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**Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and  
Related Matters in the Near and Middle East****Forty-seventh session**

Antalya, Turkey, 19-23 November 2012

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Current situation with respect to regional and subregional  
cooperation in countering drug trafficking****Statistics on drug trafficking trends in the Near and  
Middle East, South, West and Central Asia****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The present note by the Secretariat provides an overview of the current trends in illicit drug production and trafficking in the member States of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, based on the latest information available to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The report provides information on illicit drug cultivation and production and statistics on drug seizures for 2009, 2010 and, where available, 2011.

Cannabis seizure and eradication data suggest that the production of cannabis herb is increasingly widespread, but the small-scale and localized nature of cannabis cultivation and production make it difficult to assess. In 2010, seizures of cannabis resin by member States of the Subcommission accounted for almost 40 per cent of the global total.

The levels of cultivation of opium poppy and opium production rose in Afghanistan, where the decline in opium production that had taken place in 2010 was largely reversed. In 2010, seizures of opium by member States of the Subcommission accounted for 99 per cent of the global total.

The global supply chain of amphetamine-type stimulants continued to evolve in terms of the extent of manufacture, patterns in trafficking routes and the nature of substances involved. In 2010, seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants by member States of the Subcommission accounted for more than 22 per cent of the global total.

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\* Arabic, English and Russian are the working languages of the subsidiary body.

\*\* UNODC/SUBCOM/47/1.



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## I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of the developments in the production and trafficking of the main illicit drugs worldwide and with a particular focus on the member States of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East. It is based on the 2012 Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking,<sup>1</sup> which contains information drawn from the replies to the Annual Reports Questionnaire (ARQ) submitted by Governments.<sup>2</sup> The 2012 World Drug Report was used as a supplementary source of information.

2. The report addresses the illicit cultivation of cannabis, opium poppy and coca bush and the illicit production of cannabis derivatives, opium and cocaine for 2009, 2010 and, where available, 2011. With regard to drug trafficking, the report concentrates on seizure statistics for 2010 and, where available, 2011 and provides an update on trafficking trends for cannabis derivatives, opiates, cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS).<sup>3</sup>

## II. Trends in illicit drug crop cultivation and the production of plant-based drugs in the Near and Middle East, South, West and Central Asia

### A. Cannabis

3. In contrast with other drug crops such as coca bush and opium poppy, cannabis plant lends itself to diverse cultivation methods and is therefore easily grown in varied environments. This in turn makes assessment of the extent of cannabis plant cultivation and cannabis production very difficult. Nevertheless, reports of cannabis plant cultivation, together with indirect indicators, such as seizures of cannabis, suggest that cultivation of cannabis plant and production of cannabis occurred in most countries worldwide.

4. Conversely, production of cannabis resin tended to be concentrated in just a few countries, of which Afghanistan and Morocco were the most prominent examples. The most recent cannabis survey conducted by UNODC in Morocco took place in 2005. The total area under cannabis cultivation in that country was

<sup>1</sup> E/CN.7/2012/4.

<sup>2</sup> As indicated in the 2012 World Drug Report, challenges remain in making such estimates because of data gaps and the varying quality of the available data. One major problem is the irregularity and incompleteness in ARQ reporting by member States. Irregular reporting may result in absence of data for some years, and may influence the reported trend in a given year. Secondly, submitted questionnaires are not always complete or comprehensive, and thirdly, much of the data collected are subject to limitations and biases. These issues affect the reliability, quality and comparability of the information received.

<sup>3</sup> Amphetamine-type stimulants, as defined by UNODC, consist of: (a) amphetamines (amphetamine, methamphetamine); (b) "ecstasy" (methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)) and related substances such as methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) (the "ecstasy"-group substances); and (c) a number of other synthetic stimulants such as methcathinone, phentermine and fenetylline.

estimated at 72,500 hectares (ha) in 2005. Moroccan authorities estimated the net area under cannabis cultivation (after eradication efforts) to be 60,000 ha in 2008 and 47,500 ha in 2010.

