

Task Force reconvened in October to discuss developments over the previous six months. Numerous special alerts were communicated by the Board in 2014, providing Project Ion focal points with relevant information for possible operational follow-up. As at 1 November 2014, more than 100 Governments and international agencies had established focal points to receive, disseminate and, where appropriate, act on such communications.

254. The United States, a significant market for new psychoactive substances, has been active in both emergency scheduling and supporting international efforts to stop trafficking in such substances. In May 2014, the Drug Enforcement Administration, along with numerous federal and international agencies, announced the results of phase II of Project Synergy, an ongoing special operation targeting the global market for new psychoactive substances. Phase II, which lasted five months, resulted in the arrest of 150 persons and the seizure of hundreds of thousands of retail packages containing new psychoactive substances, hundreds of kilograms of raw synthetic substances and more than \$20 million in cash and assets. Although many substances seized were not specifically prohibited under domestic legislation, the Controlled Substance Analogue Enforcement Act allowed many of them to be treated as controlled substances if they were proven to be chemically and pharmacologically similar to controlled substances.

255. In June 2014, WHO convened the thirty-sixth meeting of its Expert Committee on Drug Dependence to advise it on the scientific assessment of substances for possible international control. The Committee reviewed 26 non-scheduled substances, which included 4-methylmethcathinone (mephedrone) and other new psychoactive substances. To improve efficiencies in the review process, strategies for assessing chemically similar substances with similar properties were also discussed at the meeting.

256. According to the relevant provisions of the international drug control conventions, the recommendations of WHO on the scheduling of substances reviewed by its Expert Committee in 2014 will be transmitted for the consideration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-eighth session, to be held in March 2015.³⁹

5. International electronic import and export authorization system for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

257. Pursuant to the 1961 and 1971 Conventions, import and export authorizations are required for most narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. A well-functioning import and export authorization system is essential to enable drug control authorities to monitor international trade in those substances and to prevent their diversion.

258. As part of its endeavours to harness technological progress for the effective and efficient implementation of the import and export authorization regime for licit international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Board has spearheaded efforts to develop an electronic tool to facilitate and expedite the work of competent national authorities and to reduce the risks of diversion of those substances. The new tool, called the International Import and Export Authorization System (I2ES), is a web-based electronic system developed by the Board in cooperation with UNODC and with the support of Member States. The system will assist national drug control authorities in their daily work by functioning in a way that ensures full compliance with the requirements set out in the international drug control conventions and safeguards the data therein.

259. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its resolution 55/6 of 16 March 2012, encouraged Member States to provide the fullest possible financial and political support for developing, maintaining and administering an international electronic import and export authorization system, and invited Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary contributions for those purposes. Subsequently, in its resolution 56/7 of 15 March 2013, the Commission welcomed the voluntary financial contributions of a number of Member States to support the initial phase of development of the system, invited the secretariat of INCB to administer the system, in line with its mandate, and encouraged Member States to provide the fullest possible financial support for its administration, further development and maintenance.

260. In the report of INCB for 2013, the Board informed Governments of the progress made in the development of I2ES⁴⁰ and noted with appreciation the invaluable political and financial support provided by the international community to that effect.

³⁹See www.unodc.org/unodc/commissions/CND/Mandate_Functions/Mandate-and-Functions_Scheduling.html.

⁴⁰See E/INCB/2013/1, paras. 198-203.

261. A first prototype of I2ES was presented to Member States on the margins of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission, held in March 2013. In March 2014, the first operational version of the system was demonstrated to Member States during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission.

262. A second pilot phase, involving selected competent national authorities from all regions of the world, was to be conducted between November 2014 and January 2015. An assessment of the second pilot phase will be presented to Member States at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission. In March 2015, I2ES will be launched for use by competent national authorities.

263. I2ES is designed to complement, but not replace, existing national electronic systems. Specifically, it will serve as a platform for uploading and exchanging import and export authorizations between importing and exporting countries, and will be able to link with other national electronic systems so that Governments will not need to modify their own systems. For countries without national electronic systems, the new tool also allows them to generate and transmit import and export authorizations electronically and to download and print them as necessary.

264. A key feature of I2ES is the automatic checking of the quantity of a substance to be imported and/or exported against the latest estimate or assessment of requirements of the importing country for the narcotic drug or psychotropic substance in question, and to automatically display warning messages in cases involving excess imports or exports. Furthermore, the system provides an online endorsement function, which will allow the authorities of importing countries to verify the quantity of a shipment arriving in their territory, provide an endorsement confirming receipt of the shipment to the authorities of the exporting country as required by the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention, and alert in real time the competent authorities of the exporting country in all cases in which the quantity of a substance actually received in the importing country is smaller than the quantity authorized to be exported. All of those important features are designed to help Governments meet their obligations under the international drug control treaties and will enhance the monitoring of international trade in substances under international control and prevent their diversion.

265. In developing I2ES, the Board has ensured that the business rules underlying the system fully comply with the relevant provisions of the 1961 and 1971 Conventions regarding import and export authorizations and, in particular, that the format and content of those authorizations meet the requirements provided for in the conventions. At the same time, the system takes into account the needs of countries that do not yet have national electronic import and export authorization systems. It has been designed to be user-friendly and compatible with national systems to ensure the smooth exchange of data.

266. During the initial implementation phase, I2ES will enable Governments to meet their needs in respect of the running of the import and export authorization systems for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The modular structure of I2ES should permit the future development of additional modules, provided that sufficient funding becomes available. Of priority would be a module to enable automatic, secure communication between national electronic systems and I2ES so as to allow automated uploading to and downloading from I2ES for high-volume trade transactions. The I2ES software will be provided to Governments upon request and free of charge.

267. While it has been possible to successfully conclude the development phase of I2ES entirely out of extrabudgetary resources, further funding is required in order to enable the secretariat of INCB to administer the system in line with its mandate and in accordance with Commission resolutions 55/6 and 56/7, as well as for its maintenance and the possible future development of further modules.

268. The Board wishes to express its appreciation to all Governments that have provided suggestions and recommendations concerning the system. The Board is convinced that I2ES will succeed and be effective only through joint international efforts. Once in operation, it should bring long-term benefits to all Governments and to the international drug control system as a whole. The Board therefore invites all Governments to provide both political and financial support to this important initiative. Most importantly, the Board wishes to encourage all competent national authorities to consider utilizing I2ES as soon as possible. Only through its early and widespread utilization will Governments be able to fully benefit from the advantages that the system provides.