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**Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Heads of
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Latin America and the Caribbean**

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

**Major regional drug trafficking trends and
countermeasures****Statistics on drug trafficking trends in the Americas and
worldwide****Report of the Secretariat***Summary*

The present report provides an overview of the latest trends in the illicit production of and trafficking in drugs worldwide, with a focus on the Americas. The statistics and analysis in the report are based on the latest information available to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The report presents trends in drug seizures and statistics on the illicit cultivation of drug crops up to 2015 and, where available, 2016.

Against a backdrop of increased coca bush cultivation for the second consecutive year, global cocaine seizures reached record levels in 2015. While there were increments in the amounts seized in almost all of the main cocaine trafficking regions, total seizures in Latin America and the Caribbean increased notably, reaching unprecedented levels.

Despite a decrease in cannabis herb seizures in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015, the Americas continue to account for the majority of global cannabis herb seizures. Heroin seizures in the Americas reached record levels in 2015, despite a sustained and decreasing trend in Latin America and the Caribbean over the previous 12 years. Countries in Central America (in particular, Guatemala) have reported significant amounts of amphetamine seized in recent years, while there has been a notable increase in reported seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances in South America.

* Available only in English, French and Spanish, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.

** [UNODC/HONLAC/27/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of developments in the production of and trafficking in the main illicit drugs at the global and regional levels, with a particular focus on trends within the Americas. In the context of this report, the term “Latin America” refers to South and Central America collectively. The analysis includes information available to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) up to May 2017.
2. Section II addresses the illicit cultivation of drug crops and production of plant-based drugs for the years up to and including 2015 and, where available, 2016. With regard to drug trafficking, section III focuses on seizure statistics for 2015 and previous years and provides an update on trafficking trends with regard to cannabis, opiates, cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants.
3. The principal sources of information on the illicit cultivation of drug crops and the production of plant-based drugs are the latest UNODC illicit crop monitoring surveys. In addition, replies by Governments to part IV of the annual report questionnaire for 2015 provide the primary source of information on drug trafficking patterns and seizures of illicit drugs.
4. At the time of writing, UNODC had received replies to part IV of the 2015 annual report questionnaire from 98 Member States — including 3 from North America, 10 from South America and 7 from Central America and the Caribbean — and two territories. Supplementary sources of information include official published government reports and reports submitted to the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The *World Drug Report 2016*¹ was also used for the analysis of the current situation with regard to drug trafficking. In total, seizure data for 2015 were available for 30 States in the Americas.
5. In general, statistics on drug seizures offer valid indirect indicators of drug trafficking trends. However, seizure statistics should be treated with caution, since they also reflect different reporting practices.

II. Global trends in illicit cultivation of drug crops and production of plant-based drugs

A. Cannabis herb cultivation and cannabis resin production

6. Unlike illicit crops such as coca bush and opium poppy, the cannabis plant lends itself to diverse cultivation methods and so grows in a variety of environments. This makes assessing the extent of its cultivation difficult. Reports of cannabis cultivation and eradication show that a wide range of practices exist globally. Cannabis cultivation reports range from accounts of individuals growing a small number of plants for personal consumption to reports of large-scale commercial operations in indoor warehouses, on farmland and in forests.
7. Seizure data suggest that the cultivation of cannabis herb continues to occur in most countries worldwide and in all regions of the world. In contrast, the large-scale production of cannabis resin remains confined to a few countries in North Africa and South-West Asia, the most prominent of which are Afghanistan and Morocco.
8. Morocco reported eradicating 5,000 hectares (ha) of cannabis in 2013 and estimated that, after eradication, 42,000 ha remained under cannabis cultivation. This represents a reduction of almost 70 per cent compared with 2003 levels (134,000 ha).² Morocco reported a stable trend with regard to the area under illicit cannabis cultivation in 2013 and a decrease in the production of cannabis resin, which amounted to 700 tons (down from 3,040 tons in 2003).

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.XI.7.

² UNODC and Government of Morocco, “Maroc: enquête sur le cannabis 2003” (December 2003).

9. Afghanistan, despite having a significantly smaller estimated area under cannabis cultivation than Morocco (10,000 ha in 2012), had a potential cannabis resin production estimated at 1,400 tons, almost double the estimated production in Morocco. In 2015, cannabis cultivation in Afghanistan remained linked to opium poppy cultivation, with 29 per cent of poppy-growing villages also reporting cannabis cultivation, compared with 20 per cent of non-poppy-growing villages.

10. Cannabis cultivation affects the Americas greatly, and cannabis herb trafficking is widespread across the region. Nine countries³ in the region reported eradicating cannabis cultivation sites in their responses to the annual report questionnaire in 2015. Mexico and Paraguay reported the highest levels, with 5,910 and 2,783 ha eradicated respectively. Authorities from those two countries estimated annual cannabis herb production in their respective territories at about 8,300 tons each in 2015.⁴

B. Opium poppy cultivation

11. At the time of writing, information for 2016 was only available for Afghanistan. Afghanistan and Myanmar continue to account for the majority of illicit opium poppy cultivation worldwide. Cultivation in Myanmar remained relatively stable in 2014 and 2015, after increasing steadily between 2006 and 2013, while in 2015, Afghanistan saw the first decrease in opium poppy cultivation since 2009. Global opium poppy cultivation decreased by about 10 per cent in 2015, owing mainly to the decrease in Afghanistan. The decline in Afghanistan was temporary, however, and opium poppy cultivation in 2016 increased by 10 per cent with respect to 2015.

12. In 2015, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan decreased to 183,000 ha, after reaching record levels of 224,000 ha in 2014.⁵ The vast majority of the cultivation (90 per cent) took place in the southern and western regions of the country, where significant decreases were recorded. In 2016,⁶ cultivation in the country increased again, reaching 201,000 ha. Sharp increases were recorded in the eastern and northern regions of the country, which represented a combined 13 per cent of total national cultivation, up from 8 per cent in 2015. The number of poppy-free provinces decreased in both 2015 and 2016.

13. In 2015, potential opium production in Afghanistan reached 3,300 tons, the lowest level since 2001. This decline was not only due to the fall in the area under cultivation, but also a consequence of a sharp decrease in the yield due to adverse weather conditions, from 28.7 kilograms (kg) per hectare in 2014 to 18.3 in 2015, the lowest level on record. In 2016, the aforementioned increase in cultivation and a higher yield of 23.8 kg per hectare, resulted in an increase in potential opium production of 43 per cent with respect to the previous year, reaching 4,800 tons. Despite the increase, the yield recorded in 2016 is still the third-lowest value on record in Afghanistan.

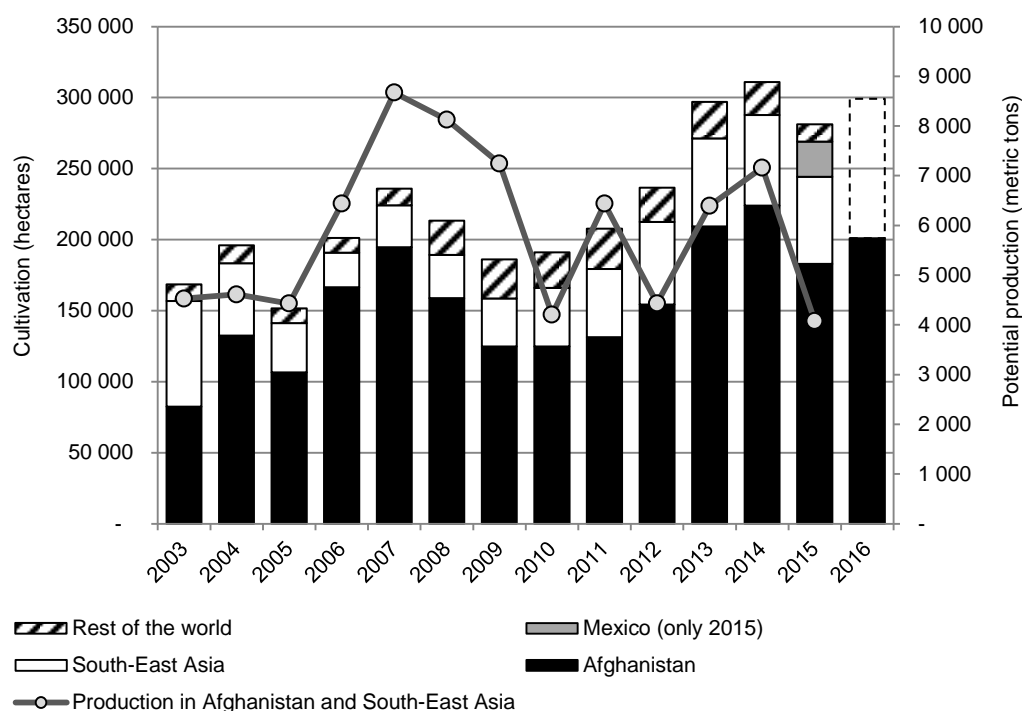
³ Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico and Paraguay.

⁴ Responses submitted by Mexico and Paraguay to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

⁵ *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2015*.

⁶ UNODC and Ministry of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016: Executive Summary* (Vienna, October 2016).

Figure I
Opium cultivation by region and potential opium production in Afghanistan and South-East Asia (2003-2016)^a



^a The only data on cultivation available for 2016 at the time of writing were for Afghanistan.

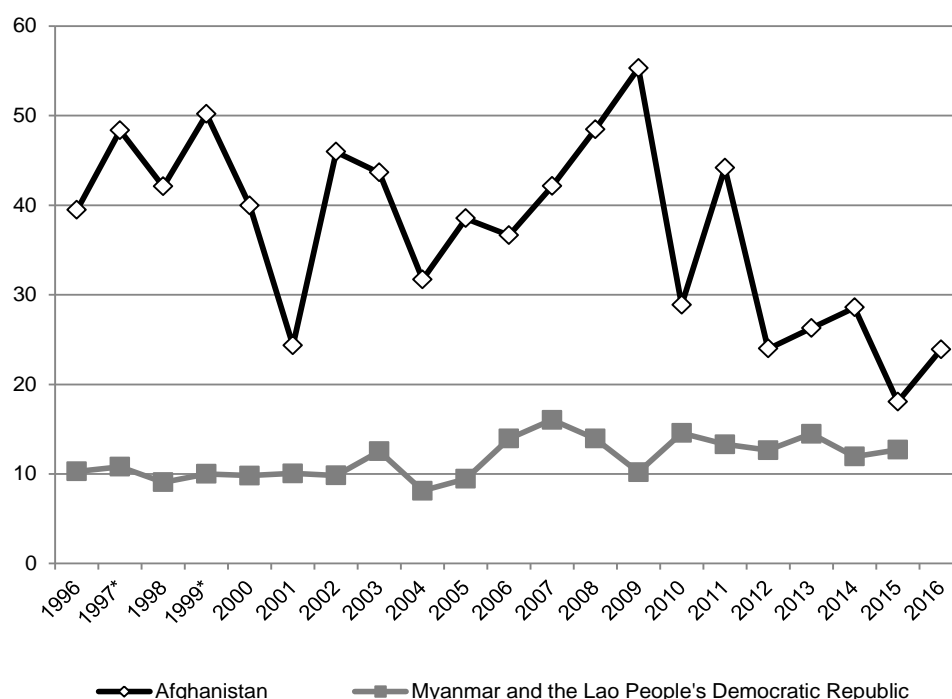
14. The *South-East Asia Opium Survey 2015* estimated that illicit opium poppy cultivation in the region covered 61,200 ha. After steadily increasing from 21,600 ha in 2006 to 57,800 ha in 2013, opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar decreased slightly, reaching 55,500 ha in 2015. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, cultivation steadily increased from 1,500 ha in 2007 to 6,800 ha in 2012. In 2015, estimated cultivation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic reached 5,700 ha.