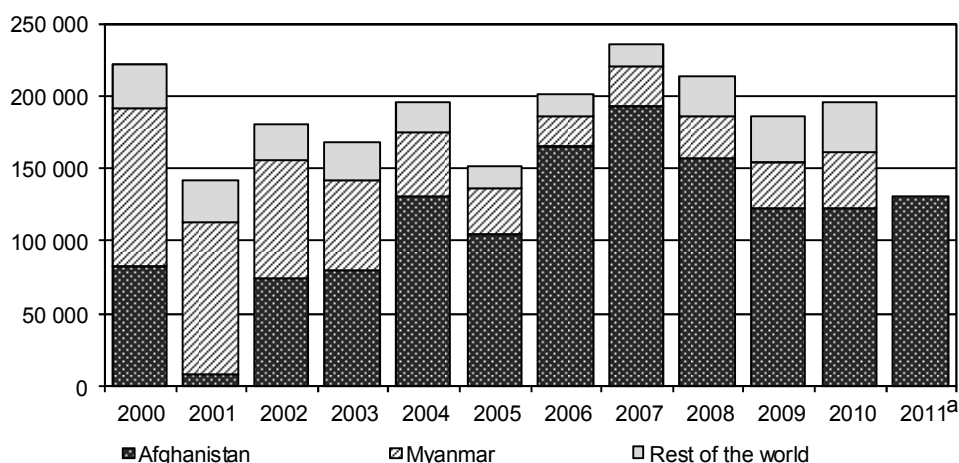
5. In 2010, UNODC and the Government of Afghanistan jointly carried out a survey on cannabis cultivation in that country, and the results showed that cannabis had become a competitor to opium poppy as a lucrative crop for farmers. Although the extent of cannabis cultivation and production could only be estimated as ranges, with a significant level of uncertainty, Afghanistan had clearly become one of the most important countries worldwide in terms of cannabis resin production. The area under cannabis cultivation was estimated to be between 9,000 and 29,000 ha, and production of cannabis resin was estimated to be between 1,200 and 3,700 tons.

## B. Opium

6. In 2010, the area under illicit opium poppy cultivation was estimated at 195,677 ha globally, only slightly more than in 2009 (185,935 ha). In 2010, Afghanistan accounted for 63 per cent of the total, continuing to be the country with by far the largest area under cultivation (see figure I). In 2010, the opium poppy crop in Afghanistan was severely affected by disease, so that opium production declined significantly there and, consequently, at the global level. Global opium poppy production in 2010 was estimated at 4,860 tons, down from 7,853 tons in 2009. In 2011, however, the decline in opium production in Afghanistan was largely (although not entirely) reversed.

Figure I

### Opium poppy cultivation worldwide, 2000-2011 (Hectares)



<sup>a</sup> For 2011, data were available for Afghanistan only.

7. In 2011, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan reached 131,000 ha, up from 123,000 ha in 2010, while opium production amounted to 5,800 tons, rising significantly from the level in 2010 (3,600 tons) but still below the levels in 2006-2008. Although the southern and western parts of the country continued to

account for more than 95 per cent of the area under cultivation in 2011, cultivation of opium poppy on a non-negligible scale re-emerged in two northern provinces (Baghlan and Faryab) and one eastern province (Kapisa), so that the number of poppy-free provinces<sup>4</sup> fell from 20 to 17. The province of Helmand continued to account for approximately one half of the total area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. Significant increases were registered in the provinces of Uruzgan and Farah.

### **C. Amphetamine-type stimulants**

8. Unlike opium poppy and coca plant, the manufacture of ATS is not limited to particular geographical locations and ATS laboratories tend to be located close to the consumption markets. Meanwhile, precursors and other chemicals required for the manufacture of ATS are trafficked across regions.

9. In 2009, the seizure of about 10,600 ATS-related laboratories were reported — a higher number than that in 2008 (8,400 laboratories). Among all types of ATS, methamphetamine continues to be the most widely manufactured ATS. The number of its laboratories increased significantly, up from 8,300 in 2008 to 10,200 in 2009.

