

FOCUS on international drug control

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The International Narcotics Control Board holds its 101st session

The 101st session of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) was held in Vienna from 2 to 13 May 2011. At the start of the session, the Board elected its officers from among its members for one-year terms as follows:

- Hamid Ghodse, President
- Raymond Yans, First Vice-President
- Rajat Ray, Second Vice-President and Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Sri Suryawati, Rapporteur and member of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Viroy Sumyai, Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration and member of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Galina Korchagina, Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Marc Moinard, member of the Committee on Finance and Administration and member of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Lochan Naidoo, member of the Committee on Finance and Administration and member of the Standing Committee on Estimates
- Carola Lander, member of the Standing Committee on Estimates

The 101st session also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961. The President opened the session by reflecting on the achievements of the Convention, stating: "Only eight States have not yet acceded to the 1961 Convention, reflecting the importance and relevance accorded to the Convention by Member States." While recognizing that implementation of the Convention had been successful in almost eliminating the diversion of

narcotic drugs at the international level, INCB noted that much work still needed to be done to prevent diversion at the national level and to achieve adequate availability for medical use.

During the session, INCB reviewed the global drug control situation and examined the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. Presentations were made by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Standing Committee on Estimates and the Committee on Finance and Administration of INCB, as well as various working groups of the Board also reported on their activities.

INCB took note of the outcome of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in particular the resolutions calling for action by the Board. Given its concern regarding the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, as reflected in the special supplement to its annual report for 2010 on that issue, INCB was pleased that the Commission had adopted a resolution calling for significant international efforts to address the issue. The INCB supplement shows that ninety per cent of licit opioid analgesics are consumed by ten per cent of the world's population, mainly in the more developed countries and regions. A similar disparity exists in the global availability of psychotropic substances.

INCB will hold its 102nd session in October-November 2011.



Prof. Hamid Ghodse, President of INCB, presides over the 101st session of the International Narcotics Control Board

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International Narcotics Control Board President participates in the World Health Assembly

The President of INCB, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, participated in the sixty-fourth World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva in May and presented the perspective of the Board on non-communicable diseases. In his statement to the Assembly, the President drew attention to the licit use of controlled substances in the treatment of and the relief of pain associated with non-communicable diseases. The President also stated that substance abuse is a global and preventable non-communicable disease and as such it required prevention in the first instance, treatment and rehabilitation.

The President expressed the concern of INCB regarding global disparities in access to drugs for the treatment of pain and illness. Despite adequate supplies of the raw materials for opiates, growth in consumption had occurred mainly in countries where consumption was

already high, while in many countries and regions availability was still limited or non-existent. The President shared with the Assembly some of the recommendations that INCB had made in the special supplement to its annual report for 2010, including educating health professionals and the general public, identifying overly restrictive laws and developing infrastructure and distribution mechanisms. The Board's partnership with WHO to assist Member States in estimating their medical and scientific requirements for internationally controlled substances was also highlighted.

The President stressed the importance of incorporating the issues of drug dependency and the use of controlled drugs for the medical treatment of non-communicable diseases into the deliberations and outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-

Recent and upcoming events

July - September 2011

- **4 - 29 July:** Substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, Geneva
- **19 - 20 September:** High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, New York

Forthcoming INCB missions

- **July - September 2011**
Afghanistan and Denmark

communicable diseases, to be held in September 2011.

Accompanied by Deputy Secretary Pavel Pachta, the President of INCB also addressed Ministers of Health from the WHO African region and held a series of consultations with officials of WHO, Governments and non-governmental organizations.

INCB participates in a meeting on international precursor control in the Republic of Korea

The Precursors Control Section of INCB was invited to give a keynote presentation at the twenty-first Anti-Drug Liaison Officials' Meeting for International Cooperation, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, in May 2011, highlighting the current global precursor chemical situation, identifying emerging trends in chemical diversion and smuggling, and outlining accomplishments under the various special operations developed under Project Cohesion and Project Prism, two initiatives launched by the Board. The meeting was attended by representatives of twenty-three Governments and five international agencies

(the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Colombo Plan, INCB, UNODC and the World Customs Organization).

