

Check against delivery

**Statement by Ms. Jagjit Pavadia, President,
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
Sixty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,
Item 5 (c): International Narcotics Control Board**

15 March 2023

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to present the INCB Annual Report and Precursors Report for 2022¹.

INCB has also published a supplementary report on availability², which I will present under item 5 (d).

The Annual Report analyses the trend to legalize the non-medical use of cannabis in a limited number of States. INCB notes this trend with great concern, in light of the treaties which limit the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes.

Legalization is leading to increased consumption. The expanding cannabis industry is marketing edibles and vaping products to appeal to young people, contributing to trivialization of cannabis use. Perceptions of harm are declining, despite related health concerns.

The 1961 Convention classifies cannabis as highly addictive and liable to abuse under Schedule I. States parties need to remain within the consensus established by the majority of the members of CND.

The convention-based system offers significant flexibility to protect young people, improve public health, avoid unnecessary incarceration and address illicit

¹ *The Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2022 (E/INCB/2022/1); Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2022 on the Implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (E/INCB/2022/4)*

² *No Patient Left Behind: Progress in Ensuring Adequate Access to Internationally Controlled Substances for Medical and Scientific Purposes (E/INCB/2022/1/Supp.1);*

markets and related criminality. Key to this are proportionality, improved education, prevention and treatment, and addressing organized crime through social prevention and law enforcement. Alternative measures can be applied for drug-related crime of a minor nature or committed by people who use drugs.

The surge in illicit cocaine production and trafficking poses a growing threat to health and wellbeing. Secondary processing of cocaine is shifting to Europe, resulting in increased availability and higher purity. INCB urges Governments to take coordinated action to address underlying causes at each stage of the supply chain, including precursor control and private sector partnerships .

In 2022, INCB issued 7 global alerts and special notices related to emerging non-fentanyl opioids, which are increasingly misused. The WHO ECDD reviewed these opioids³, three of which were scheduled under schedule I of the 1961 Convention this morning.

INCB highlights the importance of mental health and the need to ensure the availability of internationally controlled substances, at the same time highlighting concerns about over-prescription and self-medication.

The report provides guidance on promoting equality and non-discrimination towards people who use drugs and in access to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes. Respect for human rights is essential in the design and delivery of drug policies founded upon human dignity and freedom from stigma.

INCB also provides guidance on electronic import and export authorizations and recommends use of the I2ES system. The responsibilities of transit countries in licit trade are clarified, including for shipments in free trade zones and free ports.

Our regional analysis shows how the drug overdose epidemic in Canada and the United States has worsened and that trafficking in fentanyl and other dangerous opioids is expanding to Oceania.

Many countries still lack mechanisms for gathering information on drug use and treatment demand, hindering efforts to develop targeted evidence-based prevention and treatment programmes.

³ Protonitazene, etonitazepine, etodesnitazene

The ongoing large-scale opium poppy cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan remains a significant concern. INCB calls upon the international community to continue supporting drug control efforts in the country to promote public health, including for women.

With regard to the humanitarian situations in Syria, Türkiye and Ukraine, INCB highlights that simplified procedures can be used to expedite the movement of internationally controlled substances to the affected areas.

I have already touched upon many of the issues addressed by INCB's recommendations in Chapter IV. I would like to recall that the fundamental goal of the conventions is to safeguard health and well-being. This includes full respect for human rights, including due process of law. All drug control policies should conform with international human rights obligations.

31 Parties to the 1988 Convention have already notified INCB of the national scheduling of the three fentanyl precursors⁴ included in Table I of the Convention by CND one year ago, and which entered into force on 23 November 2022.

INCB's 2022 Precursors Report shows that the world precursor situation has never been more complex.

Seizures of non-scheduled chemicals used in illicit manufacturing continues to be reported by an increased number of countries. INCB has been working with the international community on options to address this challenge, including mechanisms for scheduling entire groups of substances and supporting governments in partnerships with sectors of industry vulnerable to infiltration by traffickers.

With a view to protecting licit international trade, the successful approaches to precursor control can be expanded upon to the equipment and materials used in illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, through enhanced implementation of article 13 of the 1988 Convention.

In 2022, INCB published guidance⁵ for governments to address the diversion of non-scheduled chemicals and in implementing CND Resolution 65/3.

⁴ 4 AP1, 1-boc-4AP and norfentanyl

⁵ "Proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors: Options for Global Action"

We are committed to supporting Member States in full implementation of the conventions as agreed upon by the State parties. The conventions remain the cornerstone of the international drug control framework and the embodiment of the international community's commitment to concerted action to address the challenges posed by the world drug problem.

INCB's Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances (GRIDS) Programme is supporting action to prevent marketing, sale and movement of emerging synthetic opioids with no known legitimate uses, and dismantling NPS trafficking organizations. Secure communication and analysis platforms⁶ are available to law and regulatory enforcement focal points, supported through capacity building by Regional Technical Officers located in Egypt, India, Mexico, Nigeria and Thailand. Project Ion and the global OPIOIDS Project also contribute to expanding the information base on evolving drug challenges.

INCB Learning is enhancing the ability of Governments to comply with the Conventions, to estimate their requirements for medical and scientific purposes and strengthen their control of precursors.

INCB is overhauling its international drug control system database used to process, store and analyse data reported to INCB under the treaties. The new system will offer functionalities to assist States in their management of the licit movement and availability of internationally controlled substances.

Thank you for your attention.

⁶ IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence