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Abstract:

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^Hy the Board, there has been an increase in cocaine abuse, as well as an upward trend in heroin abuse in several countries. The main drug of abuse for the continent continues to be cannabis. Due to the situation in former Yugoslavia, the Balkan route, one of the main trafficking routes, has shifted north to include Hungary and former Czechoslovakia.

34. While crack use still remains sporadic, the use of LSD seems to be re-emerging, the Netherlands being its main source. The more liberal drug policies of the Netherlands arising from the legal distinction made by the Government between hard and soft drugs continues to be of concern to the Board. Based on findings from its mission, which visited the country in October 1992, the Board considers that the policy of the authorities with respect to cannabis is contrary to provisions of the 1961 Convention. The Board is of the opinion that a controversial pilot project in Switzerland involving the prescription of heroin to a limited number of drug-dependent persons under close medical supervision should not be interpreted as a step towards decriminalization or even legalization of opiate abuse but should be considered as a monitored clinical trial.

35. In turning to North America the Board notes that abuse and trafficking remain a subject of great concern in the United States of America. The overall drug abuse trend continues to be downward but abuse is declining at a slower pace than in previous years and there are currently more hard-core heroin and cocaine abusers than there were three years ago. The abuse of cannabis has been declining steadily since 1979 and heroin abuse among occasional young abusers has also declined but the abuse of heroin in general has remained at about the 1988 level. At the same time, the purity of heroin on the retail market has increased. The same has been true of cocaine, which has also dropped in price, perhaps explaining the rise in both occasional and regular cocaine abuse, reversing a significant downward trend that had begun in 1985.

36. Major law enforcement efforts in the region of South and Central America and the Caribbean have yielded significant results in reducing cultivation and trafficking. The Board also notes with satisfaction that Governments of the region have taken more effective action to curtail money-laundering and illicit traffic in precursors. The countries of the region have not only increased bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation, especially in the field of law enforcement, but are also jointly developing ways to replace the coca economy with legal economic activities. As a result, drug traffickers are finding it more and more difficult to seek alternative routes and secure operational environments.

37. The strengthening of control mechanisms has forced trafficking organizations to involve more and more countries of the region in their operations. The trafficking situation has continued to result in growing drug abuse problems. Virtually all countries in the region are being used more and more frequently to

convey or store illicit drugs and are suffering from the consequences of such activity. The abuse of cocaine is increasing in the region. The situation as regards abuse among street children in Brazil appears especially alarming. Illicit poppy cultivation, which has appeared in several countries of the region, is a new problem.

38. The Board notes that Colombian law has still not made money-laundering a criminal act; Peru is the largest producer of coca leaves; Brazil is being used more and more for processing and trafficking; Suriname has emerged as a newly important transit point; and the whole region of the Caribbean continues to be the major trans-shipment area for cannabis and cocaine destined for North America and is also an important area for money-laundering.

Notes

United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 520, No. 7515, p. 151, as amended by the 1976 Protocol (United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 976, No. 14152, p. 105).

United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 1019, No. 14956, p. 176.

Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XI.1).