In his address, the INCB representative presented the interim results of a special operation investigating derivatives of phenylacetic acid that are currently not under international control but are used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. So far under the operation, almost 200 tons of non-controlled substances have been reported as seized in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. As available evidence seems to suggest a shifting of the modus operandi of chemical traffickers, the facilitation and rapid dissemination of intelligence by INCB to the various regulatory and law enforcement agencies taking part in this special operation has been of key importance.

The INCB secretariat serves as the focal point of the United Nations for facilitating the efforts of Governments to combat diversion of precursor chemicals and illicit drug manufacture.



The 21st Anti-Drug Liaison Officials' Meeting for International Cooperation, May 2011, Republic of Korea

Launch of the *World Drug Report 2011* in London and New York

UNODC launched the *World Drug Report 2011* in June in connection with the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Launched simultaneously in London and New York, the report highlights worldwide trends and developments in the production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs.

The launch by Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC in New York was attended by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; General Assembly President Joseph Deiss; and Viktor Ivanov, Director of the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation.

According to the *World Drug Report 2011* (www.unodc.org/wdr), there has been an increase in the global abuse of prescription opioid drugs and new synthetic drugs, while global markets for cocaine, heroin and cannabis have declined or remained stable.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (centre) with Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC (left), and Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly (right)

In particular, abuse of certain substances not yet under international control, such as piperazine, has increased markedly, as has the abuse of synthetic cannabinoids, marketed under brand names such as "Spice".

The Executive Director of UNODC stressed the principle of "shared responsibility" and the need to build national,

regional and international efforts as part of a comprehensive strategy on illicit drug cultivation and illicit drug production and trafficking. He underlined the importance and relevance of the 1961 Convention, the fiftieth anniversary of which was being celebrated in 2011, as the keystone of the international drug control system.

President of the International Narcotics Control Board briefs Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York

The President of INCB, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, gave a briefing on the status of international drug control to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York on 19 April 2011. During the briefing, the President explained the mandate and functions of INCB and discussed its recent findings presented in its annual report for 2010.

The President highlighted the concern of INCB about drug-related corruption and its impact on drug control efforts, which was the topic of chapter I of its annual report for 2010, and encouraged Governments to implement the recommendations of the Board to combat

drug-related corruption. Such measures included putting in place procedures for disclosing conflicts of interest, publicizing judicial proceedings and decisions, and nurturing international cooperation.

The briefing concluded with a discussion on the availability of drugs for licit purposes. Drawing attention to the disparities in access to internationally controlled drugs for the treatment of pain and suffering, Prof. Ghodse called on Member States to help identify barriers to access, collect data on licit drug requirements, educate relevant personnel and prevent diversion and abuse.

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)

Secretary of INCB leaves to take up new position as Director of UNICRI

After serving as the Secretary of INCB and chief of its secretariat for more than a year, Jonathan Lucas left INCB in May 2011 to take up the position of Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in Turin, Italy.

Mr. Lucas was appointed Secretary of INCB by the Secretary-General on 1 February 2010 after having served as UNODC Representative at Regional Office for Southern Africa in Pretoria. He began his international career in 1982 at the International

Labour Organization and joined the United Nations Secretariat in 1984.

During its 101st session, in May 2011, INCB thanked Mr. Lucas for his contribution to the work of the Board and wished him success in his new position.



UNICRI Headquarters, Turin, Italy

Until the post of Secretary of INCB is filled in the coming months, Pavel Pachta, Deputy Secretary of the Board, will act as Secretary of the Board and will be Officer-in-Charge of the secretariat.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed on 26 June to commemorate the efforts of the international community to monitor and combat illegal drug activity.

As reflected in the *World Drug Report 2011*, launched by UNODC just days earlier, on 23 June, drugs continue to pose serious public health and safety hazards worldwide. The link to organized crime is particularly troublesome and is the focus of

a task force recently established by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The task force will develop a strategy to incorporate the response of the United Nations to these two issues into all peacekeeping, peacebuilding, security, development and disarmament activities.