15. Because of the geographical environment in which opium is cultivated in South-East Asia (hills with poor soil and no irrigation), the yield in that region has traditionally been notably lower than in Afghanistan. However, the yield in Afghanistan has declined notably since 2009 and was similar to that observed in South-East Asia in 2015 (see figure II). Overall, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar produced an estimated total of between 731 and 823 tons of opium in 2015, a value similar to 2014, when production reached 762 tons.

16. Almost 87 per cent of global opium poppy cultivation in 2015 took place in Afghanistan and South-East Asia. According to the first *Mexico Opium Survey*, carried for the period 2014-2015 by UNODC and the Government of Mexico, the area under opium poppy cultivation in the country between July 2014 and June 2015 was estimated at 24,800 ha, which represents about 9 per cent of global cultivation. During 2015, Mexican authorities reported the eradication of 25,960 ha of opium poppy, a 21 per cent increase with respect to 2014 (21,445 ha) and a 77 per cent increase with respect to 2013 (14,662 ha).

Figure II
Yield of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and South-East Asia
(1996-2016)

(Kilograms per hectare)



* Figures for Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1997 and 1999 only reflect the yield in Myanmar.

17. In addition to Mexico, other countries within the Americas are affected by opium cultivation. Authorities in Ecuador reported the eradication of more than 180,000 plants from nine separate sites in 2015, and eradication in Colombia reached 613 ha in the same year.⁷ In Colombia,⁸ the area under opium cultivation doubled between 2013 and 2015, from 298 to 595 ha. Since opium in the country is cultivated at high altitudes, its cultivation is not directly associated with that of coca bush, which requires lower altitudes to grow.

C. Coca cultivation

18. Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru continued to account for virtually all cultivation of coca bush worldwide. The total area under cultivation in the three countries increased by 18 per cent from 132,500 ha in 2014 to 156,500 ha in 2015, the most significant increase on record since the 1980s. This was mainly the result of a sharp increase of almost 40 per cent in Colombia.

19. After reaching historically low levels (48,000 ha) in 2013, the *Coca Cultivation Survey 2015*, conducted jointly by the Government of Colombia and UNODC, showed that coca bush cultivation in Colombia had doubled in two years, reaching 96,000 ha in 2015, the highest value since 2007. About 87 per cent of coca cultivation occurred in areas that were already affected in 2014, with the most significant increases taking place in the three main producing provinces: Nariño, Putumayo and Norte de Santander. This confirms the trend observed in 2014, namely that new communities are not starting to cultivate coca; rather, communities already cultivating it have found incentives to expand their areas of cultivation.

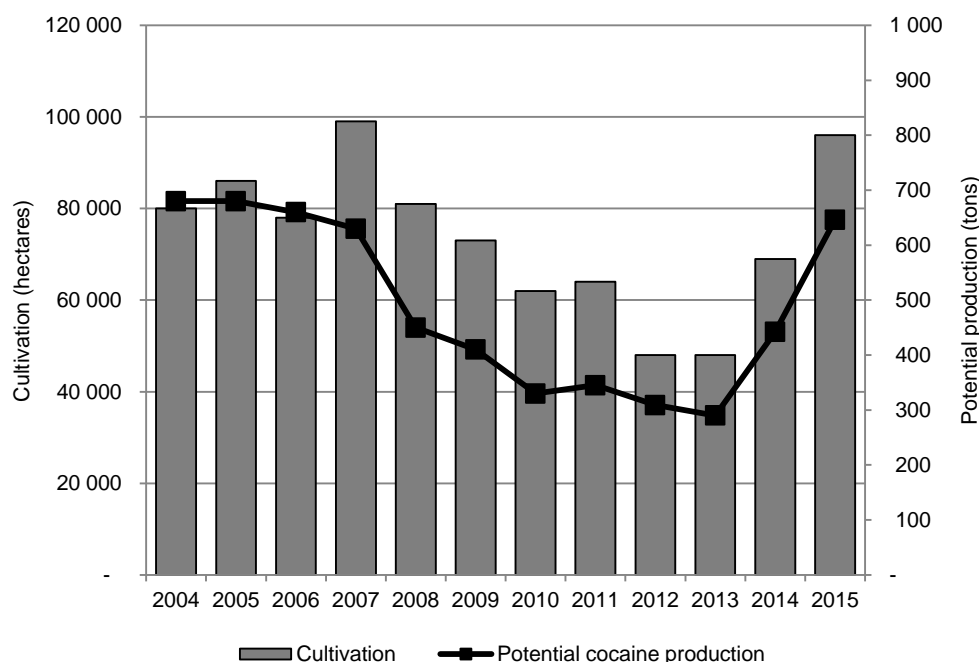
⁷ Responses submitted by Colombia and Ecuador to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

⁸ UNODC and Government of Colombia, *Monitoreo de territorios afectados por cultivos ilícitos 2015* (July 2016).

20. After reaching 290 metric tons in 2013, the lowest value since the mid-1990s, potential cocaine production in Colombia increased sharply to 646 tons in 2015 (see figure III). While it is estimated that 36 per cent of farmers process the coca leaves themselves in order to obtain cocaine base paste, intelligence indicates that some of the paste does not undergo full processing into cocaine in the country, but instead is trafficked to other countries to be processed.⁹ During 2015, the Colombian authorities destroyed a total of 3,591 laboratories where coca paste or cocaine base were being extracted and 236 cocaine hydrochloride laboratories, an increase of 64 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively, in relation to 2014.

Figure III

Coca bush cultivation and potential cocaine production in Colombia (2004-2015)



21. According to the *2015 National Coca Monitoring Survey* in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the cultivation of coca bush remained stable at 20,200 ha in 2015, the lowest level recorded since 2001. Satellite images and ground surveys showed levels similar to those of 2014 in the two main areas of cultivation, Yungas de La Paz and Trópico de Cochabamba, which together accounted for 99 per cent of the area under coca bush cultivation in the country. The production of dried coca leaf in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2015 was estimated at 32,500 tons, the lowest value on record since 2005.

22. The manual eradication of coca bush in the Plurinational State of Bolivia remained stable in 2015 for the fourth consecutive year, reaching 11,020 ha. The number of cocaine hydrochloride laboratories destroyed by the authorities increased notably, from 7 laboratories in 2008 to 74 laboratories in 2014 and 73 in 2015.

23. According to the *2015 National Coca Monitoring Survey* conducted by UNODC and the Government of Peru, the area under coca bush cultivation in Peru at the end of 2015 stood at 40,300 ha, a 6 per cent decrease compared with 2014 (42,900 ha) and the lowest level recorded since 1999. The production of dried coca leaf in Peru was estimated at 96,300 tons in 2015, of which 9,000 tons were destined for traditional consumption.

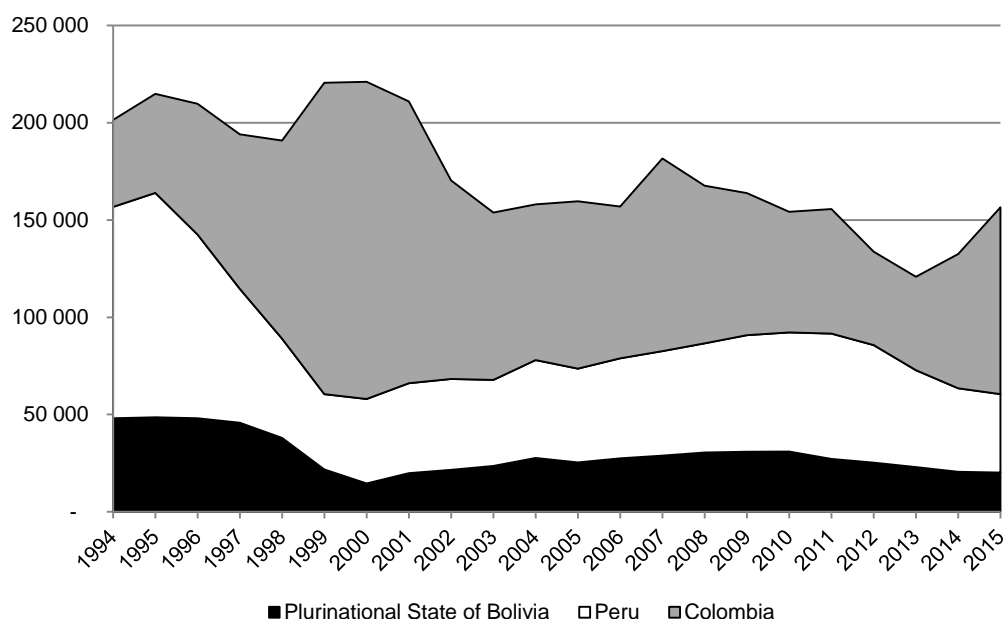
⁹ Country report submitted by Colombia to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago from 3 to 7 October 2016.

24. Planned eradication by the authorities in Peru has been the main factor behind the reduction. In 2015, the reduction was concentrated in areas including Bajo Amazonas and Alto Huallaga. Eradication increased in 2015 by more than 15 per cent compared with 2014, reaching a record 35,900 ha. The authorities reported that their eradication efforts had caused drug trafficking organizations to shift illicit cultivation to increasingly scattered and isolated areas in recent years.¹⁰ In addition, the authorities reported that an increasing proportion of domestic coca base was being exported to other countries, such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where laboratories processed the product into cocaine hydrochloride.¹¹

Figure IV

Coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru (1994-2015)

(Hectares)



25. Although the manufacture of cocaine occurs mainly in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru, clandestine laboratories processing coca leaf derivatives also exist outside those countries. According to data from responses to the annual report questionnaire for 2015, several countries in Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Honduras, reported the detection of clandestine laboratories processing coca leaf derivatives. Authorities in Honduras reported that the production of “crack” cocaine in the country increased in 2015, which suggests an increase in the existence of drug laboratories and in trafficking in precursors and essential chemicals.¹²

¹⁰ Country report submitted by Peru to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹¹ Response submitted by Peru to the annual report questionnaire for 2016.

