The threat of synthetic drugs is one of the most significant drug problems worldwide. After cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) are the second most widely used drugs across the globe, outstripping the use of cocaine and heroin. Since 1990, illicit manufacture of ATS has been reported from more than 70 countries and the figure keeps rising. Trends on the synthetic drug market evolve quickly.

The UNODC Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme enhances the capacity of Member States in priority regions to generate, manage, analyse, report and use synthetic drug information to design effective policy and programme interventions. Launched in September 2008, Global SMART provides capacity-building in East and South-East Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. Features of UNODC Global SMART are online data collection, situation reports and regional assessments. The most recent global ATS assessment was published in 2011. The fourth annual review of patterns and trends of ATS and Other Drugs in Asia and the Pacific was issued in December 2012, providing detailed data and information on 15 countries in East and South-East Asia, with coverage of South Asia and Oceania. For 2013, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/1, the Global SMART Programme will produce a first global situation assessment on new psychoactive substances.

The Global SMART Update is designed to provide regular brief reporting on emerging patterns and trends of the fast changing global synthetic drug situation. Given the speed at which changes in the ATS markets occur, it is especially important to have a simple sustainable mechanism for frequent information sharing from different parts of the world. The Global SMART Update is published twice a year and is available in English and Spanish.

The Update reports various synthetic drug information such as significant or unusual drug or precursor chemical seizures, new locations, methods and chemicals used in illicit manufacture, new trafficking groups or routes, changes in legislation to address the problem of synthetic drugs, environmental impact from their illicit manufacture and destruction, emerging drugs, and health implications related to their use.*

Each issue of the Update contains special coverage and thematic segments. Since October 2010, the special segment of the Update has been expanded to provide a more in-depth review of an issue of current interest. In addition short regional overviews have been added to provide snapshots of the situation in the regions of the world. Issues highlighted include the increasing dimension of ATS trafficking from Africa to East and South-East Asia, the ATS situation in South Asia; new psychoactive substances and the changing faces of illicit ATS manufacture.

The special segment of the current issue highlights the results of a global questionnaire on the emergence of new psychoactive substances that was undertaken by UNODC in 2012, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/1 adopted in March 2012. For the first time, there will be a global analysis of where these substances have appeared, what is known about them and where they are used. Far from being a phenomenon that affects only a few States, the report shows that all regions of the world have been affected by the manufacture, trafficking and use of these substances.

While data on ATS seizures is often easy to obtain, information about the demand for ATS and NPS remains scarce and anecdotal in nature. Nevertheless, the Update continues to make a determined effort to highlight the human toll of ATS and NPS use. Various demand-related subjects are covered in this issue, including facts that have come to light about the use of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances and their impact in various countries such as Australia, United Kingdom and United States. The Update also covers the results of the latest study on drug use among university students in the Andean countries as well as the highlights of the EMCDDA reports.

*The information and data contained within this report are from official Government reports, press releases, scientific journals or incidents confirmed by UNODC Field Offices. Additional or updated information from previously reported incidents may also be included where appropriate. Information denoted with an asterisk (*) are from ‘open sources’ where UNODC is waiting for official confirmation and therefore should be considered only preliminary. This report has not been formally edited. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNODC or contributory organizations and neither do they imply any endorsement. Suggested citation: Global SMART Update Volume 9, March 2013.
Regional overviews

Oceania. Australia and New Zealand continue to be significant markets for ATS and illicit manufacture of ATS has been reported from both countries. A controlled delivery resulted in a major seizure of 50 kg of methamphetamine in Papua New Guinea. Over the past few years, a market for new psychoactive substances* has developed in Australia and New Zealand and anecdotal information suggests that synthetic cannabinoids are also available in some Pacific Island States.

East and South-East Asia. The region, which is home to about one-third of the global population, has some of the largest and most established ATS markets in the world. Illicit ATS manufacture is reported from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand. Organized criminal groups from West Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to target the region for methamphetamine trafficking. Increases of methamphetamine use are reported from most countries in East and South-East Asia. New psychoactive substances have emerged in some countries in the region, for example, China and Viet Nam.

South Asia. South Asian countries remain vulnerable to illicit ATS trafficking and manufacture, due to the geographical proximity to important source countries of ATS in East and South-East Asia and the continued availability of precursor chemicals required to manufacture illicit synthetic drugs, particularly ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. There is little data on ATS use and manufacture. Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka have reported seizures of methamphetamine.

West Asia and the Middle East. Amphetamine, commonly sold as Captagon, continues to be the most frequently seized substance in this region. Strong increases in amphetamine seizures (mostly Captagon) have been reported from Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates. Apart from the Islamic Republic of Iran, no reports of illicit manufacture have been received from the region to date, a fact which is inconsistent with both the quantity of seizures and the availability of key ATS precursors in the region. Data on ATS use is rarely reported from the region. Trafficking of new psychoactive substances has been reported by the United Arab Emirates.

