

B. Africa

The Board notes with concern the insufficient availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical use in Africa and reiterates the importance of improving the availability of and access to internationally scheduled substances for medical purposes.

The role of Africa, in particular West and Central Africa, as a transit region for cocaine has expanded significantly, as corroborated by seizures, which reached an all-time high in 2021.

Trafficking in and abuse of tramadol, a synthetic opioid not under international control, are of growing concern in a number of African countries.

While assessing the extent of drug misuse and accurately estimating the number of people receiving treatment on the continent remain a challenge, the Board recognizes that Governments in the region are making progress in addressing substance use disorders.

1. Major developments

416. Drug control efforts and the availability of and access to internationally scheduled substances for medical purposes in countries in Africa continued to be affected by political instability, economic challenges and ongoing conflicts in parts of the region.

417. The role of Africa, in particular West and Central Africa, as a transit region for cocaine trafficking from South America to Europe has expanded significantly. In 2021, seizures of cocaine in Africa reached an all-time high in terms of both quantities of the drug seized as well as the number of seizures. While West Africa accounted for most of the cocaine seized, there are indications that other parts of the continent have also been affected.

418. The number of countries in Africa that permit the cultivation of cannabis for medical or scientific purposes has been growing in recent years. Some of the countries permit cultivation only for export, while others allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes domestically. For 2024, 12 countries in Africa submitted their estimates to the Board for the cultivation, production or consumption of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes.

419. The African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019–2023), the fifth strategic framework that guides drug policy development in Africa, has been extended by Heads of State to 2025. The action plan is aimed at improving the health, security and socio-economic well-being of the people of Africa by addressing drug trafficking and problematic drug use in all its forms and manifestations and preventing the onset of drug use.

420. The Board continues to assist countries in meeting their reporting obligations under the three international drug control conventions, as well as in addressing their drug control challenges. The initiatives conducted by the Board within the framework of INCB Learning and the INCB GRIDS Programme can be found in paragraphs 422–425, 427–428, 430–432 and 434–437.

2. Regional cooperation

421. Since 1 November 2022, the Conference of the States Parties to the African Medicines Agency Treaty, the highest policymaking body of the Agency, has convened several extraordinary sessions to further accelerate the Agency's operationalization. In particular, the meetings considered the staffing structure of the Agency and the contribution by States parties to its budget. The meetings also adopted the revised terms of reference of the Agency's Director General and appointed the members of the Governing Board.

422. On 7 and 8 November 2022, the INCB GRIDS Programme, in partnership with the UNODC Container Control Programme, organized a training event in Morocco for customs officers on awareness-raising and safe handling practices related to new psychoactive substances, synthetic opioids and other dangerous substances. The training also strengthened information exchange using the IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools. In addition, it covered precursors-related aspects and platforms, including PEN Online, PEN Online Light and PICS.

423. On 8 and 9 November 2022, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized a training event in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for postal and customs officers. The training focused on awareness-raising and safe handling practices related to new psychoactive substances, synthetic opioids and other dangerous substances, and also strengthened information exchange using the IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools.

424. From December 2022 to January 2023, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia participated in the Board's Operation Knockout and exchanged

intelligence to identify and dismantle illicit manufacturing and distribution points involving non-medical carisoprodol, 1,4-butanediol, flubromazepam, *gamma*-butyrolactone and ketamine trafficked through the international post, express mail, courier services and related modalities.

425. From 23 to 27 January 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme delivered an awareness-raising and capacity-building workshop on the safe interdiction of synthetic opioids and related chemicals for frontline officers from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and the Niger, in partnership with the UNODC Nigeria Organized Crime: West African Response to Trafficking project. The workshop was aimed at strengthening information exchange in the region to aid in counter-trafficking efforts related to synthetic opioids and new psychoactive substances using IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools.

426. In February 2023, the Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs was established, following the model of the West Africa Commission on Drugs, to review current policies, promote science-based drug policies and mobilize public awareness of drug issues in Eastern and Southern Africa.

427. From 21 to 23 February 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized an online stakeholder consultation on voluntary cooperation between Governments and freight forwarding services for the prevention of trafficking in dangerous substances. The event was attended by representatives from the public and private sector, including Kenya, and international organizations. Participants exchanged best practices and shared case examples related to the exploitation of legitimate ancillary logistics services, and discussed the next steps for promoting voluntary cooperation between Governments and their private sector partners.

