

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

As delivered

**Statement by Mr. Cornelis P. de Joncheere, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
Sixty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs:
Item 5(c): International Narcotics Control Board
13 April 2021**

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to report to you today on the work of the International Narcotics Control Board. A full version of my statement will be available on the INCB website.

The 2020 INCB Annual Report thematic chapter is on the hidden epidemic of drug use among older people.

Older people with substance use issues can be divided into two groups: “early-onset” users and “late-onset” users who began using drugs later in life. The reasons for developing drug dependencies are complex and are shaped by life experiences. Substance use disorders can also be developed through over-prescription of pain medication - and the opioid epidemic is a clear example - or misuse of prescribed medicines, for example benzodiazepines.

Three areas need to be addressed: improving research and data collection, combating stigma, and providing age-appropriate care.

We provide an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on availability of internationally controlled substances and on illicit drug activity. We draw attention to the disruption in the delivery of treatment services and controlled medicines for patients with Covid, and also for people with mental health conditions and people with substance use disorders.

In addition, we highlight the work being done by INCB to support governments with their national policies through INCB Learning, the International Import and Export Authorization System (I2ES), and the Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances (GRIDS) Programme.

In the report, the Board expresses its concern over the developments in a number of countries that have legalized the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes.

The Board also reiterates its concern over serious human rights violations, committed in purported pursuit of drug control objectives. These violations contravene internationally recognized human rights standards and are inconsistent with the obligations of Governments under the three international drug control conventions.

I urge your Governments to implement the recommendations contained in the Annual Report. I also urge NGOs to take our recommendations into consideration.

The Precursor's report for 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the 1988 Convention.

Seizures of precursors under international control remain fairly stable. Diversion from legitimate international trade has decreased due to the increased use of the INCB PEN Online

system and investigations have benefited from the use of the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS).

At the same time, there is an urgent need for global joint action to address the use of designer precursors, pre-precursors and non-scheduled chemicals. We hope that this session of the Commission will see further progress on this critical issue - INCB stands ready to support Member States in addressing this challenge.

Increased focus on domestic controls will help limit attempts by traffickers to target legitimate chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers to obtain chemicals for illicit purposes.

The recommendations in the Precursors report include the need for full utilization of the provisions of article 12 of the 1988 Convention and use of the “international special surveillance list”.

INCB also recommends use of article 13 of the 1988 Convention – and the INCB Guidelines - to prevent trade in and diversion of materials and equipment, and this will help reduce the possibilities for illicit manufacture.

In addition to the Annual Report, INCB has published a supplement reviewing the achievements of the 1961 and 1971 conventions and highlighting challenges. I presented this during the opening segment.

Today, the Board is also launching the 2020 INCB Technical Reports on narcotic drugs and on psychotropic substances, available on the INCB website. These contain summaries of developments of the past 60 and 50 years of control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, together with global data on licit production, manufacturing, trade and consumption under the two conventions.

INCB is committed to continue to support Member States in the implementation of the three international drug control conventions in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced way in line with our joint commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

Thank you.

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