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.

2012. The reports will be available in hard copy and on the Board's website (www.incb.org).

The current members of INCB:

- **Hamid Ghodse** (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- **Galina Aleksandrovna Korchagina** (Russian Federation)
- **Carola Lander** (Germany)
- **Melvyn Levitsky** (United States)
- **Marc Moinard** (France)
- **Jorge Montaña** (Mexico)
- **Lochan Naidoo** (South Africa)
- **Rajat Ray** (India)
- **Viroj Sumyai** (Thailand)
- **Sri Suryawati** (Indonesia)
- **Camilo Uribe Granja** (Colombia)
- **Raymond Yans** (Belgium)
- **Xin Yu** (China)



at The Hague on 23 January 1912, an occasion to reflect on the achievements made in international drug control over the past century and to consider the challenges that lie ahead. The thematic chapter of the annual report focuses

The Board's report on precursor chemicals, in accordance with article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, and the Board's technical reports on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances will also be released on 28 February

Diversion and abuse of buprenorphine: an issue of concern

In recent years, the diversion and abuse of preparations containing buprenorphine have been a cause for concern. Buprenorphine is an opiate analgesic listed in Schedule III of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. Since the late 1990s, buprenorphine has been increasingly used for detoxification and for substitution treatment for persons dependent on opiates. New formulations, containing higher doses of buprenorphine, have entered the market; they are also used for the treatment of pain. As a consequence, global manufacture and consumption of buprenorphine have increased significantly over the past decade.

The increased availability of buprenorphine for the treatment of pain and for substitution treatment has contributed to increased abuse and diversion of the substance into illicit markets. Although hard data on the extent of abuse of buprenorphine are difficult to obtain, those problems appear to be increasing in many countries. Buprenorphine abuse is known to be especially common among opioid addicts who are undergoing detoxification and substitution treatment. A

further concern is a change in the mode of administration: preparations containing buprenorphine are being dissolved in liquid and then injected intravenously.

The large illicit demand for buprenorphine continues to be entirely met by diversion. In some cases, doctors have been found to be negligent about prescribing the quantities needed, and patients have successfully requested more doses than required in order to sell them to drug abusers. Furthermore, the smuggling of buprenorphine has been reported by several countries.

Many Governments have taken measures to address the problems relating to the diversion and abuse of buprenorphine. Such measures include the enactment of laws and regulations concerning substitution treatment, the monitoring of supply and distribution during such treatment, prescription monitoring systems and the provision of mandatory training for doctors who are qualified to prescribe buprenorphine. However, the control measures applied to buprenorphine and its preparations vary from country to country,

making concerted action to prevent their diversion and abuse more difficult.

In view of the continued abuse and diversion of buprenorphine from domestic distribution channels, the Board has repeatedly urged Governments to remain vigilant and to adopt appropriate control measures, while making the substance available for medical treatment.



Obituary

It is with great sadness that the Board notes the passing of Ambassador Herbert S. Okun, former member of the Board, on 8 November 2011. A national of the United States of America, Ambassador Okun had a distinguished career in the United States diplomatic service (1955-1991), having served as Ambassador to the German Democratic Republic (1980-1983) and Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1985-1989). He was a member of the Secretary-General's Group of Experts on the United Nations Structure for Drug Abuse Control (1990) and was the founding Executive Director of the Financial Services Volunteer



Corps (United States, 1990). He was the Deputy Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Former Yugoslavia (1991) and Deputy Co-Chairman of the

International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (1992-1993).

Ambassador Okun was a respected educator. He was a visiting lecturer on international law at Yale Law School and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University (United States). Ambassador Okun was a member of the Board from 1992 to 2002, serving as First Vice-President (in 1996 and 2000) and Rapporteur (1997). He was a member (1998 and 2001) and Vice-Chairman (1999) of the Standing Committee on Estimates, and member (1999) and Chairman (2001) of the Committee on Finance and Administration.

Board participates in workshop on regulatory mechanisms for precursor control in Central Asia

The Precursors Control Section of the Board's Secretariat was invited to give a keynote address at a regional workshop on regulatory mechanisms for precursor control in Central Asia, which was organized by the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in October 2011. In addition to representatives from Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, representatives from Germany, Italy, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC), the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) and UNODC also attended the workshop.

In his address, the representative of

the Secretariat of the Board presented the basic provisions of the 1988 Convention in the area of precursor control and provided a brief overview of compliance by the Governments of the countries in Central Asia. Currently, more than 120 countries worldwide are registered for the PEN Online system, a web-based communication tool developed to facilitate the notification of precursor shipments prior to their shipment from exporting countries. Several countries in the Central Asian region had not yet registered with the system.

The representatives of the Central Asian countries and CARICC provided an overview of the current drug and precursor-related situation in Central Asia. The representative of CEFIC shared experiences and practical implications for the chemical industry with regard to precursor control in the European Union, based on legal obligations and voluntary cooperation with competent national authorities.



Regional workshop on regulatory mechanisms for precursor control, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in October 2011

Control of precursors discussed at the 118th Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference

A representative of the Secretariat of the Board delivered a keynote address and participated in an expert panel discussion on illicit drug production and precursor control at the 118th Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference, held in Chicago, United States, in October 2011. The Conference was attended by over 9,000 participants from 93 countries.

The expert panel examined illicit drug manufacture and chemical acquisition at the international, regional and national levels. The panel discussion also included unique perspectives from the legitimate chemical industry and convicted drug producers.

The representative of the Secretariat provided an overview of the existing tools for international precursor control, highlighting the need for Governments to invoke article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention, requiring chemical exporting countries to provide pre-export notification of shipments of precursors. It was important that Governments registered for and consistently used the PEN Online system and recognized the shared responsibility of economically developed and less developed countries. The need was stressed for Governments to put into practice the *Guidelines for a Voluntary Code of Practice for the Chemical Industry* and to respond proactively to the acquisition of new

chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, as shown, for example, by the ChemWatch programme in Canada.

Going forward, greater flexibility of Governments to respond to changes in the types of chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture and increasing international cooperation to combat traffic in precursors will be essential. As the precursor trafficking landscape changes rapidly, the future of precursor controls will increasingly rely on the development and rapid dissemination of intelligence among the various regulatory and law enforcement agencies.

Board highlights progress made and challenges faced during the first 20 years of precursor control at the fifth Synthetic Drug Enforcement Conference

A representative of the Secretariat of the Board delivered a keynote address on precursor control to 120 delegates at the fifth biennial Synthetic Drug Enforcement Conference in Nunspeet, Netherlands, from 15 to 17 November 2011.

The aim of the Conference was to bring together delegates from around the world, including Canada, China, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United States and the European Union, in order to discuss the latest developments in the fight against synthetic drugs.

In his address to law enforcement, forensic and regulatory experts, the representative of the Board underlined the progress achieved during the first 20 years of precursor control under

the 1988 Convention and the current state of transnational chemical trafficking and illicit drug manufacture, and proposed a way forward for the international community to “future-proof” precursor control into the next decade.

The efficient use of existing basic tools to prevent precursor diversion in developing countries and the shared responsibility of developed countries to ensure precursor control capacity-building and technical cooperation were stressed. Moreover, the need

to respond to the growing number of non-controlled pre-precursors and chemical derivatives increasingly found in illicit drug laboratories through improved international cooperation, intelligence gathering and real-time information-sharing was highlighted. If combined with greater flexibility to investigate, prosecute and sanction those attempting to procure non-controlled chemicals with the intention of using them in illicit drug manufacture, the fight against illicit synthetic drug production could become more effective.



Building bridges between the Board and the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Drugs

As submitted by Mr. Michel Perron, Chair of the Committee

In recent years, we have seen several positive developments in the relationship between the Board and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In many respects, I would suggest that such developments are a model to which others can look in order to understand how to engage in substantive dialogue with an array of civil society actors while staying true to a mandate.

It is widely known and understood

that NGOs have been much more visible in international drug policy and in addressing the impact of drug abuse. The entire United Nations system and, indeed, the Millennium Development Goals, speak to a productive and collaborative relationship with civil society. Accepting the principle of shared responsibility, we at the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee have worked hard to create a bridge between our members, NGOs worldwide and the primary institutions

responsible for drug matters, namely the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, UNODC and the Board.

The Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee is using a three-pronged approach to create more effective relations between these bodies and NGOs.

The first part of our work is to advocate for the recommendations emanating

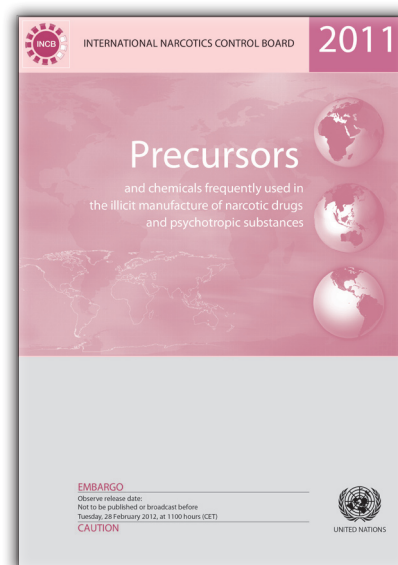
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20 years of international precursor control

In its 20th annual report on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention, which will be released on 28 February 2012, the Board examines the many notable accomplishments that have been achieved through international cooperation.

While acknowledging that challenges remain, the report outlines ways forward, calls for concerted action by the international community and emphasizes that precursor control is a shared responsibility that requires the special attention of all national drug control authorities.

The 2011 issue of the report provides policymakers, officials and observers with more in-depth analyses of trends and emerging developments in global chemical control, and includes a new thematic chapter reviewing the past 20 years of the international precursor control regime. The report also highlights the use of the Board's innovative online tools to assist Governments and the development of new international initiatives aimed at preventing the diversion of precursors and supporting investigations into precursor trafficking by organized criminal groups.



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from the Beyond 2008 forum, which was led by our organization. With regard to the Board, these include:

- Systematically including NGOs when conducting in-country assessments
- Establishing a means to clarify statements made in the Board's annual reports
- Renewing commitment to give equal attention to supply and demand reduction
- Highlighting best practices and innovative approaches with a view to fully exploring the existing latitude of the drug control conventions
- Ensuring adequate supply of licit drugs to treat dependence and relieve pain
- Regularly undertaking reviews

of the application of criminal sanctions as a drug control measure.

I am pleased to report that the Board has given these recommendations due and serious consideration and that many of them have now been fully implemented.

The second aspect of our work is educating NGOs on the specific role and mandate of the Board. As such, we initiated an annual informal dialogue in 2009 with the President of the Board. That event permitted NGOs to ask questions directly to the President, to seek clarification of statements made in the Board's reports, to highlight areas of importance to them, such as access to essential medicines (which was reported on recently by the President), and to advocate for other Beyond 2008 recommendations. I can say unequivocally that the President's openness and candour struck a chord with NGOs present and that we wish to build upon this approach.

The third aspect of our work is to build a long-term collaborative relationship with the Board. Last year, the Secretariat asked our Committee to poll its

members to identify prospective NGOs whose representatives the Board could meet during country missions. This process is evolving and we are delivering more substantive recommendations to the Board. While not all NGOs recommended are members of our Committee, they have affiliations with members and are known to deliver outstanding work in a range of areas. I believe the Secretariat of the Board appreciates this service that we can provide, which also responds specifically to one of our Beyond 2008 recommendations.

How this burgeoning relationship will evolve rests with both the Board and us. I am of the view that our recent work together exemplifies the principles of mutual respect and collaboration. I know I speak for all of our members in acknowledging the Board's rapid uptake of our recommendations and its commitment — from the President down — to building a healthy, transparent and collaborative relationship with our diverse cadre of members and their colleagues.

For more information on the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee, visit www.vngoc.org.