428. On 21 and 22 March 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme, in partnership with the UNODC Container Control Programme, conducted capacity-building training in Tunisia for 20 customs officers on the safe interdiction of synthetic opioids and related chemicals and on strengthening intelligence exchange using IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools. A second course was conducted by the INCB GRIDS Programme on 23 March 2023 for nine health regulatory officers at the headquarters of the Tunisian Ministry of Health.

429. On 26 March 2023, the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa signed its new Regional Framework for Arab States (2023–2028) in cooperation with the League of Arab States and its 18 member States, including the following African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. The regional framework

focuses on the following areas: (a) taking a balanced approach to drug control; (b) strengthening the response to organized crime; (c) combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants; (d) taking action against corruption and financial crime; (e) preventing and countering terrorism and violence; and (f) strengthening crime and violence prevention and criminal justice. On the same occasion, the Arab Plan for Prevention and Reduction of the Dangers of Drugs to Arab Society: Towards Effective Handling of the Issue from a Social Perspective was signed, representing a regional social framework for combating drugs in the Arab States.

430. On 26 and 27 April 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme hosted a capacity-building training course in Morocco for enforcement officers from the police, the customs administration, the Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie and the Directorate of Migration and Border Surveillance. A second course was held on 29 April 2023 at the Moroccan Post headquarters. Both events focused on enhancing knowledge and skills to identify and safely interdict dangerous substances. Participants also received instruction on IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools to improve cross-border intelligence-sharing.

431. From 12 to 16 June 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized an interregional twinning event for trust-building, relationship development and active networking for officers from police, customs and regulatory agencies of Ghana, Nigeria, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as the regional World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Office.

432. From 4 to 7 July 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized a twinning event for police, customs and postal security officers from Cameroon and the Congo, held in Yaoundé. The event focused on trust-building and networking for officers, and provided them with practical knowledge and skills to identify and safely interdict dangerous substances. Participants also received instruction on IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools to improve cross-border intelligence-sharing.

433. From 19 to 22 July 2023, the African Union held the Continental Technical Experts' Consultation on Synthetic Drug Supply Reduction in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, with the participation of some 70 experts from about 35 countries. The meeting was aimed at enhancing knowledge of current trends in synthetic drug trafficking in Africa, promoting inter-agency collaboration and strengthening mechanisms for real-time intelligence exchange. Experts were given information about the Pan-African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use supply reduction data-collection tool and about sharing best practices for information exchange for

interdiction operations. The INCB President participated in the event and delivered a statement, stressing the opportunities afforded by enhancing efforts for coordination, timely data-sharing and use of existing systems and platforms, including those offered by the Board, such as PEN Online, PEN Online Light, PICS and IONICS.

434. From 2 to 4 August 2023 the INCB GRIDS Programme conducted a regional expert group meeting on the prevention of trafficking in new psychoactive substances and non-medical synthetic opioids through freight forwarding and third-party logistics services in Central and West Africa. The event took place in Lagos, Nigeria, and was attended by participants from the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal, as well as the Universal Postal Union, and WCO.

435. From 11 to 15 September 2023, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized in Vienna the sixth annual operational meeting on countering trafficking in dangerous synthetic drugs and chemicals through postal, courier and air cargo services. The event brought together officers from 32 Governments and international organizations, including participants from Nigeria and South Africa. Several participating Governments also conducted bilateral and multilateral case meetings – facilitated by INCB – to enhance cooperation across borders.

436. Drug control officials from the competent national authorities of 39 countries in Africa, namely Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, have registered to use INCB Learning e-modules. There are now five e-modules that have been developed by INCB Learning, covering narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, precursors, the international drug control framework and methods for ensuring the adequate availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. E-modules are available to officials of competent national authorities at no cost upon registration through INCB Learning.

437. From 20 to 22 September 2023, a twinning event for trust-building, relationship development and active networking to increase awareness on trafficking in synthetic opioids, fentanyl-related substances and new psychoactive substances in West and Central Africa was held in Côte d'Ivoire. The event also included training on intelligence development and sharing through the IONICS and GRIDS Intelligence high-definition targeting tools and brought

together officers from the WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Western and Central Africa, WCO national focal points from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo, as well as the Cameroon postal service.