¹² Country report submitted by Honduras to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

III. Global trends in drug trafficking and seizures

26. The table below shows the quantities of the major drug types seized in the Americas and globally and reported to UNODC in 2014 and 2015. The table also shows the estimated trend in 2015 for the Americas.

Table

Drug seizures and trends in the Americas and worldwide, 2014 and 2015

Drug type	Americas			Global seizures	
	2014	2015	Trend ^(a,b)	2014	2015
	(Tons)	(Tons)		(Tons)	(Tons)
Cannabis herb	4 362	3 605	Decrease (-18%)	5 877	5 676
Cannabis resin	2.2	1.5	Decrease (-22%)	1 440	1 506
Cocaine ^c	589	763	Increase (+30%)	655	850
Heroin	7.3	8.5	Increase (+15%)	81.7	80.1
Opium	9.9	5.4	Decrease (-46%)	526	587
Illicit morphine	0.4	0.3	Decrease (-22%)	20.9	9.6
Amphetamine	5.9	16.1	Increase (>100%)	46.4	>51.8 ^d
Methamphetamine	52.7	56.0	Stable (+6%)	108.7	131.5
“Ecstasy”	1.0	0.9	Decrease (-16%)	9.4	6.2

^a Since data for 2015 were incomplete at the time of preparation of the present report, the trend was estimated by comparing total seized quantities for countries and territories for which data were available for both 2014 and 2015. Totals for 2015 are preliminary.

^b The term “stable” refers to an annual variation of less than 10 per cent.

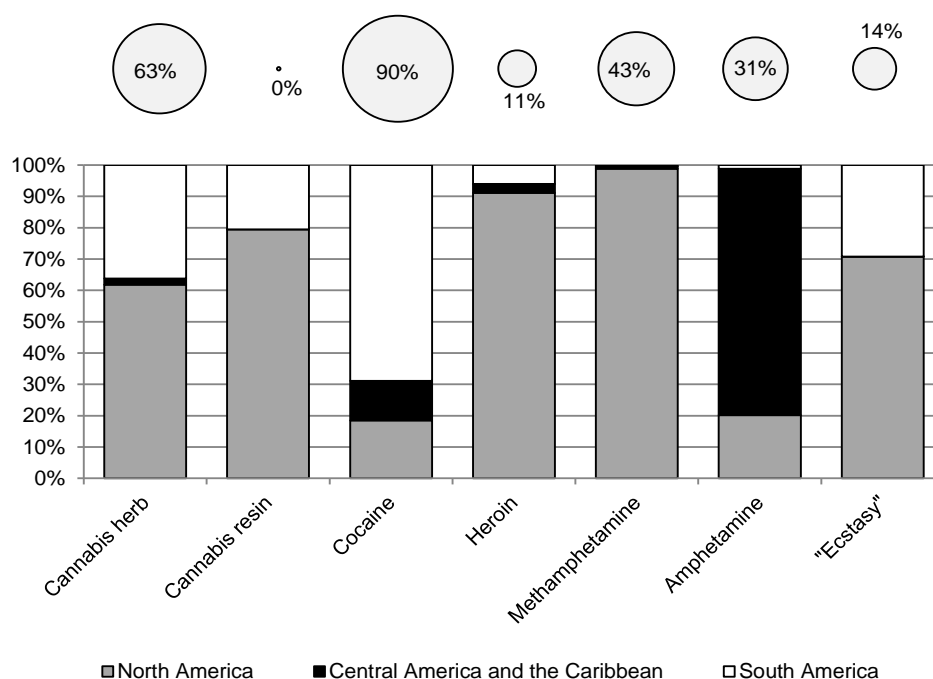
^c Includes base, pastes, salts and “crack” cocaine.

^d Data for amphetamine seizures in 2015 are incomplete. However, preliminary data suggest that reported seizures amounted to at least 51.8 tons.

Figure V

Proportion of global seizures that occurred in the Americas and geographical distribution of drug seizures within the region, by drug type, 2015

(Percentage)



27. While cocaine, heroin and amphetamine seizures in the Americas increased in 2015, reported seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances and cannabis herb decreased in the region. The Americas accounted for 63 per cent and 90 per cent of global seizures of cannabis herb and cocaine respectively in 2015, with seizures taking place all over the region. The region also accounts for significant proportions of the reported global seizures of methamphetamine and heroin; however, those seizures are mostly concentrated in North America. In 2015, record amphetamine seizures were reported in Guatemala. As a result, the region accounted for over 30 per cent of reported global seizures. Finally, the Americas accounted for a significant proportion of the “ecstasy”-type substances seized globally in 2015; those seizures were concentrated in North and South America.

A. Cannabis

28. Cannabis is trafficked in the Americas almost exclusively in its herb form. Only Canada and the United States of America consistently report seizures of more than 300 kg of cannabis resin every year. However, even in these two countries, seizure data indicate that trafficking in cannabis herb is significantly more prevalent than trafficking in cannabis resin.

Cannabis herb

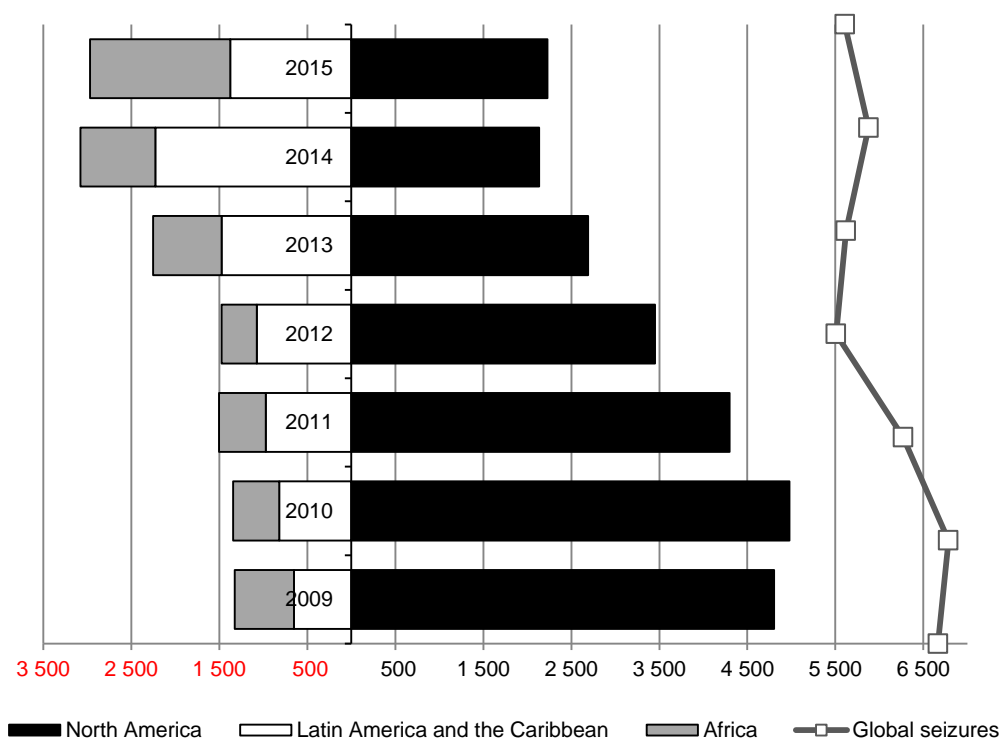
29. Even though cannabis herb seizures occur in almost every corner of the globe, the Americas have been responsible for more than 60 per cent of the amount seized globally every year since the early 1990s. While North America has traditionally accounted for most of that amount, there has been a shift towards Latin America and the Caribbean, especially since 2011 (see figure VI). In 2015, global cannabis herb seizures remained stable, with changes in the recent trends observed in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western and Central Europe.

30. As seen in figure VII, cannabis herb seizures in North America have been decreasing sharply since 2010, with significant declines in both Mexico and the United States. In 2015, seizures in the region remained stable, mainly as a result of the first increase in Mexico in five years, which offset a 22 per cent decrease in the United States with respect to 2014. As a result, Mexico recorded the highest cannabis herb seizures reported by a single country in 2015 (1,242 tons), surpassing the United States (970 tons) for the first time since 2007. Authorities in the United States reported that the decreasing trend observed since 2010 may be related to changing law enforcement priorities in states with legalized cannabis herb.¹³

¹³ Response submitted by the United States to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

Figure VI
Cannabis herb seizures by region and globally (2009-2015)^a

(Tons)



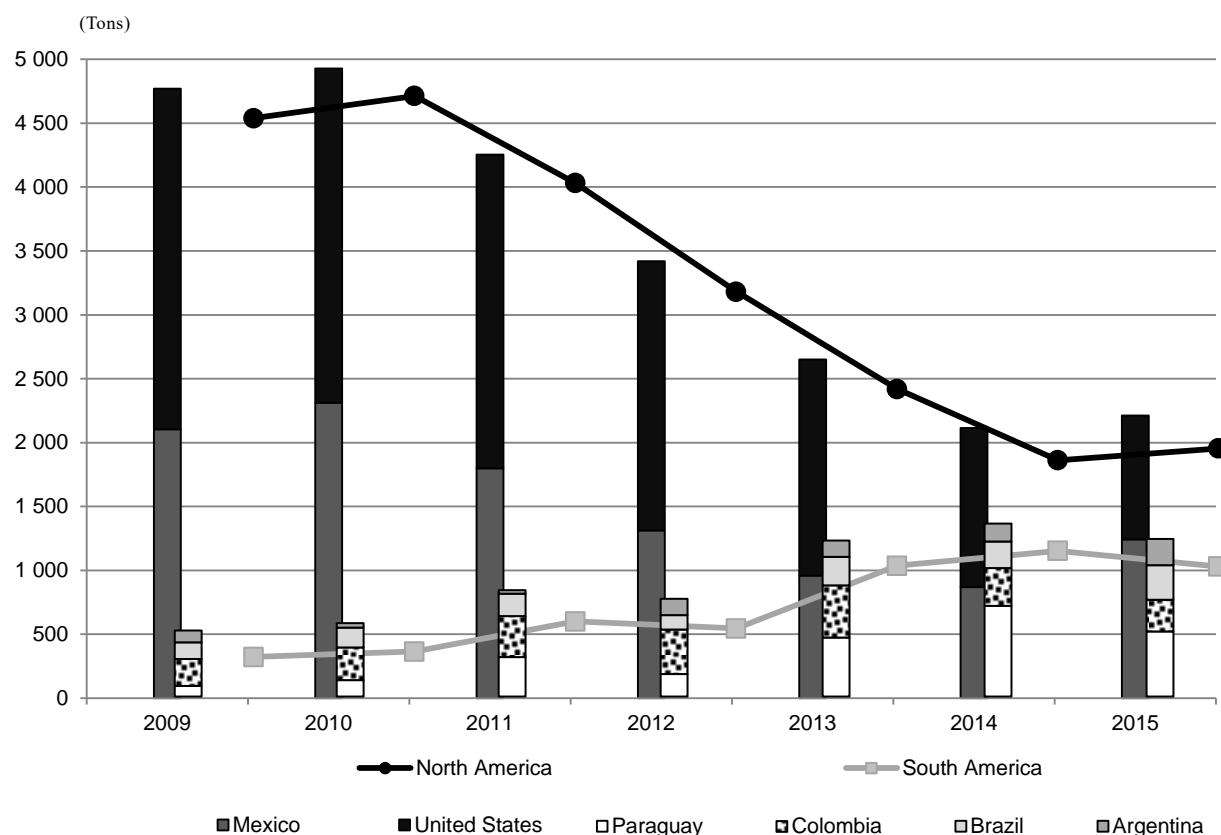
^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

31. Unlike in North America, cannabis herb seizures in Latin America and the Caribbean increased sharply between 2009 and 2014, from 650 tons to over 2,000 tons. Preliminary data for 2015 suggest that cannabis herb seizures in the region decreased to under 1,400 tons, owing mostly to a sharp decrease in the Caribbean, where record levels were observed in 2014. Cannabis herb seizures in South America also decreased from a record 1,427 tons in 2014 to close to 1,300 tons in 2015, according to preliminary data. As seen in figure VII, the amount seized in the subregion was concentrated in Paraguay, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina, in descending order of amount. While cannabis herb seizures in Colombia have decreased in recent years, seizures in the remaining three countries have followed an increasing trend since 2009.