Europe. The region continues to be an important market for amphetamine in terms of both manufacture and use. Methamphetamine appears to be replacing amphetamine as the drug of choice in some countries in the North of Europe (Finland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden). There are also reports of increased methamphetamine smoking, known to be particularly damaging to health. New psychoactive substances are available in most European countries. Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom have carried out surveys on the use of new psychoactive substances and while prevalence levels remain low, there may be potential for rapid increase in such use among certain subpopulations.

Africa. Increased trafficking of methamphetamine from countries in West Africa continues to be reported by several countries in East and South-East Asia as well as in Australia and New Zealand. Methamphetamine manufacturing facilities have been dismantled in Nigeria, possibly linked to South American drug trafficking organizations. The low level of awareness of ATS in the region, combined with limited law enforcement capacity, infrastructure and appropriate legislation observed in some countries remains an obstacle to properly counteract the activities of drug trafficking organizations in the region.

North America. North America remains a significant market for ATS, particularly methamphetamine and ecstasy. Seizures of methamphetamine have increased, particularly in Mexico and the United States. ATS manufacture has been reported from Canada, Mexico and the United States. In 2012, Mexico reported seizures of over 30 mt of methamphetamine precursors. New psychoactive substances are available in Canada and the United States, and possibly Mexico. Seizures of synthetic cannabinoids in the United States increased sharply from 23 cases in 2009 to 22,000 cases in 2011. Canada has reported multi-ton seizures of ketamine.

Central and South America. Increased seizures of ATS precursors have been reported from countries in Central America, notably Guatemala and Honduras. In November 2012, 10.3 mt of pseudoephedrine were seized in northern Honduras. In Guatemala, at least three ATS laboratories were dismantled in 2012, one of them reportedly the largest laboratory found in the country. The use of ATS has been reported by most countries in the region. A new study on drug use among university students in the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) reveals that, together with cocaine, ATS are the most frequently used drugs.

* Please see page 4 for a definition of new psychoactive substances.
New psychoactive substances have spread across the globe, new UNODC report shows

No longer a phenomenon of a few countries or regions, new psychoactive substances (NPS) are being sold across the world, finds a new report on the challenge of NPS prepared by the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme. For the first time, information on the global spread of the substances has become available. The report, which was prepared pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/1, is based on information submitted through a questionnaire that was circulated to Governments and a network of drug analysis laboratories around the world in July 2012. New psychoactive substances – a global phenomenon

For the purposes of the report, NPS are defined as “substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation that are not controlled by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances but which may pose a public health threat.” The term ‘new’ does not necessarily refer to new inventions – some NPS were synthesized more than 40 years ago – but to substances that have recently emerged and have been used on the market and which have not been scheduled under the above Conventions. The term also includes plant-based substances like kratom or Salvia divinorum.

Respondents from 70 out of 80 countries, which supplied information on the questionnaire that was distributed to Governments and drug analysis laboratories, reported the emergence of NPS. Most countries were located in Europe, followed by Asia and the Americas. The categories of NPS sold in the market comprise the following:

- **Synthetic cannabinoids** – typically synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists that function similar to delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the principal psychoactive component in cannabis, often sold as “K2”, “Kronic”, “Spice”
- **Synthetic cathinones** – analogues of or derivatives to the internationally controlled substance cathinone (active ingredient of the khat plant), often sold as MDPV
- **Phencyclidine-type substances** such as 4-methoxy-PCP
- **Tryptamines** such as 5-Methoxy-N,N-diisopropyl-tryptamine (’foxy methoxy’)
- **Piperazines** – frequently sold as ‘ecstasy’, the most commonly reported substance is Benzylpiperazine (BZP), others include mCPP and TFMPP.
- **Plant-based substances** such as kratom (mitragyna speciosa Korth) or Salvia divinorum
- **Aminoindanes** such as 2-Aminoindane (2-Al)

Some 251 substances have been reported so far, 5 new NPS already reported in 2013

Through the questionnaire, some 251 substances, including ketamine, were identified. Almost a quarter (24%) was synthetic cannabinoids, followed by phenethylamines (23%) and synthetic cathinones (18%). The most frequently reported NPS were JWH-018, mCPP (1-(3-Chlorophenyl) piperazine) and methedrone (4-methylmethcathinone).
This number is higher than the number of substances currently scheduled under the 1961 and 1971 Conventions and it continues to grow. In February 2013, five previously unknown substances were reported through the network of drug analysis laboratories participating in the UNODC International Collaborative Exercises (ICE). Technically, the number of potential derivatives is unlimited. The report contains a full list of the substances identified in 2012 and annexes with the full chemical names of the 251 substances to assist Governments in getting a global overview on NPS circulating in the market today.

**Challenges and potential responses**

The accurate identification of NPS presents a challenge to drug testing laboratories. Various difficulties are encountered in identifying the active ingredients of NPS due to the presence of isomers and possible similarities between certain compounds of the same class. UNODC is currently working on manuals on the identification of synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones and piperazines which will assist authorities in carrying out their work.

With the high number of NPS circulating in the market, the availability of reference standards becomes another challenge. Obtaining such standards from commercial sources is costly and to build a stock of a small number of NPS may be beyond the financial resources available to many drug analysis laboratories in developed and developing countries alike.