3. Availability of internationally controlled substances (including reporting to the Board)

438. The three international drug control treaties require the States parties to furnish statistical reports to the Board on an annual basis. These reports enable the Board to monitor the licit commerce of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as well as monitor availability of these substances for licit medical and scientific purposes.

439. Over the last 20 years, the level of consumption of internationally controlled opioid analgesics in Africa, expressed in S-DDD per million inhabitants, has followed a fluctuating trend at a generally lower level as compared with other regions, ranging between a low of 1,355 S-DDD_{pm} in 2013 and a high of 4,514 S-DDD_{pm} in 2020. However, the amount reported decreased to 2,556 S-DDD_{pm} in 2021. Of that amount, about half (1,238 S-DDD_{pm}) related to fentanyl, 1,115 S-DDD_{pm} to morphine, 135 S-DDD to pethidine, 51 S-DDD_{pm} to oxycodone and smaller quantities to other less common opioids. The data on consumption are not provided on a regular basis by all countries in the region and therefore one country not reporting one year could significantly impact the regional total. Most probably, the fluctuation in the data is due to gaps in reporting rather than large fluctuations in actual consumption. The countries with the highest consumption of opioid analgesics in S-DDD terms were South Africa (827 S-DDD_{pm}), Tunisia (545 S-DDD_{pm}), Seychelles (239 S-DDD_{pm}), Mauritius (231 S-DDD_{pm}), Egypt (174 S-DDD_{pm}) and Cabo Verde (103 S-DDD_{pm}). More than 29 countries in Africa did not provide any data on the consumption of medicines containing opioid analgesics.

440. About two thirds of the countries and territories of Africa have regularly provided their annual statistical report on psychotropic substances as required under the 1971 Convention. Of the remaining countries and territories in the region, some have provided the required report at least once in the past five years, with the remaining failing to provide their statistical report at all in the past five years.

441. It remains challenging for the Board to determine the levels of consumption of psychotropic substances in Africa as approximately half of the countries and territories

in the region have not provided consumption data to the Board on any psychotropic substance for the past five years. Determining availability is also hampered by the significant proportion of countries in the region failing to regularly provide their annual statistical report on psychotropic substances.

442. **The Board stresses that there is insufficient availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the region and emphasizes the importance of ensuring sufficient availability of and access to internationally controlled substances for medical purposes. The Board encourages the countries and territories in Africa that have not provided the reports as required under the international drug control conventions to do so as soon as possible and take the necessary measures to ensure that their respective competent national authorities have sufficient resources to prepare the reports in a timely manner, in particular on consumption of psychotropic substances.**

443. As regards precursor chemicals, Member States voluntarily provide – in the context of resolution 49/3 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs – their estimates of their annual legitimate requirements for imports of certain precursor chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. Among other substances, the provision of annual legitimate requirement estimates is requested for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are substances that also have medicinal uses, as well as, to the extent possible, for preparations containing those substances that could be easily used or recovered by readily applicable means.

444. Out of the 54 countries on the African continent, 41 (76 per cent) provided the Board with at least one estimate of their annual legitimate requirements for imports of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or their preparations. However, approximately 17 per cent of them have not updated their estimates for the above-listed substances in the past 10 years; this undermines the potential of annual legitimate requirement estimates as a tool to guide exporting countries as to the legitimate requirements of importing countries in order to prevent oversupply and diversion into illicit channels as well as ensure the availability of those substances for legitimate purposes. Six African countries have provided annual legitimate requirement estimates to the Board for the first time in the last five years. Those countries are Gabon, Lesotho, the Niger, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Togo.

445. Further information can be found in the technical reports of the Board on narcotic drugs,¹⁴¹ psychotropic

substances¹⁴² and the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.¹⁴³ The publication entitled *Guide on Estimating Requirements for Substances under International Control*, developed by INCB and WHO for use by competent national authorities, and the document entitled “Issues that Governments may consider when determining annual legitimate requirements for imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine” are available on the Board’s website.

