



Special issue on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

High-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopts declaration

INCB President delivers speech at high-level meeting

The policymaking body of the United Nations for drugs, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, adopted a Political Declaration and Plan of Action on international drug control for the coming decade at the high-level segment of its fifty-second session in March 2009.

The Declaration underlines the commitment of the international community to continue addressing problems related to drugs and reaffirms that the three United Nations drug control conventions remain

the cornerstone of drug control worldwide. The Plan of Action sets out practical measures that Governments should take to resolve prob-

blems related to drugs, including drug trafficking, money-laundering and the continuing demand for illicit drugs. The documents endorsed at the session followed similar declarations and action plans adopted at the 20th special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem, in 1998.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) contributed to the negotiations that took place in prepara-



The Chairperson of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia Dr. Libertina Amathila (left), addresses the meeting. Seated next to her are (from left to right) Andrés Finguerut, UNODC; the President of the International Narcotics Control Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse; and the Attorney-General of Mexico, Mr. Eduardo Medina-Mora. (UNODC)

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ration for the high-level segment of the Commission's fifty-second session by issuing discussion papers and publishing a comprehensive review of progress made by the international community since the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

In addition to many ministers, two Heads of State participated in the meeting: Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden and President Evo Mo-

That report is based on more than 145 responses from Governments and explores various

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A few words from the INCB President

Dear readers,

It is with pleasure that I present the third issue of *Focus on international drug control*. In addition to providing recurring information on the work of the Board, this issue carries ample coverage of the landmark session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that was held in Vienna in March 2009. At that session, the international community agreed on two documents, the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action, which set the framework for Governments' drug control activities for the decade to come.

During the Commission's session, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales, appealed to the international community to remove coca leaf from international control. Following a long-standing dialogue with the Government of Bolivia, President Morales and I met to discuss coca leaf.

At the session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Board introduced guidelines to assist Governments in addressing problems related to the trade in internationally controlled substances through the Internet. Increasing volumes of drugs are being trafficked through the Web without proper prescriptions from medical doctors.

A commendable initiative of non-governmental organizations, SUN-DIAL, collected millions of signatures for a petition in support of the international drug control conventions. I was presented with a copy of the petition.

I continue to encourage Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as other readers, to contribute to this newsletter and engage in dialogue with the Board.

Prof. Hamid Ghodse
INCB President

Recent and upcoming events**May 2009**

The Board held its ninety-fifth session in Vienna from 11 to 22 May.

More information on the issues discussed by the Board at this session will be reflected in the next edition of *Focus on international drug control*, to be published in September 2009.

June 2009

From 16 to 19 June, the subsidiary body of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) Europe, will meet in Vienna.

HONLEA discuss, among other things, the current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation.

About *Focus on international drug control*

Focus on international drug control is a quarterly publication of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) that provides insight into the activities and positions of the Board and information on other issues relevant to the Board's mandate. *Focus* also functions as a forum in which interested parties may share their opinions. At its session in May 2008, the Board decided to launch this newsletter.

Focus on international drug control is developed by the INCB Secretariat, which is based in Vienna. The views expressed in *Focus* do not

necessarily reflect the position of the Board unless expressly stated. INCB is the independent and quasi-judicial treaty body for monitoring the implementation of the international drug control conventions. Established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, INCB supports Government compliance with each of the international drug control conventions.

Board Members are elected by the Economic and Social Council to serve five-year terms. They act in their personal capacity.

The current Board members are:

- Joseph Bediako Asare (Ghana)
- Sevil Atasoy (Turkey)
- Tatyana Dmitrieva (Russian Federation)
- Philip O. Emafo (Nigeria)
- Hamid Ghodse (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Carola Lander (Germany)
- Melvyn Levitsky (United States)
- Maria-Elena Medina Mora (Mexico)
- Sri Suryawati (Indonesia)
- Camilo Uribe Granja (Colombia)
- Brian Watters (Australia)
- Raymond Yans (Belgium)
- Yu Xin (China)

Board Members launch annual report for 2008

Following an established tradition, the Members of the Board launched the annual report of the Board at press conferences in their respective hometowns around the world on or around 19 February 2009.