## **III. Trends in drug trafficking in the Near and Middle East, South, West and Central Asia**

### **A. Cannabis**

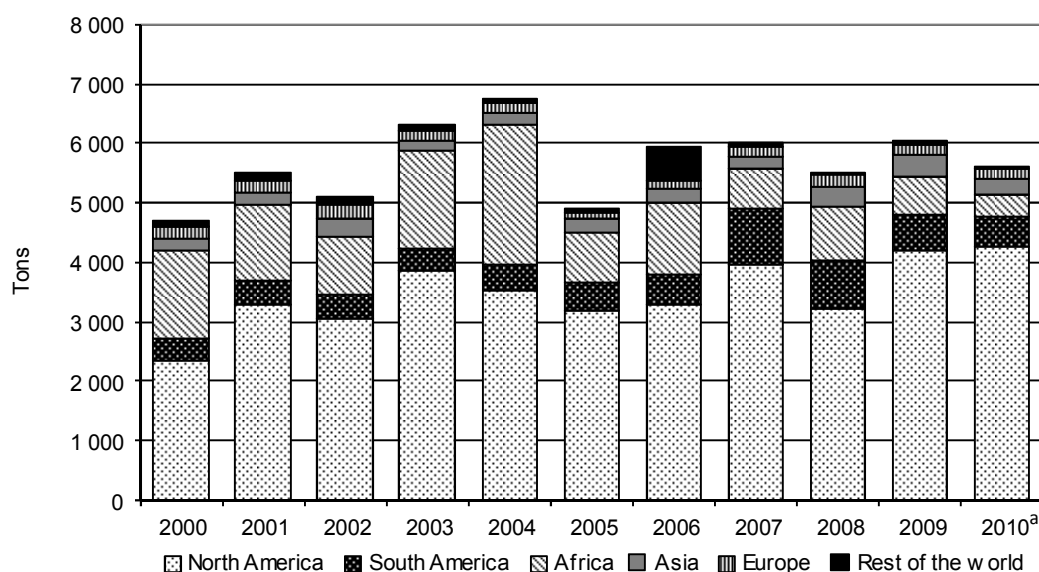
#### **1. Cannabis herb**

10. Cannabis herb continued to be illicitly used, trafficked and produced in many countries. Given the relative ease with which it may be produced, illicit demand for cannabis herb could often be met by local production, resulting in a pattern whereby trafficking flows tended to be localized in comparison with those for other plant-based drugs. Partial data for 2010 suggest that global seizures of cannabis herb remained stable in comparison with 2009. Significant quantities of cannabis herb were seized in all regions (see figure II).

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<sup>4</sup> “Poppy-free provinces” are provinces in which the total area under opium poppy cultivation is less than 100 ha.

Figure II  
**Seizures of cannabis herb worldwide, 2000-2010**  
 (Tons)



<sup>a</sup> Data for 2010 were incomplete at the time of preparation of the present report.  
 Total excludes seizures in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

11. Several countries recorded large annual amounts of cannabis herb seized. Cannabis herb seizures rose sharply in Egypt, from 63 tons in 2009 to 107 tons in 2010. The upward trend in the amount of cannabis herb seized also continued in Turkey, where seizures stood at 5.5 tons in 2002, reached 44 tons in 2010. Morocco continued to seize large quantities of “kif”, a dried form of cannabis that can be further processed into cannabis resin.<sup>5</sup> Seizures of “kif” in Morocco fell from 223 tons in 2009 to 187 tons in 2010.

## 2. Cannabis resin

12. Production of cannabis resin, in contrast with that of cannabis herb, was concentrated in a small number of countries, among which the most prominent examples were Afghanistan and Morocco. Consequently, trafficking in cannabis resin followed more distinct flows, with large quantities reaching Europe (mainly via Spain) from Morocco and reaching Pakistan from Afghanistan. According to the *World Drug Report 2012* (Statistical Annex),<sup>6</sup> seizures of cannabis resin by member States of the Subcommittee accounted for almost 40 per cent of the global total in 2010.

13. Although the illicit supply of cannabis resin from Afghanistan may have made inroads into new markets, the illicit market for cannabis resin in Europe continued

<sup>5</sup> H. Stambouli and others, “Cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* L. in northern Morocco”, *Bulletin on Narcotics*, vol. LVII, Nos. 1 and 2 (2005), pp. 79-118.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XI.1.

to be supplied mainly by production in Morocco. In 2009 and 2010, the majority of reporting countries in Western and Central Europe continued to identify Morocco as a country of origin for cannabis resin, although two countries made reference to Afghanistan.