4. National legislation, policy and action

446. The Government of Algeria enacted Law 23-05 of 7 May 2023, amending and supplementing Act No. 04-18 of 25 December 2004 on preventing and combating the use of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The law provides penalties for various drug-related offences. It also provides for the development of a national strategy.

447. In January 2023, Botswana established a new Drug Enforcement Agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence and Security. The agency is mandated to collect and disseminate information on the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as well as to receive and investigate any complaints of an alleged or suspected breach of the law. The agency will also advise Government ministries and departments, public bodies, institutions, companies, statutory bodies and corporations on ways and means of preventing prohibited activities relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

448. On 26 June 2023, the Government of Ghana launched the National Drug Control Master Plan. The plan seeks to conceptualize and develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the challenges associated with the production, cultivation, trafficking, sale, distribution and use of narcotic drugs in the country. The plan is built on six strategic pillars: (a) supply reduction; (b) demand reduction; (c) harm reduction; (d) cooperation and collaboration; (e) research; and (f) capacity-building.

449. On 12 July 2023, the Parliament of Ghana passed the Narcotics Control Commission Amendment Bill 2023, introducing changes to the controls that apply to the cultivation of cannabis for industrial and medicinal purposes. The amended bill granted the Ministry of Interior the authority to issue licences for the cultivation of cannabis in the country.

¹⁴¹E/INCB/2023/2.

¹⁴²E/INCB/2023/3.

¹⁴³E/INCB/2023/4.

450. On 18 November 2022, the Government of Mauritius amended the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000. The amendment contains provisions on how medical cannabis will be regulated and dispensed. It also contains provisions related to alternatives to conviction or punishment as well as rehabilitation of drug users.

451. On 21 March 2023, the Senate of Nigeria passed amendments to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act. The amendments aim to strengthen the operations of the Agency, empower it to establish laboratories to carry out scientific investigations and analysis of controlled substances, update the list of dangerous drugs, review penalty provisions, enhance the power of the Agency to prosecute drug-related offences and issue subsidiary legislation on related matters. On 6 June 2023, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (Amendment) Act, 2023, was read the third time and passed into law.

452. In 2022, as a result of the Board's twinning initiative aimed at promoting industry cooperation in the area of precursor control, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania adopted a voluntary code of practice to further enhance the concept of public-private partnership in the country. The voluntary code of conduct complements the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the competent national authorities in the United Republic of Tanzania and members of the industry, including two pharmaceutical associations and a number of companies, in 2021.

453. On 14 December 2022, the Government of South Africa enacted the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Amendment Act No. 14 of 2022, amending the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act No. 140 of 1992. The amended act criminalizes the manufacturing and supplying of any substance included in Schedule 1 to the Act ("substances useful for the manufacture of drugs"); and the use, possession and dealing in any drug included in Schedule 2 to the Act ("dependence-producing substances" as well as "dangerous dependence-producing substances"). The Cabinet member responsible for the administration of justice, the Minister, may, by notice in the Government Gazette, amend Schedules 1 and 2 to the Act.

454. On 22 August 2023, the Parliament of Uganda passed the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Bill, 2023, following an annulment by the Constitutional Court on 5 May 2023 due to the lack of a quorum. The bill allows cultivation of cannabis and khat strictly for medical and other authorized uses and sets penalties for a multitude of offences related to substances abuse.

5. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

455. The number of countries in Africa that permit cultivation of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes has been growing. Some of the countries permit cultivation only for export, while others allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes domestically. For 2024, 12 countries in Africa submitted their estimates to the Board for the cultivation, production or consumption of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes, compared with 10 countries that submitted such estimates for 2023.

456. The role of Africa as a transit region for trafficking in drugs as well a target market has grown significantly in recent years. The following paragraphs illustrate this phenomenon for different drugs and different countries.

457. Trafficking in cannabis and cannabis resin remains concentrated in North Africa, although cannabis seizures are reported from countries across the continent. The available data suggest that the quantities of cannabis seized, particularly in Algeria and Morocco, continued to drop in 2022. For 2022, Algeria reported seizing 58 tons of cannabis resin (compared with 71 tons in 2021) and 5 kg of cannabis herb (compared with 8 kg in 2021). For the same period, Morocco reported seizing over 300 tons of cannabis resin in 2022 (compared with over 511 tons in 2021) and about 209 tons of *kif*, a dried material derived from cannabis (compared with 328 tons in 2021). The quantities of seized cannabis herb reported by the authorities of Egypt also decreased, from over 466 tons in 2021 to 368 tons in 2022, while the quantities of cannabis resin seized in the country in 2022 were higher than in the previous years (over 49 tons in 2022, 28 tons in 2021, over 44 tons in 2020, and over 39 tons in 2019).

