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Thematic debate on the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly: general overview and progress achieved by Governments in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008 set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session

The world drug problem

Fifth report of the Executive Director

Addendum

Control of precursors

Summary

There has been an overall trend of increasing implementation of precursor control measures, with a significant improvement in implementation reported since 1998. Over the 10 years of the process launched by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, the global rate of compliance in the area of general precursor control measures increased substantially, from 61 per cent in 1998 to 74 per cent in 2007.

In general, States had well-developed legislation relating to the control of precursor chemicals, prior import/export authorizations and the establishment of working procedures for monitoring and identifying suspicious transactions involving precursors. Encouraging advances were made in a number of countries that received technical assistance, as well as in countries that had established procedures to

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** E/CN.7/2008/1.



investigate the diversion of chemicals.

Nonetheless, more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of establishing codes of conduct in cooperation with the chemical industry, making resources available for technical assistance to other countries and international cooperation in seizing illicit consignments of precursor chemicals.

In addition, there are still States without adequate controls that should be encouraged and supported in implementing appropriate precursor control measures.

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I. Introduction

1. In June 1998, at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem, Member States adopted a Political Declaration (General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex) and action plans, in particular resolution S-20/4 B, in which the Assembly decided to devote particular attention to measures to prevent the illicit manufacture, import, export, trafficking, distribution and diversion of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In the Political Declaration, the Assembly decided to establish 2008 as the target date for States to eliminate or reduce significantly the illicit manufacture, marketing and trafficking of psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs, and the diversion of precursors. At its twentieth special session, the General Assembly also adopted a series of measures, and Member States agreed to promote their implementation, in order to strengthen compliance with the requirements of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.¹ The international community recognized the fact that the procurement of chemicals necessary to manufacture illicit drugs was a key interface where trafficking in drugs intersected with legitimate commerce. Thus, the regulation of legitimate commerce was a necessary tool for denying traffickers the substances that they needed. In article 12 of the 1988 Convention, States parties undertake to control their chemical commerce to prevent the diversion of substances to illicit drug manufacture. In the annex to the 1988 Convention are two tables listing 23 substances that are crucial for illicit drug manufacture and are thus subject to international control.

2. In the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, Member States also undertook to report periodically to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on their efforts to meet the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session. The measures to be reported on by States included the status of their regulatory and control framework; the prevention of the diversion of precursors, materials and equipment used in the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; legal, law enforcement and other measures to prevent the diversion of precursors; and international cooperation to further precursor control.

3. The present report contains a summary and analysis of all replies received from Member States in the five reporting periods of the biennial reports questionnaire concerning progress made in the areas outlined above. In order to facilitate the analysis, an analytical tool was developed to quantify the replies to various questions of section III, on control of precursors, of the biennial reports questionnaire.² That indicator is based on the replies to six individual questions on

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

² The composite indices that have been developed summarize the responses provided by Member States through the questionnaire with regard to the reported implementation and estimated coverage of activities as requested under the action plans. An analysis has been conducted using the data provided by all those countries that responded to the questionnaire in each reporting period. The indices are presented as regional averages, ranging from a minimum of 0 per cent to a maximum of 100 per cent. For example, a region reaches 100 per cent when all the reporting countries indicate having all the requested measures in place, while a region where all reporting countries report having none of these measures in place has a rating of 0 per cent.

precursor control: (a) on the existence of laws pertaining to precursor control; (b) on the inclusion of a system of prior import/export authorizations; (c) on the establishment of working procedures for monitoring and identifying suspicious transactions involving precursors; (d) on the establishment of a code of conduct with the chemical industry; (e) on measures taken to prevent trade in and diversion of materials and equipment for the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; and (f) on the existence of procedures to investigate the diversion of chemicals and clandestine laboratories.

4. The progress made in different areas is presented by means of regional averages, which are based on the proportion of States within a region that have implemented measures on precursor control. A region has achieved 100 per cent implementation when all reporting States indicate that they have in place the above-mentioned infrastructure for precursor control, while a region in which all reporting States reported having none of those measures in place would have a result of 0 per cent.

Table

States responding to section III of the biennial reports questionnaire, by reporting period

<i>Reporting period</i>	<i>Number of States reporting</i>
1998-2000	109
2000-2002	124
2002-2004	108
2004-2006	102
2006-2007	107

II. Action taken by Governments on the control of precursors

5. Throughout the 10-year period 1998-2007, the global rate of compliance with general precursor control measures substantially increased, from 61 per cent in the first reporting period (1998-2000) to 74 per cent in the fifth reporting period (2006-2007) (see figures I-V).

6. The highest compliance rate over the 10-year reporting period was that of the subregion of North America. In the reporting period 2006-2007, full compliance was also reached by the subregion of Oceania, which was an improvement of 25 percentage points compared with the reporting period 1998-2000. However, that rate is influenced by the fact that only a few countries of the subregion responded to the questionnaire, and the fact that many States of the subregion are only now being introduced to the concept of precursor control and have not yet incorporated it in their legislation.

7. Except for East and South-East Asia, where the general compliance with precursor control measures remained stable over the five reporting periods, all subregions increased their compliance rates in the past 10 years. Significant results were achieved by the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure I

All regions: compliance with measures for precursor control, by reporting period
(Composite index)

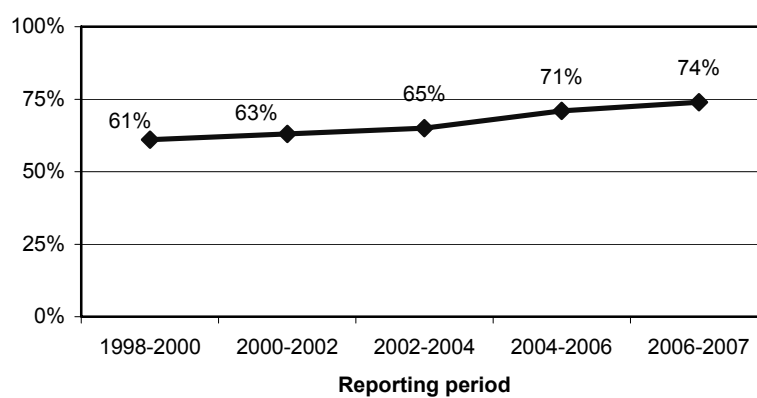


Figure II

Africa and the Middle East: compliance with measures for precursor control, by subregion and reporting period
(Composite index)