February 2009 also marked 100 years of drug control, and on the occasion of the report's launch, Prof. Ghodse underlined the importance of the drug control conventions, saying that multilateral drug control should be considered one of the

greatest achievements of the twentieth century. Some 95 per cent of States worldwide are party to the international drug control conventions.

However, Prof. Ghodse also stressed that significant challenges related to drug control remain, which Governments must address.

He called on Governments to make the availability of narcotic drugs for medical purposes a priority public health issue. The World Health Organization estimates that, as a result of the underutilization of such drugs in many countries, at least 30 million patients, and possibly as many as 86 million patients, suffer from untreated moderate to severe pain each year. "Drugs represent a danger for our societies and drug control. Control of both demand and supply is the collective responsibility of all nations," he said.



INCB President, Prof. Hamid Ghodse (right), launches the annual INCB report for 2008 in Vienna.

Board holds ninety-fourth session

At its sessions, INCB discusses matters ranging from the content of its annual report to estimates used to determine the amount of narcotic drugs that countries may manufacture or import. At its ninety-fourth session, held in Vienna from 2 to 6 February 2009, the Board examined a variety of matters including the website of the Board and the outline of chapter I of the annual report for 2009, on drug abuse prevention.

Outline of chapter I of annual report for 2009 reviewed

The Board reviewed a draft outline of chapter I of its report for 2009, entitled "Drug Abuse Prevention", which had been prepared by a consultant. The Board provided guidance on the concept of the chapter and decided that a draft should be prepared for review at its next session.

Every year, chapter I of the annual report focuses on a different theme in the remit of the Board's work. The topic for 2008 was "The international drug control conventions: history, achievements and challenges". In 2007, the Board had presented its views on the principle of proportionality and drug-related offences.

The topics of previous years can be found on the website of the Board: www.incb.org.

Website made available in the six official languages of the United Nations

Following the Board's session in February, efforts have been made to make the website of the Board accessible in all six official languages of the United Nations, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, to ensure that a larger audience can benefit from the website. Initially, the website was available only in English, French and Spanish.

The website (www.incb.org) contains information on the mandate of the Board and recent events, as well as its annual reports and technical publications on controlled substances.

Special issue on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Civic initiative collects millions of signatures in support of Conventions

The initiative Supporting United Nations Drug Initiatives And Legislation (SUNDIAL) collected over 5,025,000 signatures from more than 45 countries for a petition in support of the international drug control conventions. A copy of the signatures was presented to the President of the International Narcotics Control Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, on 18 March 2009 at a side

event of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

On that occasion, the President delivered a short speech on the importance of international drug control. The event was organized by the Drug Free America Foundation.



Project: Supporting United Nations Drug Initiatives And Legislation

Petition

We strongly believe that drug policy should be rooted in a balanced strategy of drug prevention, access to evidence-based treatment, international supply reduction based on global cooperation and good-will, and the highest standards of research.

We support the United Nations International Drug Conventions of 1961, 1971, and 1988 which explicitly state that every member country must take measures to reduce drug use and the total harm resulting from the use of drugs.

We support the United Nations International Drug Conventions which discuss how member states must devote resources to reducing the demand and supply of drugs, and not cede to legalization efforts.

We support a strategy which recognizes that drug use and its associated consequences can be reduced by non-drug policy means as well, such as progress on global poverty and access to economic opportunity and basic health care.

We are proud to support this document as a declaration of hope, opportunity, and a brighter future.

I agree with this petition, and I agree to allow my name and/or organization to be identified as a supporter for the CND 2009 meeting!

Special issue on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Governments discuss electronic import certificates

Republic of Korea takes the initiative in developing system

At its ninety-fourth session held in February 2009, the Board discussed the possibility of developing an electronic system to verify the legitimacy of trade in controlled drugs. Currently, all shipments of international trade in controlled drugs must be accompanied by paper export and import authorizations to prevent diversion into illicit channels. Even though an international system for electronic authorizations has the potential to make certification easier, it will have to fulfil important security requirements. Governments, the Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are currently working on ways to develop such a system.