458. In 2023, countries in North Africa continued to seize high volumes of cannabis in transit to Europe or destined for the North African market. In March and April 2023, the authorities of Algeria reported seizing over 2.5 tons of *kif*. In the first trimester of 2023, the Moroccan authorities reported seizing 24 tons of cannabis resin and 49 tons of cannabis herb. One incident in the port of Tangier involved nearly 5.5 tons of cannabis seized, along with 60 kg of cocaine; the substances, which were discovered hidden in a refrigerated container, were destined for Europe. Additional data on cannabis seizures for 2023 have so far been limited, which makes comparison with previous years difficult.

459. In 2022, trafficking in cocaine was reported across the continent. Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea,

Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia reported seizures of the drug in quantities ranging from a few grams to several tons. The largest quantities – over two tons each – were reported by Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Nigeria, all located along the Gulf of Guinea.

460. In the first half of 2023, countries in Africa continued to report large seizures of cocaine, thus indicating that trafficking in this drug remains a major challenge in the region. In April 2023, the Guinean navy seized more than 1.5 tons of cocaine from a Sierra Leone-flagged vessel. The drug was believed to be ultimately destined for markets in Europe. The authorities of Senegal seized over 800 kg of cocaine on a vessel 335 km off Dakar in January 2023. In February 2023, Libyan customs officers seized in the port of Al-Khoms 269 kg of cocaine that had been hidden in a container originating in Brazil. According to the Libyan authorities, this was one of the country’s largest seizures of cocaine. In February 2023, the authorities of South Africa seized 380 kg of cocaine in Durban harbour. In addition to maritime seizures, South African authorities also reported cocaine seizures at the airport, including 140 kg of cocaine found on business premises situated in an industrial area close to the airport.

461. The UNODC *Global Cocaine Report 2023: Local Dynamics, Global Challenges* commented that the role of Africa, in particular West and Central Africa, as a transit region for cocaine trafficking from South America to Europe has significantly expanded. This development has reportedly contributed to increased demand for cocaine on local markets; however, the lack of official data from the countries in the region continues to present an impediment to a clear understanding of the precise extent of use of that drug in Africa.

462. According to a transnational organized crime threat assessment for Nigeria, conducted by UNODC, Nigeria remains a transit hub for transnational cocaine and heroin trafficking. The report also indicates that criminal networks from Nigeria play an important role in drug trafficking and smuggling activities on the African continent as well as globally.

463. In 2022, the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa reported 204 seizures, including 10 kg of heroin, 20 kg of khat and 4,605 litres of chemical precursors. The Container Control Programme units in West Africa made 34 seizures, including 216 kg of cocaine and 9,462,110 pieces of unspecified medical products.

464. While trafficking by sea continues to be the primary means of arrival for illicit drugs entering or transiting across the continent, trafficking by air also presents challenges in the region. From 2021 and up until 1 June 2023, the joint airport interdiction task forces in Africa seized 413 kg of cocaine, 293 kg of khat, 782 kg of cannabis, 178 kg of heroin, 127 kg of psychotropic substances and 102 kg of precursors, as well as 297.6 kg of falsified medicines. Airports in Kenya and Ethiopia are also believed to have been targeted as stop-overs points for cocaine from Brazil destined for Europe.

465. Trafficking via international postal services, observed in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to be an important trend in the region, notably for cocaine bound for Europe.

466. As regards trafficking of pharmaceutical opioids, the UNODC *World Drug Report 2023* indicates that Africa accounted for half of the quantities seized worldwide between 2017 and 2021. This was reportedly mainly due to the non-medical use of tramadol, a synthetic opioid not under international control which remains a threat, in particular in North, West and Central Africa, including the Sahel region. Trafficking in tramadol continued in 2022 with Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania all reporting seizures of the substance. Data for 2023 have so far been limited. In the first half of 2023, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria reported some large seizures of tramadol, including over 3 million tablets seized in January 2023 in a warehouse and more than 1.2 million tablets seized during two operations in March 2023.