Joint survey helps to identify obstacles to the availability of test and reference samples

The last issue of *Focus* featured an article discussing the importance of ensuring the availability of test and reference samples for use by drug-testing laboratories as part of their work. For years, the Board has taken a leading role in raising awareness of this important issue and in suggesting ways of facilitating access to test and reference samples by drug-testing laboratories, including through the publication of its 2007 *Guidelines for the Import and Export of Drug and Precursor Reference Standards* (available from www.incb.org/documents/Reference_standard_guidelines/reference_standards_en.pdf).

Recognizing the important initiative shown by the Board on this matter, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs requested that the Board work with UNODC and Member States to review national procedures to develop a mechanism to facilitate access by drug-testing laboratories to the test and reference samples they require.

In order to respond to the Commission's request, the Board and the Laboratory and Scientific Section of UNODC decided to solicit input from competent national authorities as well as drug-testing laboratories themselves in an effort to identify remaining obstacles to the availability of test and reference samples of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. In order to do so, the Board and the Laboratory and Scientific Section created two questionnaires, one distributed to competent national authorities and the other sent to drug-testing laboratories.

The questionnaires for the competent national authorities and drug-testing laboratories covered the following thematic areas: availability of test and reference samples, including from domestic sources; import authorization procedures, validity and applicable time frames; shipping modalities and associated formalities; awareness and inter-agency cooperation; mechanisms adopted to facilitate availability; and

the International Collaborative Exercises and the international quality assurance programme of UNODC.

The completed questionnaires showed that, to a large extent, the obstacles to availability identified by the Board in its 2007 *Guidelines* continued to exist, with 60 per cent of respondent drug-testing laboratories indicating that they continued to experience difficulties in sourcing test and reference samples. The survey revealed, however, that drug-testing laboratories participating in the International Collaborative Exercise were 20 per cent less likely to report difficulties in obtaining test and reference samples than those not participating in the exercise.

According to the information provided by the competent national authorities that responded, one of the most common grounds for the refusal of import or export of test and reference samples was that drug-testing laboratories were not sufficiently aware of the legal and administrative procedures in place for requesting the import or export of the substances in question. As a result, applications were often rejected or delayed because of being incorrectly filled out or not being accompanied by the required supporting documentation. Despite this fact, very few competent national authorities reported having developed resources to raise awareness among drug-testing laboratories of the proper procedures to be followed and to work with those laboratories to ensure that applications were submitted properly.

Another problematic aspect identified as impeding access to test and reference samples was the lack of awareness among many national institutional stakeholders of the importance of ensuring that requests for import or export of those substances were processed as expeditiously as possible. That had led to imports, exports and customs clearance of test and reference samples not being given priority consideration, often delaying and potentially jeopardizing the acquisition of the samples by laboratories.



In addition, the majority of respondent competent national authorities reported not having any mechanisms in place to assist inter-institutional cooperation aimed at facilitating test and reference sample availability, nor did they report having undertaken any actions to raise awareness of the importance of the issue among various institutional stakeholders.

Additional difficulties reported by drug-testing laboratories were problems in sourcing test and reference samples (particularly where they were not available from domestic sources) and the high costs associated with acquiring substances, including purchase, import and export authorization fees, customs duties and shipping.

A key finding of the survey was that many of the problems identified could be easily addressed by States without the need for elaborate and costly policy initiatives, namely through the adoption of simple awareness-raising measures and measures facilitating inter-institutional cooperation to create a dialogue between drug-testing laboratories and competent national authorities.

The findings of the survey by the Board and the UNODC Laboratory and

Scientific Section have confirmed the need for further action to be taken by States to comprehensively address continued impediments to the availability of test and reference samples of internationally controlled substances. They also

revealed the nature of specific problems that need to be addressed and helped in identifying the best practices that may be instrumental in solving them.

As States continue to work to ensure

that drug-testing laboratories are given the tools they need to perform their important work, the Board and its partners at UNODC stand ready to continue to support them.

INCB missions

Mexico

A high-level Board mission visited Mexico from 11 to 14 October 2011. The mission was conducted by the President of the Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, accompanied by a member of the Secretariat of the Board. The previous mission of the Board to that country had taken place in 2005. The purpose of the mission was to review the national drug control policy in Mexico and the country's efforts to implement the three international drug control conventions, to which it is a party.