32. In Paraguay, after reaching an unprecedented 711 tons in 2014, seizures decreased to 510 tons, the second-highest level on record. Authorities in the country reported that cannabis herb continues to be produced and trafficked to neighbouring countries and Chile. They underlined the need to quantify and monitor areas of cultivation in order to take more effective action.¹⁴ In addition, Argentina and Brazil reported record levels in 2015 with 207 tons and 271 tons of cannabis herb seized, respectively. After reaching record levels in 2013 with 410 tons, cannabis herb seizures in Colombia decreased for two consecutive years, reaching 247 tons in 2015.

¹⁴ Country report submitted by Paraguay to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Figure VII
Cannabis herb seizures in North and South America and selected countries,
2009-2015



33. Between 2009 and 2014 cannabis herb seizures in Western and Central Europe nearly doubled, from 65 to 125 tons, partly due to the fact that in recent years domestically produced herbal products have become more prevalent, displacing imported resin in many countries.¹⁵ In 2015, however, cannabis herb seizures in the region decreased sharply to under 87 tons, owing mainly to sharp reductions in Belgium (764 kg seized, down from 10,744 in 2014), Greece (2.5 tons, down from 19.6) and Italy (9 tons, down from 33). The production of and trafficking in cannabis herb is an area of growing concern for law enforcement efforts in Europe because of the increasing involvement of organized crime in the region.¹⁶

34. In 2015, global cannabis herb seizures remained stable, mainly due to a sharp increase in seizures reported in Africa that offset the decline in the Americas and Europe (see figure VI). While information on cannabis herb seizures in the region is limited,¹⁷ certain countries with high levels of reported seizures, such as Egypt, Morocco and Nigeria, have consistently responded to part IV of the annual report questionnaires, and all show increasing trends in recent years. In Nigeria, cannabis herb seizures oscillated between 100 and 350 tons during the 2005-2014 period, and reached a record 871 tons in 2015, the highest level reported by a single country that year outside of North America.

Cannabis resin

35. In contrast with the cultivation of cannabis herb, the production of cannabis resin is concentrated in a smaller number of countries, the most prominent of which

¹⁵ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview* (2016).

¹⁶ EMCDDA, *European Drug Report: Trends and Developments 2015* (Luxembourg, 2015).

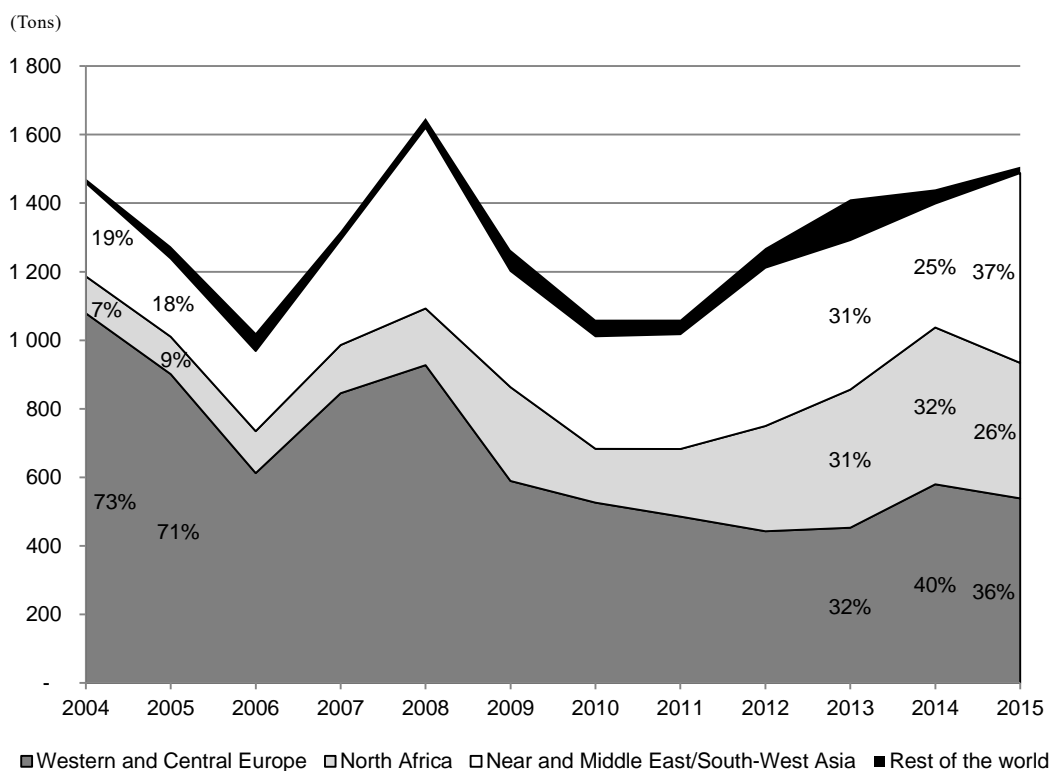
¹⁷ At the time of writing, eight African countries had reported cannabis herb seizures in their annual report questionnaire for 2015.

are Afghanistan and Morocco. Consequently, seizure statistics for cannabis resin are also concentrated in and around those two source countries, in North Africa, South-West Asia, and in Western and Central Europe, the main consumer market. While 10 years ago cannabis resin seizures were concentrated mainly in Western and Central Europe, seizures have been more evenly distributed across those three regions in recent years (see figure VIII).

36. As the main entry point for cannabis resin from Morocco into Western Europe, Spain continued to be the country with the highest amount of cannabis resin seized in the world, with seizures in 2015 surpassing 380 tons, virtually the same amount as in 2014. Over 50 per cent of total seizures in the country occurred in Cádiz, as a result of its strategical position with respect to Africa.¹⁸ Other Western European countries reporting large amounts of cannabis resin seized during 2015 were Italy (67 tons) and France (60 tons), with the drug entering these countries either directly from Morocco or through Spain. In Turkey, cannabis resin seizures have decreased sharply in recent years, from an unprecedented 94 tons in 2013, to 7.8 tons in 2015, the lowest level since 2007.

Figure VIII

Global cannabis resin seizures, by region (2004-2015)^a



^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

37. In 2015, cannabis resin seizures in North Africa decreased for the first time since 2009, reaching 395 tons, 14 per cent less than the previous year, mainly owing to sharp decreases in Algeria and Egypt with respect to 2014. Despite the declines in 2015, cannabis resin seizures in those two countries have increased more than twentyfold since 2005. In Morocco, an unprecedented 235 tons of cannabis resin were seized in 2015. While cannabis resin is mostly smuggled into Egypt overland from Morocco, there is also evidence of smuggling attempts from South-West Asia by land (through Jordan) and by sea (from Afghanistan and Pakistan).¹⁹

¹⁸ Country report submitted by Spain to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹⁹ Country report submitted by Egypt to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.

38. Cannabis resin seizures in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia are concentrated in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan. Seizures in all three countries have increased sharply in 2015. In 2015 cannabis resin seizures in the Islamic Republic of Iran reached a record 98 tons, a 26 per cent increase with respect to 2014. About 90 per cent of seized cannabis resin in the country in 2015 entered from Pakistan.²⁰ After decreasing in 2014, cannabis resin seizures in Pakistan increased again in 2015 to 279 tons, the second-highest value since 2000. Cannabis resin seizures in Afghanistan reached unprecedented levels at 163 tons, the highest level since 2008.

39. Seizure data indicate that most of the limited cannabis resin trafficking that takes place in the Americas occurs in North America. Since 2007, Canada and the United States have reported average annual cannabis resin seizures of 3,000 kg and 900 kg, respectively. In 2015, total reported cannabis resin seizures in North America amounted to 1.2 tons, while Brazil reported almost 300 kg.

B. Opiates

Opium and illicit morphine

40. The Near and Middle East and South-West Asia represent between 95 and 100 per cent of global opium and illicit morphine seizures. In particular, significant seizures in the region occur almost exclusively in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

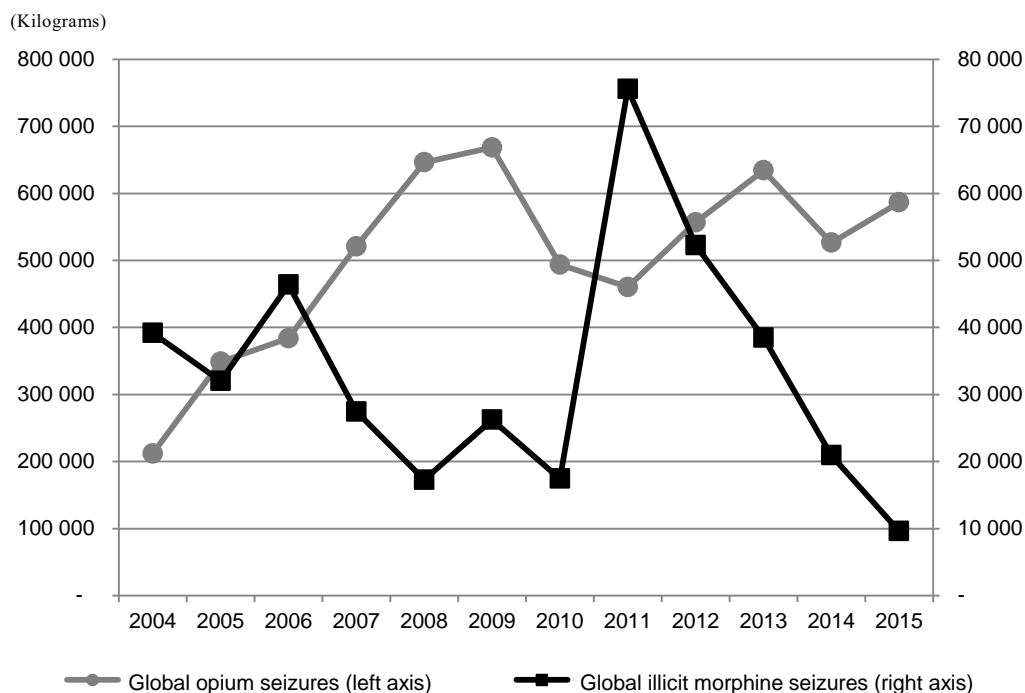
41. After decreasing in 2014, global opium seizures increased by 10 per cent in 2015, reaching 587 tons. Opium seizures in Afghanistan have been declining sharply in recent years, from a record 124 tons in 2012, to 30 tons in 2015, the lowest level since 2004. However, sharp increases in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan have offset this decrease. A record 59 tons were seized in Pakistan in 2015, while opium seizures in the Islamic Republic of Iran have reached the highest level since 2009, at 479 tons.

42. Opium seizures in North America have increased in recent years, with the United States reporting a record 38 tons in 2013, and seizures in Mexico reaching an unprecedented 3.4 tons in 2014. In 2015, opium seizures in Colombia reached 1.7 tons, the highest value reported by any South American country.

43. Global seizures of illicit morphine have been decreasing sharply since reaching a record 75 tons in 2011 (see figure IX). In 2015, global seizures of illicit morphine amounted to just over 9 tons, a 54 per cent decrease with respect to 2014 and the lowest level on record since the early 1990s.

²⁰ Response submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

Figure IX
Global opium and illicit morphine seizures (2004-2015)



44. Similarly to what has happened with opium in recent years, seizures of illicit morphine in Afghanistan have decreased notably since peaking at 64,028 kg in 2011, to only 18 kg in 2015. Seizures in Pakistan have also been declining sharply over the last 10 years, reaching 762 kg in 2015, the lowest level on record since 2000. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, seizures of illicit morphine reached 8.3 tons in 2015, a 35 per cent decline with respect to 2014.

Heroin

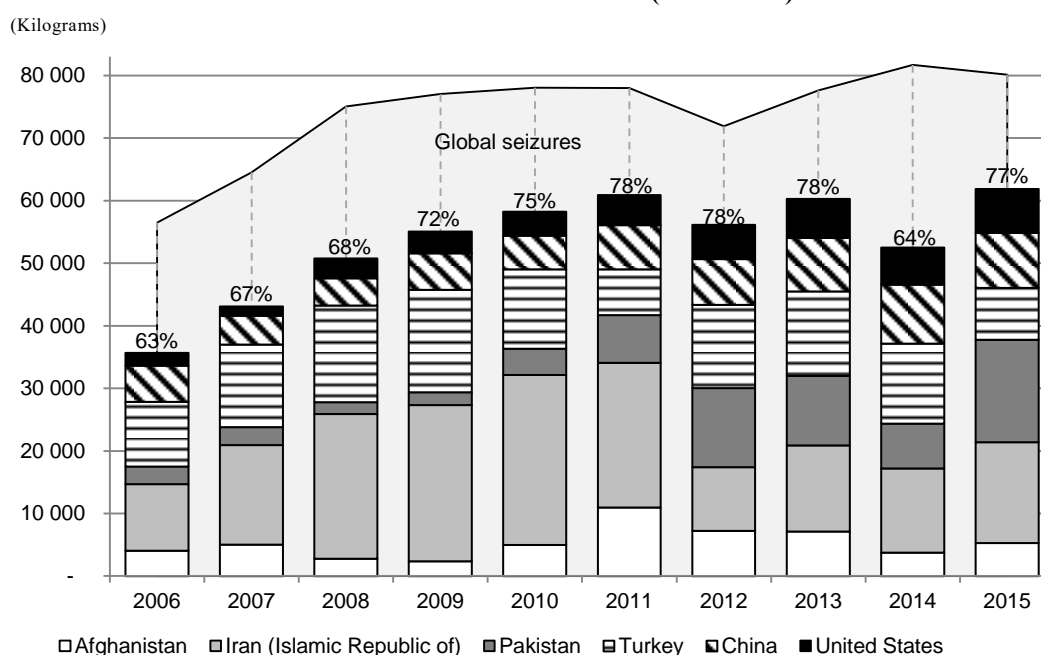
45. Compared with seizures of opium and illicit morphine, heroin seizures occur in a much wider range of countries, in particular around the larger markets in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. Each of these three markets is mostly supplied by a different producing region. While East and South-East Asia are supplied in the main by production in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, most of Europe is supplied by Afghan heroin that is trafficked along the Balkan route and the southern route through Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and, increasingly, countries in Africa.²¹ The northern route continues to link heroin from Afghanistan to markets in the Russian Federation.²² In North America, most of the heroin trafficked to the United States is produced in Latin America.

46. At the global level, heroin seizures have remained relatively stable at high levels since 2008. Afghanistan, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Turkey and the United States are the six countries with the highest annual amounts of heroin seized in recent years, consistently accounting for between 60 and 80 per cent of global seizures since 2006 (see figure X). Hence, global trends are heavily influenced by what occurs in these countries.

²¹ UNODC, *Afghan Opiate Trafficking through the Southern Route* (Vienna, June 2015).

²² UNODC, *The Illicit Drug Trade through South-Eastern Europe* (Vienna, March 2014).

Figure X
Heroin seizures in selected countries and worldwide (2006-2015)^a



^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

47. In the Asia-Pacific region, the majority of heroin seizures are concentrated in China, where the amount of heroin seized increased from 4.6 tons in 2007 to over 9.4 tons in 2014. In 2015, seizures in this country declined slightly to 8.8 tons. According to authorities in China, almost 94 per cent of heroin seized during the first nine months of 2015 originated in the Golden Triangle, while about 2 per cent was produced in the Golden Crescent.²³ Despite remaining stable at around 13 tons in 2015, heroin seizures in the Asia-Pacific region have followed an increasing trend over the last decade, with seizures in Myanmar and Viet Nam increasing almost tenfold since 2007.

48. The most-used route for Afghan heroin into the European market continues to be the Balkan route, with high levels of heroin seized in the Golden Crescent and Turkey. In 2015, heroin seizures increased sharply in Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, reaching 5.3, 16.1 and 16.3 tons, respectively. This represents increases of 41 per cent in Afghanistan with respect to 2014, 20 per cent in the Islamic Republic of Iran and 138 per cent in Pakistan. In Turkey, heroin seizures decreased by 35 per cent in 2015, to 8.3 tons, the lowest level since 2011.

49. Despite a spike in 2014 owing to a multi-ton seizure in Greece, heroin seizures in Western and Central Europe have been following a decreasing trend, from 11.6 tons in 2000 to 4.6 tons in 2015, the lowest level on record since the late 1980s. In 2013 and 2014, the number of large individual seizures of over 100 kg has increased notably in the European Union, and a number of member States recorded their largest ever seizures in that period,²⁴ showing a change in the modus operandi of traffickers in recent years.

50. In 2015, heroin seizures in the Americas reached record levels, owing mostly to an unprecedented 7 tons seized by the United States. The country's authorities reported that the majority of the heroin trafficked to the country was produced in Mexico and Colombia.²⁵ Heroin seizures in both Mexico and Colombia increased in 2015 with respect to the previous year, reaching 546 and 393 kg, respectively.

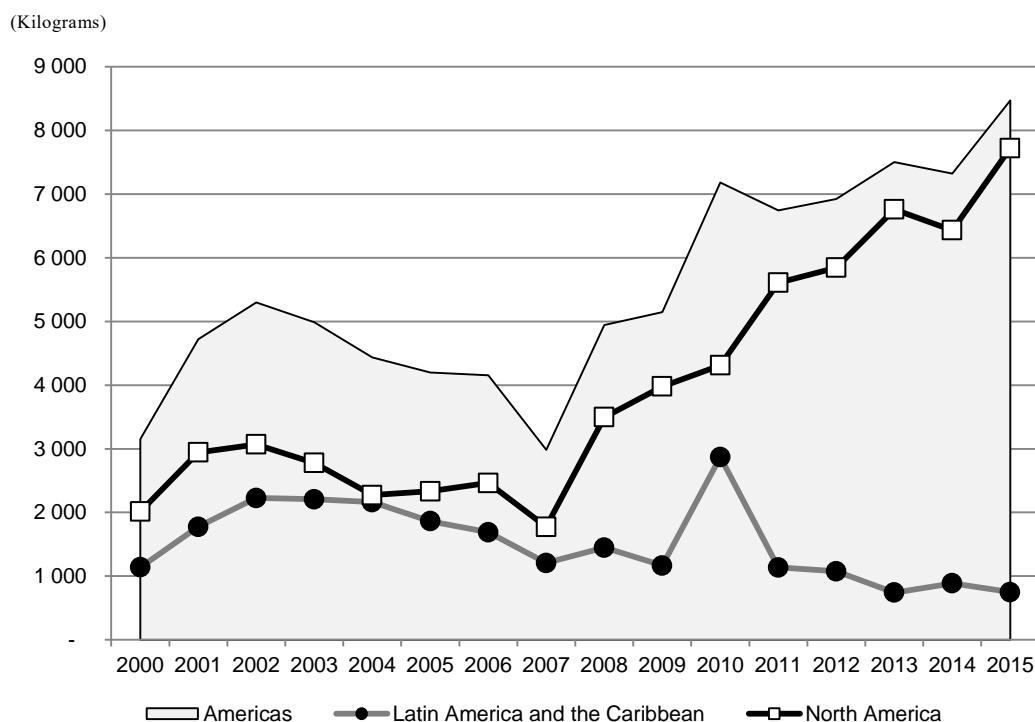
²³ Country report submitted by China to the Fortieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.

²⁴ EMCDDA, *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview* (2016).

²⁵ Response of the United States to the annual drug questionnaire for 2015.

The Mexican authorities reported that most of the heroin that entered Mexico was of Guatemalan or Colombian origin, and destined for the United States and Europe.²⁶

Figure XI
Heroin seizures in the Americas, 2000-2015



51. Heroin seizures in the Americas more than doubled between 2007 and 2010. Since then they have continued to increase, but at a slower rate. As seen in figure XI, this is the result of a consistent increase in heroin seizures in North America, especially in the United States, since 2007. In Latin America and the Caribbean, heroin seizures have followed a mostly downward trend since 2003, owing mainly to declines in South America. While annual heroin seizures between 2012 and 2015 averaged 400 kg in Colombia, the lowest levels reported since the late 1990s, seizures in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have decreased notably, from between 400 and 700 kg during the 2002-2005 period, to an annual average of 54 kg since 2009.

