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Illicit drug traffic and supply, including reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and the impact of communication networks, such as the Internet, on the drug problem

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Report of the Secretariat

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Summary

The present report aims at providing an overview of global trends and patterns in illicit drug production and trafficking. It also details matters arising from meetings in 1998 of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and describes the impact of the Internet on the drug problem.

Worldwide supplies of both heroin and cocaine seem to have stabilized, following rapid increases in recent decades. Estimates of production of opium and coca leaf and statistics on the volume of global seizures of heroin, cocaine and cannabis have reflected no further increases since the mid-1990s. However, the increased flow of heroin and cocaine into non-traditional markets (heroin in the United States of America, cocaine in western Europe and both drug types in other regions, including Africa, Asia and eastern Europe), and the rising level of abuse of and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants worldwide have added a global dimension to drug control.

At the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in June 1998, Member States affirmed their commitment to concrete action in tackling the world drug problem, through, *inter alia*, eradication and alternative development methods aimed at plant-based drugs, as well as through measures relating to the suppression of the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants.

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I. Introduction

1. The purpose of the present report is to provide an overview of global and regional trends in illicit drug trafficking, with particular reference to opiates (opium, morphine and heroin), cocaine, cannabis (herbal and resin) and psychotropic substances. The focus is on both recent developments and emerging trends. A brief overview and summary analysis of issues such as illicit cultivation, production and manufacture of drugs, as well as the patterns, routes, methods and extent of trafficking, are presented.

A. Sources of information

2. The information presented is drawn mainly from annual reports questionnaires relating mostly to 1997, submitted by Governments to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Additional sources, such as the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and UNDCP field offices, were used to supplement this information. The UNDCP/Interpol/WCO data-sharing initiative in respect of reports of significant individual seizures of illicit drugs became operational in 1998, and will result in the availability of a comprehensive data pool on worldwide drug seizures as of 1999.

B. Limitations of data used

3. Limitations with regard to information used to describe trafficking trends are twofold. First, the reporting problems result in insufficient availability of useful information. Secondly, the inherent constraints in the available data, which relate to illicit activities and measure not only trafficking trends but also other related variables, further complicate possible interpretations and analysis.

4. Reporting problems relate to the quantity, quality and comparability of the reports received. First, the irregular intervals at which some Governments report may result in the absence of data for some years but its availability for others. Lack of regular data, for which UNDCP tries to compensate by reference to other sources, could influence trend patterns. Secondly, submitted questionnaires are not always complete or sufficiently comprehensive. While detailed data on seizures are provided by many Governments, information on illicit

cultivation and production of drugs, clandestine laboratories and manufacturing activities, as well as on illicit market prices, is often absent. Thirdly, differences in reporting criteria between countries, or within single countries over a period of time, may distort the trafficking picture and the analysis of trends. For example, some countries include so-called kitchen laboratories in the total number of manufacturing sites detected, while others only count fully equipped clandestine laboratories. By the same token, a country that in the past has included kitchen laboratories may change its reporting practice and omit such detections. Also, the extent to which seizure statistics from some countries constitute all reported national cases, regardless of the final destination of the illicit drug, can vary and make it difficult to assess international trafficking.

5. The utilization of data available from the various sources is limited because of two main shortcomings. First, some of the information is not fully reliable owing to the complexity of the drug phenomenon and problems in assessing the particulars and details of illicit endeavours. Analyses of the cultivation and production of illicit drugs, for example, rely on estimates and cannot be treated as hard data. Secondly, data on seizures, for example, reflect different factors, such as changes in reporting modalities or variations in law enforcement practices. However, where such factors remain constant, changes in seizure statistics may indicate trends in trafficking, and some inferences in the present report are drawn on that basis. In that context, seizure statistics and other trafficking data used may be revised as new information becomes available.

II. Executive summary

6. For many years, the analysis of trends in the global supply¹ of illicit drugs has presented a continuously rising picture, particularly for heroin and cocaine. Some of those drugs having apparently reached saturation levels, an interrelationship of the various drug types becomes noticeable. Developments and emerging trends in the global supply of (and demand for) illicit drugs differ significantly between drug types, suggesting that a climbing supply of one drug may coincide with the decline or stabilization of another. Just as the interdependence of supply and demand dynamics has received increasing attention in recent years, leading to proposals for a balanced approach to tackling the drug problem, an

interrelationship of sometimes diverse trends in the supply of different drug types has been acknowledged. Such a development suggests that newly emerging substances are to a certain extent replacing traditional ones.

7. A second characteristic of the current drug market is the continued globalization of illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption, as a result of which the old distinction between so-called producer and consumer areas is becoming increasingly blurred. Generated by a spread of trafficking routes across the entire globe in recent years, and driven by increased pressure on traffickers to create new markets, the abuse of various drug types, most of which were once limited to certain regions, has become prevalent worldwide. Problems linked to non-traditional drug abuse that have long existed in producer and transit countries are further aggravating the situation (especially in Africa, Asia and eastern Europe). At the same time, the production of plant-based drugs has appeared in countries and regions not traditionally known as supply countries, although the main producer countries remain unchanged. The traditional consumer regions are mainly linked to the manufacture of synthetic drugs, but indoor and small-scale outdoor cultivation of the cannabis plant has also surfaced.

8. Production of both cocaine and heroin seems to have reached a peak globally, with the sharply rising trends of the 1980s and early 1990s having levelled out and turned into relative stabilization.² However, while the major cocaine and heroin consumer markets have reached saturation points for those particular substances, drug consumption and demand on the whole are still growing in those regions. At the same time, both drug types are increasingly entering new markets outside their major consumer areas.

9. The growing demand for illicit drugs in traditional cocaine and heroin consumer regions, which is apparently being satisfied mostly by the increased abuse of psychotropic substances (amphetamine-type stimulants), has led to some displacement of cocaine trafficking to western Europe and heroin to North America. Abuse of cocaine and heroin (as well as amphetamine-type stimulants) is also increasing in other regions, including Africa, Asia and eastern Europe. A rise in global consumption could spur a renewed increase in production in the near future, with abuse being stimulated by growing supply and production in response to demand. The potential for and risks of renewed increases in coca and opium production

are evident in many country situation reports relating to traditional and new growing areas. The extent of the problem is briefly described in the sections below. Increased cocaine and heroin production, coupled with an overall rise in global consumption, is perhaps one of the most troubling features of the current illicit drug scene.

10. While production of cocaine and heroin is currently stable, the illicit manufacture and supply of psychotropic substances, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, is rising fast and consumption is booming, deepening within traditional consumer regions and spreading to new areas, such as eastern Europe and east and south-east Asia.³ Despite some fluctuations in seizure volumes, rising trends are evident in respect of stimulants, hallucinogens, Ecstasy-type substances and depressants (except methaqualone). The second troubling feature of the current illicit drug scene may be the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, which could substantially displace consumption of traditional plant-based drugs in the future.

11. Cannabis statistics, particularly with regard to production, are more difficult to gather and seem to fluctuate more than with other drugs. Nevertheless, the overall picture currently presented of both cannabis resin and herbal cannabis more or less reflects a stable trend at the global level but an increase in some areas where heroin or cocaine consumption has recently seemed to decline or stabilize (for example, cannabis resin in western Europe).⁴ The increased abuse of cannabis products in some regions, as well as of stimulant tablets globally, may have fuelled misperceptions about the apparent harmlessness of certain illegal substances and revived discussions about the merits of their legalization, creating a third troubling situation. Legalization of such substances could in fact pave the way to enormous increases in the consumption of all illegal drugs.

12. The globalization trend in drug trafficking seems to have been further strengthened by intensified networking of trafficking groups and continued diversification of transportation routes. For example, well-established cocaine routes are increasingly being used to smuggle heroin, and vice versa. According to Interpol, heroin from Colombia has for the first time been seized in European countries that are traditional entry points for cocaine. All indicators point to the fact that trafficking groups that had previously confined themselves to cocaine are now penetrating the European heroin market through their existing European cocaine networks. At the

same time, those groups are involved in smuggling heroin into North America.⁵

13. Trafficking groups as a whole no longer tend to confine their efforts to a single drug type. In south-east Asia, for example, several recent reports have indicated a connection between heroin and methamphetamine manufacture and trafficking. Polydrug trafficking, like polydrug consumption, has become a common phenomenon.⁶

14. Finally, the diversification of trafficking routes can be witnessed throughout the globe. Virtually the entire African continent may now be viewed as a transit region. The Balkan route is now more complex, with an increasing number of countries being used as conduits. The network of trafficking routes in the Americas has also been expanded to involve the entire continent, as exemplified by the increased use of Argentina in recent years.

III. Overview of global and regional trends in illicit drug production and trafficking

A. Opiates

15. Global illicit production of opium marginally increased in 1997 compared with 1996. Total world production reached an estimated 4,800 tons as a result of cultivation of areas totalling approximately 266,000 hectares. Notwithstanding minor fluctuations, levels of cultivation and production seem to have stabilized during the 1990s, particularly since 1995, following an enormous rise during the 1980s. The supply of illicit opium is currently at its highest level in decades (see figure I).