The use of NPS is often linked to health problems. Users of some NPS, particularly synthetic cannabinoids or synthetic cathinones, have been hospitalized with severe intoxications. Synthetic cathinones such as mephedrone, methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) or 4-methylamphetamine (4-MA) have been associated with fatalities. The report provides an overview of the prevalence studies that have been conducted in various countries around the world. The absence of a common terminology on NPS has impeded the generation of comparable data across countries so far. The report shows that there is a clear need for a wider and common understanding of the spread of these substances and more information on their composition and potentially harmful effects.

For the first time, the Global SMART Programme has produced a national situation assessment on amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) in Indonesia. The report, prepared in cooperation with the National Narcotics Board of Indonesia, highlights the latest trends and emerging concerns related to ATS in Indonesia. It focuses on the growing trend of synthetic drugs use, and warns of the increasing dimension in the manufacture and trafficking of crystalline methamphetamine in the country, both for domestic use and for trafficking to international markets.

Cannabis, methamphetamine and ecstasy are the most widely used drugs. While cannabis remains the most widely used drug in Indonesia, the use of crystalline methamphetamine has expanded continuously during the past several years. In 2010 and 2011, crystalline methamphetamine was identified as the primary drug of concern in Indonesia. The estimated number of drug users in Indonesia for 2011 ranged from 3.7 to 4.7 million. Of those users, an estimated 2.8 million use cannabis whereas between 1.1 million and 1.3 million use crystalline methamphetamine. Ecstasy comes in third place, with about 938,000 to 969,000 users.

ATS use, once confined to major urban centres, has now expanded throughout the country, both geographically and demographically. While ATS use among drug users declined significantly in Java, the most populous province in Indonesia, its use has risen in other provinces. Kalimantan, located in the north of the country (on the island of Borneo), has the highest average crystalline methamphetamine use in Indonesia, at almost 21 grams per year, twice the national average (10.4 grams). Crystalline methamphetamine use among women is highest in the eastern regions of the country. In the easternmost region (Maluku and Papua) nearly one-third of all women drug users use crystalline methamphetamine.

Most crystalline methamphetamine is manufactured domestically. While cannabis continues to be cultivated in Indonesia, the country has not traditionally been a major producer of other drugs. However, since ATS manufacture was first detected in the country in 1998, a small number of crystalline methamphetamine manufacturing facilities and ecstasy-pill pressing operations have been dismantled regularly. In 2011, 25 ATS laboratories were seized in Indonesia, of which 17 were manufacturing crystalline methamphetamine and eight were manufacturing ecstasy.

Most crystalline methamphetamine and ecstasy demand in the country is believed to be supplied by domestic manufacture. China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and the Philippines have been cited as sources of trafficked crystalline methamphetamine, whereas for ecstasy, some of the trafficked shipments came from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. The large number of potential drug users and the high ATS prices in Indonesia (a gram of crystalline methamphetamine is estimated at USD 145 and one ecstasy pill at USD 22) relative to other countries in South-East Asia continue to attract international drug trafficking networks to smuggle large quantities of ATS into Indonesia.
Global SMART segments are arranged based on regional threat. Oceania has among the highest prevalence rates for ATS use in the world, while the number of ATS users is greatest in East Asia. Therefore, the map and corresponding index of segments begins with recent events from Oceania and East Asia and then moves geographically westward. The numbered pins on the map above correspond with the index of segments below.

**Index of segments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WELLINGTON, New Zealand</td>
<td>26 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANBERRA, Australia</td>
<td>10 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYDNEY, Australia</td>
<td>21 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>12 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAKARTA, Indonesia</td>
<td>1 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND – October/November</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYANMAR</td>
<td>29 September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELHI, India</td>
<td>28 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KARACHI, Pakistan</td>
<td>26 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>4 September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAIRO, Egypt</td>
<td>January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHANNESBURG, South Africa</td>
<td>26 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINDHOEK, Namibia</td>
<td>18 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABUJA, Nigeria</td>
<td>28 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGOS, Nigeria</td>
<td>5 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRUSSELS, Belgium</td>
<td>31 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONDON, United Kingdom</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISBON, Portugal</td>
<td>15 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAO PAULO, Brazil</td>
<td>15 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMA, Peru</td>
<td>1 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN SALVADOR, Salvador</td>
<td>5 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YORO, Honduras</td>
<td>6 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras</td>
<td>2 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUEHUETENANGO, Guatemala</td>
<td>6 September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JALISCO, Mexico</td>
<td>7 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANZANILLO, Mexico</td>
<td>23 September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTREAL, Canada</td>
<td>20 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCE RUPERT, Canada</td>
<td>14 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSOURI, United States</td>
<td>8 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO, United States</td>
<td>3 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td>17 October 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australia: study on methamphetamine use and psychosis released

CANBERRA, Australia – 10 January 2013. Research at the Australian National University has established for the first time strong evidence of a causal link between the use of methamphetamine and psychotic symptoms. The study tracked 278 methamphetamine users over several years and found a clear dose-related increase in psychotic symptoms during periods of use, with about half experiencing psychotic symptoms when taking the drug daily. The study showed that the psychotic symptoms were not due to pre-existing conditions, since people with a known psychotic disorder were excluded from the study. A strong temporal relationship between using the drug and psychosis, with symptoms abating when people stopped using the drug, was also revealed. The study is published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Psychiatry.