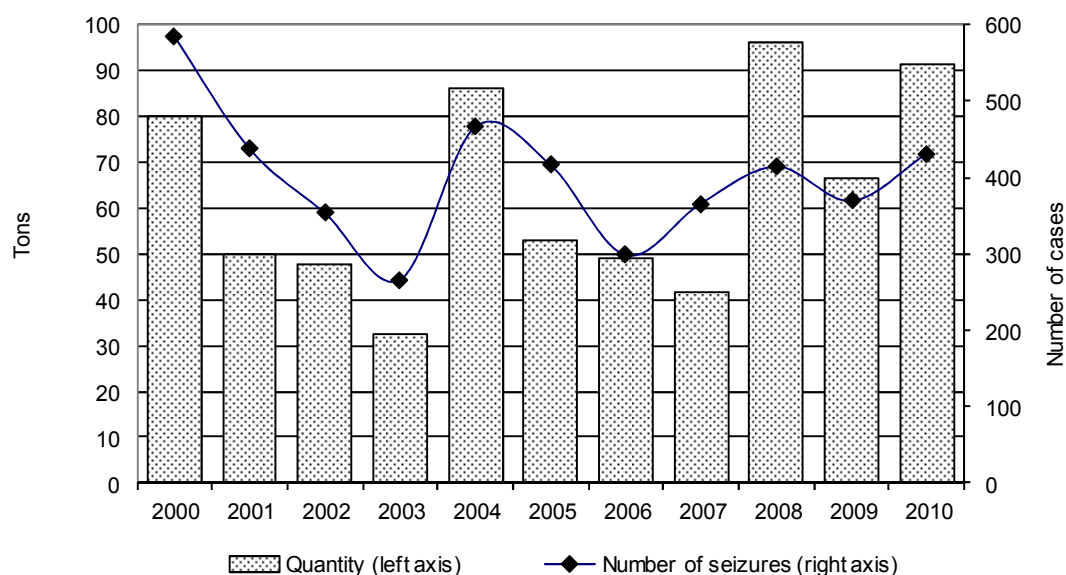
14. In recent years, Afghanistan has increased in importance as a source of cannabis resin. In 2009 and 2010, Afghanistan was mentioned as a country of origin for cannabis resin by countries, including in the Near and Middle East and Central Asia. The amount of cannabis resin seized in Afghanistan fell from a record level in 2008 (271 tons) to a relatively low level of 10.5 tons in 2009, accounting for slightly less than 1 per cent of the total amount seized worldwide in 2009.

15. In Pakistan, seizures of cannabis resin increased sharply between 2007 and 2009 and edged slightly higher in 2010 to 212 tons, almost twice the level in 2007 and the highest level since 1995. Pakistan assessed that all of the cannabis resin seized on its territory in 2010 originated in Afghanistan and identified Canada and Sri Lanka as countries of destination. In 2010, 46 per cent of significant individual drug seizures reported by Pakistan involved cannabis resin (see figure III).

Figure III

**Significant cannabis resin consignments originating in Afghanistan and seized in Pakistan, 2000-2010**

(Tons)



*Note:* The above figure is based on records of significant seizure cases submitted by Pakistan on a case-by-case basis.

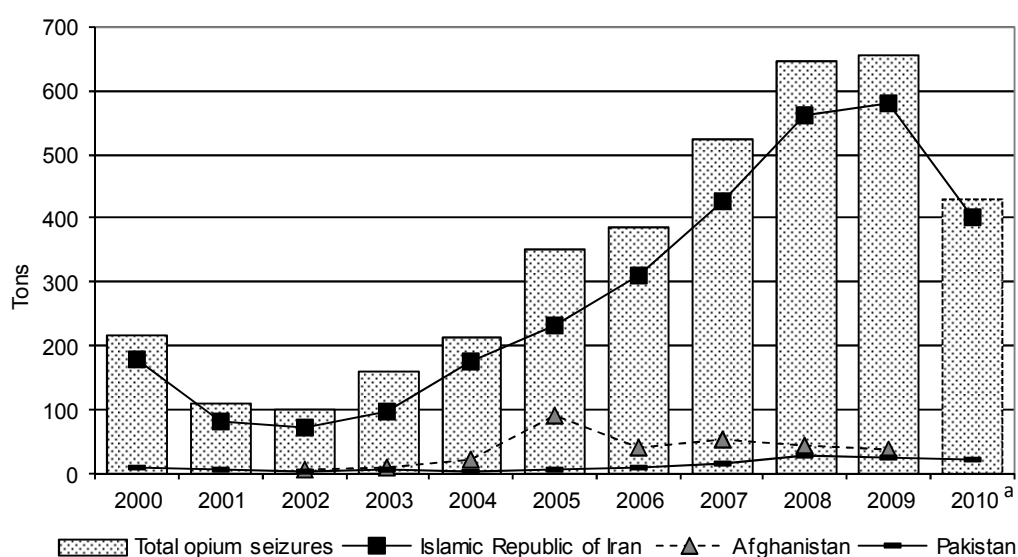
## B. Opiates

### 1. Opium

16. Global seizures of opium grew at a marked, sustained pace during the period 2002-2008 and stabilized in 2009 at 653 tons. According to the *World Drug Report 2012* (Statistical Annex),<sup>7</sup> seizures of opium by member States of the Subcommission accounted for 99 per cent of the global total in 2010. Incomplete data for 2010 suggest that, following a significant decline in opium production in Afghanistan, seizures of opium declined significantly. Since 2004, three countries — Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan — have consistently accounted for more than 90 per cent of global seizures of opium (see figure IV).