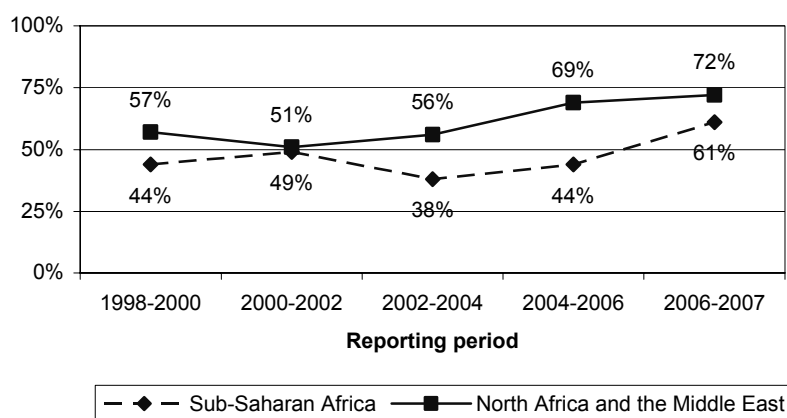


Figure III
Americas: compliance with measures for precursor control, by subregion and reporting period
 (Composite index)

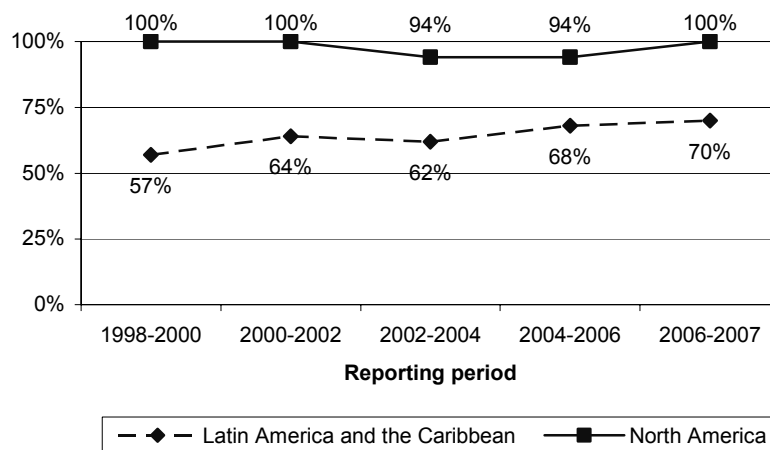


Figure IV
Asia and Oceania: compliance with measures for precursor control, by subregion and reporting period
 (Composite index)

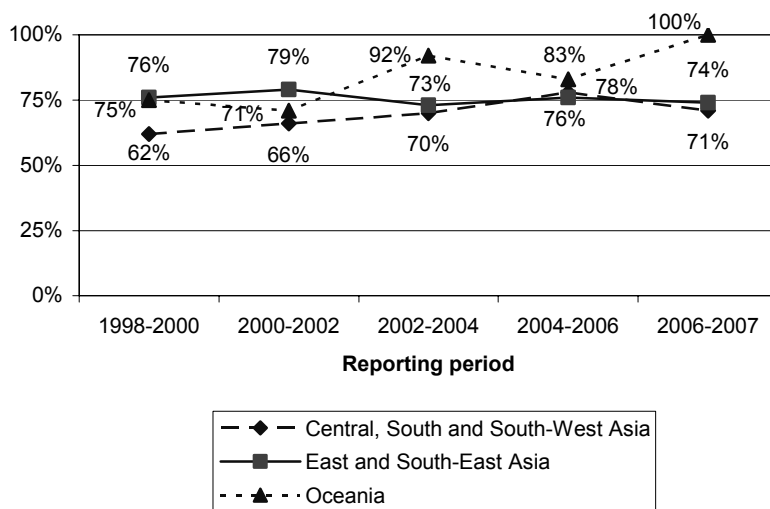
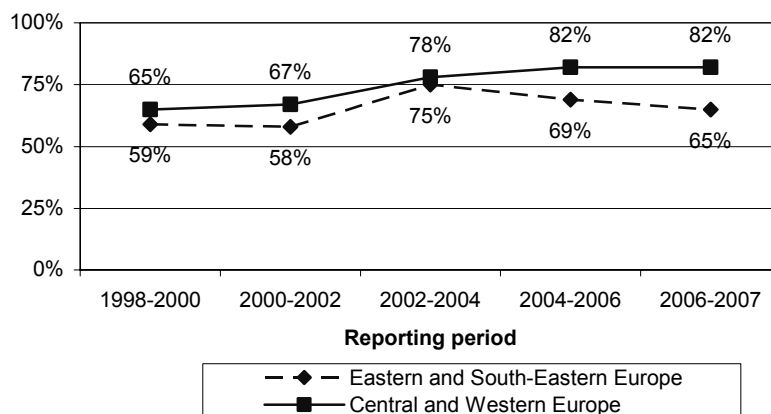


Figure V
Europe: compliance with measures for precursor control, by subregion and reporting period
 (Composite index)

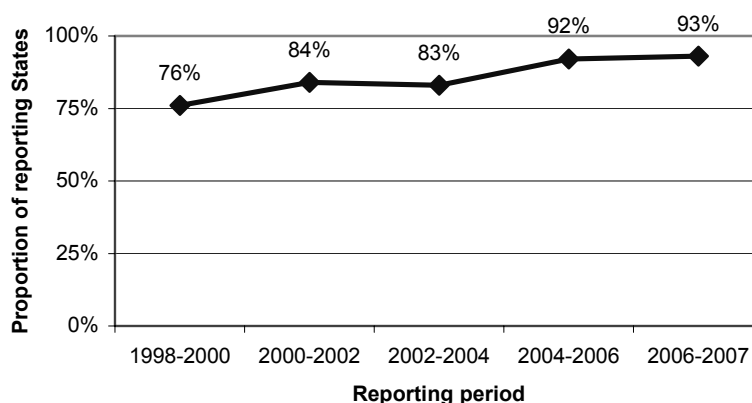


A. Regulatory control framework

1. Legislation

8. A total of 100 States, 93 per cent of those responding in the fifth reporting period, indicated the existence of laws related to precursor control. That is an increase of 17 percentage points compared with the first reporting period (1998-2000) (see figure VI).

Figure VI
Proportion of reporting States having enacted laws related to precursor control, by reporting period
 (Percentage)



9. There has been a trend of an increasing percentage of reporting States that have enacted precursor control laws. In each of the five reporting periods, 100 per

cent of reporting countries in the subregions of North America and Oceania reported having laws related to precursor control. The subregion of Central and Western Europe also had well-developed legislative frameworks, with a total of 93 per cent of responding States reporting precursor control legislation in the period 1998-2000, and 100 per cent reporting such legislation in the period 2006-2007. In East and South-East Asia, 75 per cent of reporting countries had precursor control legislation in the first reporting period. That number increased to 100 per cent by the reporting period 2006-2007. An increase in the number of Member States reporting the existence of a legal framework on precursor control in the subregion of North Africa and the Middle East, where 67 per cent of responding States reported having precursor laws in the reporting period 1998-2000, increasing to 92 per cent in the reporting period 2006-2007.