52. In Central America, Panama reported close to 100 kg of heroin seized every year from 2009 to 2013, but declined to 24 and 30 kg in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Guatemala reported record levels of 134 and 83 kg in 2014 and 2015, respectively. In the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic reported 51 kg of heroin seized in 2015, up slightly from the 45 kg reported in 2014.

53. Various regions in Africa are developing significant roles in facilitating the transit of heroin by the “southern route”, with networks on the continent taking control over trafficking routes.²⁷ In Egypt, record heroin seizures were reported in recent years, with 613 and 516 kg in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Authorities from Mozambique reported that the country is being used as a transit point for heroin from Pakistan into the United Republic of Tanzania. That may be a result of measures taken by Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, forcing traffickers to move south.²⁸

54. While heroin continues to be trafficked into Central Asia and the Russian Federation along the northern route, seizures along this route have decreased over

²⁶ Country report submitted by Mexico to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

²⁷ *Afghan Opiate Trafficking through the Southern Route*.

²⁸ Country report submitted by Mozambique to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.

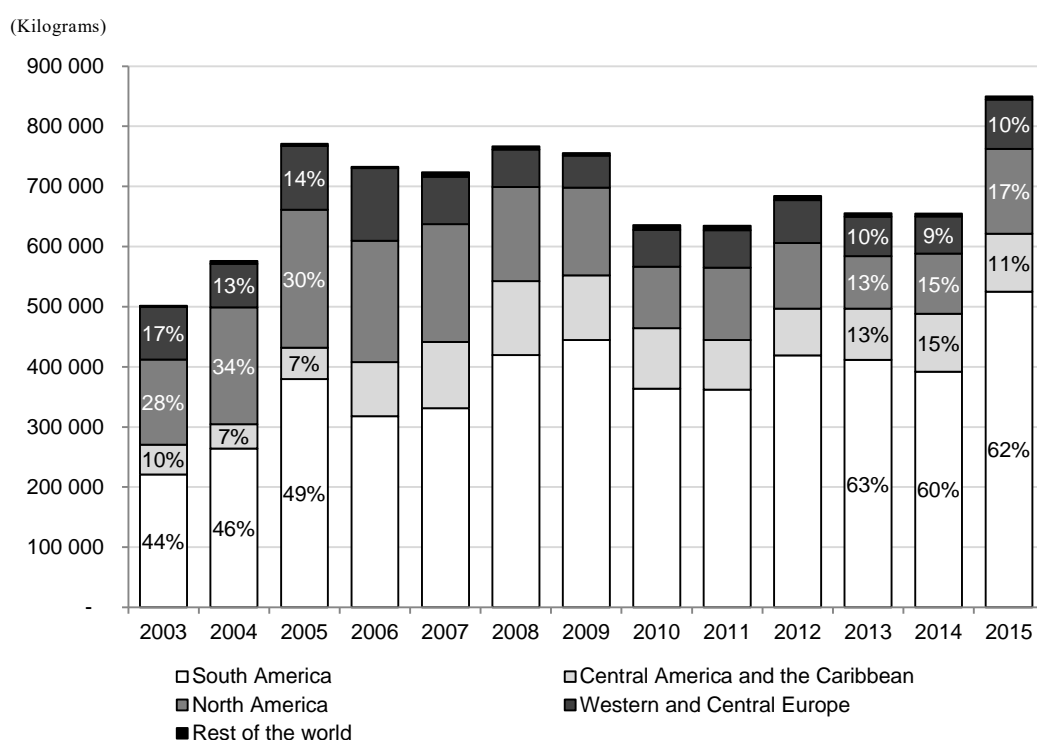
the last five years with respect to the first decade of the century. In 2015, preliminary data indicate that heroin seizures in Central Asia reached 1.5 tons, down from 3 tons in 2014. In the Russian Federation, heroin seizures amounted to under 2 tons in 2015, the lowest level since 2002.

C. Cocaine

55. The main consumer markets for cocaine in the world, North America and Western and Central Europe, continue to be supplied by cocaine originating in South America. Therefore, global cocaine seizures are concentrated in these regions, as well as in transit regions such as Central America and the Caribbean. Available data for 2015 suggest that global cocaine seizures increased sharply in 2015, reaching the highest level on record, with significant increases in almost all regions (see figure XII).

Figure XII

Global seizures of cocaine (base, paste and salts) by region, 2003-2015^a



^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

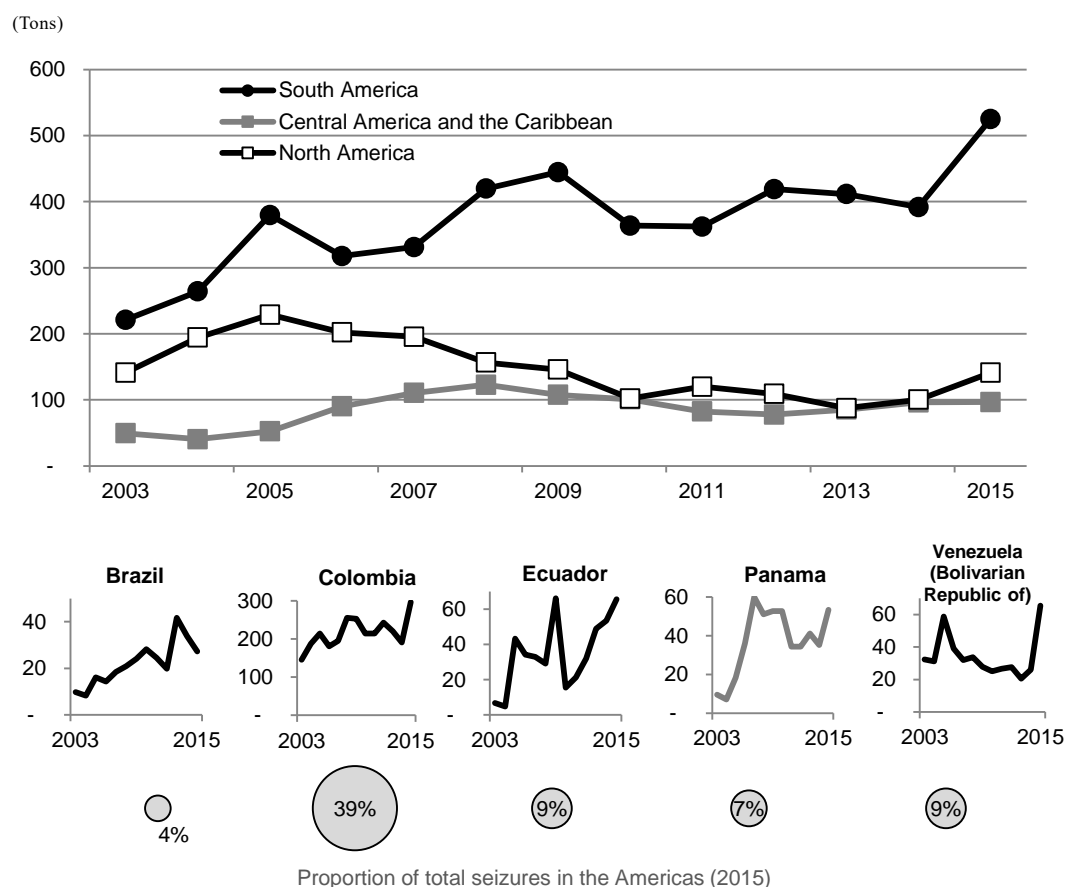
56. In South America, cocaine seizures increased from 150 tons in 2000 to over 400 tons in 2008, and remained stable until 2014 (see figure XIII). In 2015, an unprecedented 525 tons of cocaine were seized in the subregion. Cocaine seizures in Colombia have followed a general increasing trend over the last 15 years, and a record 297 tons were seized in 2015, up from 191 in 2014. However, the increase observed in South America over the years is not solely the result of the increase in Colombia. In Ecuador, cocaine seizures increased for the fifth year in a row, from 15 tons in 2010 to over 65 tons in 2015, while 65 tons were seized in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the highest amount on record and more than double the annual average of 26 tons reported during the previous six years. Cocaine seizures in Brazil increased from under 10 tons in 2004 and previous years, to 41 tons in 2013, with a further decrease to 34 and 27 tons in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

57. In 2015, five European countries²⁹ listed Central America and the Caribbean, in particular Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama, as transit and departure points for cocaine. These three countries also recorded the highest amounts of seized cocaine in the region in 2015. While preliminary data indicate that cocaine seizures increased in Panama (53 tons) and the Dominican Republic (9.4 tons), seizures decreased by 36 per cent in Costa Rica after the peak of 2014, reaching 17 tons in 2015. Total cocaine seizures in Central America and the Caribbean remained stable at 97 tons in 2015, after increasing for two consecutive years. Authorities in Panama reported that cocaine arrives from Colombia in large quantities via sea or land and, shortly thereafter, is trafficked onwards, concealed in vehicles and containers.³⁰

58. Global cocaine seizures seem to have been shifting geographically from the main markets to the origin and transit regions. While seizures in the production and transit regions of South America and Central America and the Caribbean have increased significantly over the last 10 years, cocaine seizures in the main markets of Western and Central Europe and North America have followed a marked decreasing trend over the same period.

Figure XIII

Cocaine seizures in the Americas, by subregion and in selected countries, 2003-2015



59. After decreasing to 87 tons in 2013, the lowest level reported since the late 1980s, cocaine seizures in North America increased to 100 tons in 2014. Cocaine seizures increased once again to 141 tons in 2015, with sharp increases in both Mexico and the United States. According to national authorities, the vast majority of cocaine that enters the United States is smuggled over land through the south-west

²⁹ Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

³⁰ Country report submitted by Panama to the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.

border, with a smaller portion entering by sea from the Caribbean (mostly the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) through Miami and New York.³¹

60. Cocaine seizures in Western and Central Europe peaked at 121 tons in 2006, then declined to an average of 62 tons between 2008 and 2014. In 2015, cocaine seizures in the region reached 82 tons, the highest number since 2006. This rise was mostly driven by sharp increases in Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Portugal, where cocaine seizures reached 17, 12, 11 and 6 tons, up from 9, 9, 7 and 3.7 tons in 2014, respectively. The country with the highest cocaine seizures in the region continues to be Spain, where seizures remained stable at 22 tons. In recent years, the increase of cocaine smuggling in maritime containers appears to be a major threat, given the large and increasing volume of maritime trade going into the region, with major European ports such as Rotterdam and Antwerp being targeted by traffickers.³²

61. A secondary route for cocaine trafficked across the Atlantic to Europe involves the use of countries in Africa, notably West Africa, as transit points. Authorities in Ecuador noticed the emergence of new routes into Europe, using West African countries as transit points.³³ Countries in West Africa have reported large seizures in recent years, with Nigeria recording over 100 kg every year since 2003, and Ghana seizing a total 1.3 tons during the period 2013-2014. A more recent concern involves the use of routes established for other drugs to traffic cocaine, such as cannabis routes in North Africa or heroin routes in East Africa.³⁴ In this regard, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and the United Republic of Tanzania have reported significant amounts of cocaine seized in recent years.

