

Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: +43-1-26060, Telefax: +43-1-26060-5867 / 5868
E-Mail: secretariat@incb.org Internet Address: <http://www.incb.org/>

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**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD
STATEMENT BY DR. LOCHAN NAIDOO,
PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD**

**Fifty-eighth session of the International Commission on Narcotic Drugs
(9-17 March 2015)**

Agenda Item 6 (c):

**Implementation of the International Drug Control Treaties:
International Narcotics Control Board**

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Bureau, and Special Board Members guiding UNGASS preparations, on the successful conclusion of the special segment of this session of the CND, which I was privileged to contribute to on Monday and as a panellist in an interactive discussion. One matter that comes clearly to mind from the last four days is the need for Member States to reassert and recommit to the principle of shared and collective responsibility in international drug control, which is fundamental to all international treaty matters and international cooperation.

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to present to you the International Narcotics Control Board's [Annual Report for 2014](#) and the [2014 Report on Precursor Chemicals](#). These Reports are accompanied by two [technical publications on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances](#).

This year's reports mark the 46th year of Board's analysis into the world's drug control situation. In 1964, the entry into force of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the establishment of the Board signalled a unified and determined collaboration of UN Member States to monitor global drug flows. This, and subsequent conventions were drafted with two mandated purposes and one underlying principle; to protect populations from the dangers of drug abuse and trafficking, to support States in ensuring the availability of controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for scientific and medical use, in order that UN Member States may work together to collaboratively promote the 'health and welfare of humankind'.

Today, the Board works closely with Member States in pursuit of the same principle. Yet success depends on striking a fine balance; balancing availability with control, ideological divergences with cooperation, and established policies with new approaches.

This year's report focusses on '[implementing a comprehensive integrated and balanced approach to addressing the world drug problem](#)'. Drawing guidance from Article 38 of the 1961 Single Convention, the Board urges Member States to employ a 'multidisciplinary approach' when elaborating and implementing national and international drug control policy. At all times, States should work to guarantee *adequate access* to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. Secondly, as part of a comprehensive approach, *emphasis* in drug control policy and legislation should be placed on demand reduction. And thirdly, States should work *collaboratively* to ensure drug control policies are pursued in a manner consistent with international human rights standards.

This year's Report points out that, as we speak, roughly three quarters of the world's population is suffering from inadequate or non-existent access to medicines containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Ensuring the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes continues to be a priority for the Board. I will say a few words on this topic later under item 6(d). The Board works with States, the World Health Organisation and other stakeholders to determine how best to ensure adequate availability of controlled substances to treat the sick and wounded, particularly to populations in remote locations, or those affected by emergency situations, including armed conflict and natural disasters. This year, [this issue is highlighted as a Special Topic](#) of interest to Member States in [Chapter II](#).

Alongside ensuring adequate availability, this year's report draws attention to Member States' obligations under international drug control treaty law to reduce illicit demand for drugs. In addressing national drug problems, the Board encourages States to collaborate and share good practices when elaborating policy on prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and social integration.

Over four decades of global drug control analysis, the Board has borne witness to socio-economic drivers of drug dependence, which cut across national, cultural and generational divides. In all parts of the world, populations are affected by poverty, food insecurity, economic inequality, social exclusion, deprivation, displacement, shortages of educational and recreational facilities, limited employment prospects, poor parental engagement during early childhood and exposure to violence and abuse. These factors play into both the demand and supply sides of illicit drug abuse, driving both drug dependence and illicit trafficking, and require an integrated, holistic and balanced response from States.

In my [foreword to this year's report](#), I highlight Member States' responsibilities under Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In order that governments can protect children from the illicit use of drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances, they must place the 'best interests of the child' at the heart of drug control policymaking and legislation.

In addition, I re-affirm [the Board's established view](#), that 'while the determination of specific sanctions applicable to drug-related offences remains the prerogative of States, the Board... 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’.

Mr Chair,

In the lead-up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session 2016, it is imperative that all Member States participate in the United Nations international drug control system. The success of the ‘**comprehensive integrated and balanced approach**’ to effectively address the world drug problem rests upon universal adoption, participation and implementation. On this note, I would like to congratulate Timor-Leste on its ratification of the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and Afghanistan, one of this year’s Member States ‘in focus’, on its recent accession to the 1972 Protocol to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. Afghanistan’s accession consolidates years of positive steps taken by the State to strengthen control of the licit movement of scheduled substances, improve treaty-mandated reporting, and participate in international precursor control mechanisms.

