



INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

# Report

## of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2010



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odourless, victims may not suspect that they have been drugged and thus may not consider undertaking a forensic examination of their blood or urine. Third, substances such as *gamma*-butyrolactone (GBL) and GHB are metabolized very quickly and may not, after a few hours, leave any traces in blood or urine. In addition, in the case of sexual assault, in some cultures the nature of the crime makes it difficult for the victim to seek professional help, especially when the assailant had been acquainted with the victim before the crime. Victims may not report such incidents out of shame or fear of being blamed or because of the stigma that, in some societies, is associated with being a victim of such crime. Therefore, law enforcement authorities dealing with cases involving drug-facilitated crime should undergo special training on interrogating the victims of such crime. The Board therefore trusts that Governments will not limit their search for such data to official criminal records but will also continue looking for empirical data, for example, by contacting social workers, including special services and crisis centres for women, and the medical profession, to obtain realistic estimates of the extent of the problem.

282. The Board is pleased to note that many countries have introduced countermeasures to tackle this problem, as recommended in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 53/7. In that connection, the Board welcomes initiatives started by some Governments, in cooperation with industry, to prevent the diversion and use of medicines for the commission of drug-facilitated crime, similar to what was done with flunitrazepam in the 1990s, without having a negative impact on the bioavailability and medical use of the preparations in question. The Board calls on all Governments that have not yet done so and that are affected by such problems, to consider taking appropriate measures to prevent the covert administration of psychoactive substances to commit sexual assault or other crime.

283. The Board notes the actions taken and planned by UNODC and interested Governments to develop common definitions and guidelines for forensic analyses, with a view to identifying the presence of psychoactive substances used to commit sexual assault or other criminal acts. The Board welcomes those initiatives and will support them in accordance with its mandate. Furthermore, the Board will continue to monitor problems experienced with drug-facilitated crime, share the information collected with UNODC and other international bodies, such as WHO, take

further action as necessary to develop appropriate countermeasures, and include in future annual reports newly received information on the subject, as applicable.

#### **6. Plant material containing psychoactive substances**

284. Many plants that contain psychoactive substances with stimulating or hallucinogenic properties, as well as preparations made from those plants, have traditional uses in some countries or regions; for example, some are used in religious rites. Under the 1961 Convention and that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, plants that are the sources of narcotic drugs, such as cannabis plant, opium poppy and coca bush, are subject to specific control measures. In contrast, although some active stimulant or hallucinogenic ingredients contained in certain plants are controlled under the 1971 Convention, no plants are currently controlled under that Convention or under the 1988 Convention. Preparations (e.g. decoctions for oral use) made from plants containing those active ingredients are also not under international control.

285. Examples of such plants or plant material include khat (*Catha edulis*), whose active ingredients cathinone and cathine are listed in Schedules I and III of the 1971 Convention; ayahuasca, a preparation made from plants indigenous to the Amazon basin of South America, mainly a jungle vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and another tryptamine-rich plant (*Psychotria viridis*) containing a number of psychoactive alkaloids, including DMT; the peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsii*), containing mescaline; magic mushrooms (*Psilocybe*), which contain psilocybine and psilocine; *Ephedra*, containing ephedrine; “kratom” (*Mitragyna speciosa*), a plant indigenous to South-East Asia that contains mitragynine; iboga (*Tabernanthe iboga*), a plant that contains the hallucinogen ibogaine and is native to the western part of Central Africa; varieties of *Datura* containing hyoscyamine (atropine) and scopolamine; and *Salvia divinorum*, a plant originating in Mexico that contains the hallucinogen salvinorin A.

286. The Board notes increased interest in the recreational use of such plant materials. In addition, such plants are often used outside of their original socio-economic context to exploit substance abusers. As they can be transported quickly by air to any country in the world, the use of such plants or of

preparations made from such plants, is no longer limited to the regions where the plants grow, or to the communities that have traditionally used the plants. Potential abusers have been using the Internet to inform themselves about the stimulating or hallucinogenic properties of such plant material, about the fact that the plant material is not under international control and about Internet sites through which the plant material can be purchased. As a result, increased trade, use and abuse of such plant material have been noted in many countries. The use of such plant material may have adverse effects on the abuser, including nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, poisoning and flashbacks. In addition, any impairment resulting from a person's use of such plant material might have serious consequences for the well-being of other persons — consequences similar to those of driving under the influence of psychoactive substances.