467. Trafficking in heroin continues to pose a challenge in the region. While the East African subregion is mainly used as an entry point for heroin from South-West Asia, the drug is trafficked through all subregions to reach consumer markets. For 2022, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, the Gambia, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania reported seizures of the substance. In particular, South Africa continues to report large seizures of heroin. In July 2023, the Trilateral Planning Cell established by the authorities of Mozambique, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania to counter heroin trafficking through the southern route seized 250 kg of the substance at the border with Mozambique. The quantity of this single seizure is more than double the amount of heroin seized in the country in 2022 (over 106 kg). The drug was hidden in a concealed compartment of a truck.

468. Information regarding trafficking in other drugs is limited. However, several countries in the region reported seizing amphetamine, ketamine, khat, MDMA, methaqualone or methamphetamine in the course of 2022.

469. Although the information from the region is limited, the Board is aware that some countries in the region have recently been targeted by traffickers seeking alternative sources of supplies of amphetamine-type stimulant precursors, in particular pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine. To address the situation, the Board has facilitated the exchange of actionable information and notes the efforts of the countries concerned in this regard.

470. More generally, and as in previous years, only a few countries in Africa have submitted to the Board the mandatory information for 2022 related to seizures of precursor chemicals, both the substances in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention and chemicals not under international control. Such information is crucial for identifying emerging trends in precursor trafficking as well as weaknesses in precursor control systems.

471. The Board wishes to remind Governments of their obligation under the 1988 Convention to provide it with information related to seizures of substances scheduled at the international level and of substances not under international control, including, when known, their origin.

472. A comprehensive review of the situation with respect to the control of precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Africa can be found in the report of the Board for 2023 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.¹⁴⁴

6. Prevention and treatment

473. Assessing the extent of drug abuse and accurately estimating the number of people in treatment on the African continent remains a challenge as detailed and reliable information and prevalence data provided from the region are scarce.

474. However, based on the information available, cannabis remains the main drug of concern for the majority of people in treatment on the African continent. According to the UNODC *World Drug Report 2023*, the estimated annual prevalence of cannabis consumption in Africa was 6.85 per cent of the population (approximately 53.6 million people). The prevalence was particularly high in West and Central

Africa, almost 10 per cent, reportedly owing to the prevalence of cannabis use in Nigeria. For opioids, including prescription opioids, the estimated prevalence of consumption stood at 1.24 per cent (approximately 9.67 million people). For opiates, mostly heroin, the estimated prevalence of consumption stood at 0.50 per cent (3.9 million people). The prevalence rates for the consumption of other drugs (i.e., cocaine, amphetamines and prescription stimulants and “ecstasy”) in Africa were below 0.4 per cent of the population in 2021. For many substances, including cannabis, the prevalence data for some subregions of Africa were not available. Africa is among the regions with the lowest proportions of women in drug-related treatment.

475. According to UNODC, Africa, where the population is young, is one of the regions where youth are the most vulnerable to using drugs. The annual prevalence of the use of cannabis in the population aged 15–16 (6.4 per cent) was similar to the prevalence of the general population aged 15–64 (6.85 per cent). The report estimates that 70 per cent of people in treatment in Africa are under the age of 35.

476. In 2023, the African Union launched the report of the 2023 Pan-African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use, which aims to improve health security and the socio-economic well-being of people in the region by addressing substance use and treatment.

477. The 2022 West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use report entitled *Statistics and Trends on Illicit Drug Supply and Drug Abuse*, validated during an Economic Community of West African States Commission workshop in May 2023, identified cannabis, tramadol, amphetamines and cocaine as the most consumed drugs in the region. It further pointed to an increase in drug use among unemployed persons aged 15–25, compared with 2021 data.

478. The National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse of Kenya released a report on the 2022 national survey on the status of drugs and substance use in the country. The survey, which is conducted every five years, was undertaken in all 47 counties and involved 3,797 households and 3,314 individuals aged 15–64 years. Of that group, 44 per cent were 36 years old and above and the majority (54.5 per cent) were female. The survey found that the prevalence of cannabis use had almost doubled over the previous five years; according to the report, that could be attributed to the low perception of harm due to misinformation. The highest prevalence of lifetime use of cannabis was reported in Nairobi (6.9 per cent). Alcohol was identified as the most widely misused substance in the country, with an estimated prevalence of 19 per cent.

