



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2014 Annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board discusses the need for a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach in addressing the world drug problem. Chapter I of this year's report calls on Governments to give due consideration to universally recognized principles of international law in their interpretation of the provisions of the international drug control treaties as well as in the implementation of the obligations incumbent upon them as States parties to these conventions. Accordingly, the Board encourages Governments to respect all relevant human rights norms in designing drug-related strategies and policies, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in order to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances, and to ensure that national and international drug control strategies and policies take into consideration the principle of the best interests of the child.



In the foreword to the Annual Report, I also draw attention to our view that “while the determination of specific sanctions applicable to drug-related offences remains the prerogative of States, the Board again encourages those States which retain and continue to impose the death penalty for drug-related offences to consider abolishing the death penalty for such offences.”

The Report also analyses socioeconomic, sociocultural, security and stability factors and warns that efforts to reduce the demand for, and supply of, illicit drugs could be futile if the relevant socioeconomic factors that function as drivers of the drug problem are not addressed in an effective and sustainable manner by Governments.

The Board is encouraged that multilateral drug control has yielded positive results, and today most States in the world are parties to the international drug control treaties, contributing their share towards the goal of the United Nations legal framework on drugs, namely to safeguard the health and welfare of humankind. To pretend, however, that challenges do not exist would be to deny reality. In order to address these challenges, the Board has called for the inclusion of demand reduction interventions into the strategies and action plans of Governments. Overall, when Governments consider their future drug control policies, the long-term health and welfare of their populations should be their primary consideration.

In the pursuit of its mandate, the Board has also consistently called on Governments to make the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes a public health priority and to provide treatment to drug addicts based on sound medical practice. Indeed, the Board was among the first international bodies to draw attention to major discrepancies in the availability of such drugs around the world. Despite the progress made in some countries and



regions, approximately three quarters of the world population still live in countries with inadequate or non-existent access to medicines containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. As the Report points out, this problem has been exacerbated in the period under review by natural disasters and armed conflict having occurred, which have increased the need for controlled substances to treat the wounded and sick while further complicating efforts to get these substances to those who require them. We draw attention to the measures available to Governments to tackle the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in emergency situations in a special topic in chapter II.

Another focal area for INCB is the control of precursor chemicals. Shifts in the sourcing of chemicals, the emergence of designer precursors and more complex trafficking patterns necessitate the fine-tuning of the system. The Board's 2014 report on precursors contributes to this process by providing a review and assessment of the effectiveness and challenges of international precursor control.

One of the basic principles underlying the international drug control system is the limitation of the use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to medical and scientific purposes. While the choice of measures to implement treaty obligations is the prerogative of States parties, such measures must respect both the letter and the spirit of the international legal norms. There are no simple or unilateral solutions, outside the boundaries of the international control framework, available to Governments to address the complexities of the drug problem.

From 9 to 12 March 2015, Governments will hold a special segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, to be held in 2016. The Board stands ready to engage with the international community and thus to contribute to shaping the architecture of the post-2016 international drug control system through its functions as mandated by the international drug control treaties. International drug control is a complex undertaking which requires a multi-dimensional approach. Governments should continue to base their actions on the drug control treaties and remain engaged in a constructive, frank and forward-looking dialogue to tackle international drug control in a comprehensive, sustained and concerted manner.

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President

International Narcotics Control Board