10. In Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, 44 per cent of countries responding in the period 1998-2000 reported having precursor control legislation in place. That figure increased to 92 per cent by the period 2006-2007. Sub-Saharan Africa had a stable rate of precursor control legislation among responding countries, at 70 per cent, for each of the five reporting periods. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 73 per cent of countries responding in the period 1998-2000 reported having precursor control laws. That figure increased to 100 per cent in the reporting period 2000-2002 and stayed at that level in subsequent reporting periods. In Central, South and South-West Asia, 71 per cent of countries reporting in the period 1998-2000 stated that they had precursor control legislation. That figure increased slightly, to 80 per cent, in the period 2006-2007.

11. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose 10 member States are parties to all three United Nations drug control conventions, reported that its member States have developed national legislation governing the control of precursors. The challenge of countering the diversion of and trafficking in precursors was reported still to be very serious in China, owing to the size of the country and the size of its chemical industry. It was reported that, although almost all States members of ASEAN have, to varying degrees, legal frameworks for precursor control, the control measures were not always effective or fully implemented. The lack of awareness, coordination and cooperation between the various regulatory and control agencies and ministries was among the obstacles mentioned with regard to the efficient working of precursor control systems.

12. In addition to legislating new precursor control measures, a number of Governments have strengthened controls and extended them to include pharmaceutical products. A number of States now prohibit the over-the-counter sale of pseudoephedrine preparations and have reclassified ephedrine and pseudoephedrine as dangerous drugs. Some States have also introduced licensing systems for pharmacies dispensing tablets containing pseudoephedrine and quantity restrictions on purchases by individual customers.

2. Prior import/export authorization

13. In order to verify the legitimacy of individual precursor chemical imports and exports, to identify and stop suspicious shipments and to prevent the diversion of controlled substances into illicit channels, under article 12, paragraph 10 (a), of the 1988 Convention, competent authorities of an exporting country are required to

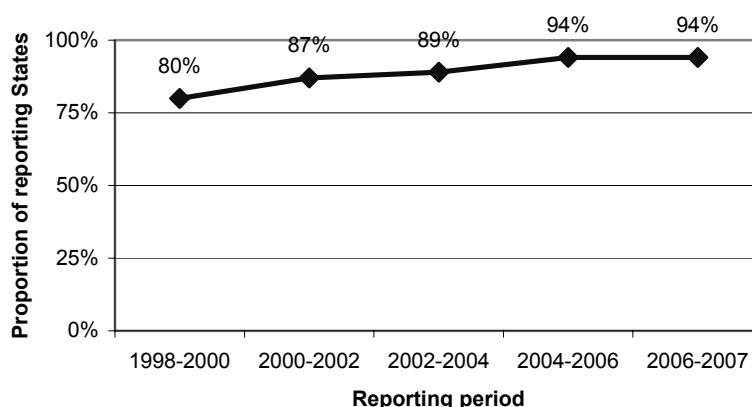
provide the competent authorities of the importing country with the following information, prior to export:

- (a) Name and address of the exporter and importer and the consignee;
- (b) Name of the substance;
- (c) Quantity of the substance to be exported;
- (d) Expected point of entry and expected date of dispatch.

14. In the biennial reports questionnaire, States were requested to provide information on whether their framework for precursor control included a system of prior import/export authorization. In both the fourth and fifth reporting periods (2004-2006 and 2006-2007), 94 per cent of States responded that their framework included such a system. That was an improvement of 14 percentage points over the 80 per cent of States that reported having such a system in the first reporting period (1998-2000), which is the baseline period (see figure VII).

Figure VII

Proportion of reporting States possessing a system of prior import/export authorization, by reporting period
(Percentage)



15. In the subregions of North America, Oceania, East and South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central, South and South-West Asia consistently high percentages of States (over 80 per cent in the period 1998-2007) reported having frameworks that included import/export authorization. An increasing number of reporting States in the subregion of North Africa and the Middle East affirmed that their national framework included provisions on import/export authorizations. In the period 1998-2000, 56 per cent of reporting States in the subregion reported having frameworks with import/export authorizations. By the period 2006-2007, the percentage of reporting States that had precursor control frameworks that included import/export authorizations increased to 92 per cent.

16. Over the five reporting periods, there was a clear trend of an increasing percentage of reporting States that had implemented prior import/export authorizations in their systems for precursor control. In addition, the reports submitted throughout the five reporting periods showed that, once a State had

established a framework for import/export authorizations, the system tended to be maintained.

17. In the fifth reporting period, 88 per cent of States reported that their precursor control system included import/export authorizations, specifying that those authorizations applied to all substances in tables I and II of the 1988 Convention. In the baseline period, only 80 per cent of responding States had indicated the existence of such a system.

18. Throughout the reporting periods (1998-2007), a number of States provided information on controls on individual substances not included in tables I and II of the 1988 Convention or provided further detail on their schemes for import/export authorizations.

19. The International Narcotics Control Board, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has developed Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online), a system for use by Member States exporting precursor chemicals. The PEN Online system was designed to alert the competent national authorities in importing countries to the details of export transactions on a real-time basis and thus support Member States in implementing their obligations under article 12 of the 1988 Convention. The system enables States, in a fully electronic format, to acknowledge receipt and to notify the exporting country of clearance to export. As a default setting, the system sends an electronic copy to the International Narcotics Control Board. Currently, 92 countries and territories are authorized to access the PEN Online system.

20. Most of the main exporting countries and countries where main trans-shipment points are located provide pre-export notifications for exports of substances listed in table I of the 1988 Convention, irrespective of whether or not those States have received a formal request under article 12, paragraph 10 (a) of the 1988 Convention, and a number of Governments are also able to provide such notifications for substances listed in Table II.

21. Pre-export notices and preliminary verification enquiries undertaken prior to the shipment of controlled chemicals, to confirm the legitimacy of trading parties, have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of such procedures to prevent the diversion or attempted diversion of precursor chemicals from licit channels for illicit drug manufacture. In addition, the number of Governments that regularly exchange such notices and undertake those enquiries continues to increase.