New Zealand: temporary ban on new psychoactive substance

WELLINGTON, New Zealand – 26 November 2012. A temporary ban on a substance identified as EAM-2201 has been announced by Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne. The substance was found in a package of a product sold as ‘K2’, which often contains synthetic cannabinoids. The temporary drug notice became effective on December 6 and from that date, it became illegal to import, manufacture, sell or supply the substance. ‘K2’ has recently caused concern, particularly in the lower South Island where it has been connected to a number of incidents. The use of ‘K2’ has been tied to elevated heart rate, vomiting, anxiety and psychosis. A new control system for new psychoactive substances is expected to be in place in New Zealand by mid-2013, under which the burden of proof will be reversed so that manufacturers and distributors will have to prove their products are safe before they can be sold. Products that pass testing will still have age and other restrictions applied.

Australia: 235 kg of methamphetamine seized

SYDNEY, Australia – 21 November 2012. After more than 2.5 years of a complex investigation, the Australian Federal Police has disrupted an international drug trafficking organization, seizing 235 kg of methamphetamine as well as 115 kg of cocaine, with a combined estimated street value up to USD 246.4 million. The investigation, codenamed Operation Pendine, began when the international drug trafficking organization planned to traffic drugs to Australia. During a search of a storage unit in Warriewood, a suburb of Sydney, the Australian Federal Police discovered the drugs concealed in heavy machinery, including a road roller. Two nationals of the United States and Canada were charged with the crime. Enquiries into this matter remain ongoing.

Papua New Guinea: controlled delivery results in 50 kg seizure of methamphetamine

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea – 12 November 2012. Fifty kg of methamphetamine with an estimated value of USD 8 million were seized by Port Moresby Police, making it the largest amount of methamphetamine ever seized in Papua New Guinea. The drugs were hidden in the metal frames of welding machines consigned as cargo originating from the Netherlands and destined for Papua New Guinea, when they were detected in the United Kingdom. After replacing the drugs with soap powder, the cargo was fitted with a tracking device and followed in a controlled delivery to New Zealand, Australia and Papua New Guinea. The seizure is the result of international collaboration between the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and police forces in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Two nationals of Malaysia and one national of Papua New Guinea were arrested in connection with the seizure.
Indonesia: drug trafficking organization smuggled 250 kg of methamphetamine

JAKARTA, Indonesia – 1 December 2012. More than 250 kg of crystalline methamphetamine with an estimated retail value of about USD 39 million were seized by the National Police. The seizure was made after the National Police received information that a large-scale drug-related transaction was planned at a hotel in West Jakarta. Surveillance operations led the police to a housing complex where the drugs were discovered. Investigations continue on how the drugs were trafficked into the country. The National Police Narcotics Director stated that the suspects are believed to be part of an international drug trafficking organization led by a national of Malaysia and allegedly controlled from Kuala Lumpur. Five suspects were apprehended and will be charged with Article 114 of the 2009 Law on Narcotics, under which they could face a death penalty in Indonesia.

Thailand: more than 26 USD million worth of methamphetamine seized

THAILAND – October and November 2012. Thai Police seized methamphetamine with an estimated value of more than USD 26 million in two separate incidents in October and November 2012. The first seizure of more than 1.7 million methamphetamine pills was made in the central province of Samut Sakhon, after a tip-off had been received by the local police. Pills reportedly originated from the North of Thailand and have an estimated value of more than USD 16 million. The second case involved a significant seizure of 18.5 kg of crystalline methamphetamine with an estimated value of USD 10 million, made in the eastern province of Chonburi. Pseudoephedrine and equipment used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine were also found. Three nationals of the Islamic Republic of Iran were arrested.*

Myanmar: 13 million pseudoephedrine tablets seized

MYANMAR – 29 September 2012. Anti-Narcotics Task Force personnel seized 13 million tablets containing pseudoephedrine that were being trafficked through the Chindwin River near Ka Ni Township, in the Sagaing Region in northwest Myanmar. The seized tablets had an estimated value of more than USD 1.5 million. Nine kg of ephedrine were also seized in the incident. While the source of the tablets in this seizure is still under investigation, India is frequently cited as a source country for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine trafficked into Myanmar. Seizures of pseudoephedrine have increased in Myanmar: from 766 kg in 2010 to more 1.7 mt in 2011. Preliminary data for 2012 indicate a further rise, with almost 3.5 mt of pseudoephedrine seized during the first nine months of the year.