16. Together, Afghanistan and Myanmar continue to provide more than 90 per cent (4,480 tons) of the illicit opium produced worldwide. Production in Afghanistan increased by 25 per cent in 1997, to 2,800 tons of opium, followed by a decrease in 1998 (see below). Estimates for Myanmar suggest a very minor decrease during 1997, with the level of production at approximately 1,670 tons.

17. The total production of all other producer countries in Asia, principally the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam, currently accounts for 5 per cent (220 tons) of the global estimate. All those countries, which are relatively small-scale

sources of opium, have significantly reduced cultivation and production in recent years, but estimates for 1997 reflected renewed increases in Pakistan and Thailand.

18. Despite widespread concern during the early 1990s that central Asia would become a future source of opium, illicit cultivation of opium poppy in that subregion has remained rather limited and largely confined to small individual plots. While the gloomiest predictions have not been fulfilled, the subregion continues to cause concern, since it offers excellent climatic conditions for the cultivation of both opium poppy and cannabis plant, the latter already occurring in extensive wild growth. This potential capacity for illicit cultivation could be exploited as a consequence of increased eradication measures in neighbouring Afghanistan, coupled with the continued worsening of the social, economic and political situation in central Asian States that are already heavily utilized as transit routes.

19. An estimated 2 per cent (112 tons) of opium produced worldwide originated in Latin America in 1997. Both Colombia and Mexico indicated decreases in production.

20. While less accurate information is available on the method of assessing cultivation and production in most producer countries, estimates for Afghanistan are drawn from national surveys carried out by UNDCP on an annual basis. Details included in the present report are based on the well-documented findings of the latest annual opium poppy survey,⁷ which provide some insight into possible future developments. Estimates for opium production in Afghanistan in 1998 suggest a 25 per cent reduction compared with the previous season, owing to crop damage and reduced yields caused by unusual weather conditions. However, the figures for cultivation continue to rise. The surveys carried out over several years have also shown that the agricultural conditions in most of Afghanistan are conducive to opium poppy cultivation. Activities related to poppy cultivation are, on the one hand, becoming more widespread within districts and villages of provinces where cultivation occurs, while, on the other hand, shifting away from some traditional producer provinces (those bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran) to new areas (in the north of the country, close to the central Asian States). That may also indicate a northward shift in trafficking routes directed through central Asia.

21. It is estimated that more than 50 per cent of the opium produced in Afghanistan is consumed within the south-west Asian region, mainly as opium, but also as

heroin.⁸ The bulk of the remaining quantity (on average, approximately 100-150 tons in heroin equivalent) is destined for Europe and, to a lesser extent, North American markets. Similarly, a significant proportion of the opium produced in south-east Asia is consumed in the source countries and their neighbours. While opium is the main drug consumed domestically and regionally, the number of heroin addicts is increasing throughout the region, including among youth. A smaller but significant portion of the total heroin production in south-east Asia, mainly originating from Myanmar, remains destined for the United States of America, where it is being increasingly challenged by an influx of heroin originating from Latin America. Heroin from Latin America, which seems to be of particularly high purity,⁹ has reportedly entered the European market, as indicated by seizure reports.⁵

22. Seizure statistics,¹⁰ which are used as indicators of trafficking, follow a trend similar to those for production (see figure II). Opiate seizures represent from 10 to 15 per cent of the estimated world supply. In 1997, the interception rate¹¹ was about 12 per cent, with the south-west Asian region accounting for 60 per cent of the global volume of seizures of opium, morphine and heroin, followed by Europe (16 per cent) and east and south-east Asia (13 per cent).

23. The main transit countries in south-west Asia reported slight increases in opiate seizures in 1997 compared with 1996, but the general trend has been more or less stable in recent years. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which normally ranks highest in the volumes of opium and morphine seized, recorded an increase in all opiate-type seizures in 1997. Seizures of heroin by Pakistan rose slightly, while the volume of opium seizures declined. Turkey remains a major transit country for heroin trafficking from south-west Asia to Europe. However, it reported a significant decrease in its volume of seizures of all opiate-type drugs in 1997. Though data are still fragmented, countries in central Asia and eastern Europe indicated significant increases in trafficking throughout the 1990s, a trend that is also reflected in seizure data. The increased use of central Asia as a transit region has also been highlighted in recent reports.¹²

24. The seizure statistics summarized in the foregoing paragraph support reports in recent years describing new diversions from the traditional Balkan route. While the Islamic Republic of Iran remains a major transit point for opium and morphine, which originates in Afghanistan and is trafficked to Turkey for conversion into heroin, the

flow of opiate drugs is increasingly directed through central Asian States, in particular through Tajikistan and/or Turkmenistan, and then on into Turkey, or directly through Transcaucasian and eastern European countries. The Balkan route itself, which continues to originate in Turkey, has developed various offshoots as a result of, on the one hand, conflict in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and, on the other, the opening-up of new and independent countries in central and eastern Europe, increasingly facilitating free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

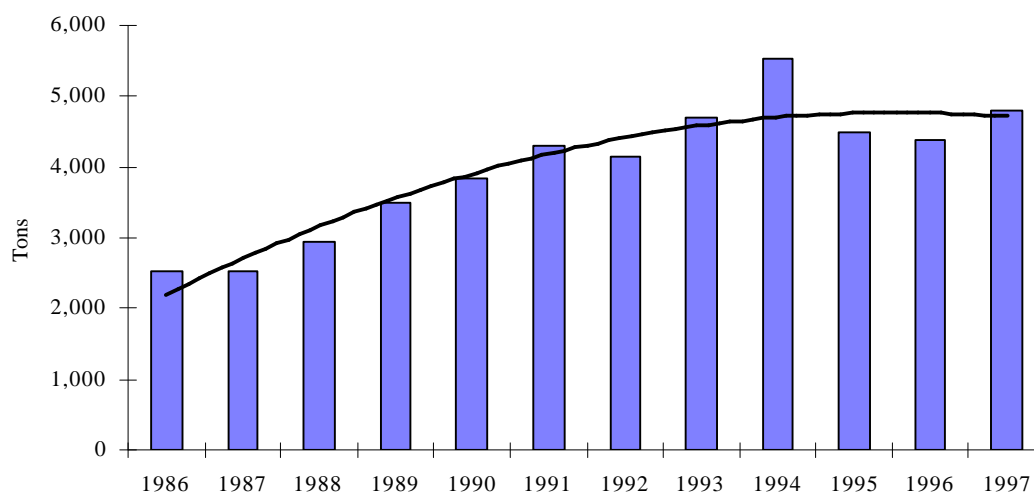
25. In addition to the western and northern direction, via the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and/or central Asia, the southern and eastern direction across Pakistan continues to be extensively used for drug trafficking, particularly by air and sea routes. Karachi, Pakistan, remains the principal seaport and airport for the smuggling of heroin originating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area and destined for Europe, whether directly or via African seaports and airports. Some is also routed to India and neighbouring countries, which serve as storage centres and points of transit. The development of new international airports in the States of the Persian Gulf, together with the geographic proximity with of those States to, and their historical, political and cultural ties with, countries in south-west Asia, has fuelled the increased involvement of that region in drug trafficking in recent years.

26. The stable seizure statistics in the region of south-west Asia also imply that no major changes have occurred with regard to the location of morphine and heroin laboratories, which are abundant in southern Afghanistan, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area and Turkey. While seizures of opium, which is widely distributed and abused throughout the region, occur in many countries in significant amounts, the accumulation of morphine and heroin seizures in certain countries points to the establishment of the required trafficking routes. The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to account for 97 per cent of the volume of global morphine seizures, the only other country featuring in that context being Turkey. That suggests that laboratories in Afghanistan close to the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran remain directed towards the manufacture of morphine base, and to a lesser extent heroin base, which is trafficked across the Islamic Republic of Iran into Turkey, where it is converted into heroin hydrochloride destined for the European market. From the information currently available, it cannot be determined

whether the decrease in seizures made in Turkey implies that morphine base is also trafficked from the Islamic Republic of Iran to central Asian States, or whether heroin laboratories exist elsewhere in the region. Pakistan, on the other hand, tends to record large volumes of heroin seizures, indicating that laboratories located in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area continue to manufacture heroin.