B. Prevention of diversion of precursors, materials and equipment used in the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

1. Identification of suspicious transactions

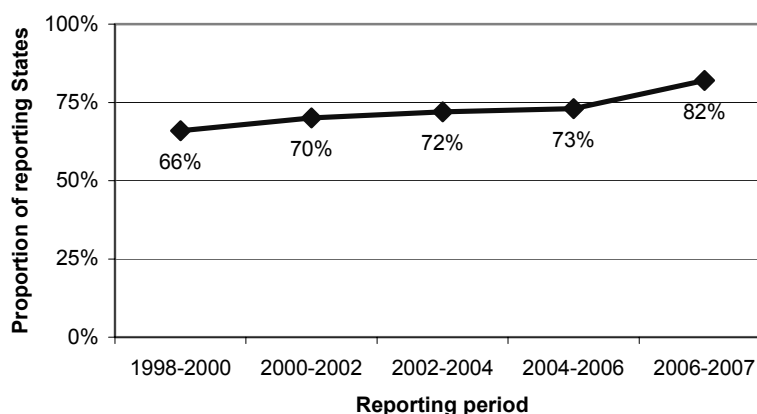
22. By monitoring changing patterns in the import or export of chemicals to or from a specific country, authorities have been able to identify the actions of criminal organizations. That experience has shown that when authorities detect a sudden increase in trade to a country not participating in international precursor control programmes, it is likely that an attempt to circumvent international controls is under way. Alerting authorities to such trading anomalies gives them an opportunity to

launch investigations to determine whether such irregularities are related to an attempted diversion and to prevent such an occurrence. In addition, more Governments are now engaged in launching backtracking investigations of seized consignments of chemicals in order to identify those responsible for the diversion and the method, procedures and subterfuge employed to divert the consignment from licit trade into illicit channels.

23. In the fifth reporting period, 82 per cent of States reported that they had established working procedures for monitoring licit trade to identify suspicious transactions involving precursors. That was a significant increase from the first reporting period (1998-2000), when 66 per cent of Governments reported having such procedures (see figure VIII).

Figure VIII

Proportion of reporting States having established working procedures for suspicious transactions involving precursors, by reporting period
(Percentage)



24. In particular, the subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean showed encouraging progress over the 10-year reporting period. In the period 1998-2000, 59 per cent of reporting States in the subregion responded that they had established working procedures for monitoring and identifying suspicious transactions involving precursors. That figure increased to 89 per cent in the period 2006-2007.

25. Over the five reporting periods, a number of States cited examples and gave details of their established working procedures and relevant legislation. They also listed the bodies and mechanisms in place for the identification of suspicious transactions involving precursors. Many States reported that their national customs authorities, as well as ministries of health, ministries of the interior, and criminal intelligence services were involved in identifying suspicious transactions of precursor chemicals.

26. In the countries of the European Union, traders are obliged to notify designated competent authorities of suspicious transactions. Guidance on how to identify suspicious transactions is provided through guidelines for the chemical trade. In addition, legislation obliges traders in the European Union to appoint a

responsible officer whose main task is to ensure that the trade in scheduled substances is carried out in compliance with the relevant legal provisions. In the case of suspicious transactions, stopped shipments or seizures, laws provide for mutual assistance and an information exchange mechanism for all the member States of the European Union. The exchange of information is carried out by means of the European Anti-Fraud Information System, which rapidly disseminates case- and trend-related information, in the form of mutual assistance communications, to all competent authorities, in order to prevent traffickers from taking advantage of the free movement of goods within the European Union internal market and to prevent their “shopping around” for potential weaknesses in the European Union system for drug precursor control. In accordance with the amended Community Customs Code, there is now an obligation to quickly inform border control authorities, in particular customs authorities, about suspicious transactions. That notification is done via the European Union risk information system.

27. In 2000, Andean countries, furthering their efforts to identify diversion attempts at an early stage, undertook procedures to accurately assess their licit domestic requirements for potassium permanganate. As a result, the amount of potassium permanganate being imported into those countries has been reduced by half.

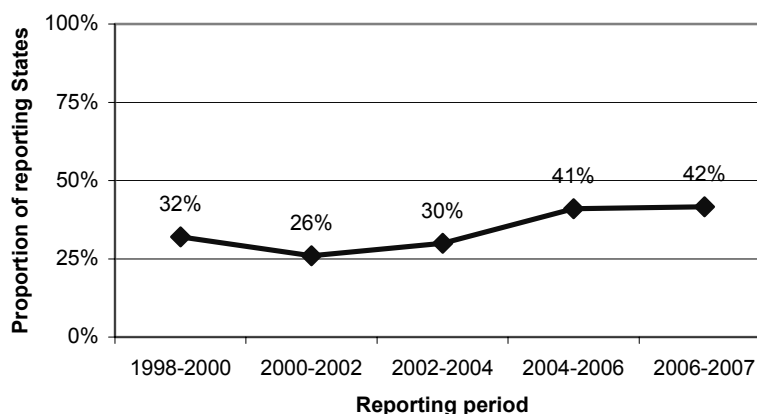
2. Codes of conduct

28. In view of the important role of the chemical industry in preventing the diversion of precursors from the legitimate trade in chemicals, UNODC has encouraged Governments to establish codes of conduct with the chemical industry in order to facilitate a common system of practice to aid cooperation with government and law enforcement agencies in their efforts to control and prosecute those involved in the trade or production of illicit drugs and weapons.

29. In the fifth reporting period, 42 per cent of responding States indicated that they had established such a code of conduct to enhance cooperation with the chemical industry. That was an improvement compared with the first reporting period, in which only 32 per cent of States indicated that they had established such codes (see figure IX).

Figure IX

Proportion of reporting States having established a code of conduct with the chemical industry, by reporting period
(Percentage)



30. While the proportion of States reporting that they had established such codes of conduct increased over the five reporting periods, it was still far from the target set for 2008. Overall, implementation by subregions of codes of conduct in cooperation with the chemical industry varied from one reporting period to the next. North America was the exception, consistently reporting the existence of such codes throughout the period 1998-2007. One subregion where the introduction of codes of conduct increased greatly was Central and Western Europe, where the number of States with such codes increased from 36 per cent in the first reporting period (1998-2000) to 83 per cent in the fifth reporting period (2006-2007).

31. Such cooperation usually took the form of agreements, guidelines and/or memorandums of understanding between the chemical and pharmaceutical industry and the competent authorities. Some States also provided specific information on the arrangements they had put in place, whether voluntary, statutory or regulatory in nature.

32. The Asian Collaborative Group on Local Precursor Control³ promotes the adoption of internationally agreed best practices for national policies, legislation and administrative processes and regulations that address the threat of precursor diversion and the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in Asian countries. The range of countermeasures introduced to combat diversion must incorporate the effective regulation and control of the legitimate precursor trade, while recognizing the benefits to the economy and communities of the legitimate precursor trade.