India: significant seizure (3.8 mt) of ephedrine

DELHI, India – 28 November 2012. Officers of the Narcotics Control Bureau seized 3884.6 kg of ephedrine, the largest seizure of the substance reported by any national drug law enforcement agency during 2012. The substance was believed to originate in Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh), 19 km east of Delhi. Ephedrine is often trafficked from India to Myanmar, where the substance is used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine pills (‘yaba’). Both ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are among the most frequently used methamphetamine precursors, have been controlled in India since 1999. Since 2011, the Narcotics Control Bureau has observed that pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are being smuggled to Myanmar through the Indo-Myanmar border. More than 3.5 million tablets of pseudoephedrine were already seized during the first six months of 2012.
Egypt: synthetic cannabinoids emerging on the market

CAIRO, Egypt – January 2013. A substance sold as ‘voodoo’, and believed to contain a synthetic cannabinoid, appears to be spreading across Egypt. The substance is allegedly trafficked from Europe, and smuggled to Egypt through the Libyan border. It resembles cannabis and is available in the form of leaves with seeds or as dark brown powder, the latter used in a similar fashion as hashish, i.e. wrapped in a rolling paper either with or without tobacco. The price of one pack of ‘voodoo’ reportedly ranges between USD 22 and USD 37. The substance is said to be widely used among affluent students and is sold in wealthy areas of the city. In a news report, Major General Hani Abdel Latif, Deputy Director of the General Administration of Information and Public Relations of the Ministry of Interior, stated that this new psychoactive substance started to emerge in the governorates of Egypt two months ago and that it is currently being monitored by the Anti-Narcotics General Administration.

UAE: trafficking of synthetic cannabinoids reported

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates – 4 September 2012. Dubai Customs inspectors have prevented 126 attempts to smuggle a total of 23.5 kg of synthetic cannabinoids (‘Spice’) within the first eight months of 2012. Ahmed Abdullah Bin Lahej, senior manager of Air Shipping Operations, said that all seized consignments arrived as parcels. Amounts trafficked ranged between two grams and five kg. The substance was brought to Dubai for both local use and for trafficking to other destinations. Parcels were often addressed to young men, including, in one case, a 9-year-old boy. Use of these substances is reportedly common among young people. The United Arab Emirates has recently placed ‘Spice’ in Schedule 1 of the Federal Narcotics Law, as an illicit substance, whose trafficking and use are subject to imprisonment.

Pakistan: 4 kg amphetamine found in aircraft

KARACHI, Pakistan – 26 October 2012. Four kg of amphetamine were seized from an aircraft by the Drug Enforcement Cell of Pakistan Customs. The DEC staff of the Jinnah International Airport at Karachi recovered the amphetamine from cavities of toilets in an aircraft ready to take off for Lahore. The drugs were packed in cloth belts which could be tied around waists by passengers operating for drug trafficking organizations. The aircraft had arrived in Karachi after operating on different domestic and international sectors, including destinations in South-East Asia. This is the second reported ATS seizure, after four kg of domestically manufactured amphetamine were seized in Karachi from a Malaysian national.*

South Africa: 38 kg of methamphetamine seized

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – 26 November 2012. A total of 38 kg of crystalline methamphetamine (known locally as ‘tik’) has been seized by the Customs team of the South African Revenue Service Customs at the international airport of Johannesburg, in two separate cases. Twenty-eight kg of methamphetamine with a street value of about USD 950,000 were found on a passenger travelling from Delhi, the drug was concealed in several ladies handbags. Earlier that month, ten kg of methamphetamine with a street value of about USD 400,000 were seized from a passenger arriving from Delhi via Doha. The drug was concealed in shoes, rolls of ribbon and lever arch files. Methamphetamine is the most widely used ATS in South Africa.
Belgium: tighter controls over methamphetamine precursors proposed by the European Commission

BRUSSELS, Belgium – 27 September 2012. Stronger controls over pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have been proposed by the European Commission to close existing loopholes in current legislation on these precursors. While ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in bulk are controlled under the 1988 Convention, the trade in products containing them is not. Drug traffickers therefore frequently target the preparations as an easy source. If the proposal is adopted, any export of pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine will be preceded by a pre-export notification. In addition, competent authorities would be given the powers to stop or seize those products when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that they are intended for the illicit manufacture of drugs, when they are exported, imported or in transit. The proposal will be reviewed by the European Parliament in June 2013.

Nigeria: 4.2 kg of methamphetamine seized at Lagos airport

LAGOS, Nigeria – 5 October 2012. Two suspected drug traffickers were apprehended at the international airport in Lagos for attempting to traffic 4.2 kg of methamphetamine to India. The arrests took place during a routine search on passengers boarding a flight to India. The drug was hidden inside the luggage and discovered during screening at the baggage checking desk. The substance was valued at USD 436,000. Nigeria, the most populous country in West Africa, has been cited as the starting point for methamphetamine shipments trafficked to destinations in Asia. The growing dimension of ATS in West Africa is highlighted in a special assessment prepared by the Global SMART Programme (see Global SMART Update, Volume 8).