The first concrete steps have already been taken by the Republic of Korea. The Government has developed an electronic tool that will allow exporting countries to verify import certificates issued by the Republic of Korea via the Internet. At this stage, this tool is not yet utilized. The consent of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is required before it can be used.

The Board decided that a meeting should be held with the representatives of 15 major exporting and importing countries, including the Republic of Korea, and the Information Technology Service of UNODC. The meeting was held on 17 March 2009, on the margins of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The meeting was opened by the President of INCB, Prof. Hamid Ghodse, who stated that the meet-

ing would be only the beginning of a series of activities that must be undertaken before a viable international electronic import and export authorization system could be developed and presented to the Commission.

Above all, such a system must meet the high standards required under the drug control treaties, and the authenticity, confidentiality and security of the authorizations exchanged among Governments had to be ensured.

developing a single electronic import and export authorization system for internationally controlled substances.

The system should be acceptable from a legal perspective to all countries and to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and meet the most recent security standards.

Successful electronic tools that have been developed through close cooperation between INCB and the UNODC Information Technology Service are the National Drug Con-



An example of an import certificate, used by Governments to verify the legitimacy of shipments of internationally controlled substances.

It was also stressed that such an electronic system would be in compliance with the international drug control conventions only if it could be established that the electronic system was as secure as the manual system currently in use by all countries, in order to guarantee the legitimacy of import and export authorizations and certificates.

The meeting's participants agreed that efforts would be made towards

control System, a standardized tool for drug control management at the national level that allows competent authorities, inter alia, to electronically report statistical data to INCB; and the Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN-Online) System, the electronic global system that allows Governments to send pre-export notifications for precursor chemicals online and in real time.

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areas of implementation of the international drug control treaties. It shows that Governments have increased their efforts to deal more effectively with the world drug problem. Accession to the international drug control treaties has further increased and has become almost universal, covering about 95 per cent of Member States representing 99 per cent of the world's population.

The President of INCB addressed the session, stating that even though the cultivation, trafficking and abuse of drugs had not ceased entirely, that should not be taken as a failure and drug control standards should not be relaxed: "The Board disagrees with such suggestions. The principles outlined in the international drug control treaties represent an internationally recognized standard that Governments aspire to achieve. Abandonment of those standards would signify denial of significant achievements of the past century."

Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden also addressed the meeting in her capacity as President of the Mentor Foundation, an organization focusing on the prevention of drug abuse and promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. She called for a team effort among Governments and civil society to tackle a problem that "causes so much harm and distress to individuals, families and communities in all parts of the globe".

Over 1,400 participants from 130 countries, non-governmental organizations and international organizations participated.

INCB President discusses coca leaf with the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales

INCB President Hamid Ghodse met with the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales, to discuss the control regime for coca leaf, during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2009.



INCB President Hamid Ghodse meets the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales, on 12 March 2009 during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

At the high-level segment, Morales argued that coca leaf was not a dangerous drug and should no longer be controlled at the international level. The Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia has been pursuing the revision of the international control regime for coca leaf since 2006.

The Board has entertained a constructive dialogue with the Government in that regard. As long as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 includes coca leaf, Governments are under the obligation to control it in the same way that they control all other narcotic drugs scheduled under the Convention, such as cannabis or heroin. The Board has an overall mandate to monitor the implementation of the Conventions by Governments.

However, there is a procedure in the Convention that would allow Governments to add or remove drugs. The President of the Board referred to that procedure in the statement that he made at the beginning of the regular segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, following the high-level segment. He said that "Treaties are not cast in stone and can be changed when necessary. Adjustments to the treaties can be made, particularly with respect to the substances placed under international control."

That procedure required a positive recommendation by the World Health Organization and the approval of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and of the Economic and Social Council.

INCB missions

Angola

An INCB mission visited Angola from 9 to 11 February 2009. The mission was carried out by Board Member Dr. Camilo Uribe Granja, accompanied by Mrs. Li-Qin Zhu of the Convention Evaluation Section of the INCB Secretariat.