33. The Asian Collaborative Group on Local Precursor Control is working to make practical policy improvements in the following areas:

³ The Asian Collaborative Group on Local Precursor Control consists of the following members: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

(a) To establish the effective regulation and control of the legitimate precursor trade, including coordinating and harmonizing controls across the region wherever possible;

(b) To improve knowledge about the legitimate precursor market in Asia by promoting understanding of the legitimate uses of precursors, monitoring the legitimate movements of precursors and estimating the legitimate demand for precursors in each country;

(c) To strengthen and coordinate intelligence-gathering and information-sharing on the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants and the diversion of precursors. Combined with better market knowledge, improved intelligence will help to target future regulations and controls, as well as operational responses;

(d) To put in place arrangements on forensic technical capacity to ensure that Asian countries have access to the relevant expertise and equipment necessary to respond to issues involving amphetamine-type stimulants.

C. Legal, law enforcement and other measures to prevent the diversion of precursors

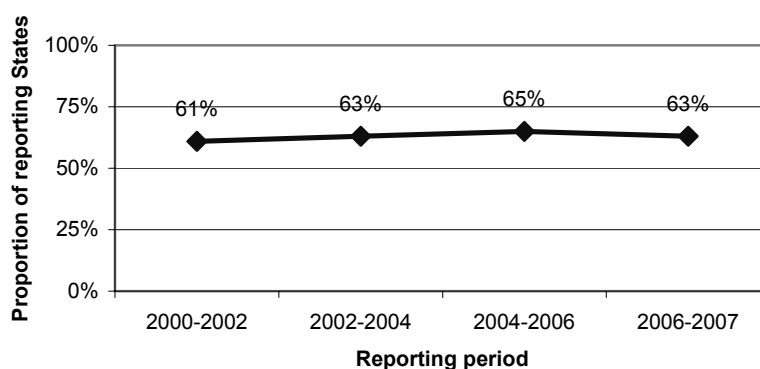
1. Prevention of the diversion of materials and equipment

34. In order to target the clandestine manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, Governments have been encouraged to monitor illicit manufacturing methods, including the trade and sale of laboratory equipment and apparatus suitable for supporting the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.

35. In the fifth reporting period, 63 per cent of responding States reported having taken measures to prevent trade in and diversion of materials and equipment for the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. As shown in figure X, there was no significant improvement in this regard over the reporting periods.

Figure X

Proportion of reporting States having taken measures to prevent trade in and diversion of materials and equipment for illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, selected reporting periods
(Percentage)



36. Although the global picture with respect to prevention measures for materials and equipment showed little change, one subregion in particular made clear improvements. A total of 60 per cent of the responding States in Central, South and South-West Asia reported that in the period 1998-2000 they had established measures to prevent the diversion of materials and equipment for the illicit production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; in the period 2006-2007, the number improved to 90 per cent. In the majority of subregions, an essentially stable percentage of States reported having established such measures over the five reporting periods: for example, Central and Western Europe (around 60 per cent), East and South-East Asia (around 70 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (around 45 per cent). Several States introduced specific measures such as the adoption or revision of legislation, regulations or working procedures in order to prevent the diversion of precursors. Police investigations and/or inspections by competent national authorities were also among the measures taken by States to prevent the diversion of materials and equipment.

37. In recent years, many common types and models of tableting machines have been seized. Generally in such cases, the machines are diverted from industry or obtained on the second-hand market from original manufacturers, brokers and pharmaceutical companies, among others. Up to the period 2003-2004, States reported that most seized tableting machines (70 per cent) were of small or medium-scale capacity, but in the period 2005-2006, it was reported that the majority were of higher capacity (capable of producing 15,000-60,000 tablets per hour). In addition, sophisticated industrial and custom-made equipment, including custom-made reaction vessels with a high capacity (80-200 litres), is now being seized, mainly in the major sites of amphetamine, methamphetamine and methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) manufacture. The industrial equipment used in "super labs" was sourced from a limited number of legitimate companies that had fulfilled orders, unaware of the illegal end-use of their products.⁴

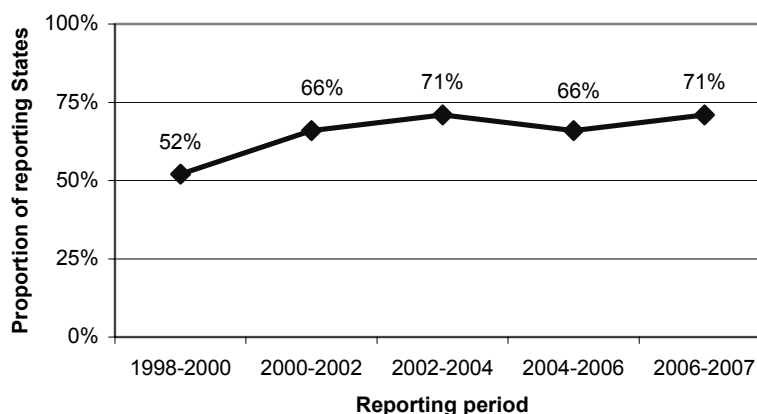
2. Investigating the diversion of chemicals

38. Over the five reporting periods, there was an increase in the number of Member States whose law enforcement authorities had established investigative procedures. In the fifth reporting period, 71 per cent of the States replying to the questionnaire reported that their law enforcement authorities had put in place procedures to investigate the diversion of chemicals. That represented a steady increase of 19 percentage points compared with the first reporting period, in which 52 per cent of States indicated having done so (see figure XI).

⁴ "Amphetamine-type stimulants in the European Union, 1998-2007", the contribution of the European Police Office to the expert consultations for the assessment of implementation of the measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, The Hague, Netherlands, July 2007.

Figure XI

Proportion of reporting States with procedures to investigate the diversion of chemicals, by reporting period
(Percentage)



39. Overall, the regional breakdown of the percentage of reporting States that had procedures in place to investigate the diversion of chemicals looked similar to the global picture, that is, the percentage was essentially stable, with slight overall improvements. Over the five reporting periods, approximately 100 per cent of States in North America and Oceania, 80 per cent of reporting States in East and South-East Asia, 60 per cent of States in Central and Western Europe and 65 per cent of States in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe stated that their law enforcement authorities had established procedures to investigate diversions of chemicals. The increases observed in the percentages for Central, South and South-West Asia (from 28 per cent to 70 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (from 50 per cent to 72 per cent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (from 23 per cent to 60 per cent) were encouraging.

40. The issue of precursor trafficking was a priority for the European Union, and several initiatives had been launched in that regard. The European Union drug strategy (2005-2012) and action plan (2005-2008) introduced measures aimed at improving the effectiveness, efficiency and knowledge base of law enforcement interventions by European Union member States to counter trafficking in drugs and precursors, including the diversion of synthetic drug precursors imported into countries of the European Union.