Figure I
Opium production, 1986-1997

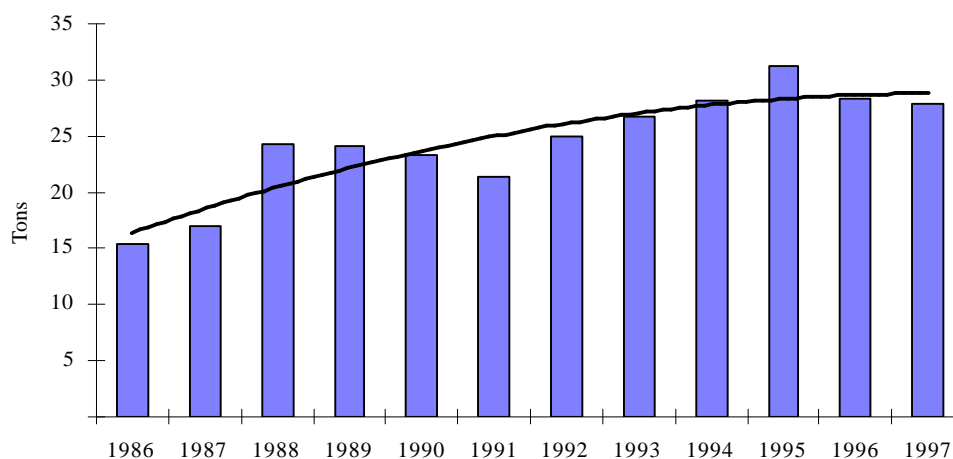
(Global trend)



Source:
UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure II
Heroin seized, 1986-1997

(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

27. In south-east Asia, the volume of opiate seizures significantly increased in 1997, continuing the rising trend of recent years. Quantities of opium seized in that region more than doubled in 1997, the bulk continuing to be intercepted in Myanmar, followed by China and Thailand. The volume of heroin seizures increased by more than 25 per cent in 1997, compared with the average level of previous years, mainly as a result of a significant rise in seizures recorded in China. There has been a substantial increase in heroin seizures in China during the last few years, while quantities seized in Thailand have fallen over the same period. That reflects a recent development in the region involving a decrease in the flow of heroin across the Myanmar-Thailand border, resulting in a corresponding rise in heroin trafficking from Myanmar to China. Another trend noted in the illicit drug situation in south-east Asia has been the increasing interconnection of and networking in the production and trafficking of both methamphetamine and heroin.¹³

28. Statistics on seizures of opiates originating from Latin America also confirm available information on trends in that region, although the extent of poppy cultivation and heroin trafficking remains limited compared with the situation in Asia. Following the emergence of opium poppy cultivation in Colombia in 1991, regular seizures of heroin have been recorded by that country and neighbouring Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela, with a rising trend up to 1995. Seizure trends in those countries mirror the cultivation level in Colombia, which was rising during the early 1990s. Mexico, which has a much longer history of opium cultivation, has recorded heroin seizures since the early 1980s. Both seizure statistics and estimates of poppy production in Mexico have reflected more or less stable trends in recent years. Heroin originating from that country is assumed to supply about 5 per cent of the illicit heroin market in the United States.¹⁴

29. Africa continues to play an increasing role in the trafficking of heroin from Asia to western Europe and, to a lesser extent, North America. Though data are limited, total seizure volumes have been consistently higher during the 1990s than in the early to middle 1980s. Most of the seizures continue to be recorded in west and central Africa, followed by north and east Africa. The north and east African subregions have recorded similar volumes of heroin seizures in recent years. East Africa seems to have followed a rising trend, but seizure volumes in countries of north Africa have slightly decreased.

30. The main consumption area for heroin remains western Europe, although seizure volumes have stabilized in recent years and even declined in 1997 by more than one third of the quantity seized in 1996. However, along with the saturation of western European heroin markets has come the rise in the abuse of that drug in many other regions of the world. Seizure volumes in the United States, the second main destination for heroin, continue to rise. Other regions that have experienced rising trends, although consumption remains on a smaller scale, include eastern Europe, east and south-east Asia and some parts of Africa.

31. Statistics¹⁵ on means of transportation of all trafficked opiates generally correspond with the trafficking routes and methods described above. The predominant method of transportation for opiates at the global level is the land route. Air transport and, to a lesser extent, mail services and rail routes are also frequently used, but the quantities trafficked are less significant. Opiates originating in south-west Asia are smuggled in bulk to Europe mainly via the Balkan route and its recent variants. Countries that recorded the biggest seizure volumes relating to trafficking by land in 1997 included Bulgaria, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia. Rail routes are predominantly used in central Asia and eastern Europe, as observed from available seizure reports from the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Myanmar was the only country outside the south-west Asian, central Asian and European regions where big seizure quantities were reported in relation to land and rail trafficking.

32. Trafficking by air involves much smaller quantities but has a wider geographic spread. Countries and territories that reported heroin seizures in connection with air transport in 1997 have been grouped under three categories, according to the seizures made. The United States and Pakistan rank highest, followed by a second category group of countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. The third category includes Argentina, Colombia, China (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), India, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Puerto Rico, the Russian Federation and Togo. Finally, seizure reports involving relatively small-scale opiate trafficking via air transport are received from a large number of other countries, including, in Africa, Benin, Egypt, Mauritius, Morocco, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Republic of

Tanzania. Trafficking by mail was principally recorded by the United States, followed by Australia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The sea route seems less prominent in heroin trafficking, but was recorded by Australia and the United Kingdom.

B. Cocaine

33. Global illicit production of coca leaf slightly increased in 1997 compared with the previous year, reaching an estimated 319,000 tons. That translates to a potential 887 tons of cocaine, after applying the different estimated ratios for conversion of coca leaf into cocaine. The total area of illicit cultivation of coca bush in 1997 amounted to approximately 182,000 hectares, a minor increase compared with 1996. The level of cultivation and production, which seemed to have reached a peak in the early 1990s following sharp rises throughout the previous two decades, indicates stabilization at the global level in recent years, despite differing trends among producer countries. The main coca-cultivating and -producing countries remain Bolivia, Colombia and Peru¹⁶ (see figure III).

34. Cultivation and production, which have decreased significantly in Peru and slightly in Bolivia in recent years, continued to decline in both countries in 1997. Estimates from Colombia, on the other hand, reflected a rising trend and, for the first time, marginally exceeded the production level of Bolivia. Peru remains the largest producer, but now ranks second to Colombia in terms of cultivation.

35. North America remains the principal region for cocaine abuse, although consumption is currently declining. The relentless development of the illicit cocaine market in the Americas over the past 25 years has made the hemisphere a complex zone of the illegal drug trade, with virtually every country now being affected by the prevalence of cocaine trafficking and consumption throughout the region. Europe remains the fastest-growing market, though still considered to be at a developmental stage. The current picture is one of widespread availability of cocaine throughout the European region, particularly in larger cities. The Caribbean, a major transit area, continued to grow in importance in the context of cocaine trafficking. Three of the main exit points in South America for cocaine destined for Europe continue to be Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, with Argentina having grown in strategic

importance for cocaine trafficking only in recent years and Brazil remaining the most significant country in terms of quantities trafficked. The southern cone of Africa is playing an increasingly significant role in worldwide cocaine trafficking. Originating mainly from Brazil, cocaine is trafficked by ship or air, either directly to South Africa or through Angola or other countries in west Africa, and then transported through the southern part of the continent before leaving for Europe.

36. Seizure statistics¹⁰ are used as indicators to describe the routes, patterns and extent of trafficking, as summarized in the previous paragraph (also see figure IV). Global seizures of cocaine, which generally relate to interceptions made in the Americas, have been more or less stable in recent years, amounting to 312 tons in 1997, a minor decrease compared with 1996. While seizure volumes continue to rise in a number of South and Central American countries, the largest decline was recorded in Peru (coinciding with a reduction in coca production there) and the United States. The quantities of cocaine seized in Europe have steadily increased in recent years. The share of the region in the global seizure volume climbed from an average of 3 per cent during the 1980s to 13 per cent in 1997, a rise that is reflected in both eastern and western Europe. Seizures in Africa increased from an annual average of 280 kilograms over the past decade to more than 7 tons in 1997, an increase mainly due to record seizures in Morocco. In addition, Angola recorded a large cocaine seizure in 1997 and a number of other African countries have shown rising trends in recent years, although data are not available on a consistent basis.

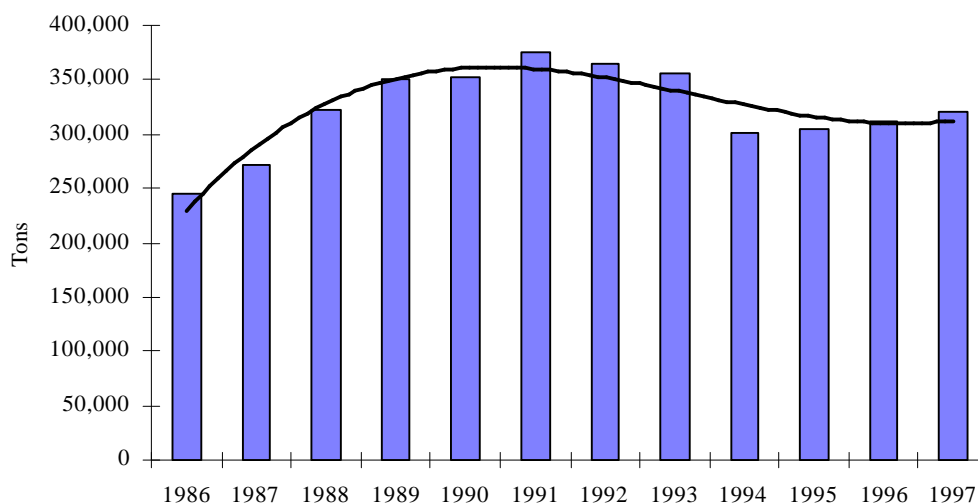
37. The interception rate¹¹ for cocaine was between 17 and 36 per cent, with a rising trend over the last decade. That appears to be high when compared with opiates, for which an average rate of 10 per cent is assessed. In 1997, the cocaine interception rate was, at 35 per cent, more or less at the same level as in 1996. One explanation offered in that context is that the global production of coca leaf and its subsequent manufacture into cocaine may exceed current estimates. Another is that certain trafficking methods in the case of cocaine tend to involve large bulk seizure volumes and result in greater interception successes, reflecting a significant difference from heroin trafficking.