Nigeria: NDLEA Chairman expresses concern over methamphetamine

ABUJA, Nigeria – 28 December 2012. The discovery of three methamphetamine laboratories in Nigeria “is a clarion call on stakeholders to pay priority attention on this dangerous twist in our nation’s drug trade”, Ahmadu Giade, the Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria (NDLEA) has said. After months of investigation, NDLEA located three methamphetamine facilities in Lagos and Anambra State. The laboratories reportedly had been established by a Colombian methamphetamine production expert, who had been contracted by a Nigerian drug trafficking organization. NDLEA has expanded considerable efforts to uncover methamphetamine facilities. In July 2011, Nigeria became the first West African country to officially report illicit methamphetamine manufacture. A second methamphetamine laboratory was seized in February 2012. The growing dimension of ATS in West Africa is highlighted in a special assessment prepared by the Global SMART Programme (see Global SMART Update, Vol. 8).

Namibia: 20 kg of ephedrine discovered

WINDHOEK, Namibia – 18 December 2012. A Zimbabwean and a South African woman were arrested in Windhoek for possession of a total of 20 kg of a white powdery substance hidden in their bags. Initially assumed to be methamphetamine, tests undertaken by the Forensic Institute showed that it was ephedrine. It is the largest amount of ephedrine ever confiscated in Namibia. According to the head of the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian Police Force, Deputy Commissioner Hermie van Zyl, the women obtained the drugs in South America, from where they travelled through Angola to Namibia, and hoped to hitch a lift with a trucker through Botswana to their final destination in South Africa. Police were tipped off about the suspicious behaviour of the suspects at a Windhoek guesthouse and a subsequent search revealed the substance. The value of the confiscated ephedrine (USD 1m) seized from the two women is twice the total value of drugs confiscated by the Namibian Police Force in 2012.*

Nigeria: 4.2 kg of methamphetamine seized at Lagos airport

LAGOS, Nigeria – 5 October 2012. Two suspected drug traffickers were apprehended at the international airport in Lagos for attempting to traffic 4.2 kg of methamphetamine to India. The arrests took place during a routine search on passengers boarding a flight to India. The drug was hidden inside the luggage and discovered during screening at the baggage checking desk. The substance was valued at USD 436,000. Nigeria, the most populous country in West Africa, has been cited as the starting point for methamphetamine shipments trafficked to destinations in Asia. The growing dimension of ATS in West Africa is highlighted in a special assessment prepared by the Global SMART Programme (see Global SMART Update, Volume 8).
Belgium: European Commission proposes ban on 4-MA

BRUSSELS, Belgium – 31 January 2013. The European Commission has proposed an EU-wide ban on 4-methylamphetamine (4-MA), a new psychoactive substance with similar physical effects to amphetamines. The substance has been associated with 21 fatalities in Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and the United Kingdom from 2010 to 2012. 4-MA is already controlled in 10 EU countries (Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands and the United Kingdom). The proposal would ban the manufacturing and the marketing of 4-MA, making it subject to criminal sanctions. EU governments will decide on whether to put these measures into force, voting by a qualified majority in the Council. The proposal of the Commission follows the procedure for risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances set up by European Council Decision 2005/387/JHA. In 2010 the Commission proposed and achieved an EU-wide ban on mephedrone.

England: rise in treatment demand for ketamine and mephedrone

LONDON, United Kingdom – November 2012. The number of persons entering treatment for ketamine and 4-methylmethcathinone (mephedrone) has increased, according to the 2012 report of the National Treatment Agency for Substances Misuse. The report shows that while the number of people entering treatment for ecstasy has halved from 2,138 in 2006-07 to 1,018 in 2011-12, ketamine and mephedrone cases have risen. Ketamine presentations continuously increased between 2005-06 and 2010-11, from 114 to 845, falling back to 751 in 2011-12. In 2012, 900 over-18s started treatment for mephedrone, compared to 839 in the previous year. The high numbers could indicate a potential strain on public health although it is not possible to predict long-term treatment demand on the basis of data for two years. The report also notes that persons demanding treatment for NPS were relatively young. In 2011, 56% of all over-18s treated for mephedrone were aged between 18-24.

Portugal: EMCDDA – users confronted with “plethora of powders and pills”

LISBON, Portugal – 15 November 2012. Europe is faced with an increasing-ly complex stimulant market, in which young people are exposed to a wide variety of powders and pills, according to the annual report of the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). While amphetamines, cocaine and ecstasy continue to be the main players on the stimulant scene, they are now competing with a growing number of new psychoactive substances. In 2012, 73 new psychoactive substances were reported through the European Early Warning System. Synthetic cathinones and synthetic cannabinoids are the two largest drug groups monitored. The number of products containing multiple psychoactive substances appears to be rising. In 2011 and 2012, all new psychoactive substances notified have been synthetic.