Figure IV

**Global seizures of opium, 2000-2010**  
(Tons)



<sup>a</sup> For 2010, no data were available for Afghanistan. The total for 2010 is based on incomplete data and subject to revision.

17. According to UNODC data, the Islamic Republic of Iran has, every year since 1980, registered the highest annual total amount of opium seized by a single country. During the period 2002-2009 in particular, opium seizures increased almost eightfold, climbing from 73 tons to 580 tons. In 2010, the trend was reversed, as such seizures fell to 401 tons.

### 2. Morphine

18. As in the case of opium, seizures of morphine continued to be concentrated in or close to Afghanistan. Every year from 2005 onwards, three countries — Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan — together accounted for

<sup>7</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XI.1.

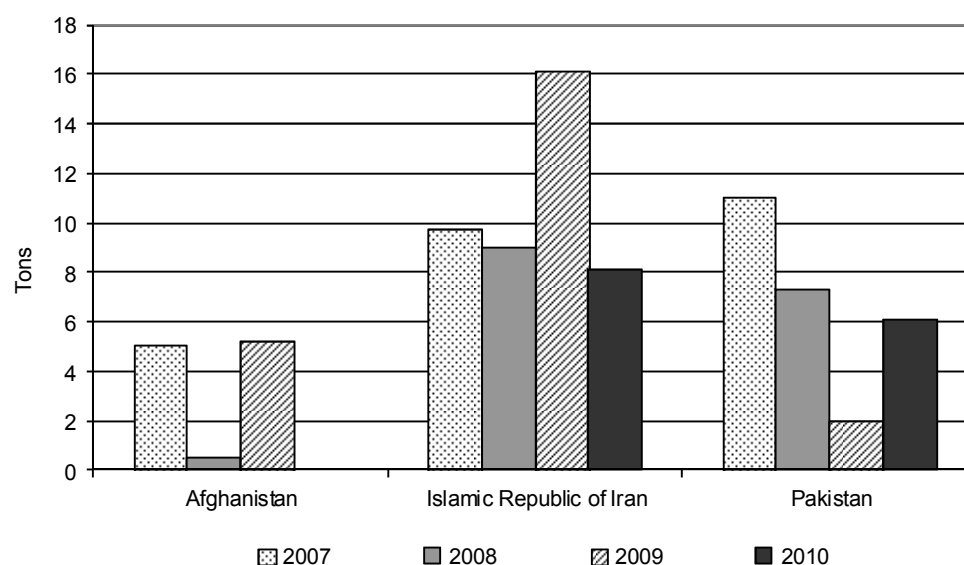


more than 90 per cent of the total amount of morphine seized worldwide. Since 2008, the Islamic Republic of Iran has registered the highest amount of morphine seized by a single country. In 2009, morphine seizures shifted markedly from Pakistan, where they declined by 73 per cent, to the Islamic Republic of Iran, where they rose by 80 per cent. In 2010, however, morphine seizures in both countries returned to levels comparable to those recorded in 2008, amounting to 8.1 tons in the Islamic Republic of Iran and 6.1 tons in Pakistan (see figure V). The large quantities seized outside Afghanistan suggest that the supply of morphine exceeded the limited demand for that substance among illicit drug users; it was not clear whether the surplus was further processed into heroin (and if so, where).

Figure V

**Seizures of morphine in Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, 2007-2010**

(Tons)



### 3. Heroin

19. Global seizures of heroin increased significantly during the period 2006-2009, reaching 76 tons. Incomplete data indicate that the global total stabilized in 2010 (see figure VI). Large quantities of heroin continued to be smuggled along the established route, often referred to as the Balkan route, leading from Afghanistan to Western and Central Europe via the Middle East and South-Eastern Europe. In terms of the amount of heroin seized, the largest totals continued to be reported by Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey, two important transit countries on the Balkan route. During the period 2004-2009, the total amount of heroin seized in each of the two countries appeared to be very closely related, but 2010 saw a marked departure from the trend, with seizures of heroin in the Islamic Republic of Iran continuing to increase, while such seizures decreased in Turkey (see figure VII). Nevertheless, significant quantities of heroin were also seized closer to the major illicit markets for heroin.