D. Amphetamine-type stimulants

62. Amphetamine-type stimulants can be broadly classified as amphetamines (which include amphetamine and methamphetamine) and “ecstasy”-type substances.³⁵ Unlike the collection of seizure data for plant-based drugs, the collection of high-quality seizure data relating to amphetamine-type stimulants relies heavily on the proper identification and classification of seized controlled substances.

63. As seen in figure XIV, the Americas have traditionally accounted for significant proportions of global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances and methamphetamine, with seizures being mostly concentrated in North America. In recent years, there has been a decrease in the proportion of global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances occurring in the region, and an increase in the proportion of global amphetamine seizures, which has surpassed the 20 per cent mark. Additionally, there have been changes in the geographical distribution of seizures of these types of drugs within the region. While Central America has been playing a more significant role in the seizure of amphetamines in recent years, a higher portion of regional seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances has been taking place in South America. Significant methamphetamine seizures in the region continue to be heavily concentrated in North America.

³¹ United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency, *2016 National Drug Threat Assessment*.

³² EMCDDA, *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview* (2016).

³³ Response submitted by Ecuador to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

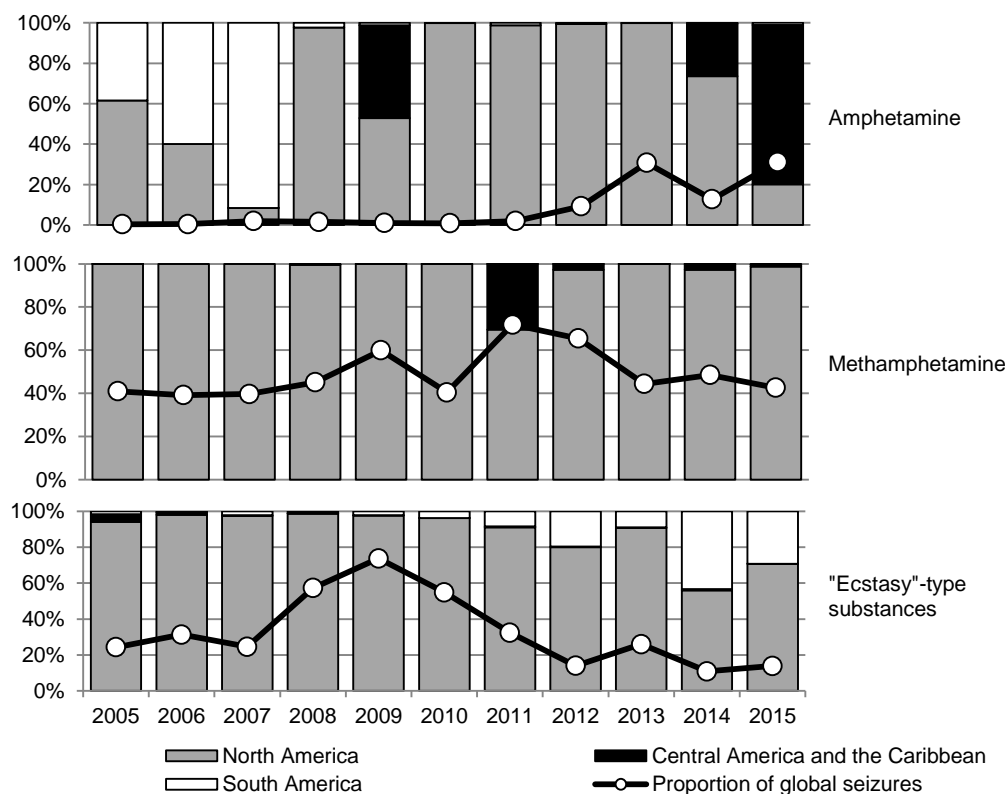
³⁴ EMCDDA, *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview* (2016).

³⁵ Including 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA).

Figure XIV

Proportion of global seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants occurring in the Americas and geographical distribution within the region, by drug type, 2005-2015

(Percentage)



Methamphetamine

64. The regions of Asia-Pacific and North America account for the majority of global methamphetamine seizures, and the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine has traditionally been concentrated close to these consumer markets. However, it has recently also spread to other countries and regions, with recent reports of new trafficking flows between different subregions.³⁶ In 2015, global methamphetamine seizures reached record levels.

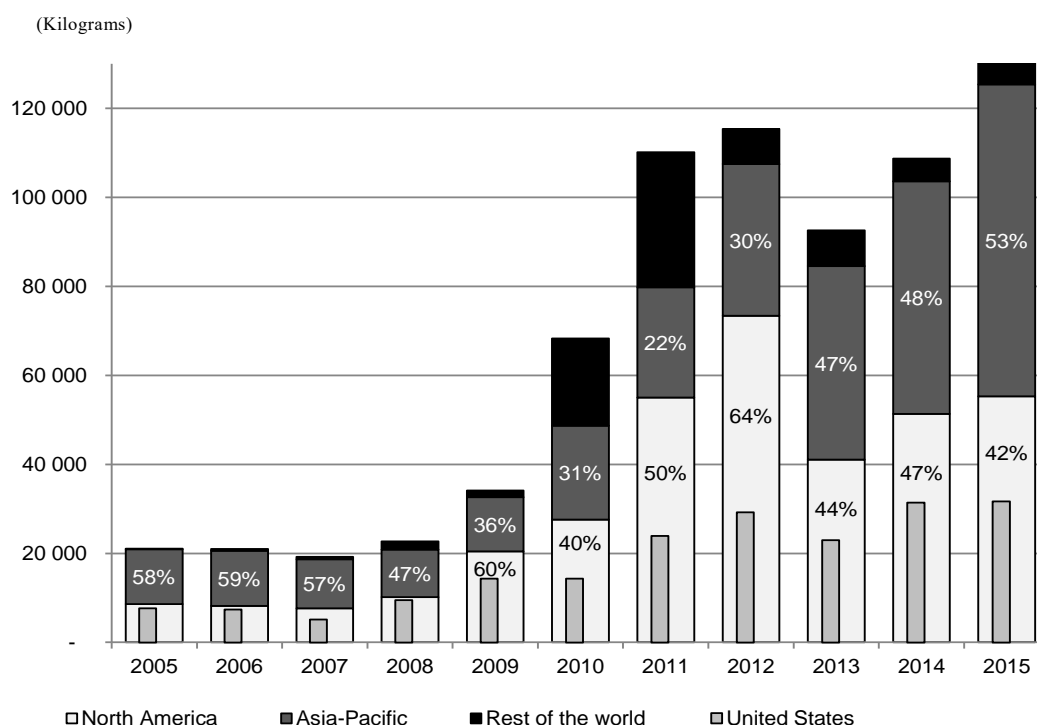
65. In North America, methamphetamine seizures increased slightly in 2015, mostly owing to an increase reported by Mexico. In the United States, methamphetamine seizures reached 31 tons in both 2014 and 2015, the two highest levels since 2002. National authorities reported a significant increase in liquid methamphetamine seizures, especially along the south-west border, where the drug is smuggled from Mexico and conversion laboratories are situated.³⁷ Methamphetamine seizures in Mexico increased for the second consecutive year, from 17.9 tons in 2013 to the equivalent of 23.5 tons in 2015, including almost 9,000 litres of liquid methamphetamine. The authorities in Mexico reported that methamphetamine was manufactured in clandestine laboratories using chemical precursors that were trafficked mostly from China and the United States.³⁸

³⁶ UNODC, *Global SMART Update*, vol. 12 (September 2014).

³⁷ Response submitted by the United States to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

³⁸ Response submitted by Mexico to the annual report questionnaire for 2015.

Figure XV
Global seizures of methamphetamine, by region (2005-2015)^a



^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

66. In the Asia-Pacific region, methamphetamine seizures have been increasing steadily since 2008, with the total amount seized in the region increasing sixfold over the period 2008-2015. In East and South-East Asia, methamphetamine is trafficked in tablet and crystalline form, with tablets being manufactured and trafficked mostly within the Mekong subregion (notwithstanding recent evidence of the presence of tablets in Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore) and crystalline methamphetamine being spread throughout the region.³⁹

67. Methamphetamine seizures in China have increased every year since 2008, from 6 tons to over 36 tons in 2015, the highest value reported by a single country that year. Authorities in China reported that about 88 per cent of seized methamphetamine tablets are produced in the Golden Triangle, while most of the crystalline methamphetamine trafficked in the country is of domestic manufacture.⁴⁰ The sharp increase in seizures in the Asia-Pacific region is not only a consequence of a rise in China, but in many countries within the region. Australia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand all have shown strong increasing trends since 2009.

68. In Latin America and the Caribbean, methamphetamine seizures have traditionally been limited. However, in recent years, Guatemala has reported significant levels, with 1,359 and 421 kg of methamphetamine seized in 2014 and 2015, respectively. In Argentina, methamphetamine seizures reached record levels in 2015, at 217 kg, a significant increase from the 21 kg reported in 2014.

³⁹ UNODC, *The Challenge of Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia and Oceania: Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances* (2015).

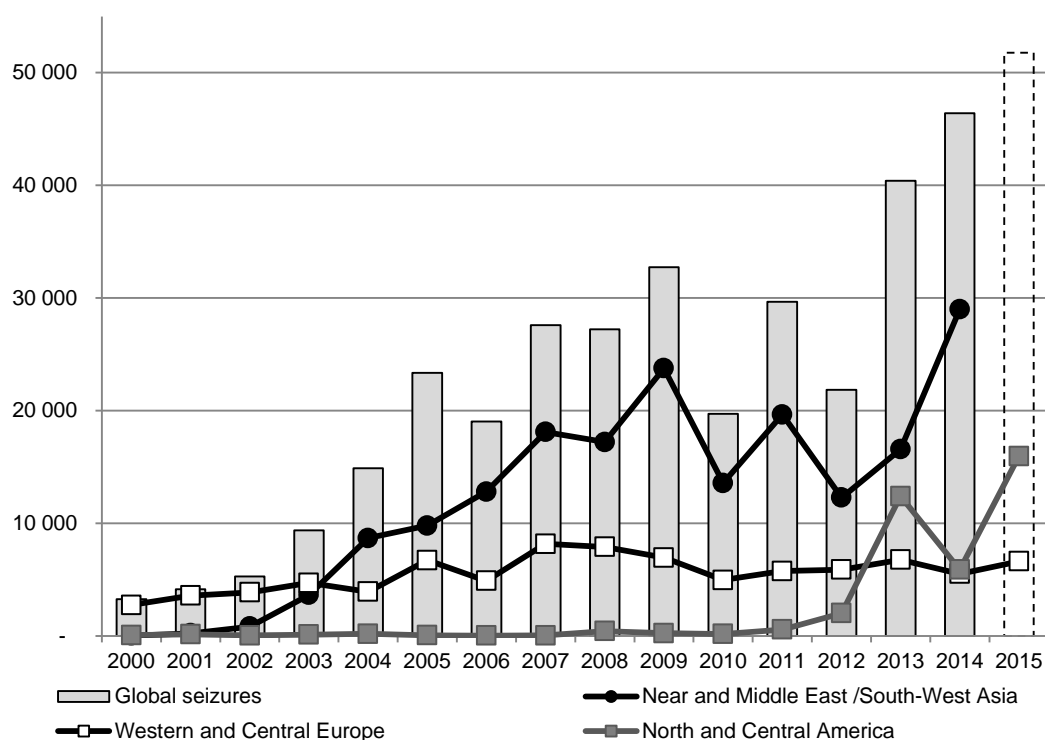
⁴⁰ Country report submitted by China to the Fortieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.

Amphetamine

69. Since 2004, global amphetamine seizures have been concentrated mostly in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia (see figure XVI). In particular, there has been a marked increase in Saudi Arabia, from less than 100 kg of amphetamine seized annually prior to 2003 to a record 17 tons in 2014. In 2015, amphetamine seizures in Saudi Arabia amounted to 10.7 tons. The increase in the region is not only a consequence of the rise in this country; other Member States have experienced an increasing trend in recent years. Record amphetamine seizures were reported in Jordan and Lebanon in 2014, with 5.4 and 6 tons, respectively, while Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic recorded historical highs of 2.9 and 4.2 tons, respectively, in 2015.

Figure XVI
Global seizures of amphetamine, by region, 2000-2015^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2015 in the Near and Middle East are incomplete.

70. In Western and Central Europe, amphetamine seizures have remained relatively stable since 2005, with countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consistently reporting significant annual seizures. While amphetamine seizures in Germany have remained at between 1.2 and 1.4 tons since 2008, the United Kingdom reported 612 and 624 kg seized in 2014 and 2015, respectively, down from levels that oscillated between 1 and 3.5 tons during the period 2000-2013. The Netherlands reported 1.5 tons of amphetamine seized in 2015.

71. In recent years, there has been an increased presence of amphetamine in the Americas, in particular in North and Central America (see figure XVI). The United States was the country with the highest reported amphetamine seizures globally in 2013, with over 12 tons. While seizures have decreased in recent years — to 4.3 and 2.7 tons in 2014 and 2015, respectively — they remain significantly above the levels reported in previous years. In Guatemala, seizures reached over 1.5 tons in 2014 and 12.7 tons in 2015, the highest level reported by a single country that year, mostly owing to an unprecedented multi-ton seizure that year. Mexico also reported seizing a record 300 kg of amphetamine in 2015. In the rest of the

Americas, Brazil reported an unprecedented 180 kg of amphetamine seized in 2015, a notable increase, considering that reported annual amphetamine seizures had never previously amounted to more than 6 kg.

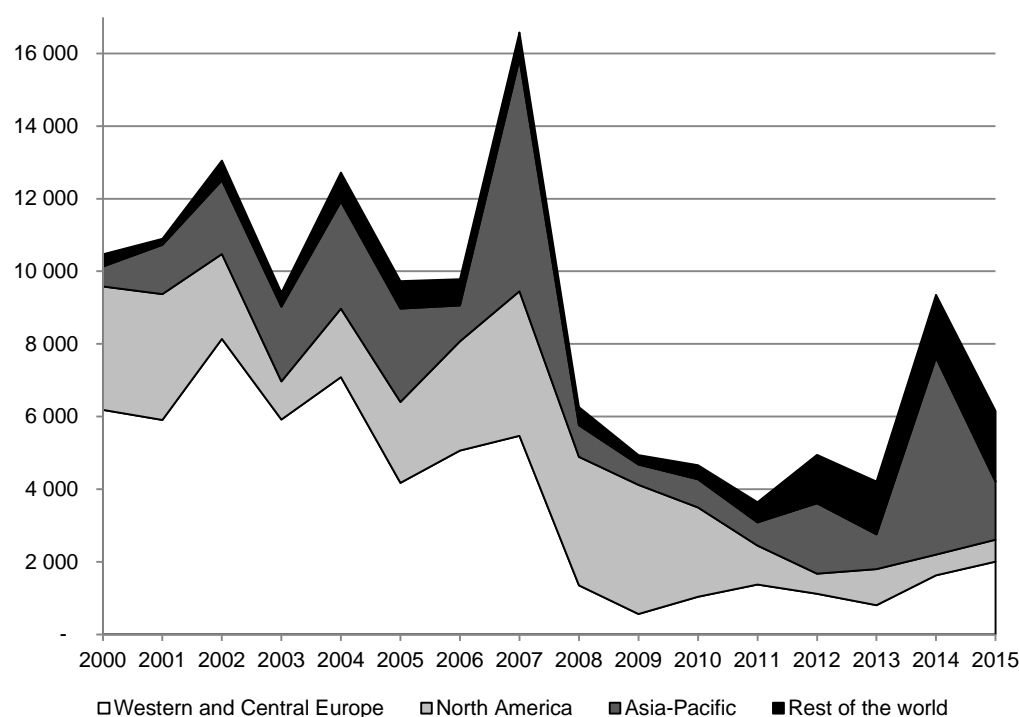
“Ecstasy”-type substances

72. After increasing to 9.4 tons in 2014, global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances decreased to 6.2 tons, a higher level than that observed during the 2009-2013 period, when seizures averaged 4.5 tons. As seen in figure XVII, seizures of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) have followed a decreasing trend over the last 15 years, mostly as a result of declines in the North America and Western and Central Europe markets. In recent years, global trends seem to be more affected by regional tendencies in the Asia-Pacific region, suggesting that this region might be becoming an emerging driver of the global market for ecstasy.⁴¹ Other subregions, such as South-Eastern Europe (in particular Turkey), have also seen sharp increases in “ecstasy” seizures in recent years.

Figure XVII

Global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances, by region (2000-2015)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2015 are preliminary.

73. In 2015, Turkey reported the highest seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances by a single country, with a record 1,538 kg. The country reported close to 1 ton seized annually between 2012 and 2015, up from an average 285 kg during the previous nine years. After reaching 4,375 kg in 2014, “ecstasy” seizures in Australia decreased to 671 kg in 2015.

74. In North America, the decline in MDMA seizures came as a consequence of reported decreases in both the United States and Canada. In Canada, annual seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances declined from an average of more than 650 kg during the period 2000-2010, to 15 and 22 kg in 2014 and 2015, respectively. In the United States, MDMA seizures decreased to between 500 and 600 kg in recent years, after reaching over 3,000 kg in 2009.

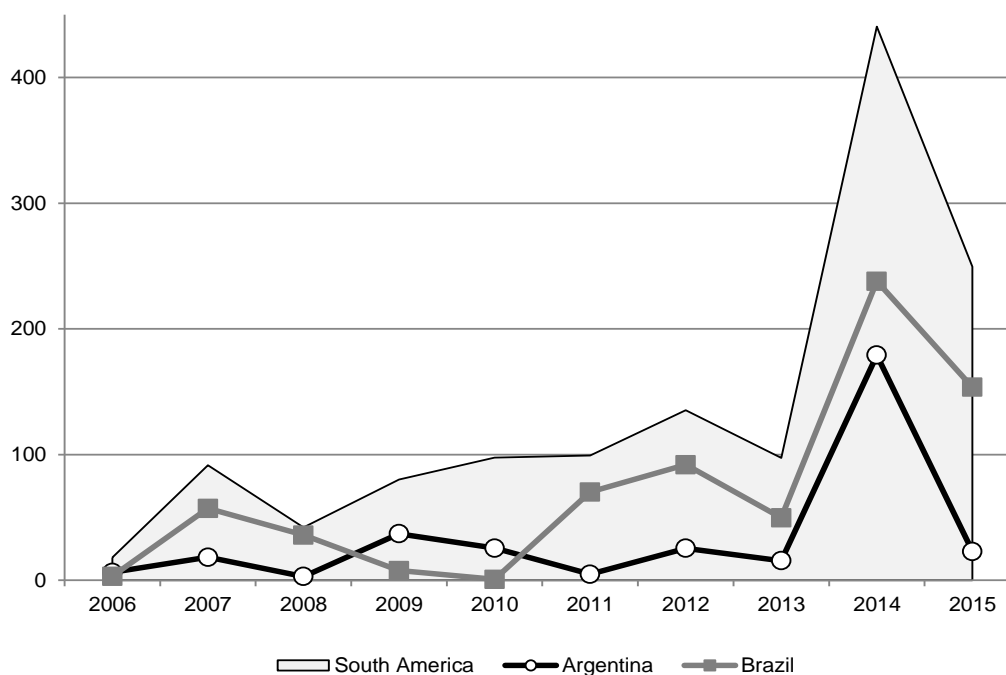
⁴¹ *The Challenge of Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia and Oceania: Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances.*

75. Seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances in South America have increased significantly in recent years. Argentina and Brazil have reported seizing significant amounts of MDMA, as seen in figure XVIII. Additionally, in 2015 Chile and Colombia reported unprecedented levels of “ecstasy”-type substances seized, with 32 and 33 kg respectively.

Figure XVIII

“Ecstasy”-type substances seizures in South America and selected countries within the region, 2006-2015

(Kilograms)



IV. Conclusions

76. The cultivation of cannabis continues in most countries worldwide and in all regions of the world, while the production of cannabis resin remains confined to a few countries. Globally, cannabis herb seizures have remained stable since 2012, while preliminary data suggest that cannabis resin seizures increased slightly for the second consecutive year in 2015. While there was a decrease in reported cannabis herb seizures in the Americas in 2015, the region continues to account for the majority of global seizures.

77. After decreasing in 2015 for the first time in six years, preliminary data suggest that the global area under opium poppy cultivation increased again in 2016. Global seizures of opium and illicit morphine remain concentrated in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, while heroin seizures cover a wider geographical area. Global heroin seizures have remained relatively stable since 2008, at levels significantly higher than those recorded in previous years. Despite a decreasing trend in Latin America and the Caribbean, heroin seizures in the Americas reached record levels in 2015, owing mainly to unprecedented amounts seized in North America.

78. After reaching historically low levels in 2013, the total area under coca bush cultivation increased for the second consecutive year in 2015, as a result of sharp increases in Colombia. Global cocaine seizures increased sharply in 2015, reaching unprecedented levels, with increases in the Americas and Western and Central Europe. Cocaine seizures in North America increased notably in 2015 to the highest level observed since 2009. A record 525 tons of cocaine were seized in South

America, with significantly higher levels reported by Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

79. Seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants have been following a sharp increasing trend since 2008, and 2015 marked a new global record. Global amphetamine and methamphetamine seizures have also followed sharp increasing trends over the last 15 years. In Central America, Guatemala reported seizing significant amounts of amphetamine in recent years. Although global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances have decreased over the last 15 years, there has been a notable increase in such seizures in South America in recent years.
