

4 October 2012

English, French and Spanish only*

**Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of
National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies,
Latin America and the Caribbean**
Antigua, Guatemala, 1-5 October 2012

Draft report

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Addendum

Consideration of topics by working groups

(c) Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations

The working group on the above topic met during the sixth, seventh and eighth meetings, held on 3 and 4 October 2012. In its consideration of the topic in question, the working group formulated the following observations:

1. An ongoing challenge for authorities is to identify the transnational criminal organizations engaged in the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals, the modus operandi they employ to divert and transport these chemicals and the routes taken to the illicit production sites.
2. Chemical precursor diversion methods are many and diverse, with examples cited as false labelling of chemicals, tampering of batch numbers, cash payments, collection in person, the use of small companies/enterprises, multiple orders for small quantities of controlled substances, undeclared sales.
3. It is essential that authorities develop good cooperation with the chemical and pharmaceutical industries and together collectively share responsibility for enforcement of controls and restrictions over chemical sales.
4. The PRELAC initiative is making a valuable contribution through its support to public administrative and control bodies, enforcement agencies and the private

* English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the subsidiary body.



sector chemical industries to strengthen their capacity to prevent illegal diversion of precursor chemicals.

5. Many officers employed by national chemical control authorities have no sufficient training or professional knowledge of the detail and diversity of the chemical industry they are policing. Examples cited were a lack of knowledge of health and safe chemical handling protocols, lack of knowledge of the properties of the chemicals, lack of forensic accounting skills when undertaking audits of chemical companies.

6. The current focus of controls upon pharmaceutical preparations is not strong enough. Many pharmaceutical preparations are very effective for managing pain, but they are also highly addictive and their abuse builds up a tolerance in their use. A similar threat lies in the misuse of psychotropic pharmaceutical products.

7. Many controlled chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations are available through the Internet. These online sources are a further challenge to authorities, responsible for administrative control over their sale and distribution.

8. Cooperation with the chemical and pharmaceutical industries with Government regulatory authorities works best when it is not pressured.

The working group drew up the following conclusions:

1. There is a need to improve the professional skills and knowledge of officers employed by the national authorities responsible for chemical regulation and control. The private sector should be encouraged to support the training of authorities in areas of health, handling and safety of chemicals.

2. The existing staff rotation policy in a number of countries of the region that results in a high turnover of trained officers, can adversely impact upon the experience and professional competency of some of the authorities responsible for precursor control.

3. There is a need to strengthen cooperation in the sharing of information on the international trade in precursor chemicals, together with a clear understanding of legitimate domestic chemical needs.

4. Authorities need to adapt their strategies to meet the challenges of developing technologies such as the Internet as a source for obtaining controlled substances and preparations.

The working group adopted the following recommendations:

1. Governments should be encouraged to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of their domestic legal needs and requirements of controlled chemicals so as to arrive at a baseline figure that will assist identify any attempts at illicit diversion.

2. Governments must take steps to ensure that the staff employed in their national authorities responsible for precursor control are sufficiently trained with the specialist knowledge and professional skills required to effectively apply and enforce the legislation and procedures controlling their use and remain in post so as to maintain continuity.

3. Governments are encouraged to strengthen their efforts and ensure that their law enforcement agencies are aware of the important role played by forensic analysis of seized precursor chemicals, the shared results of which lead to increased regional knowledge of sources of manufacture and patterns in trafficking.
 4. Governments should encourage their national authorities to develop pharmaceutical industry voluntary codes of conduct that support the effective implementation of national legislation and regulations and promote good cooperation and corporate responsibility between the public and private sectors concerned with transactions involving pharmaceutical preparations.
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