

Chapter IV.

Recommendations to Governments, the United Nations and other relevant international and national organizations

762. The following paragraphs contain the most significant observations contained in the present report and a number of related recommendations. The Board invites Governments and international organizations to provide it with any feedback and information they consider relevant regarding their achievements and difficulties in implementing these recommendations and the recommendations of previous years in fulfilling their obligations under the international drug control treaties.

Health and welfare as the main objectives of the international drug control treaties

Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem

763. States parties have made important strides towards implementing more cohesive and coherent drug control strategies as envisioned in the Conventions. However, the evolving nature of the complex social problem of drug abuse, drug trafficking and illicit drug cultivation and production requires that Governments be cognizant of the challenges and opportunities facing them. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 is a timely opportunity to review drug control policies and practices grounded in evidence and science and based upon the principle of shared responsibility and a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach. The international drug control system should

promote the application of scientific knowledge, respect for human rights and the principle of proportionality in dealing with the set of problems related to drugs. Legalization of the use of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for non-medical purposes is not an adequate response to the existing challenges.

Recommendation 1: INCB recommends that States approach the review to be undertaken through the special session of the General Assembly with the goal of reinforcing best practices, while modifying measures that have not worked and expanding the options used to cope with new drugs, social developments, the use of the Internet for illicit purposes and money-laundering.

764. Strong communities with rich economic potential are more capable of withstanding the corrupting influence of illicit crop cultivation or drug dealing. Poverty reduction measures within a framework for sustainable development that give farmers an economically viable, legal alternative to growing illicit crops are of fundamental importance for the success of the efforts to reduce illicit cultivation.

Recommendation 2: States should promote alternative livelihood programmes in order to support communities and provide farmers engaged in illicit drug crop cultivation with licit and sustainable income-generating activities that can reduce and eliminate their dependency on income from that illicit crop cultivation. Such programmes include, inter alia, services related to health, education, infrastructure, community development and security.

Demand reduction

765. States are reminded of their obligation to implement effective drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

Recommendation 3: Prevention of substance abuse in society at large, particularly among the youth, should remain the prime objective of government action. Such action is not limited to drug-specific policies: anything that strengthens social cohesion and individuals' capacity for self-determination and resilience can reduce the prevalence of drug abuse. Reducing the adverse health and social consequences of drug abuse is an essential element of a comprehensive demand reduction strategy. States should provide effective and humane assistance to people affected by drug abuse, including both medically appropriate and evidence-based treatment. States should ensure that sanctions for drug-related criminal offences are proportionate and, where such offences are committed by drug users, consider alternatives to conviction and punishment as provided for in the treaties, such as treatment, education, after-care, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Availability

766. The international drug control system, as established by the conventions and built upon in the relevant political declarations, provides a comprehensive framework for ensuring the proper provision of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to reduce pain and suffering while preventing their diversion into illicit use. However, about 75 per cent of the world population still has limited or no access to proper pain relief treatment. The supplement to the present report, *Availability of Internationally Controlled Drugs: Ensuring Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes*, demonstrates that the availability of internationally controlled drugs can be—and has been—improved within the framework of the international conventions.

Recommendation 4: Striking a balance between overprescribing and underprescribing requires continuous study and an ongoing review of policies. Drug abuse should and will remain a concern for society as a whole, including those in the medical profession and public health officials. Adequate access to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes can be improved through corrective action by States that should address the regulatory, attitudinal, knowledge-related, economic and procurement-related aspects identified as the causes of inadequate availability. The Board urges Member States

to implement the recommendations made in the above-mentioned supplementary report on the availability of internationally controlled drugs.

International Import and Export Authorization System

767. As part of its endeavours to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the import and export authorization system for licit international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Board developed the International Import and Export Authorization System (I2ES). I2ES is an electronic platform that allows Governments to electronically generate import and export authorizations for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, to exchange those authorizations in real time and to instantly verify the legitimacy of individual transactions while ensuring full compliance with the requirements of the conventions. The system significantly reduces the risk of drug consignments being diverted into illicit channels.