38. The predominant methods of transportation¹⁵ for cocaine trafficking remain the sea and air routes. Trafficking by sea is characterized by large bulk quantities, of

which the United States recorded the biggest seizure volumes in 1997. Large quantities trafficked by ship were also seized by the Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Cuba,

Figure III
Coca leaf production, 1986-1997

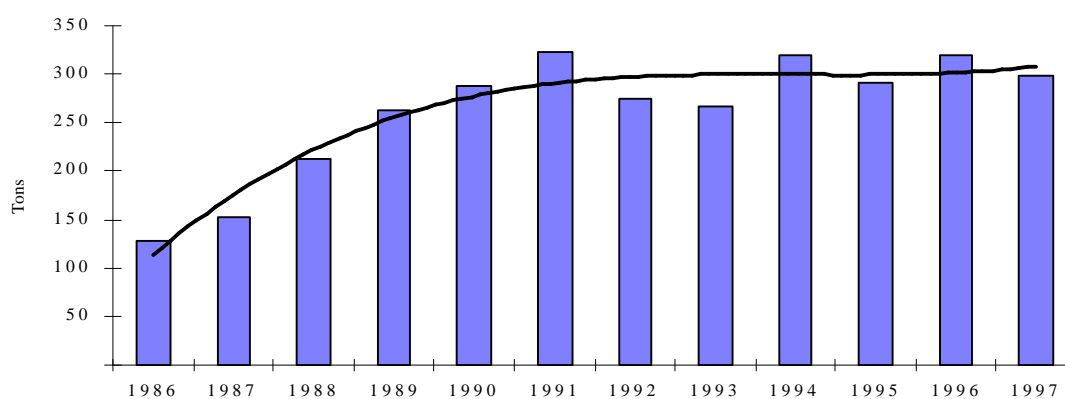
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure IV
Cocaine seized, 1986-1997

(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Colombia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain and Venezuela. In that context, a shift to smaller loads has been evident in recent years (especially in overseas trafficking to Europe), which may reflect an attempt by trafficking organizations to minimize risk. Statistics show that the number of seizures increased faster than the total quantities seized, with multi-ton seizures occurring less frequently.¹⁷

39. The air route is by far the most frequently used means of transporting cocaine, but quantities trafficked are naturally small. Countries and territories that recorded the largest seizures in relation to air trafficking included the Netherlands, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. Large quantities were also seized by Argentina, Belize, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Overland trafficking seems to occur mainly between Mexico and the United States, the latter recording the largest seizures. Mail services account for approximately 15 per cent of reported cases of cocaine seizure, occurring most frequently in Germany, the Netherlands and the United States.

C. Cannabis

40. Estimates of the extent of illicit cannabis production and trafficking are more difficult to obtain than those relating to other plant-based drugs because of the significant amounts of wild growth, the more dispersed nature of cultivation and the widespread trafficking. Despite the lack of accurate data, a brief summary of the information available on the spread of illicit cannabis cultivation and the extent of and trends in trafficking is presented below.

41. Cannabis grows across the globe in a large number of countries and almost all geographical environments. The largest areas of wild growth of cannabis seem to be in some of the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, notably the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and other central Asian States. Large-scale illicit cultivation and production of cannabis takes place in a number of African, Asian and Latin American countries. The primary source countries identified by Interpol¹⁸ include Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, Jamaica, Morocco, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and Thailand. In addition to a large number of secondary sources, including Europe, North America, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines, more countries

recently seem to have emerged as significant cannabis sources. The main sources of cannabis resin continue to be Morocco and countries in south-west Asia. The global areas where cannabis plant is cultivated and/or grows wild may cover from 670,000 to 1,800,000 hectares, and actual production is roughly estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000 tons a year.

42. The latest trends in indoor cultivation of cannabis with a high content of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), by means of modern hydroponic technologies, present an additional disturbing dimension of the cannabis production situation. Although the production sites using indoor methods are naturally restricted, output is considerable because of the high THC content (reportedly up to 20 per cent or even higher) and the possibility of four full growth cycles per year. This development seems to be most marked in Europe and North America.

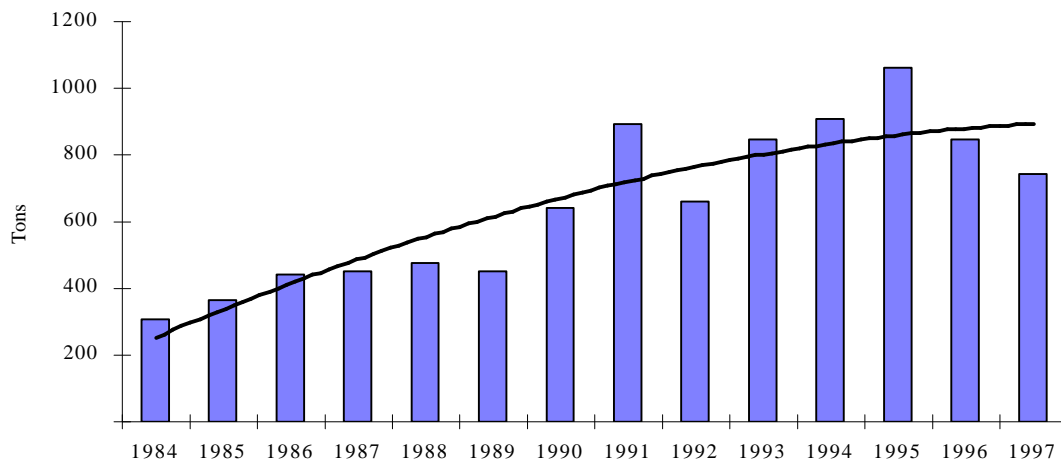
43. Trafficking of cannabis exceeds that of all other drugs in terms of geographic spread and quantities smuggled. Almost all countries that provide data to UNDCP refer to cannabis seizures, and more than 50 per cent of all seizure cases reported relate to some type of cannabis. The largest quantities of herbal cannabis continue to be trafficked in North America, while trafficking in cannabis resin remains largely focused on supplying European markets.

44. Global trends in trafficking of cannabis tend to fluctuate more than trafficking of other drugs. However, seizure statistics,¹⁰ which seem to correlate highly with abuse patterns as identified in some national statistics,¹⁹ provide the following picture. After a more or less stable trend during the 1980s in the case of cannabis resin and wide fluctuations with a decreasing tendency in the case of herbal cannabis, seizure volumes of both drug types rose during the first half of the 1990s, but have stabilized since 1996. The current global level of seizure quantities for herbal cannabis is lower than the average level during the 1980s, but is still higher than during the early 1990s. In the case of cannabis resin, global seizure volumes have stabilized at their highest level for decades (see figures V and VI).

45. Herbal cannabis is widely trafficked in all regions of the world, but particularly in North America, which records by far the largest seizure quantities of that drug. Figures for North America have been stable in recent years, though remaining higher than during the early 1990s. The total seizure volumes for Asia, Europe and

Figure V
Cannabis resin seized, 1984-1997

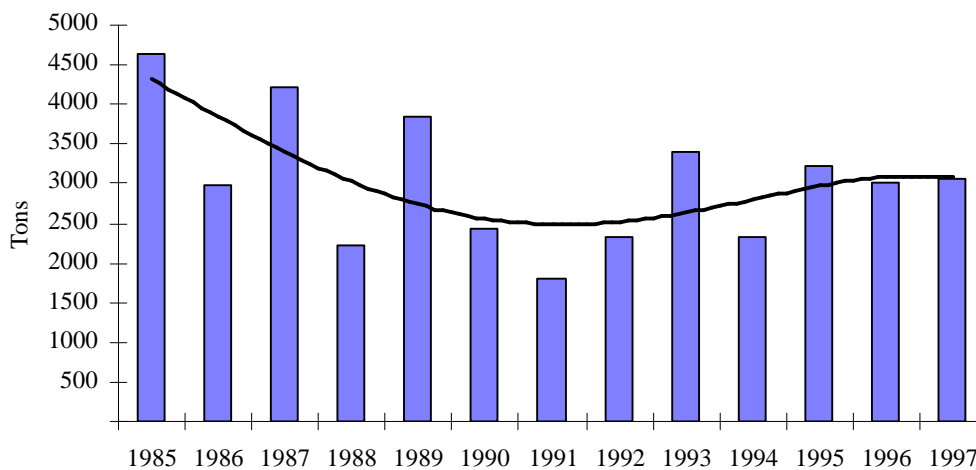
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure VI
Herbal cannabis seized, 1985-1997

(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

South America are currently at similar levels, being roughly 20 per cent of the North American totals, although trends in those regions differ. While in recent years South America has shown a decreasing trend and figures for Asia have been steady, Europe has recorded an increase, which is reflected in both western and eastern Europe, although the latter accounts for only a small portion. Other subregions also show different trends, though seizure totals are on a smaller scale. Annual seizure volumes in the Caribbean were significantly lower during the 1990s than during the previous decade, while Central America has recorded an increase over the last few years. Average figures for Africa, mainly relating to the southern African subregion, reflect more or less stable trends. In 1997, as in previous years, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa and the United States recorded the largest seizures of cannabis herb in the world. Guyana also reported a big seizure volume during that year.