¹⁴⁴E/INCB/2023/4.

479. In November 2022, the National Authority launched a framework for community engagement in the management of alcohol and drug abuse, the first such framework in Kenya. The main objectives of the framework are: (a) to reduce alcohol and drug use in the community; (b) to leverage joint initiatives and resources for alcohol and drug use prevention and management; and (c) to standardize and harmonize community efforts towards the reduction of alcohol and drug use.

480. A drug use survey conducted in the framework of the Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment for Nigeria found that 14.4 per cent of Nigerian adults (aged 15–64) had used at least one illicit drug in the previous year. In addition to the over 12.9 million cannabis users, the findings estimated 5.6 million non-medical users of pharmaceutical opioids and another 2.9 million non-medical users of codeine cough syrup in the country. The widespread non-medical use of opioids is a further major concern in Nigeria. The results of the survey are based on responses from 38,850 households and 9,344 high-risk drug users. In 2022, Nigeria published *Standard Operating Procedures: Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence in Nigeria – Methadone and Buprenorphine*, in preparation for implementing opioid-assisted therapy in the country.

481. A national school survey on substance use and associated patterns to assess the level of tobacco, alcohol, medicines and drug use among schoolchildren aged 15–16 in Senegal found that 9 per cent of students reported had smoked cigarettes, 10.4 per cent had consumed alcohol in their lifetime and 7.8 per cent had taken a tranquillizer or painkiller. The survey also found that the use of drugs is less frequent than the use of tobacco, alcohol or prescribed medicines, with 3.5 per cent of young people reporting a lifetime prevalence of psychoactive substances. The findings were based on 3,303 questionnaire responses from Senegalese students aged 15–16 in public and private secondary schools. The survey was conducted by UNODC.

482. In the course of 2023, the United Republic of Tanzania provided treatment services to at least 854,134 persons (434,847 men and 419,287 women) with varying drug use disorders. The country currently runs 15 opioid substitution therapy sites that use methadone and buprenorphine. These clinics, located across the country, provide treatment services to approximately 14,500 people on a daily basis, compared with 11,500 people in 2021. The majority of people receiving the treatment are men.

483. A third survey on the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in schools, conducted in 2021 in Tunisia as part of the

Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (MedSPAD), revealed an increase in the use of drugs since the second MedSPAD survey in 2017.

484. Countries in North Africa, including Egypt, Libya and the Sudan, have continued implementing the UNODC Youth 4 Impact programme, which had been launched in 2022. In May 2023, UNODC launched the initiative in Algeria. The programme aims at helping young men and women, including those who are marginalized and at risk, to become more empowered to face life's challenges and to be more resilient against crime, violence and drugs.

485. On 3 January 2023, the Transitional Sovereignty Council in the Sudan launched the national campaign “Save your son” to tackle drug consumption, specifically the use of methamphetamine, which has dominated the market since the Sudanese revolution in 2019. Alongside government institutions, numerous non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations have participated in the campaign.

486. Algeria rolled out opioid agonist treatment programmes with the support of UNODC and Egypt in 2023. In Algeria, UNODC also assisted in the development of national guidelines for methadone agonist treatment, standard operating procedures for opioid agonist treatment and the finalization of the National Drug and Harm Reduction Strategy. As of June 2023, five centres are providing opioid agonist treatment programmes, with over 300 clients enrolled in methadone maintenance treatment.

487. In 2022, UNODC supported the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the national opioid agonist treatment programme in Egypt. The framework is being used for monitoring clients enrolled in such treatment and will also support the future evaluation of the programme. In 2023, UNODC delivered two training courses on the delivery of harm reduction services, particularly opioid agonist treatment, in Egypt.

488. In 2022/23, UNODC conducted a first-of-its-kind rapid situation assessment for women who use drugs in Egypt. The assessment provided valuable insights into the extent of substance use among women, as well as associated risk factors. The assessment offers governmental as well as non-governmental institutions a more comprehensive understanding of the services needed by women who use drugs, enabling them to prioritize the appropriate services.