Recommendation 5: The Board urges all competent national authorities that have not yet done so to register and start using I2ES as soon as possible, as only through its widespread application will Governments be able to avail themselves of all the advantages that the tool can provide. The Board reiterates the call made to Member States by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its resolution 58/10, to provide the fullest possible financial support to enable the secretariat of the Board to continue administering and monitoring the System.

Psychotropic substances

768. The status of control in some countries for many psychotropic substances included in Schedules II, III and IV of the 1971 Convention remains unknown.

Recommendation 6: The Board reiterates its call for Governments to review their laws and regulations to verify that they are fully in line with all the relevant provisions of the 1971 Convention and relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council. The Board reminds the Governments concerned of the treaty requirement of issuing import/export authorizations for Schedule II substances, and calls on them to submit the missing information regarding their national control over Schedules III and IV substances, in particular in view of the recent scheduling of six new substances and the change in the

scope of control of GHB, which was transferred from Schedule IV to Schedule II of the Convention in 2013.⁴⁴

769. The widespread prescription of benzodiazepines and unwarranted treatment, particularly among older people, with sedative-hypnotics and anxiolytics carries the risk of overuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing those substances and the resulting adverse and toxic reactions.

Recommendation 7: The Board calls on all Governments to remain vigilant to the consequences of misuse and overuse of benzodiazepines, particularly among older patients. Governments are urged to closely monitor the consumption levels of benzodiazepines and ensure that they are prescribed in accordance with sound medical practices and in line with the rational use of psychoactive drugs.

Precursors

770. Since the entry into force of the 1988 Convention, States have succeeded in substantively reducing the diversion of scheduled substances from international trade into illicit drug manufacture. To further support the monitoring of the licit trade in precursor chemicals and to prevent their diversion into illicit channels, INCB has developed electronic tools such as Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) and the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS).

Recommendation 8: All Governments are urged to make use of PEN Online and PICS to improve monitoring of the international trade in precursors and to exchange intelligence on related illicit activities in real time.

771. Insufficient attention has been given to national controls and the monitoring of domestic movements and the end use of precursor chemicals. Further challenges today are the emergence of non-scheduled substitute chemicals, including “designer precursors”, and the increase in the sophistication, diversification and scale of illicit synthetic drug manufacturing operations. States have a shared responsibility to adopt a forward-looking strategy that addresses the limitations of the existing system, mainly in relation to non-scheduled chemicals.

Recommendation 9: In view of new developments, Governments should take the following set of actions:

(a) Use the opportunity provided by the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug

problem to reconfirm the importance of precursor control as a preventive component in a balanced drug control strategy;

(b) Make industry a critical partner in the prevention of chemical diversion and formalize the commitment to such partnerships;

(c) Review the effectiveness of national regulatory control systems and work to close any gaps in those domestic systems;

(d) Ensure that law enforcement authorities investigate seizures, stopped shipments and attempted diversions in order to identify the sources of diversion and the criminal organizations behind those activities, and share their findings globally to prevent future diversions using similar *modi operandi*.

New psychoactive substances

772. INCB notes the cooperation between WHO and UNODC to establish criteria for prioritizing new psychoactive substances that should be the subject of scrutiny for possible review and consideration for possible international control. In addition to scheduling at the international level, countries continue to bring new psychoactive substances under national control. New psychoactive substances have also been the subject of an increasing number of meetings and conferences worldwide; however, effective strategies are still forthcoming. The challenges posed by those substances and the diversification of the abuse market continue to grow, with a rising number of reports about new psychoactive substances as the cause of hospital emergency admissions and deaths.

Recommendation 10: INCB encourages all Governments to build on relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, regional experiences and the experiences of individual Member States, and use the upcoming special session of the General Assembly to explore and devise regulatory, practical and realistic measures to protect individuals and the public at large from the harmful effects of new psychoactive substances. INCB also urges all Governments to make full use of the global focal point network Project Ion and the related incident communication platform (IONICS), which support operational cooperation among Governments with a view to preventing new psychoactive substances from reaching markets of drug abuse. INCB also reiterates the importance of primary prevention in addressing the challenge posed by new psychoactive substances.

⁴⁴ Commission on Narcotic Drugs decision 56/1.

Promoting the consistent application of the international drug control treaties

773. Africa continues to be one of the world's major drug trafficking hubs. While West Africa has traditionally been used to traffic drugs, such as cocaine, to Europe, the subregion has also been identified as a source of amphetamine-type stimulants. Furthermore, East Africa's prominence as a transit region for Afghan heroin has increased. Recent developments on the continent have also included a rise in domestic drug abuse in some countries, particularly among youth.

Recommendation 11: The Board requests Governments to enhance regional cooperation and the sharing of information in an effort to target established and emerging trafficking routes, bolster security throughout the region and combat the rise of drug abuse.

774. The rates of intravenous drug abuse in Eastern Europe have not abated and now stand at almost five times the global average. According to UNAIDS, one third of global population infected with AIDS who contracted the virus due to injecting drug use reside in that subregion.

Recommendation 12: The Board recommends the implementation by Governments in the region of prevention mechanisms to dissuade individuals from engaging in intravenous drug abuse. Treatment facilities for sufferers of drug-related diseases should also be provided, in addition to comprehensive rehabilitation programmes designed to facilitate the cessation of drug abuse, recovery and the social reintegration of drug abusers into society.

775. The Board notes the measures taken by Afghanistan concerning regional and international cooperation in an attempt to address the drug-related threats facing the country. The Government has also committed to implementing initiatives such as alternative livelihood programmes. Although, according to the latest UNODC opium poppy survey, the area of illicit cultivation in 2015 was the lowest since 2001, the Board expresses its continuing concern about illicit opium poppy cultivation, drug production and drug trafficking in the country, including the situation with respect to the illicit cultivation of cannabis in the country.

Recommendation 13: INCB calls on the Government of Afghanistan to continue its efforts to tackle illicit drug crop cultivation and the illicit production and manufacture of drugs and for the interdiction of drug trafficking and increased prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, social

reintegration and recovery from drug abuse. INCB recommends that international partners continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan in this regard.

776. A worrying trend has emerged in North America regarding the number of people who have developed opioid dependencies, often following prescribed courses of treatment with opioid analgesics. Such dependency has resulted in both the abuse of prescription opioids and other narcotic drugs such as heroin. The result has been a high loss of life in the region due to overdoses.

Recommendation 14: The Board urges Governments to ensure the training of prescribers and dispensers of narcotic drugs in best practices for the prescribing and dispensing of, in particular, opioid-based analgesics.

777. The South American continent accounts for almost all the world's illicit cultivation of coca bush. Both Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru registered decreases in the size of the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in 2014. In contrast, Colombia had a 44 per cent year-on-year area increase in coca bush cultivation in 2014.

Recommendation 15: The Board urges the Governments of the Andean region to increase their sharing of information and best practices to tackle and reduce illicit drug crop cultivation. Colombian authorities should look at ways to reverse the trend in the country, and both Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru should ensure the continuation of the decreasing trend of area under illicit coca bush cultivation.

778. The 1961 Convention establishes that the parties to the Convention shall take such legislative and administrative measures as may be necessary to give effect to and carry out the provisions of the Convention and to limit exclusively to medical and scientific purposes the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution of, trade in, use and possession of controlled narcotic drugs. Likewise, the 1971 Convention requires States parties to adopt such legislative and administrative measures as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of the Convention within their respective territories and to cooperate with other States and international organizations in the execution of the aims of the Convention.

Recommendation 16: The Board stresses the importance of the universal adherence to the international drug control treaties and urges all Governments to carefully review the implementation of their respective obligations under the international drug control treaties and to

ensure that domestic legislation does not contravene the provisions of the international conventions to which they are parties. The Board will continue to monitor

developments and looks forward to continuing its dialogue with all authorities on matters related to the implementation of the drug control conventions.

(Signed)
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