



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

**EMBARGOED TO 17:00 HRS (BANGKOK) 28 FEB 2012**

## **Rise in Methamphetamine abuse among youth in SE Asia**

**Shortage of qualified drug treatment professionals hampers drug treatment services**

**Bangkok (Thailand), 28 February 2012** – Methamphetamine abuse is rising across South-East Asia, especially among young people, according to a report released today by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). A shortage of qualified health-care professionals and limited drug treatment programs greatly restrict drug abuse prevention and treatment programs in the region, the INCB warns.

To protect youth from drug abuse, the INCB Report recommends prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services, community rehabilitation and policing.

“Youth of marginalized communities have a right to be protected from drug abuse and drug dependence,” said Mr. Hamid Ghodse, INCB President, commenting on the Report from INCB HQ in Vienna. “Helping marginalized communities experiencing drug problems must be a priority.”

In East Asia and the Pacific, the INCB also reports a rise in opium poppy cultivation and production in Myanmar and Lao PDR, and large-scale illicit trafficking in methamphetamines, particularly in China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand.

Speaking at the report launch in Bangkok, Gary Lewis, UNODC Regional Representative for East Asia and the Pacific, said: “The significant increase in opium poppy cultivation coupled with increases in trafficking in methamphetamines and other illicit drugs reflect a growing human security threat to the region.”

Despite nearly universal adherence to international drug control conventions elsewhere in East Asia and the Pacific, significant illicit drug control challenges require comprehensive action, says the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for 2011*. Challenges include illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, marginalized communities vulnerable to drug abuse, illegal internet pharmacies, the targeting of the young by social media, the use of ‘designer’ non-scheduled chemicals to bypass drug control systems, and uneven access to controlled medicines around the world.

The INCB also notes that nine Pacific States – the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – have not yet ratified one or more of the international drug control treaties. Many of those countries have become trans-shipment areas and destinations for drugs and precursors trafficked by organized criminal groups, the Report notes.

INCB is an independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations international drug control conventions. Based on INCB activities, the INCB annual report provides a comprehensive survey of the drug control situation in the world. As an



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impartial body, INCB tries to identify and predict dangerous trends and suggests necessary measures to be taken.

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