Nevertheless, much work lies ahead for the Afghan government in implementing the provisions of the Single Convention. This year, our Annual Report highlights **Afghanistan** as a country of ‘grave concern’. The country remains the world’s largest supplier of illicit opium poppy, accounting for over 80% of global production, with many of the country’s provinces actively involved in cultivation of this controlled substance. Whilst the Board warmly welcomes Afghanistan’s renewed commitment to the international drug control treaty system, we encourage the international community to align in providing sustainable assistance to Afghanistan to reduce illicit cultivation, redouble efforts in demand reduction, and to work toward ensuring human rights norms, stability and security there.

Turning now to **Uruguay**, which remains the only State party to the 1961 Single Convention, which has legalised the production, distribution, sale and consumption of cannabis and its derivatives for purposes other than medical and scientific use. This State-regulated market, established by national legislation passed in December 2013, is in breach of Article 4(c) of the 1961 Convention, as well as the 1988 Convention, Article 3, Paragraph 1(a).

The Board will continue its on-going dialogue with the government of Uruguay, and looks forward to promoting international cooperation and compliance with United Nations drug control treaties.

Now turning to the **United States of America**. As of this year, medical cannabis programmes have been introduced in twenty-three states. The Board notes that many state-run programmes do not meet the legal requirements of the 1961 Single Convention or the requirements of United States federal law. [Chapter II of our Annual Report discusses in detail the control measures applicable to medical cannabis programmes.](#)

Further to this, the Board notes that four states and one federal territory have regulated or ‘legalised’ the consumption of cannabis for non-medical purposes. The Board stresses that these initiatives are not in conformity with United Nations

international drug control treaties, which limit the production, manufacture, import, export, distribution of, trade in, use and possession of scheduled substances exclusively to medical and scientific purposes. The Board will continue to consult with the United States government on issues of implementing international drug control standards across its entire territory.

Mr Chair,

Now turning to Chapter II of the Annual Report, I'd like to draw your attention to the [Special Topics](#) highlighted by the Board; [increased abuse of methylphenidate](#), the dangers of '[new psychoactive substances](#)', the related Project Ion and [I2ES](#), new initiatives launched by the Board this year to assist Member States governments in reducing the illicit manufacture, production, shipping and trafficking of scheduled and non-scheduled substances.

This year, special focus was given to a rise in abuse of [methylphenidate](#), a stimulant primarily used in preparations for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and included under Schedule II of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Our report notes a marked increase in consumption of this substance, and recommends that States closely monitor developments in diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, prescriptions of methylphenidate, and ensure that prescription practice meets the highest standards of medical practice, as set out in the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

This year's report also noted the continued prevalence of '[new psychoactive substances](#)', or 'NPS' which pose a serious threat to public health. This year, the Board recognised a significant increase in demand and abuse of these substances, as data shows that this year, the number of new psychoactive substances reported to the UNODC have increased 53% on last year's figures.

In response to this threat and at the requests of governments and recent Commission on Narcotic Drugs' resolutions, the Board launched '[Project Ion](#)', a new international operational initiative. This system provides digital infrastructure for real-time intelligence sharing on NPS, as well as follow-up between authorities of concerned countries. This technology has been developed with a view to assisting in investigations and devising solutions to prevent new psychoactive substances from reaching the consumer (or in other terms, the abuse) market. Project Ion is overseen by a dedicated Task Force, and a Member State New Psychoactive Substance Focal Point Network, which ensures the timely exchange of strategic and operational information on suspicious manufacture, production, shipping or trafficking in NPS.

This global communication platform is known as the [Project Ion Incident Communication System](#), or **IONICS**. As of the end of February 2015, more than one hundred and ten governments and seven regional and international agencies have provided at least one Project Ion Focal Point, whilst IONICS has over 135 registered users. In its first two months of use, the total quantity of new psychoactive substances seized in incidents communicated through IONICS stands at over 375 kilos. The larger aim of both the Project Ion and IONICS operations is to identify key suppliers and distributors in order to disrupt shipments and dismantle trafficking operations in NPS.