The mission held meetings with the Attorney General, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Minister and the Vice-Minister of Health, the Admiral and Secretary of the Navy and key decision makers and senior officials from the armed forces (army and navy), the Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios (Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks), the Comisión Nacional contra las Adicciones (National Commission against Addictions), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Security, and the police and customs authorities. The delegation visited the National Intelligence Centre of the Ministry of Public Security, the forensic laboratory of the Attorney General's Office, the National Institute for Psychiatry of the Ministry of Health, a governmental drug abuse prevention and treatment centre and a non-governmental organization



specializing in drug abuse prevention and treatment.

Deliberations concentrated on recent developments in drug trafficking and abuse in Mexico, measures taken to control narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and the chemicals needed for their illicit manufacture, and demand-reduction policies. The availability of opiates for medical needs in Mexico was also discussed with the national authorities, and this topic was further highlighted by the President of the Board in a lecture given at the National Academy of Medicines.

The findings of the mission were reviewed by the Board at its session in November 2011 and will be reflected in its 2011 annual report, to be published in early 2012.

Serbia

A mission of the Board visited Serbia from 18 to 20 October 2011. The mission was conducted by Dr. Galina Korchagina, member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the Secretariat of the Board. The previous mission to the country had taken place in 2001. Serbia is a party to the three international drug conventions. The purpose of the mission was to discuss specific issues related to the country's implementation of those conventions.

The mission held meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the

Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance. The mission also visited a special hospital for the treatment of addiction and met representatives from two non-governmental organizations.

Discussions with senior stakeholders during the mission focused on legislative and administrative measures taken and policies adopted by the Government to improve the availability of controlled substances for medical purposes; Government action to address drug abuse and trafficking, including in relation to precursor control; regional cooperation in drug control measures; and the country's continued cooperation with the Board.



The findings of the mission were reviewed by the Board at its session in November 2011 and will be reflected in its annual report to be published in early 2012.

Turkey

A mission of the Board visited Turkey from 28 to 30 November 2011. The mission was conducted by Dr. Carola Lander, member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the Secretariat of the Board. The purpose of the mission was to discuss the implementation by Turkey of the three international drug control conventions, to which it is a party. The previous mission of the Board to Turkey had taken place in 2003.

The mission held meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Customs and Trade and the Turkish Grain Board of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The mission also held meetings with representatives from two non-governmental organizations, as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the World Health Organization representative.

Discussions held with senior officials during the mission focused on the policies of and the measures taken by the Government of Turkey to address drug abuse and trafficking in drugs and precursor chemicals. The mission discussed with



the competent national authorities the licit control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, including the licit cultivation of opium poppy, and the Government's efforts to improve the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical purposes. Regional cooperation in drug control and the country's ongoing cooperation with the Board were also addressed.

The findings of the mission will be reviewed by the Board at its 103rd session in February 2012 and will be reflected in the Board's annual report for 2012, which will be published in early 2013.

Retirement of INCB Secretariat member, Mr. Thae Saman

Mr. Thae Saman, who was born in Iraq, joined the Secretariat of the Board in 1994 as a Statistics Assistant. Mr. Saman worked mainly in the Psychotropics Control Section, dealing with statistical information related to the 1971 Convention, but he also served in other sections of the Secretariat to share his experience and to broaden his professional knowledge. His main functions included processing and analysing the statistical data that Governments

submit to the Board pursuant to the international drug control treaties and preparing the graphs and tables for the technical publication on psychotropic substances and for other reports of the Board. Mr. Saman retired on 31 December 2011. We would like to thank him over during his support of the work of the Board, and wish him all the best for the new period in his life.



Call for contributions

Readers are invited to submit comments and contributions:

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Mail can be sent to the following address:

Focus on international drug control

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The Focus Team reserves the right to edit and select articles depending on their relevance and the availability of space.

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About Focus on international drug control

Focus on international drug control is a quarterly publication, initiated by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), that provides insight into the activities and positions of the Board and information on other issues relevant to the Board's mandate. Focus also functions as a forum in which interested parties may share their opinions. Focus on international drug control is prepared by the Vienna-based INCB Secretariat.