The Secretary-General stated: "In this way, the United Nations can integrate the fight against drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime into the global security and development

agenda. This year's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is an opportunity to highlight the importance of addressing these twin threats through the rule of law and the provision of health services."

In December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26 June each year as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, in order to express its commitment to pursuing a society free of drug abuse.

List of import and export authorization requirements for certain psychotropic substances - a useful tool for Governments

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 1985/15, 1987/30 and 1993/38, requested Governments to establish import and export authorization requirements for substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, in order to prevent their diversion from international trade into illicit channels. Most Governments have informed INCB that they apply the import authorization requirement in accordance with the

above resolutions. This information has been provided by INCB for many years to all Governments twice per year in a table showing the import authorization requirements applied by Governments to psychotropic substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the Convention.

To enhance the efficiency of the provision of information, INCB has recently decided to make the above-mentioned table available online on the secure

area of its website, which is accessible only to authorized Government officials. Governments which have not yet obtained access to the secure area of the INCB website are invited to do so by visiting (www.incb.org/incb/en/governmentssecurearea/index.html) and following the instructions under "To request an account". Governments are invited to review the information contained in the table and, if necessary, to inform the Board of any amendments.

Second expert group meeting on the development of an international electronic import and export authorization system

The second expert group meeting on the development of an international electronic import and export authorization system was convened by the INCB secretariat and the Information Technology Service of UNODC in Vienna from 23 to 27



May 2011. The meeting was attended by twenty-eight experts from sixteen countries, mostly senior officials from competent national authorities responsible for the issuance of import and export authorizations for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. Some participants took part in the discussions via telephone conference.

At the meeting, the primary and secondary requirements for the planned electronic system were identified and expert guidance was provided to the Information Technology Service in defining the technical requirements for the system. The results of the meeting will also facilitate the preparation of a realistic work programme and cost estimate for developing and maintaining an international electronic import and export authorization system for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

INCB's Narcotics Control and Estimates Section: its role in the implementation of the 1961 Convention

While the last issue of "Focus on international drug control" highlighted the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention, the current issue presents an overview of the operations of the technical section of the INCB secretariat in implementing that Convention.

The Narcotics Control and Estimates Section provides technical support to the Board in monitoring the implementation by States parties of the provisions of the 1961 Convention and that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol. Currently, a total of 119 narcotic drugs, including cannabis, cocaine, opium, morphine,

codeine and heroin, and synthetic drugs, such as methadone and pethidine, are controlled under the Convention.

The international control system for narcotic drugs, as established by the 1961 Convention, is aimed at two distinct but complementary goals:

- Ensuring that manufacture, trade in and use of narcotic drugs is limited exclusively to medical and scientific purposes
- Ensuring that narcotic drugs are available for medical and scientific requirements

To achieve these objectives, two global data collection and analysis systems have been established: the system of annual estimates for narcotic drugs and the system of annual statistical data on narcotic drugs.

The daily operation of these systems has been entrusted to the Narcotics Control and Estimates Section. A large part of the Section's work relates to communication with Governments, with more than 700 letters and facsimiles to individual countries and about 10 circular letters to all countries being sent out every year.

Estimates system

Under the 1961 Convention, States parties have to furnish their estimated annual requirements for narcotic drugs to INCB every year. When a country fails to do so, INCB will establish such estimates for the country concerned. Estimates that adequately reflect actual requirements of States parties are key

in preventing diversions of narcotic drugs into illicit channels while at the same time ensuring adequate availability for medical purposes. To support INCB in the administration of the estimates system, the Narcotics Control and Estimates Section identifies country estimates that appear to be too high

or too low and seeks clarification from the Governments concerned. The Section also manages the daily operations of the supplementary estimates system, which allows countries to adjust their estimates, as necessary, during the year for which they apply.

Statistical data system

Under the 1961 Convention, States parties have to furnish annual statistical data on the manufacture, consumption, utilization and stocks of narcotic drugs and quarterly data on international trade. The Narcotics Control and Estimates Section processes and analyses all data received, with a view to identifying possible imbalances between the total amounts available and total

amounts utilized in individual countries. The Section also identifies discrepancies in the amounts traded between countries. Since such imbalances and discrepancies often point to weaknesses in national drug control, the statistical data system is an indispensable tool for taking remedial action, as necessary.

The Narcotics Control and Estimates

Section undertakes a number of other activities as well, such as supporting an adequate balance between global supply of and demand for licit opiate raw materials, preventing the diversion of drugs through illegal Internet pharmacies, preventing the smuggling of drugs through mail and courier services and facilitating adequate availability of narcotic drugs for medical purposes.

Missions of the International Narcotics Control Board

Costa Rica

An INCB mission visited Costa Rica from 22 to 24 June 2011. The mission was conducted by Dr. Camilo Uribe Granja, member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the INCB secretariat. It was the first time since 1993 that an INCB mission had visited that country.

Costa Rica is party to the three main international drug control conventions. The purpose of the mission was to review the implementation of those conventions through national policy. Deliberations focused on the recent developments in drug trafficking and abuse in Costa Rica;

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 was also discussed. The mission met with senior officials from the ministries of health, foreign affairs and public security, as well as customs authorities and the judicial system. The mission included visits to a non-governmental organization that provides treatment, counselling and aftercare for drug-dependent patients, and to a pain treatment centre.



El Salvador

An INCB mission visited El Salvador on 27 and 28 June 2011. The mission was conducted by Amb. Jorge Montaña, member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the INCB secretariat. The previous mission of INCB to that country took place in 2006.

The aim of the mission was to review the national drug control policy in El Salvador and efforts to implement the three international drug control conventions, to which El Salvador is a party. The mission met with senior officials from the National Anti-Drug Commission; the Superior Council of Public Health; the

ministries of health, foreign affairs, justice and public security; and the Attorney-General and police and customs authorities. The delegation also visited a non-governmental organization specializing in drug abuse prevention and treatment and a pain treatment centre. The discussions concentrated on the recent developments in drug trafficking and abuse in El Salvador; measures taken to control narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and the chemicals needed for their illicit manufacture; demand reduction policies; and the availability of opiates for medical needs.



United States

The President of the Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, accompanied by then-Secretary of INCB, Jonathan Lucas, undertook a mission to the United States in April 2011. The previous mission of INCB to that country took place in 1998.

The mission reviewed the drug control situation in the United States and discussed the Government's experience in the implementation of the international drug control conventions, to which the United States is a party. The mission reviewed a number of specific issues, including the abuse of prescription drugs, the "medical" cannabis schemes in some states in the United States, measures to combat illegal Internet

pharmacies, drug trafficking and abuse, and the diversion of precursor chemicals.

The mission met with senior officials at the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Office of the Deputy Attorney-General at the United States Department of Justice, the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Bureau of International Organizations, the United States Department of State



and the Bureau of Specialized Prosecutions of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. The mission also held discussions at the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control and met with representatives of non-governmental organizations.

Zimbabwe

An INCB mission visited Zimbabwe from 30 May to 1 June 2011. The mission was conducted by Dr. Lochan Naidoo, member of the Board, who was accompanied by a member of the INCB secretariat. The previous mission of INCB to Zimbabwe took place in 2001.

The mission met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Health and Child Welfare, the Deputy Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Police and senior officials of the various ministries responsible for drug control issues. The mission also visited

the Mental Health Department of the Parirenyatwa Hospital in Harare and met with representatives of non-governmental organizations. The discussions focused on measures to improve the response to drug abuse and drug trafficking; coordination among the country's drug control bodies; monitoring of licit trade in and domestic distribution of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals; the Government's cooperation with INCB; and measures to improve availability of controlled substances for medical purposes.



Call for contributions

Readers are invited to submit comments and contributions:

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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.