41. According to information provided by the European Police Office (Europol), a new trend, the trafficking of 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P) and 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone (3,4-MDP-2-P) (known in Europe as benzyl methyl ketone and piperonyl methyl ketone), which are the principal precursors required for the manufacture of amphetamine and MDMA production, has been identified as posing a major threat to the countries at the eastern border of the European Union. Following successful investigations by the law enforcement authorities of the countries concerned, international trafficking organizations smuggling P-2-P and 3,4-MDP-2-P from China and the Russian Federation via

Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland for use in large-scale illicit amphetamine manufacturing sites in the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium and Poland were identified and dismantled.⁵

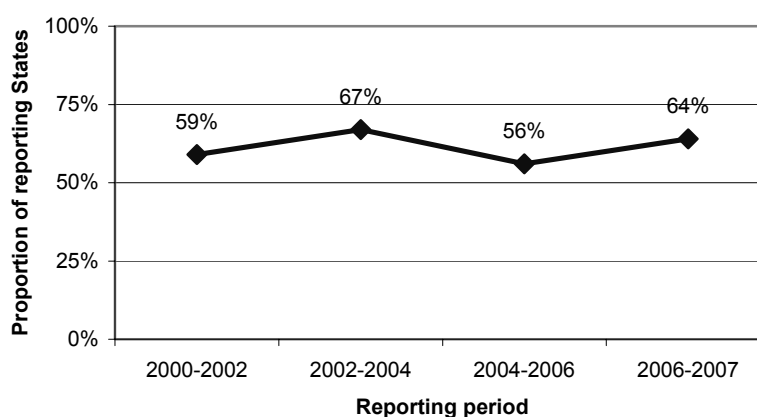
3. Investigation of clandestine laboratories

42. The presence of hazardous materials in clandestine laboratories was a concern for all Member States. Hazardous and toxic materials complicated law enforcement efforts and required the improvement of traditional procedures in order to effectively address health, occupational safety and environmental concerns. Because of the special expertise required to conduct investigations, seizures and clean-up operations for clandestine laboratories, States reported through the biennial reports questionnaire on their procedures to investigate clandestine laboratories.

43. In the fifth reporting period, 64 per cent of responding States reported having put in place procedures to investigate clandestine laboratories. That was an increase from the period 2000-2002,⁶ in which 59 per cent of States reported having such procedures. However, no stable trend over the four reporting periods can be established (see figure XII).

Figure XII

Proportion of reporting States with procedures to investigate clandestine laboratories, selected reporting periods
(Percentage)



44. At the subregional level, the number of countries reporting the establishment of procedures to investigate clandestine laboratories increased substantially in North Africa and the Middle East, rising from 20 per cent of reporting States in the period 1998-2000 to 50 per cent in the period 2006-2007. The number of States in Central, South and South-West Asia reporting the establishment of procedures to investigate clandestine laboratories also increased, from 22 per cent in the first reporting period to 40 per cent in the period 2006-2007. The percentage in other

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ There are no data available for the first reporting period (1998-2000) because this question was not included in the questionnaire for that reporting period.

subregions of reporting States with such procedures remained stable throughout the reporting process, in particular, East and South-East Asia (approximately 85 per cent), Sub-Saharan Africa (50 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (approximately 70 per cent).

D. International cooperation

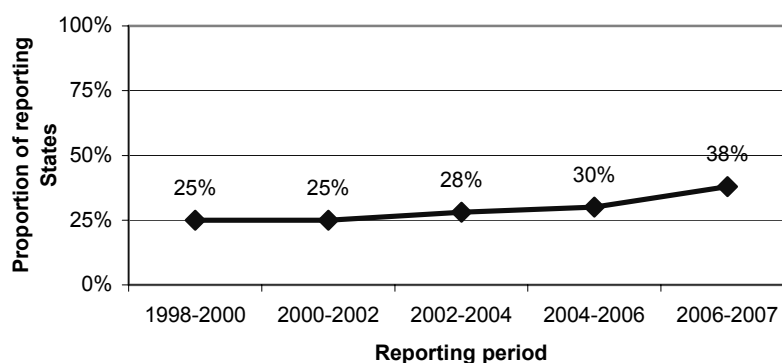
1. Seizure of precursors

45. The precursor chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances and narcotic drugs are legitimately used on a regular basis by licit industries all over the world. International cooperation, combined with a comprehensive chemical control strategy, is essential to achieving a lasting impact. In the biennial reports questionnaire, States were asked whether there had been seizures of precursors as a result of cooperation between their Government and Governments of other countries. In the fifth reporting period, 38 per cent of the reporting States indicated that such seizures had been made, which was an increase of 13 percentage points from the first reporting period (1998-2000), in which 25 per cent of responding States indicated that they had made such seizures as a result of international cooperation (see figure XIII).

Figure XIII

Proportion of States that reported seizures of precursors as a result of international cooperation, by reporting period

(Percentage)



46. Over the five reporting cycles, the trend was a slight increase in international cooperation on seizures of precursor chemicals. At the subregional level, all reporting States in North America and Oceania responded in each reporting period that they had engaged in some form of international cooperation in order to seize illicit consignments of precursor chemicals. Increases in international cooperation were observed in the subregions of Sub-Saharan Africa (an increase from 0 per cent to 10 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (an increase from 13 per cent to 29 per cent), Central and Western Europe (an increase from 36 per cent to 57 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (an increase from 22 per cent to 40 per cent).

47. The subregion of Central and Western Europe reported the greatest increase over the reporting periods in the use of international cooperation to investigate precursor diversion. An example of such cooperation was the convening of operational case meetings, which brought together the investigators of a specific case, or series of cases, from all countries concerned in order to identify the steps required for further investigations.

48. Several States reported that they had been actively cooperating in Operation Purple and Operation Topaz, in coordination with the International Narcotics Control Board, to track shipments of potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride. The Government of Bolivia clarified that seizures of precursor chemicals were carried out with the cooperation of other countries through the exchange of timely information. Brazil, Paraguay and Venezuela reported participating in Operation Six Frontiers in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

49. Colombia participated in the international Operation Mosque, a joint undertaking with Spain and the United States of America. In Paraguay, Operation Gran Chaco, conducted in cooperation with law enforcement authorities of Argentina and Bolivia, succeeded in dismantling clandestine laboratories and seizing chemicals. The Islamic Republic of Iran seized a large quantity of acetic anhydride in 2000 in collaboration with another State.

50. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reported on operations being carried out in cooperation with Argentina, Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa. A cooperative investigation by the Australian Federal Police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency resulted in arrests and the seizure of 1.5 tons of pseudoephedrine in March 2004. The pseudoephedrine had been shipped from China to the Philippines, and the perpetrators were planning to import the substance into Australia.