Also as of this year, the Board has launched [I2ES](#), an international electronic platform monitoring imports and export of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. I2ES is designed to complement national systems. Two unique features of I2ES are its automated checking of substance quantities, and automated warning mechanisms. In the event of substances exceeding or not reaching authorized quantities, both importing and exporting countries are automatically and immediately alerted.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, for their generous support in developing this system. I would also like to express my gratitude to the many more countries from all regions of the world who participated in the two pilot testing stages, contributing their ideas, knowledge, expertise and valuable feedback. I would like to encourage all Member States to support Draft Resolution [L.12](#), on 'Promoting the use of the electronic import and export authorization system for licit international trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances'. Similarly, I strongly encourage all Member States to register and participate in I2ES, to maximize the mutual benefit of this new international electronic platform, which is provided free of cost. As the product of two CND resolutions, I would like to take this opportunity to *formally launch* I2ES, and to invite all Member States to take part in the hand-on demonstrations of the new system (held by the INCB and UNODC ITS in room M024) throughout this CND session.

Mr Chair,

This year the Board conducted country missions on three continents, providing an essential component of our on-going dialogue with Member States. I would like to express my gratitude to the governments of Iceland, Nicaragua, Panama and the United Republic of Tanzania for their cooperation, and would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Member States to continue to support the Board in the conduct of its missions. As in previous years, the Board's analysis of the world drug situation, organised region by region, is found in [Chapter III](#) of the Annual Report.

The regional analyses in this Chapter rely on the data presented to the Board over the preceding year. For this reason, I would like to encourage all Member States to share up-to-date and comprehensive information as early as possible with the Board on developments in national and sub-national drug control policies, law and initiatives, in order that this information can be reflected in the Board's Reports.

Our Annual Report for 2014 concludes with a [series of recommendations](#). Particularly in the lead up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in 2016, I urge governments to absorb these recommendations into national and international policymaking.

Moving on to the Board's [Report on Precursor Chemicals](#), I would like to begin by highlighting that the 20th December 2013 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In the intervening years, there have been significant

reductions in diversions of international licit trade, largely as a result of enhanced communication between the authorities of exporting and importing countries through the PEN Online system. In practice, during seizures of international shipments, early communication of the seizure details, modus operandi and other relevant information, has assisted law enforcement in other nations to address similar incidents in their own territories.

At the same time, States face new technological and economic challenges, which differ widely to those faced by Member States twenty-five years ago when the 1988 Convention was negotiated. In order to address these challenges, and keep the Precursors control system relevant for the challenges of 2019 and beyond (2019 being the target date of the Political Declaration), international efforts need to innovate further than the mechanistic introduction and implementation of regulatory measures. The Board considers it critical that more emphasis be placed on voluntary measures, cooperation with a range of industries, on domestic controls, and on international collaboration in investigating the points of, and trafficking organisations behind, diversions.

The tools to achieve these ends are available, such as the Board's 'Guidelines for a voluntary code of practice for the chemical industry', the PEN Online system for the monitoring of legitimate international trade and PICS, the communication platform for seizures and other precursor trafficking incidents, in addition to the valuable experiences gained from relevant regional and national initiatives. The Board is committed to working in close partnership with Governments to support their efforts addressing these challenges.

Finally, regarding Precursors, it is worth mentioning that a significant part of the Board's activities since the 1988 Convention have been funded by extra-budgetary resources. This applies specifically to the practical operational aspects under [Project Prism and Cohesion, PICS, and PEN Online](#), the Board's international operational initiative Project Ion aimed at preventing NPS from reaching consumer markets, and the related communication platform, IONICS. I would like to again reiterate my sincere thanks to the donors for their generous and continuing support over the years.

Now, more than ever, Member States have the opportunity to formulate and put into practice a '**comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach**' to resolving the world drug problem. In the wake of international conflicts, natural disasters and emergency situations, as well as in times of peace, governments are encouraged to take measures to ensure adequate availability of controlled substances to their populations. At the same time, Member States are encouraged by the Board to work together to reduce demand for drugs globally, by tackling the many intersecting socio-economic determinants of illicit demand, as well as supply-side drivers. The Board will continue to work with governments to improve current initiatives, and to develop new online tools to facilitate greater control of the international import and export of scheduled substances. Finally, and crucially, the Board reaffirms its support of human rights standards in the development and implementation of international drug control law and policy. On a shared foundation of respect for human rights, concern for the 'health and welfare of humankind', Member States in preparations for 2016 have an opportunity to address the roots of

the world drug problem, promote compliance with international treaty law, and devise 'comprehensive, integrated and balanced' solutions.

In closing, I thank you for your attention.