Figure VI  
**Seizures of heroin worldwide and in selected countries, 2000-2010**  
 (Tons)

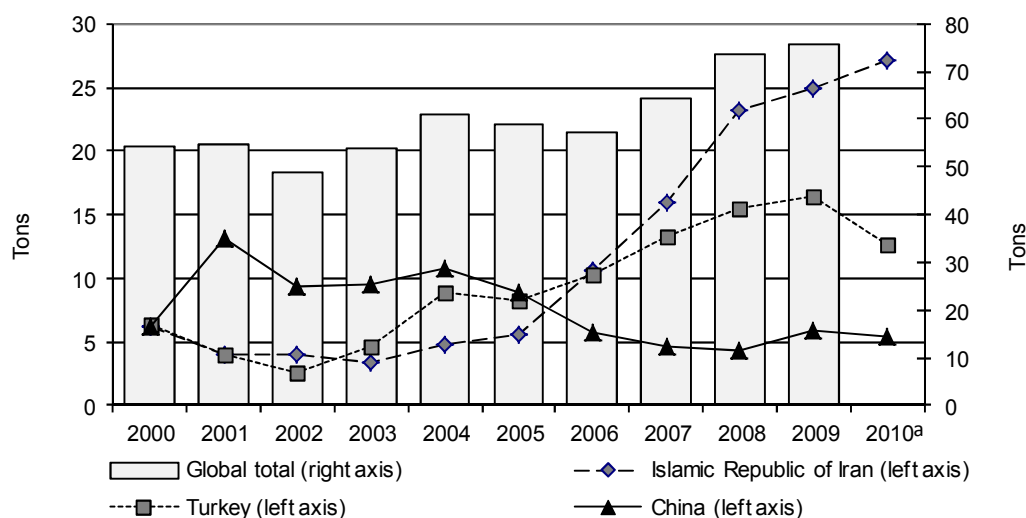
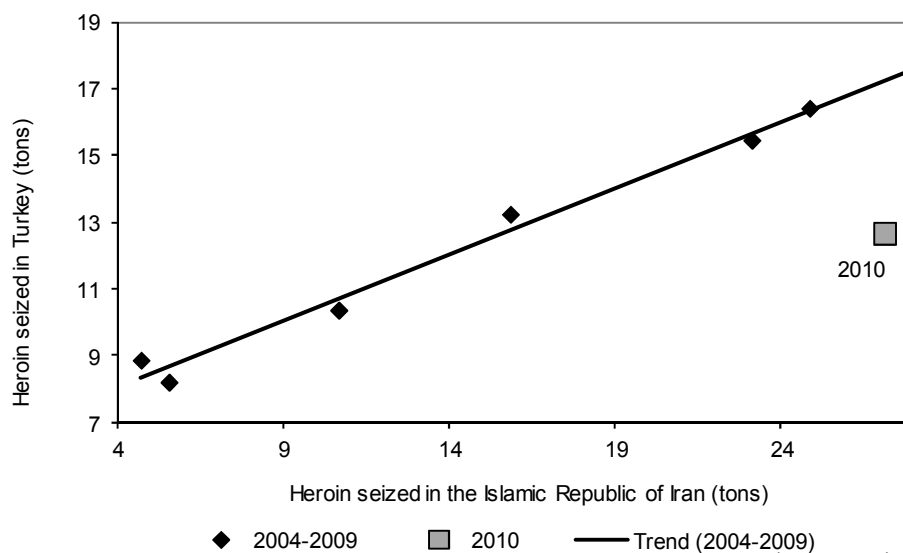


Figure VII  
**Seizures of heroin in Turkey in relation to seizures of heroin in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2004-2010**  
 (Tons)



20. Between 2003 and 2010, seizures of heroin in the Islamic Republic of Iran rose eightfold, reaching 27 tons in 2010, a rate of growth equivalent to seven year-on-year increases of 35 per cent. Iranian authorities also reported an

increase in opiates transiting the country's territory in 2011, owing to the rebound in opium production in Afghanistan in 2011. In Pakistan, seizures of heroin doubled in 2010, reaching 4.2 tons. According to provisional data for 2011 from the authorities of Pakistan,<sup>8</sup> the increase continued into 2011, with seizures reaching 5.3 tons, the highest level in that country since 2003.