51. The Government of the Netherlands reported that the exchange of information following requests for legal assistance had frequently led to successful action to stop and seize illegal shipments and contributed to the discovery of production sites and criminal organizations and, in some cases, to the conviction of offenders. In addition, applications for export licences had been withdrawn on the basis of information exchanged (for example, in pre-export notifications), resulting in the prevention of illicit transactions. That Government reported that there had been seizures of precursors as a result of cooperation between its drug law enforcement agencies and counterparts from Belgium, Germany and Ireland. The Government of Portugal cited the example of the sending of pre-export notification to European Union authorities concerning ephedra, which had enabled competent authorities to detect and stop suspicious transactions of the substance.

52. The Government of Croatia indicated that, in 2003, a seizure of 20,330 kilograms of acetic anhydride had been made as a result of cooperation between Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro⁷, ⁸ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Government of Germany reported that, in the framework of

⁷ Since 3 June 2006, the membership of Serbia and Montenegro in the United Nations has been continued by Serbia.

⁸ By its resolution 60/264 of 28 June 2006, the General Assembly decided to admit Montenegro to membership in the United Nations.

precursor monitoring and the related international exchange of information, several suspicious transactions had come to official notice and had been investigated accordingly.

53. In December 2006, as a result of Operation Red Dragon, based on a joint investigation involving United Kingdom and United States law enforcement authorities, officials in the United Kingdom arrested a Scottish couple on charges detailed in a federal indictment in the United States, in which it was alleged that the two had illegally supplied chemicals to methamphetamine laboratories throughout the United States. Sales took place through a website, which advertised “discreet” delivery to customers around the world. To date, a total of 100 clandestine methamphetamine laboratories have been dismantled as a result of that investigation. Between August 2004 and November 2006, approximately 319 kg of red phosphorus and 46 kg of iodine were sold to United States customers through the website, quantities sufficient to make over 635 kg of methamphetamine, with a wholesale value of approximately \$12,600,000.

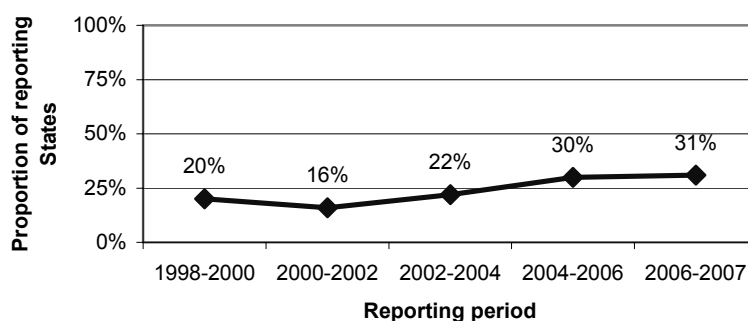
54. Among ASEAN member States, international cooperation in precursor control was increasing, although most law enforcement activities took place at the bilateral level. In Thailand, a precursor control plan for East Asia had been developed under the Greater Mekong subregional memorandum of understanding action plan to address the lack of mechanisms to share experiences and best practice and exchange information. The action plan will help to develop joint actions including backtracking investigations on the manufacture and smuggling of and trade in precursor chemicals.

2. Resources for technical assistance

55. In the fifth reporting period, 31 per cent of reporting States indicated that they provided resources for technical assistance in precursor control to other countries. As reflected in figure XIV, there was an increase of 11 percentage points in the provision of such resources from the baseline period 1998-2000 (20 per cent) to the fifth period (31 per cent).

Figure XIV

Proportion of reporting States providing resources for technical assistance in precursor control to other States, by reporting period
(Percentage)



56. It is apparent that the amount of technical assistance provided to other States increased, however slightly, over the five reporting periods. At the subregional level, the trend was slightly more varied. For example, in Central and Western Europe in the period 1998-2000, 32 per cent of reporting States indicated that they had provided resources for technical assistance to other States, compared with 52 per cent in the period 2006-2007. Increasing trends over the five reporting periods were also observed for North Africa and the Middle East (from 0 per cent to 20 per cent), North America (from 33 per cent to 67 per cent) and East and South-East Asia (from 17 per cent to 30 per cent).

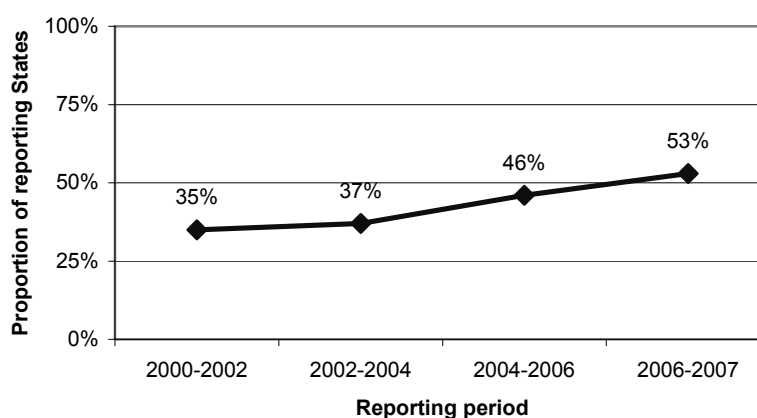
57. Examples of cooperation cited included training assistance programmes and study visits, international conferences, courses, seminars and workshops on the identification of precursor chemicals and narcotics; police and customs joint exercises and operations; the PHARE programme of the European Union; the provision of technical equipment; and precursor projects of UNODC. A specific European Union technical assistance project for the Andean Community and Project Prism were also cited in this regard. The United States reported that it had provided technical assistance, mostly in the form of training, to 17 States and 530 foreign law enforcement officers from Kazakhstan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam.

3. Technical assistance received from other Governments

58. On the question of whether respondents had received technical assistance in precursor control, 53 per cent of States responding in the fifth reporting period reported that they had received such assistance. That was an increase of 18 percentage points from the second reporting period (2000-2002)⁹ in which 35 per cent of respondents reported that they had received such assistance (see figure XV).

Figure XV

Proportion of reporting States that received technical assistance in precursor control, selected reporting periods
(Percentage)



⁹ There are no data available for the first reporting period (1998-2000) because this question was not included in the questionnaire for that period.

59. Over the five reporting periods, the trend was a steady increase in technical assistance in precursor control received by Member States. In a number of subregions, the percentage of States reporting that they had received technical assistance on precursor control had increased since the reporting period 2000-2002. In particular, technical assistance in precursor control in Sub-Saharan Africa had increased from 5 per cent of reporting States in the period 2000-2002 to 20 per cent in the period 2006-2007. Other subregions where increases were noted were North Africa and the Middle East (from 10 per cent to 33 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (from 63 per cent to 78 per cent), Central and Western Europe (from 23 per cent to 50 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (from 10 per cent to 27 per cent).