46. A subregional breakdown of trafficking trends in the case of cannabis resin presents a less widespread picture than in the case of herbal cannabis, with seizures concentrated in western Europe, as one of the biggest consumer areas, as well as in south-west Asia and north Africa, both of which remain the main points of origin of that drug. Despite fluctuating trends, seizure volumes in all three subregions were considerably higher during the 1990s compared with the previous decade, but quantities intercepted in 1996/97 seemed to stabilize globally, with a falling trend in south-west Asia and a rise in western Europe. Morocco and a number of western European countries continue to seize large quantities, but seizures of cannabis resin by Pakistan, which used to rank highest worldwide, were reduced by half in 1997 as against 1996. Whether the recent decline in Pakistan is a fluctuation or indicates a reversal of the trend in cannabis trafficking remains to be seen.

47. Cannabis is predominantly transported by land or sea routes, the latter being characterized by large consignments. Seizure statistics¹⁵ received for 1997 reveal the following ranking of countries. The United States accounted for by far the biggest quantities of cannabis seizures in relation to trafficking by land, followed by a number of other countries, including France, India, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, South Africa and Spain. Cannabis transported by the sea route also involved a large number of countries in all regions of the world; the biggest seizure quantities were reported by Australia, Belgium, Colombia, Greece, Jamaica, Mozambique, the

Netherlands, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. Finally, the use of air routes to traffic cannabis mainly occurred in Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

D. Psychotropic substances

48. While the availability of data on a time-series basis relating to the illicit production of plant-based drugs has improved in recent years, information on the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances has remained scarce and largely relies on statistics relating to the number and type of clandestine laboratories detected. Such data do not allow any firm conclusions to be drawn as to the quantity of drugs manufactured, and tend to present a distorted picture because of the absence of any clear definition of the term "laboratory" (resulting in the reporting of so-called kitchen laboratories by some countries and not by others). Nevertheless, they provide information on the regions and countries that most commonly produce certain drug types. Europe remains the main manufacturing region for amphetamines and substances of the Ecstasy group, 60 per cent of the amphetamine laboratories and almost 70 per cent of the Ecstasy-group laboratories reported worldwide having been detected in western European countries during the 1990s. North America, principally the United States, reported approximately half of that number for both drug types over the same period. That region, however, accounts for more than 90 per cent of the methamphetamine laboratories detected worldwide, according to reports received in the 1990s. The number of methamphetamine laboratories detected in the region of Asia and the Pacific has risen fast in recent years. The manufacture of that drug in Europe remains small and is largely limited to the Czech Republic, although some reports indicate that it may be spreading to other countries.

49. Seizure statistics¹⁰ are applied in evaluating the prevalence of, and extent of trafficking in, psychotropic substances. The volume of stimulants seized worldwide rose fast throughout the 1990s, reaching a peak in 1996, by which time figures had doubled compared with the average and relatively stable level of the 1980s. In 1997, the total quantity of stimulant seizures was marginally lower than in 1996. East and south-east Asia, North America and western Europe have together accounted for an average 90 per cent of the global seizure volume in recent years. All three regions recorded continual

increases throughout the 1990s. The only other country outside those regions that recorded large seizure quantities in the 1980s was Egypt. Its seizure statistics in recent years, however, have shown a significant decline. The number of countries reporting stimulant seizures has increased in recent years, not only in western Europe and east and south-east Asia, but also in other subregions, mainly eastern Europe and the Near and Middle East, reflecting the considerable spread of stimulants throughout Europe and Asia (see figure VII).

50. Trends in seizure volumes of hallucinogens and drugs of the Ecstasy group have fluctuated more than in the case of other substances, but average figures have been much higher during the 1990s than during the 1980s. The exception has been lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), which seemed to reflect the opposite trend. Western Europe and North America generally report the largest seizure quantities of hallucinogens or Ecstasy-type substances. Those subregions, which together account for almost half of the average global seizure volume, were also responsible for the peaks achieved in 1992 and 1996 (see figure VIII). East and south-east Asia and north Africa (Egypt) recorded increases in 1996 and 1997. The number of countries reporting seizures of drugs in the categories mentioned has doubled in recent years, compared with the average number during the 1980s. That increase was particularly notable in east and south-east Asia and in eastern and western Europe.

51. Global seizure volumes of LSD were lower during the first half of the 1990s compared with the previous decade, despite fluctuating trends. However, figures have been rising again since 1996, and in 1997 they reached their highest level in 10 years. Seizures declined in western Europe throughout the 1990s, and remained relatively stable on average in North America and Oceania. On the other hand, several other subregions have recorded large seizures in recent years, including the Near and Middle East (mainly Israel and Saudi Arabia) in 1994 and 1996, east and south-east Asia (mainly Japan) in 1995 and 1996, and eastern Europe (mainly Hungary) and southern Africa (mainly Zambia and South Africa) in 1997 (see figure IX).

52. Information on trafficking trends and seizure data for depressants, other than methaqualone, are even more sparse than in the case of other psychotropic substances, thus hampering reliable analysis. In general, global seizure statistics have reflected a sharply rising trend in recent years (see figure X). Seizure volumes of metha-

qualone decreased considerably in 1996 and 1997 (see figure XI), following a fast-rising trend during the early to middle 1990s, when great quantities were seized in India, South Africa and other east and southern African countries. While India has reported a substantial reduction in the seizures of that drug in recent years, several African countries continue to seize significant amounts. However, a large seizure volume in the United Arab Emirates in 1997 indicates that trafficking of that drug is not restricted to Africa.

53. The predominant method of transportation¹⁵ of psychotropic substances remains the land route, partly because of the customary proximity of manufacturing and consumer areas. Most seizures of those drug types were reported in Europe—the bulk in western Europe, but significant amounts also in eastern Europe—followed by North America and east and south-east Asia. Trafficking by air and mail also occurs frequently within Europe and North America, but seizures relating to air and mail transportation rank particularly high in east and south-east Asia, with large seizure volumes reported mainly from Australia.

IV. Drugs and the Internet

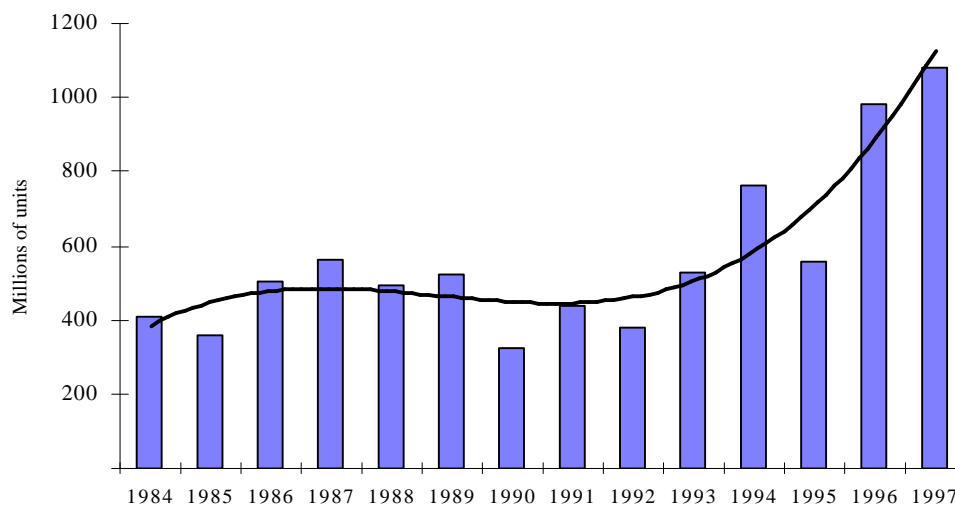
54. The exponential growth in access to Internet facilities and the unregulated nature of this area of international communications have for some time aroused concern that the Internet could be exploited by drug traffickers in furtherance of their nefarious activities. There is limited evidence that this is as yet a significant factor in higher levels of trafficking, and the insecure nature of Internet facilities may limit the use made of them by major criminal organizations. Nevertheless, the risks presented by the use of such facilities in the supply of or incitement to manufacture illicit drugs is something to which States need to remain vigilant.

55. The attitude of criminal organizations to the opportunities presented to them by Internet facilities is in practice unlikely to be materially different from that developed in respect of the many other opportunities that have fallen their way as a consequence of measures to ease restrictions on international trade, transport, communications and finance. All such measures can prove to be mixed blessings, and there can be little doubt that the Internet does have the potential for enormous good, providing vastly increased access to information and

fostering greater dialogue and understanding between peoples. However,

Figure VII
Stimulants seized, 1984-1997

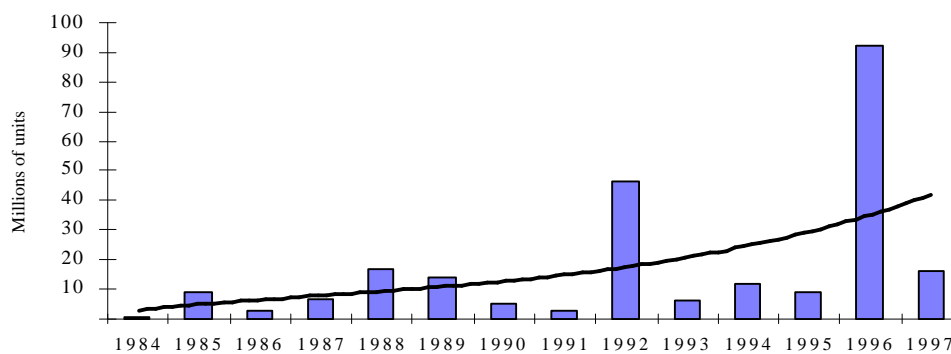
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure VIII
Hallucinogens (excluding LSD) and Ecstasy-type substances seized, 1984-1997

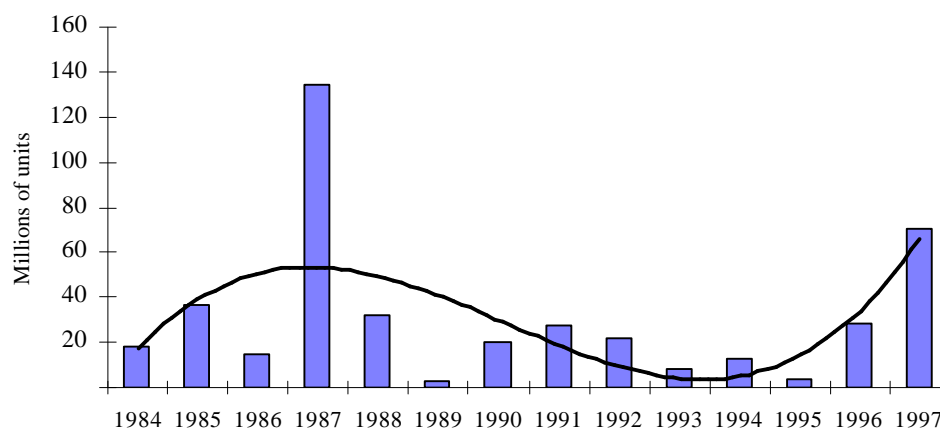
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure IX
LSD seized, 1984-1997

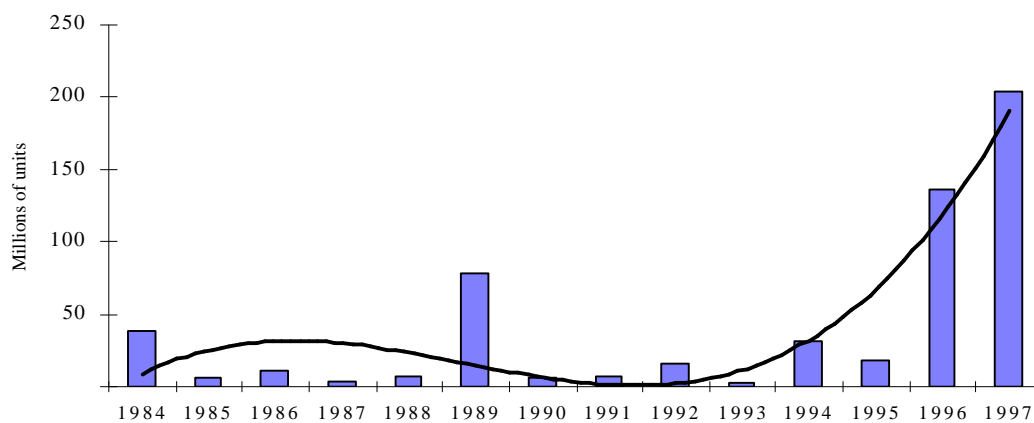
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure X
Depressants (excluding methaqualone) seized, 1984-1997

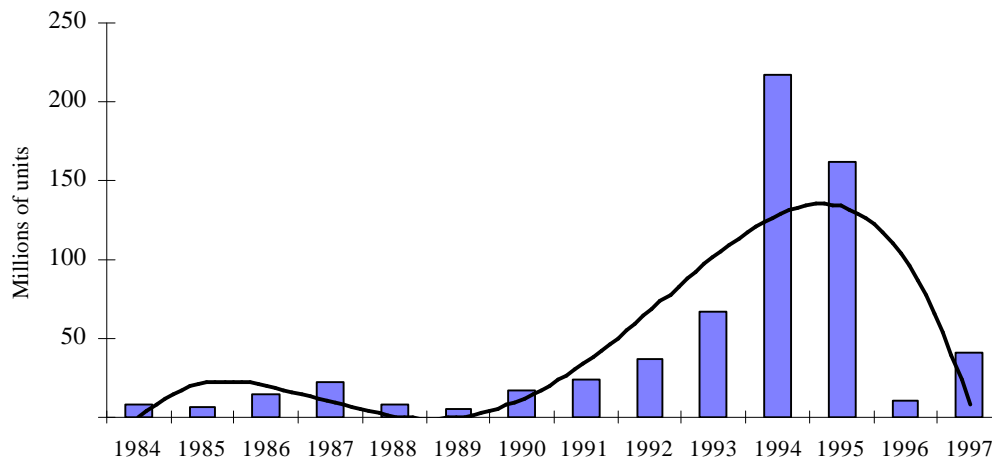
(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

Figure XI
Methaqualone seized, 1984-1997

(Global trend)



Source: UNDCP annual reports questionnaires, supplemented by additional sources.

criminals are by their very nature always quick to exploit any opportunities that are presented to them, and the Internet was never likely to prove an exception to that rule.

56. There are some areas of illicit drug activity in which such exploitation is already evident. For example, formulae (recipes) for illicitly manufacturing drugs, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, are already abundantly available on the Internet, and may encourage criminal groups and curious young people alike to venture into such activity, with the attendant risks in terms of personal and public safety. While it is impossible to provide any kind of accurate assessment in this regard, it is probably safe to conclude that the Internet has to some degree contributed directly to the steep rise in the illicit manufacture of stimulants.

57. Some Internet sites also provide details of available sources of the precursor chemicals and laboratory equipment required for illicit drug manufacture, pinpointing manufacturers of such materials who may be amenable to meeting orders placed by criminals or who are located within States whose laws or regulatory, licensing and monitoring systems do not meet the required international standards. Other sites provide comprehensive details of current street prices of all illicit drugs, broken down by country and even city. Access to such data could be of assistance to trafficking organizations in targeting particular local markets, diversifying their range of materials and extending their criminal networks.

58. A further area in which exploitation of Internet facilities is already evident is in the marketing of materials for use in the illicit production of cannabis, particularly of the varieties with high THC content that may be produced indoors or in greenhouses by means of modern hydroponic techniques. Enterprises of such a nature may be based in one territory but, through Internet mail-order facilities, operate globally and increasingly profitably, taking advantage of any weaknesses in national laws.

59. Currently, no international body holds overall responsibility for monitoring and considering the broad implications of the Internet, nor for developing standards in respect of its use. However, the issue of use of the Internet by those engaged in or promoting illicit drug activity was raised during the Expert Meeting on Amphetamine-type Stimulants, convened by UNDCP and held in Shanghai, China, from 25 to 29 November 1996. At that Meeting, States were urged to establish systems for monitoring the

Internet for relevant material, so that potential violations of their national laws and regulations could be determined, and to consider establishing open complaint mechanisms as part of such monitoring systems (E/CN.7/1997/6).

60. Governments were urged to negotiate with service providers and with the telecommunication and software industries to develop a code of conduct and self-restraint governing the treatment of drug-related information. The negotiations were to be undertaken in time for recommendations to be formulated for consideration by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session on the World Drug Problem, held in June 1998.

61. At the special session, the recommendations resulting from the Shanghai Meeting were incorporated in an Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and Their Precursors, which was approved unanimously by Member States (resolution S-20/4 A of 10 June 1998). Under the Action Plan, consultations should be initiated at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate, with representatives of the traditional media and the telecommunications and software industries, in order to promote and encourage self-restraint and to develop frameworks, based on existing law, for the removal of illegal drug-related information from the Internet.

62. Those frameworks, according to the Action Plan, could be developed from industry-managed open complaint mechanisms such as reporting hotlines, which would allow Internet users to report instances of illegal drug-related material being found on the Internet. Responsibility for enforcement action should remain with the appropriate enforcement authorities. States should encourage the development and use of rating and filtering software, which would enable users to protect themselves from material that, while not illegal, may contain offensive or undesirable information. They should also ensure that their legal frameworks regarding illegal drugs and drug-related information apply on-line, as appropriate, to the Internet, as they do off-line.

V. Conclusions

63. Trends in illicit drug supply and trafficking, which grew relentlessly over the last two decades, have recently provided grounds for at least some degree of optimism. Production estimates and seizure volumes, which are used as indicators for measuring the extent of drug supply,

reflect stabilizing trends in respect of opiates, coca and to a certain extent cannabis at the global level. While no reverse trend indicating a significant decrease can yet be discerned, the rapid growth recorded in the past in the global supply of cocaine and heroin, as well as cannabis, seems to have come to a halt.

64. With supply still at its highest level in decades, the drug problem, having ceased to escalate, is now being addressed more determinedly and uniformly by Governments. At the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, Member States discussed the current situation with regard to the demand for and supply of drugs, and unanimously affirmed their commitment to taking concrete action in these fields.

65. While some positive trends have been recognized, a number of problems persist and new challenges seem to be emerging, calling for a well-coordinated approach. First, as mentioned above, the current level of drug supply and extent of trafficking, despite having stabilized for some drugs, remains at its highest level in decades.

66. Secondly, the stabilization of heroin and cocaine supply at the global level principally reflects saturation in their major consumer areas (western Europe in the case of heroin and the United States in the case of cocaine). Both substances, however, are increasingly entering new markets, resulting in a growing geographic spread in the abuse and trafficking of drugs. The globalization trend is evident from the continued rise in the prevalence of cocaine in Europe, of heroin in the United States, and of both drug types in many other, smaller, consumer areas, including Africa and eastern Europe.

67. Thirdly, the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of new drugs, mainly amphetamine-type stimulants, continue to rise in all regions of the world, adding a new dimension to the globalization trend.

68. The problems at hand call for closer cooperative approaches at the international level. The Commission may wish to reiterate recommendations resulting from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to cutting the supply lines of drugs through eradication methods and alternative development, as well as implementing action relating to the suppression of the manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants.

69. Finally, a more accurate assessment of the illicit drug supply and trafficking situation at the global and regional levels inherently depends on the availability of

sufficient and reliable data. The recently initiated programme of exchange and sharing of seizure data between UNDCP, Interpol and WCO is a step towards the establishment of a worldwide and coordinated data pool for drug seizures. Such a source, in addition to the annual reports questionnaires that Governments are requested to submit regularly to UNDCP, would provide the relevant time-series data necessary to prepare a strategic analysis of trends in and patterns of illicit drug trafficking. The Commission may wish to urge all Member States to provide UNDCP with regular reports on significant individual seizures and to comply with their obligation to complete and submit the annual reports questionnaires.

VI. Reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission convened in 1998

70. Following the forty-first session of the Commission four meetings of its subsidiary bodies were held during 1998. The Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East held its thirty-third session in Beirut from 29 June to 3 July 1998; the Tenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Africa, was held in Abuja from 20 to 24 April 1998; the Fourth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, was held at Vienna from 14 to 18 September 1998; and the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, was held in Kuala Lumpur from 26 to 30 October 1998.

71. Each meeting addressed drug law enforcement matters of priority concern for its respective region. Their deliberations were facilitated by the discussions that took place in the informal working groups established to consider pressing law enforcement issues. The Subcommittee considered the following issues: (a) illicit traffic in precursor chemicals; (b) terrorist organizations involved in drug trafficking; and (c) illicit cultivation of opium poppy and production of opiates. The Tenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, considered the following issues: (a) trends and countermeasures in combating criminal drug-trafficking networks in Africa, including those engaged in the trafficking in ephedrine and methaqualone; (b) controlling and reducing the street-hawking of pharmaceutical preparations containing substances under international control; and (c) countering

illicit cultivation of cannabis. The Fourth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, examined the following topics: (a) evaluation of the role of the police and drug law enforcement bodies on the demand and supply side, with a view to obtaining a balanced multidisciplinary drug policy; (b) status of international cooperation in the suppression of illicit trafficking by sea, as called for in article 17 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;²⁰ (c) role of law enforcement agencies in controlling exports and imports of essential chemicals and precursors; and (d) illicit production and abuse of psychotropic substances. The following topics were considered by informal working groups at the Twenty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific: (a) illicit manufacture and distribution of stimulants; (b) drug courier profiling, including standardization of data collected for use in profiling; and (c) illicit traffic in heroin.

72. The recommendations adopted are to be implemented at the national level by the law enforcement agencies attending the meetings. It is the practice of the subsidiary bodies to review the implementation of the recommendations on a biennial basis, except in the case of HONLEA, Europe, which convenes on a triennial basis.

73. The recommendations are contained in the reports of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies, which are available to the Commission (UNDCP/HONLAF/1998/5, UNDCP/SUBCOM/1998/6, UNDCP/HONEURO/1998/5 and UNDCP/HONLAP/1998/5). While the follow-up to the recommendations fall under the purview of the subsidiary bodies, the following recommendations, given their specific interlinkages with the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, are brought to the attention of the Commission.

Illicit traffic in heroin

74. States are encouraged to establish national containerized cargo profiling systems to combat the flow of illegal narcotics, seeking assistance where required from WCO. Measures should be taken by Member States to monitor the activities and origin of suspect heroin shipments and individuals representing South American groups involved in illicit traffic in heroin.

75. States should reassess local heroin abuse trends as part of an overall effort to resolve the disparity between estimated production figures and quantities currently being seized, particularly heroin from south-east Asia. That could be of assistance in identifying new trafficking

routes and modus operandi and improving law enforcement targeting and interdiction efforts.

Drug courier profiling, including standardization of data collected for use in profiling

76. Drug law enforcement authorities should adopt profiling and targeting techniques to help identify drug couriers crossing national borders. Intelligence databases should be created (either at border points or in regional and national intelligence units) to gather strategic intelligence in support of developing courier profiles. The exchange of profiles between States should be encouraged.

77. Continuous reviews of drug courier profiles should be adopted by national agencies to reflect changing drug trafficking trends.

Terrorist organizations involved in drug trafficking

78. All States Members of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East should share information regarding terrorist organizations involved in drug trafficking or providing assistance to trafficking groups.

Role of the police and drug law enforcement bodies on the demand and supply side, with a view to obtaining a balanced multidisciplinary drug policy

79. Tackling drug misuse and abuse is a shared responsibility and, to fight the drug problem, States should implement long-term, multi-agency, multidisciplinary strategies that target young people and that include all segments of society.

80. Mutual assistance between law enforcement agencies in the European region should be strengthened by:

- (a) Exchanging information periodically;
- (b) Providing relevant documents and evidentiary items;
- (c) Using modern technologies for the exchange of information;
- (d) Designating central authorities that may communicate directly with one another.

International cooperation in the suppression of the illicit traffic by sea, as called for in article 17 of the 1988 Convention

81. States should be encouraged to share with other States, to the extent possible, timely, relevant information, whether directly or through the multinational customs system, such as MAR-INFO/YACHT INFO, the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office network of WCO, Interpol, the European Police Office (Europol) or any other regional channel, such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, in order to make possible the comprehensive reporting and integration of available intelligence.

82. The feasibility of regional maritime cooperation programmes, such as those used in Europe (MAR-INFO) and among Caribbean small island States (under the terms of the Barbados Plan of Action), should be reviewed by countries of Asia and the Pacific to determine whether or to what extent the methods and structures applied in those areas for countering drug trafficking could be adapted for use within the region of Asia and the Pacific.

83. States should encourage their drug law enforcement agencies to engage in:

(a) Pursuing the signing of formal memoranda of understanding with trade partners such as carriers, shipping agents and freight forwarders;

(b) Developing "human intelligence" programmes aimed at eliciting the vigilance and cooperation of the public, in support of risk assessment and targeting efforts;

(c) Making full use of new and developing technology in intelligence collation, risk analysis and drug detection.

Control of precursors and essential chemicals that may be used in the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

84. States should involve the chemical industry in their efforts to suppress diversion of precursors through voluntary implementation by the industry of measures to prevent diversion and through reporting of suspicious transactions to the authorities.