287. The Board notes that, in view of the health risks associated with the abuse of such plant material, some Governments have placed certain types of plant material and preparations under national control. The Board recommends that Governments that have not yet done so and have experienced problems with regard to persons engaging in the recreational use of or trafficking in such plant material, to remain vigilant (since the risks associated with such use may increase) and to notify the Board and the WHO of those problems. The Board recommends that Governments should consider controlling such plant material at the national level where necessary.

potassium permanganate still remains difficult to assess, the Colombian authorities indicate that potassium permanganate may be illicitly manufactured in sufficient quantities to cover most of the traffickers' needs for the substance. In 2009, two laboratories illicitly manufacturing potassium permanganate were destroyed in the country.

499. In the past three years, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru have strengthened controls over the licit trade in ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, including in the form of pharmaceutical preparations. The measures taken included restricting or banning the import and use of those substances. Nonetheless, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have continued to be smuggled. In 2009, a total of over 1.5 tons of raw ephedrine were seized by Chilean, Colombian and Venezuelan authorities. In addition, Argentina, Brazil and Colombia reported seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the form of pharmaceutical preparations. In July 2010, the Colombian law enforcement authorities seized 2 million tablets containing pseudoephedrine in a shipment bound for Honduras. The Board encourages Governments to use the "Guidelines for a voluntary code of practice for the chemical industry", developed by the Board, to further strengthen control over the precursor chemical trade in their countries, in cooperation with the private sector.

#### *Substances not under international control*

500. The Governments of countries in South America continue to pay attention to the use of psychoactive substances that are not currently under international control. In January 2010, the National Anti-Drugs Council (CONAD) of Brazil adopted a resolution on the use of ayahuasca for religious purposes. In March 2010, the Government of Argentina approved decree 299/2010, pursuant to which ketamine was included on the list of substances subject to national control.

501. The health and drug regulatory authorities of several countries in the Americas have recently focused on herbal mixtures marketed under the brand name Spice. As small amounts of synthetic cannabinoids have been identified in such mixtures, there is concern that the use of Spice products may have negative effects on health. The CICAD group of experts on chemical substances has recently prepared for all

CICAD member States factsheets on scopolamine (hyoscine) and Spice products.

### **5. Abuse and treatment**

502. The latest estimates on drug abuse indicate that cannabis continues to be the most abused drug in South America, where about 7.5 million persons aged 15-64 used that drug during the past year, three times the number of persons who used cocaine during the past year.

503. The Board notes that recently, a number of countries in South America have used common methodologies in conducting surveys on drug abuse in the region. For example, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay conducted the second comparative analysis of drug use among students in secondary schools. According to the results of the analysis, cannabis herb is the drug most commonly abused among students aged 13-17. On average, almost 11 per cent of the students in those six countries had used the substance at least once in their lifetime; the percentages in the individual countries ranged from 4 per cent in Peru to almost 23 per cent in Chile. The Board wishes to encourage the Governments of the countries in South America to periodically carry out, in cooperation with CICAD and UNODC, standardized drug abuse surveys to enable the magnitude of the drug abuse problem to be assessed and compared in countries throughout the region.

504. The results of the first national survey on the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among university students in 27 Brazilian state capitals, announced by the Government of Brazil in June 2010, indicate that 8 per cent of the university students in the survey were at risk of becoming dependent on cannabis. The Brazilian study also revealed that almost half of the surveyed students had used a psychoactive substance at least once in their lifetime and that there had been an increase in the abuse of synthetic drugs (amphetamines and MDMA ("ecstasy")). The drug most often abused among university students was cannabis (13.8 per cent), followed by amphetamines (10.5 per cent).

505. Past-year prevalence of cocaine abuse among the general population in South America (0.9-1.0 per cent) is far lower than in North America (2.0 per cent) but higher than in Central America (0.5-0.6 per cent). According to UNODC, in South America cases