60. Several Governments indicated that they had received technical assistance from the United States, the European Union and/or UNODC, mostly in the form of training and the provision of technical equipment, testing equipment, mobile laboratories and computer database systems. With the assistance of UNODC, a number of Governments had installed and implemented a national database system, a computerized system for managing information on licences and permits for internationally controlled drugs and precursors. The system was currently being used by the competent authorities of a number of countries for the issuance of precursor licences and import and export licences.

61. In Latin America and the Caribbean, States reported receiving assistance through the regional project for precursor control in the Andean region (PRECAN), which was funded by the European Commission; joint initiatives of UNODC and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States; and Europol.

III. Technical assistance programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

62. UNODC is promoting technical assistance programmes; the sharing of experience and information regarding police, customs and other investigations; and the detection, interception and control of the diversion of chemicals, in order to facilitate transborder cooperation in the control of precursors.

63. Currently, UNODC is implementing regional projects in Central and West Asia and South and South-West Asia, and national projects in Brazil and Afghanistan. Those projects seek to identify causes of diversion into illicit channels from international trade and domestic distribution, to establish adequate licit control mechanisms and to improve law enforcement operations against the smuggling of precursors. They also seek to intensify regional cooperation with and among neighbouring and potential transit countries and to develop knowledge, structures and capacities to conduct effective precursor control operations and interdict smuggled chemicals.

IV. Activities of the International Narcotics Control Board

64. The International Narcotics Control Board initiated, in conjunction with competent national authorities, the international initiative Project Cohesion (formerly known as Operation Purple and Operation Topaz), which brings together relevant institutions and experts from Member States in order to assist Governments in developing and implementing operating procedures to control and more effectively monitor the trade in precursor chemicals. Those initiatives have furthered efforts by Governments to meet the objectives set by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

65. In October 2005, a new phase of Project Cohesion was launched, focusing on time-limited regional operations and the exchange of real-time information, backtracking investigations and the evaluation of activities on a regular basis. Such an approach had already been applied in Project Prism, delivering promising results. Project Prism also collects information on pre-export notifications to monitor shipments of the essential precursor chemicals used to produce methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

66. The overall trend was an increase in the implementation of precursor control measures, with a significant improvement being made since the period 1998-2000. In general, legislation pertaining to the control of precursor chemicals, prior import/export authorizations and the establishment of working procedures for monitoring and identifying suspicious transactions involving precursors was well developed. Encouraging advances have been made in a number of countries receiving technical assistance, as well as in those that established procedures to investigate the diversion of chemicals. Nonetheless, the global implementation rate was below the target levels in some areas, in particular in establishing codes of conduct in cooperation with the chemical industry, making resources available for technical assistance to other countries and international cooperation in seizing illicit consignments of precursor chemicals.

67. In addition to the improved global picture with respect to precursor control, each subregion improved its control measures throughout the process initiated by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. The subregions of North America and Oceania reported the most consistent level of implementation of measures for precursor control throughout the 10 years. In the subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean, States reported considerably improved precursor control measures over the 10-year reported period, with the rate of implementation rising from 57 per cent in the period 1998-2000 to 70 per cent in the period 2006-2007. In North Africa and the Middle East, the rate of implementation of precursor control measures hovered between 60 per cent and 70 per cent over the 10-year reporting period, with the greatest improvement being made towards the end of that period.

68. In Central, South and South-West Asia, the rate of implementation of precursor control measures improved from 62 per cent in the period 1998-2000 to 71 per cent in the period 2006-2007. In East and South-East Asia, the rate of implementation of precursor control measures by reporting States remained at about 75 per cent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of implementation of precursor control measures improved considerably, rising from 44 per cent in the period 1998-2000 to 61 per cent in the period 2006-2007.

69. In Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the rate of implementation of precursor control measures rose from 59 per cent in the period 1998-2000 to 65 per cent in the period 2006-2007. In Central and Western Europe, implementation of measures for precursor control also improved, rising from 65 per cent in the period 1998-2000 to 82 per cent in the period 2006-2007.

70. Although the overall trend in implementation of precursor control measures was positive, attention should be paid to emerging issues associated with precursor control. Those measures include the increasing use of advanced technology for trafficking in controlled substances, as evidenced by Internet pharmacies; the use of third countries in attempted diversions; and the use of substitute chemicals not currently subject to international control.

71. Many States still lacked the resources or the capacity to determine whether a specific import or export of precursor chemicals was for legitimate use, or for illicit drug manufacture. Consequently, large quantities of the key chemicals required for illicit drug manufacture were still being diverted for use in clandestine laboratories. The problem of effective control was made more difficult because many shipments were directed through third countries in an attempt to disguise their real purpose and final destination or to exploit weaknesses in control systems. In addition, as the internationally controlled chemicals covered by the 1988 Convention have become more difficult to obtain, traffickers have sought to obtain new chemicals that may be used as substitutes for those that are closely monitored. As a result, there has been a move towards new methods for illicit manufacture using substances that were not under international control.

B. Recommendations

72. The following recommendations aimed at enhancing the precursor control capacities of Member States are brought to the attention of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs:

(a) Member States, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central, South and South-West Asia, should continue to address deficient or inadequate domestic legislation on the control of precursor chemicals;

(b) Member States should include in their framework for precursor control a system for prior import and export authorization;

(c) Member States that have not yet done so, in particular in the subregions of North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, should establish working procedures for monitoring and identifying suspicious transactions involving precursors;

(d) Member States in all subregions should establish codes of conduct to enable effective collaboration with the chemical industry;

(e) Member States, in particular in the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean and Central and Western Europe, should take measures to prevent trade in and diversion of materials and equipment for the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances;

(f) Member States that have not yet done so, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central, South and South-West Asia, should encourage their national law enforcement authorities to put in place procedures to investigate diversions of chemicals and clandestine laboratories;

(g) Member States should, whenever possible, cooperate at the international level in investigations and seizures of suspicious shipments and illicit consignments;

(h) Member States that are in a position to offer technical assistance should do so, and Member States that are in a position to accept technical assistance should do so. The ongoing, practical training of officials in precursor control, together with their counterparts in the chemical industry, is strongly encouraged;

(i) Governments should continue to prioritize investigations of intercepted and seized shipments of precursor chemicals and to rigorously follow up on all information provided on attempted diversions;

(j) Member States should make the greatest possible use of new and developing technologies to support effective national and international control measures. In addition, Member States should support the increasingly important field of forensic support for precursor control and the investigation of trafficking offences.

73. The Commission may also wish to explore the following additional recommendations:

(a) A universal code of conduct for the chemical industry should be promoted;

(b) Member States should endorse and adhere to effective control procedures such as PEN Online.