21. In spite of the increases in seizures of heroin in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, there were signs of the availability of heroin being reduced near some of the major illicit heroin markets that were supplied by heroin originating in Afghanistan. In Turkey, seizures of heroin fell from 16.4 tons in 2009 to 12.7 tons in 2010. In addition to Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, Turkey mentioned Iraq as a transit country for heroin consignments entering its territory. Moreover, while heroin was smuggled into Turkey exclusively by land, 10 per cent of heroin exiting the country was smuggled by sea. According to Turkish authorities,<sup>9</sup> the decrease in opium production in Afghanistan in 2010 also had an impact on seizures of heroin in Turkey.

22. Heroin from Afghanistan continued to be smuggled northwards via Central Asia into the Russian Federation, which identified Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as Azerbaijan and Iran (Islamic Republic of), as major transit countries for heroin reaching its territory in 2010. With the notable exception of Uzbekistan, the overall trend in seizures of heroin in Central Asia, the major transit area used for smuggling heroin from Afghanistan into the Russian Federation, was downward in 2010.

## C. Cocaine

23. The world's main illicit markets for cocaine, in North America and Western and Central Europe, continue to be supplied by trafficking routes originating in South America, notably the Andean countries. Cocaine is mainly smuggled northwards into North America or across the Atlantic into Europe (directly or via the Caribbean or Africa).

24. Global seizures of cocaine have remained stable for several years, ranging from 690 tons to 731 tons during the period 2006-2009. At the time of preparation of the present report, incomplete data suggested a continued stable trend in 2010 or possibly a slight decrease, with the partial total standing at 653 tons, compared with 731 tons in 2009. Several regions where cocaine trafficking has so far been limited showed a clear upward trend. In 2010, several countries not previously associated with cocaine trafficking or abuse on a large scale, including Pakistan and Turkey, registered moderate but sharply increasing (in comparison with 2009) seizures of cocaine.

<sup>8</sup> Country report submitted by Pakistan to the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, at its forty-sixth session, held in Vienna from 19 to 22 December 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Country report submitted by Turkey to the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East at its forty-sixth session.

## D. Amphetamine-type stimulants and other synthetic psychotropic substances

25. According to the *World Drug Report 2012* (Statistical Annex),<sup>10</sup> seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants, including amphetamine, methamphetamine, non-specified amphetamine-type stimulants, other stimulants and prescription stimulants, by member States of the Subcommittee accounted for more than 22 per cent of the global total in 2010.

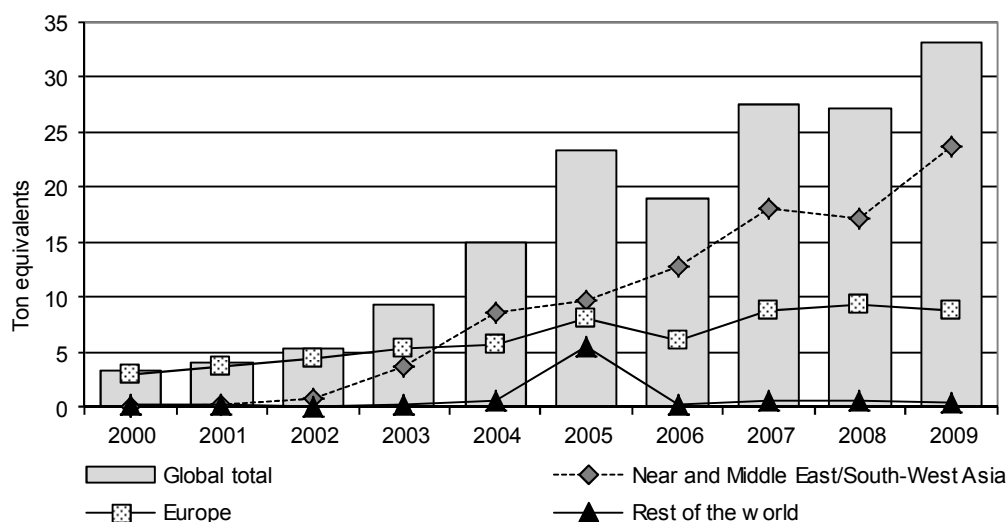
### 1. Amphetamine

26. Global seizures of amphetamine followed a generally upward trend during the period 2000-2009, driven in part by increases in Captagon seizures registered in the Near and Middle East/South-West Asia, which overtook Europe, the other major illicit market for amphetamine, in terms of total quantity seized (see figure VIII). Incomplete data suggest that seizures in the Near and Middle East/South-West Asia may have receded in 2010. In particular, seizures in Saudi Arabia, a major illicit market for Captagon tablets, fell from 12.4 tons in 2009 (the largest worldwide that year) to 8.8 tons in 2010, while seizures in the Syrian Arab Republic fell from 22 million tablets in 2009 to 12 million tablets in 2010. Jordan registered seizures of 29 million tablets in 2009. For several years, Europe has been the source of the amphetamine present in Captagon tablets seized in the Near and Middle East/South-West Asia, and countries such as Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey have been used as transit areas; it is unclear to what extent those countries may have been supplanted by others.