Brazil: more than 19,000 ecstasy pills seized

SAO PAULO, Brazil – 15 December 2012. The Federal Police, in co-ordination with the Federal Revenue Service of Brazil, prevented an attempt to traffic more than 19,000 ecstasy pills (4.6 kg) into Brazil. The ecstasy pills were found in three plastic bags hidden inside the luggage of a passenger arriving in a flight from Madrid. In July 2012, more than 74,000 ecstasy pills were seized in two separate incidents at the International Airport of Guarulhos-Sao Paulo and at the International Airport of Rio de Janeiro, from passengers arriving from Lisbon.
Andean countries: marginal increase in ATS use

**LIMA, Peru – 1 February 2013.** In 2012, last-year use of ATS in countries of the Andean Community stood at 0.5%, a slight increase compared to 2009 (0.4%), according to the latest epidemiological report on drug use in the university population. Of all Andean countries, Colombia has the highest last year use prevalence of ATS among university students (0.9%), followed by Ecuador (0.7%), Peru (0.5%) and Bolivia (0.2%). The study also showed a rise in lifetime methamphetamine use among university students, from 0.2% in 2009 to 0.5% in 2012. The study is based on a sample size of 22,389 university students from 45 universities in countries of the Andean Community and was released by the Andean Community (CAN), in the framework of the joint CAN-European Union anti-drug project PRADICAN.

Salvador: ‘Operation Icebreaker’ leads to seizures of methamphetamine and precursors

**SAN SALVADOR, Salvador – 5 February 2013.** More than 360 mt of chemicals, 200 kg of methamphetamine, cocaine and LSD have been seized in an Interpol-led operation combating methamphetamine manufacture and trafficking across the Americas. Codenamed ‘Icebreaker’, the Operation resulted in the arrest of some 25 suspects across the participating countries – Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama. Coordinated by the Interpol Regional Bureau in Salvador, key objectives of the operation were to identify and seize shipments of methamphetamine precursors, to dismantle organized crime groups and to locate and destroy clandestine laboratories. Supported by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), ‘Icebreaker’ was the first of a series of operations in the Americas aimed at enhancing regional capacity to more effectively target and dismantle the organized crime networks involved in trafficking.

10.3 mt of pseudoephedrine destroyed in Honduras

**YORO, Honduras – 6 December 2012.** Some 10.3 mt of pseudoephedrine were destroyed by incineration on a cement kiln, according to media reports. During multiple raids carried out the previous week, packages with contents of more than 10 mt of ephedrine were found in the basement of a farm in the village of Pata de Gallina de Santa Rita, Yoro, in northern Honduras. Honduras is one of the countries in Central America that has reported large seizures of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine over the last few years. Over two million pills were reported in 2009, and a record seizure of pseudoephedrine pills (more than 30 million pills) was reported in 2010.*

More than 1 mt of pseudoephedrine seized in Honduras

**SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras – 2 October 2012.** An in-depth investigation by the National Police led to the seizure of 54 barrels of pseudoephedrine (each containing some 23 to 27 kg of the precursor) at the airport Ramon Villeda Morales of San Pedro Sula, in northern Honduras. The precursor was contained in barrels labelled as ‘material for the production of anti-parasitic medications’, and addressed to a fictitious import company, in the city of San Pedro Sula. The batch of barrels arrived in the industrial capital on a flight from Bogota, Colombia, with an intermediate stop in Panama City. The seized chemicals were apparently further destined for Guatemala and Mexico. There is speculation that this case is related to a seizure of 80 kg of cocaine made in September at the same airport.*
Guatemala: industrial-scale ATS lab discovered

HUEHUETENANGO, Guatemala – 6 September 2012. A clandestine laboratory for the manufacture of synthetic drugs was dismantled in San Isidro, Huehuetenango, a province bordering Mexico. National Police officials consider this laboratory as the largest and most industrialized laboratory for the manufacture of synthetic drugs found in Guatemala so far. Preliminary analysis indicated the manufacture of methamphetamine. In early 2012, two laboratories for the manufacture of amphetamine were also dismantled, one located in San Marcos (a neighbouring province of Huehuetenango), and the second in Santa Rosa (in the south of the country).

Mexico: ATS laboratories discovered in Jalisco

JALISCO, Mexico – 7 December 2012. Two illicit laboratories for the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs were dismantled in the course of two separate ground monitoring operations carried out by military personnel in the State of Jalisco, West Mexico. First, on 28 November, a facility was uncovered in the settlement of ‘El Saucillo’ in Cocula. Items seized included 345 litres of liquid amphetamine, 2,000 litres of unspecified chemical substances as well as five large reactor vessels (two with a capacity of 1,000 litres and three with capacity of 600 litres). A week later, a second manufacturing facility was discovered in Cocula, resulting in the seizure of 600 litres of liquid methamphetamine as well as several pieces of equipment, including reactor vessels with 400 litres capacity. The confiscated material was handed over to the authorities for criminal investigation.