Angola acceded to the three international drug control treaties in October 2005. The purpose of the mission was to review the drug control situation in Angola and to

discuss with various national authorities involved in drug control measures taken and progress made by the Government of Angola in the implementation of those treaties. The mission met with the Vice-Minister of Justice, the National Director for Criminal Investigations, the National Director for Medications and Equipment and the National Director for School Social Action, as well as other senior officials. The mission also visited a rehabilitation centre in Luanda.



Australia

An INCB mission visited Australia from 10 to 14 February 2009. The mission was conducted by Board Member Dr. Philip O. Emafo, accompanied by Mr. Pavel Pacht, Deputy Secretary of the Board.

The mission met and held discussions with the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs of Australia and the Chairman of

the Australian National Council on Drugs.

The mission also held discussions with senior officers of the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Federal Police, the Customs Service, the Australian Crime Commission and the Poppy Advisory and Control Board of the Department of Justice of Tasmania. In addition, the mission met and held discussions with representatives of two non-governmental organizations.

Syrian Arab Republic

An INCB mission visited the Syrian Arab Republic from 8 to 12 February 2009. The mission was carried out by Board Member Prof. Dr. Sevil Atasoy, accompanied by Mr. Imrich Betko, Drug Control Officer of the INCB Secretariat.

The mission met and held discussions with the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice and the Deputy Minister of Health. The objective of the mission was to discuss the implementation of the international drug control conventions and cooperation with

INCB. Discussions with senior officials from the Anti-Narcotics Department and the forensic laboratory of the Ministry of the Interior were also held and focused on reporting obligations under the international drug control treaties and legislative and administrative measures to address the situation of trafficking in drugs, in particular, amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors.

The availability of opiates for medical needs was

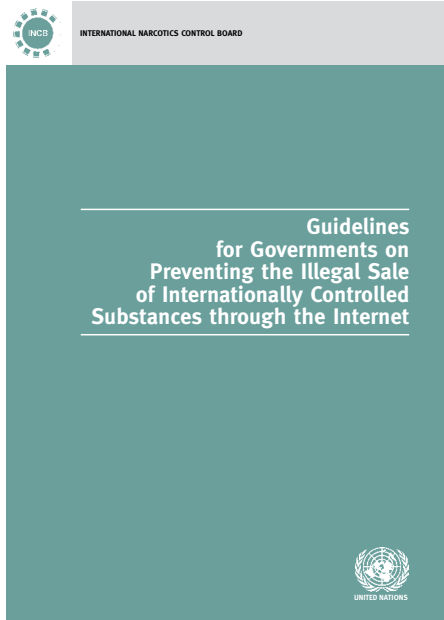
discussed with the officials of the Ministry of Health of the Syrian Arab Republic and representatives of the World Health Organization based in the country.



Special issue on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

INCB presents Internet guidelines to Governments

On 17 March 2009, INCB President Prof. Hamid Ghodse presented guidelines on the Internet to Governments attending the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.



The cover page of the Internet Guidelines issued by the Board.



The President of the Board, Prof. Hamid Ghodse (right), and staff of the INCB Secretariat introduced the Guidelines to Government representatives.

Prof. Ghodse underlined that even though the Internet has brought many good things to the world, it also poses threats, among which illegally operating Internet pharmacies is one. Prescription medicines are sold to the general public without the required prescription, which can have grave consequences for public health.

The *Guidelines for Governments on Preventing the Illegal Sale of Internationally Controlled Substances through the Internet* are aimed at assisting Governments in addressing the illicit trade in drugs that increasingly takes place on the Internet.

The Guidelines will assist authorities in formulating national legislation and policies for prescribers, pharmacists, law enforcement authorities, regulatory authorities and the public with regard to the use of

the Internet to dispense, purchase, export and import internationally controlled substances.

The Guidelines should help Governments to identify the control measures most appropriate for their country. Some of the recommendations, particularly those relating to

the provisions of the three international drug control treaties, need to be implemented by all Governments.

The Guidelines are available in all six official languages of the United Nations on the website of the Board: www.incb.org.

Call for contributions

The Board invites readers to submit comments and contributions, preferably by e-mail (focus@incb.org), but also by facsimile ((+43-1) 26060 76948) and mail at the following address:

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The Board reserves the right to edit and select articles depending on their relevance and the availability of space.