Figure VIII

#### Breakdown of global seizures of amphetamine, 2000-2009

(Ton equivalents)



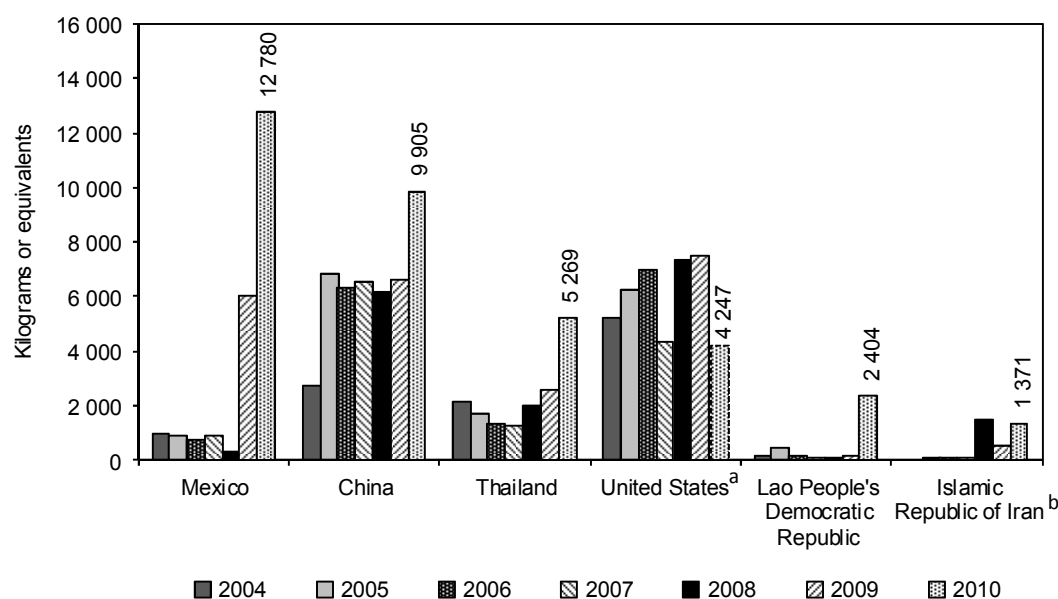
<sup>10</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XI.1.

## 2. Methamphetamine

27. During the period 2004-2010, the global market for methamphetamine appeared to be expanding significantly (see figure IX). Methamphetamine remained widely available in several established illicit markets, and new patterns of illicit methamphetamine manufacture, trafficking and use appeared to emerge which involved countries and regions not previously associated with the phenomenon. Globally, the amount of methamphetamine seized rose from 22 tons in 2008 to 31 tons in 2009; preliminary data suggested that the total for 2010 would exceed 40 tons.

Figure IX

### Seizures of methamphetamine in selected countries, 2004-2010 (Kilograms or equivalents)



<sup>a</sup> For the United States, seizure data for 2010 are preliminary.

<sup>b</sup> For the Islamic Republic of Iran, seizure data for 2009 refer to the first nine months only.

28. Reports from various countries pointed to a recent pattern of methamphetamine being smuggled out of the Islamic Republic of Iran into East and South-East Asia. Iranian authorities seized 1.4 tons of methamphetamine, as well as an unspecified number of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories, in 2010.

## 3. “Ecstasy”-type substances

29. In recent years, the global market for “ecstasy” showed a marked decline, with global seizures falling from the record level of 16.6 tons in 2007 to 6.0 tons in 2008 and 5.0 tons in 2009 (see figure X). The decline was possibly the result of reduced availability of the precursors required for the manufacture of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, commonly known as “ecstasy”). It was accompanied by a tendency to resort to other psychoactive ingredients, some of

which are not under international control, both alongside MDMA and as an alternative to that substance. As illicit manufacturers of MDMA switch to other methods for manufacturing MDMA and alternative precursors, however, the availability of MDMA is susceptible to a possible rebound. Incomplete data for 2010 suggest that, while the availability of MDMA was still relatively low, the downward trend had stabilized or possibly reversed.

Figure X  
**Seizures of “ecstasy” worldwide, 2000-2009**  
 (Ton equivalents)