85. Member States should consider the potential for strategic partnerships with their chemical industries, particularly manufacturers, brokers or companies that handle precursors, with a view to:

(a) Improving early warning systems for suspect consignments;

(b) Ensuring quicker responses to requests for verification;

(c) Improving identification of substances and brands;

(d) Increasing awareness within the industry of the requirements of the 1988 Convention and the local laws relating to such chemicals;

(e) Promoting enhanced capability within law enforcement in terms of identifying and handling suspect consignments.

86. Precursor-producing and precursor-exporting countries should voluntarily implement pre-export notification procedures in respect of all destination or transit countries, regardless of whether or not the importing or transit country has asked for pre-export notification.

87. Governments should establish specialized units within their law enforcement structures to deal with the control and licensing of chemicals that are listed by the 1988 Convention as substances used for the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

88. States should establish, where necessary, a means of immediate response to requests for information and verification in respect of consignments of precursor chemicals. The competent authorities should respond to one another expeditiously, while keeping the International Narcotics Control Board fully informed.

89. In accordance with article 18 of the 1988 Convention, Member States operating free ports and other free-trade areas should ensure that such zones are not exploited for illicit trafficking in precursor chemicals, especially with regard to labelling that suppresses information on the country of origin.

Illicit manufacture and abuse of psychotropic substances, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants

90. European initiatives to combat the illicit manufacture and abuse of psychotropic substances, such as the amphetamine profile project in Sweden, the LOGO project of Europol and the early warning system of the European Union, should be extended to other European States interested in participating in those initiatives, and consideration should be given to fulfilling any training needs that may arise as a result.

91. States should consider the experience of other States that have adopted a functional approach to dealing with

the illicit manufacture and abuse of psychotropic substances, setting up centres providing expertise to specialists to act as focal points. Regardless of the approach adopted, mechanisms should be considered for developing and sharing information from the industries manufacturing and dealing in equipment and other instrumentalities used in the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances.

92. States should consider the nature and extent of on-line measures to counter, minimize or neutralize material on the Internet that promotes the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, desensitizes the public or unduly influences the young.

93. Bearing in mind the seriousness of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, States should consider, as a priority in demand reduction efforts, introducing regulatory control of cultural events for youth that contribute to the abuse of and demand for psychotropic substances.

94. In addition to ephedrine, countries should also control and monitor closely other substances listed in the Tables of the 1988 Convention and used in the manufacture of methamphetamine, especially phenylacetic acid. They should also consider gathering information on non-internationally-controlled essential chemicals, for example, thionyl chloride, frequently found in clandestine laboratories manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants in the region. Furthermore, countries should increase vigilance against the diversion of methylenedioxy- methamphetamine precursors.

Controlling and reducing the street-hawking of pharmaceutical preparations containing substances under international control

95. African Governments should increase their political commitment to fighting street-hawking of drugs and controlled substances and give stronger priority to that phenomenon in the development and implementation of their relevant public health, drug control and monitoring policies.

96. Public education campaigns and awareness-raising programmes should be undertaken by Governments in order to increase the knowledge within the population of the dangerous and potentially fatal effects of the uncontrolled distribution and use of medicines, including pharmaceutical preparations containing substances under international drug control. Such education campaigns should also provide accurate information on the real effects of active ingredients.

97. African States should conduct, with the assistance of UNDCP and the World Health Organization (WHO), specific national surveys and studies that identify the detailed patterns and trends of street-hawking of drugs in their countries, so as to be able to develop specific and concrete targeted actions that are in line with the findings of such studies.

98. Law enforcement, regulatory and health authorities need to improve their cooperation in tackling the street-hawking of drugs, as no single authority can end or reduce the scale of the phenomenon. Governments should, therefore, in cooperation with UNDCP, the Board and WHO, increase related training and education programmes for professionals from those sectors, in order to improve their professional knowledge, commitment and results.

Countering the illicit cultivation of cannabis

99. States in the African continent should counter any move in favour of decriminalization or legalization of cultivation and abuse of cannabis, and engage more vigorously in the eradication of cannabis cultivation.

100. States should consider the following measures to counter cultivation of cannabis and its abuse:

- (a) Creation of a drug (including cannabis) awareness programme for their population;
- (b) Promotion of alternative development;
- (c) Establishment of law enforcement units in the cultivation areas with adequate equipment and logistical support.

101. States should promote national and international exchange of information, including intelligence, regarding cannabis cultivation and trafficking.

Illicit cultivation of opium poppy and production of opiates

102. The parties exercising control over the opium poppy-growing areas of Afghanistan should commit themselves to supporting alternative development efforts and should take effective law enforcement measures to prevent illicit cultivation. They should elicit international support for long-term development programmes in order to achieve the goal of elimination of illicit opium poppy and cannabis cultivation.

103. As a follow-up to its resolute efforts to destroy illicit opium poppies in April 1998, the Government of Pakistan was encouraged to continue to display the necessary

resolve to achieve complete eradication of opium poppies in Pakistan in the 1999/2000 season. The Government was also encouraged to formulate plans, with appropriate international assistance, for the consolidation phases that would help maintain Pakistan as a poppy-free country following the completion of its current alternative development projects.

104. Alternative development programmes should go beyond the narrow focus of crop substitution and include wider aspects of socio-economic development, such as improved transportation and marketing facilities, off-farm employment and social infrastructure. As part of alternative development programmes, appropriately timed, resolute and effective law enforcement action should be taken to prevent the spread of cultivation and to ensure that illicit crops are eliminated once sufficient socio-economic progress has been achieved.

Notes

¹ The term "supply" refers to the production of drugs as well as their transportation and trafficking to consumer areas.

² The stabilization trend of cocaine and heroin supply is reflected not only in estimates of cultivation and production, but also in seizure statistics at the global level.

³ The increase in the supply of amphetamine-type stimulants is mainly drawn from seizure statistics, while data on the volume of manufacture is mostly lacking.

⁴ The trend in the supply of cannabis is mainly drawn from seizure statistics, but data on cultivation and production is lacking.

⁵ Interpol, *Global Heroin Traffic, Changing Scenario, 1996-1997* (Lyon, 1997), p. 50; Interpol, *World Cocaine Situation Report* (Lyon, 1997), pp. 4 and 11; and Interpol, *Heroin, the European Scene, 1997* (Lyon, 1998), p. 19.

⁶ Interpol, "Illicit drug trafficking in the Asian Region, 1997", paper submitted to the fifteenth Asian Regional Conference, held in Canberra in 1998, pp. 5 and 6; Interpol, *Regional Drugs Supply Trend, East Asia, 1997/98* (Lyon, 1998), p. 5; and Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues, *The World Geopolitics of Drugs, Annual Report, 1997/98* (Paris, 1998), pp. 10, 63 ff.

⁷ UNDCP Country Office, Afghanistan, *Annual Opium Poppy Survey, 1998* (Islamabad, 1998).

⁸ UNDCP Country Office, Afghanistan, "Supply: existing sources in south-west Asia, 1997" (Islamabad, 1998).

⁹ Department of Justice of the United States of America, Drug Enforcement Administration, *Intelligence Bulletin: The South American Heroin Threat* (Washington, D.C., 1997), pp. 2

and 4.

¹⁰ The main sources for seizure statistics are the annual reports questionnaires submitted by Governments to UNDCP. Where information is lacking, additional sources are used, including UNDCP field offices, Interpol, WCO and government reports, such as those submitted at meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

¹¹ The interception rate is calculated on the basis of the total global production level and a deduction of the volume of global seizures of the drug.

¹² UNDCP Regional Office for Central Asia, *Annual Report, 1997-98* (Tashkent, 1998).

¹³ Interpol, *Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Asian Region* ..., pp. 3-6; Interpol, *Regional Drugs Supply Trend* ..., pp. 4 and 5; and Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues, *The World Geopolitics of Drugs* ..., p. 63 ff.

¹⁴ Interpol, *Global Heroin Traffic, Changing Scenario* ..., p. 2.

¹⁵ World Customs Organization, *Monthly Bulletin*, 1997 issues.

¹⁶ Estimated figures on coca leaf production differ from those used in the business plans for alternative development in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, because of the application of different yield factors and/or conversion rates. That was necessary in order to make other calculations based on production figures, such as interception rates, more reasonable. However, cultivation figures, which are the main indicators for the various business plans, concur with those used in the present report.

¹⁷ Interpol, *World Cocaine Situation Report* ..., p. 4.

¹⁸ Interpol, *World Traffic in Cannabis* (Lyon, 1997), pp. 2-5; Interpol, *Regional Drugs Supply Trend* ..., p. 2.

¹⁹ A very high positive correlation between volumes of herbal cannabis seizures and prevalence rates has been identified in the United States, as reflected in a 1998 UNDCP study entitled "Cannabis as an illicit narcotic crop: a review of the global situation of illicit cannabis consumption, trafficking and production, trends and patterns of abuse over the last few decades".

²⁰ *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1998, vol. I* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