Mexico: 32 mt of methylamine seized in the port of Manzanillo

MANZANILLO, Mexico – 23 September 2012. Mexican Customs authorities seized 31.9 mt of methylamine hydrochloride at the port of Manzanillo, West Mexico. The substance was transported in two containers in a Panamanian-flagged vessel arriving from Yokohama, Japan and originated from Busan in the Republic of Korea. The methylamine was destined for Culiacan, capital of the state of Sinaloa. Methylamine, which is not under international control, can be used to manufacture methamphetamine, together with 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P). Seizures of methylamine have been reported to the International Narcotics Control Board in increasing numbers since 2004, primarily by countries in North America. Such seizures have also been reported in Oceania, Europe and East and South-East Asia.*

Canada: khat hidden in computer cases

MONTREAL, Canada – 20 December 2012. Canada Border Services Agency officers at the international airport of Montreal discovered 64 kg of khat inside two parcels sent by a postal courier service from London (United Kingdom). Closer examination of the parcels revealed the presence of two computer cases wrapped in carbon paper. The computer cases contained several bunches of the khat plant, with a total value of USD 31,800. The plants were handed over to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for investigation. Since the beginning of 2012, CBSA officers in Quebec have made 1,563 drug seizures.
Canada: 14 mt of ATS and other precursors seized

PRINCE RUPERT, Canada – 14 October 2012. Canada Border Service Agency announced the seizure of over 14 mt of unspecified precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, ecstasy and gamma-butyrolactone. The precursors were hidden in a shipment originating from China and declared as glycerin. Further examination of the 552 jugs, revealed the presence of the precursors. The seizure is the largest precursor chemical seizure on record in Prince Rupert. Since 2003, a license and a permit for all imports and exports of Class A precursor chemicals are required in Canada. This is the third precursor chemical seizure at Prince Rupert Port in the last two years. At the time of reporting there were no arrests associated with the seizure, but the matter remained under investigation.

United States: ‘N-Bomb’ (25I-NBOMe) circulating the St. Louis Area

MISSOURI, United States – 8 January 2013. St. Louis County Police are warning of a new psychoactive substance that has begun circulating the St. Louis area. The new psychoactive substance, 1-(4-Iodo-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-N-[(2-methoxyphenyl)methyl]ethanamine (2C-I-NBOMe/25INBOMe), is regarded as a very potent hallucinogen that has been linked to deaths in California, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota and Virginia. The new psychoactive substance known as “N-Bomb”, Legal Acid” or “25I” among users, is a phenethylamine derivative and is allegedly much more potent and deadly than similar predecessors. The substance is liquid, most commonly soaked in blotter paper, which users put on their tongue. Reports on the emergence of this new psychoactive substance have been received by UNODC.

United States: 259 kg of methamphetamine seized

SAN FRANCISCO, United States – 3 December 2012. More than 259 kg of crystalline methamphetamine were seized in what is one of the largest seizures of methamphetamine ever in the United States, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. The drugs with a street value of over USD 6 million were seized and 11 people were indicted for federal and state narcotics, weapons and immigration violations. Defendants have been charged with engaging in a narcotics conspiracy to distribute large amounts of methamphetamine throughout California. The indictment also alleges that the defendants distributed illegal narcotics and possessed illegal narcotics with the intent to distribute them and further conspired to launder the proceeds of the sales of narcotics internationally.

United States: research stresses potential health dangers of MDPV

UNITED STATES – 17 October 2012. Tests in rodents have shown that methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV), a common new psychoactive substance found in illicit drug markets around the world, is potentially more dangerous than cocaine. The research study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and published in Neuropsychopharmacology, reported that MDPV was at least ten times more potent than cocaine at producing locomotor activation, tachycardia, and hypertension in rats. MDPV prolonged the effects of two neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine (by blocking reuptake at brain nerve cells) and produced hyperactivity, rapid heart rate and increased blood pressure. Although the study was done in rodents, results could explain why these substances are addictive and potentially dangerous in humans.
Global SMART accomplishments for 2012

Since 2008, the Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Programme has been working towards improving the capacity of targeted Member States to generate, manage, analyse, report and use information on illicit synthetic drugs. In 2012, the Global SMART Programme accomplished the following:

- Prepared and launched Global SMART Updates Volume 7 and 8 (in English and Spanish);
- Prepared and launched the fourth regional ATS report entitled “Patterns and trends of amphetamine-type stimulants and other drugs- Asia and the Pacific”;
- Prepared the national situation assessment on the ATS situation in Indonesia;
- Provided substantive input to the 2012 World Drug Report;
- Prepared the West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report;
- Organized a side event on the challenges of new psychoactive substances at the 55th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;
- Briefed its stakeholders during the SMART Advisory Group Meeting in Vienna;
- Conducted the third SMART annual regional workshop on synthetic drugs in East and South-East Asia;
- Organized a panel discussion on synthetic drugs at the 52nd regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD);
- Disseminated information related to the synthetic drug situation at targeted conferences and events, e.g. such as the 3rd Interpol Operational Working Group Meeting on Operation Ice Trail and the Group of European Customs Laboratories workshop on designer drugs.

UNODC would like to specifically recognize the following funding partners for their investment in the Global SMART Programme. UNODC would also like to acknowledge the significant contributions of our partner, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), for their support regarding this publication.

The Global SMART Programme is managed by the Laboratory and Scientific Section of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs. UNODC reiterates its appreciation and gratitude to Members States and partner agencies for the reports and information that provided the basis of this report.

If you have comments on this report, or would like to contribute information that should be considered for future reports, please contact the Global SMART Programme at globalsmart@unodc.org. Information on the Global SMART Programme can be found via the internet at www.unodc.org and www.apaic.org or by contacting UNODC at the Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria.