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**Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and
Related Matters in the Near and Middle East****Fifty-fourth session**

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**Current situation with respect to regional and
subregional cooperation****Current situation with respect to regional and subregional
cooperation****Report of the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. As the world's leading opium provider, Afghanistan remains at the centre of drug control efforts in the region. In 2018, the total opium poppy cultivation area in Afghanistan was estimated at 263,000 hectares, which was a decrease of 20 per cent, or 65,000 hectares, compared with the previous year. It is the second highest measurement since the systematic monitoring and recording of opium poppy began in 1994. The 2018 level exceeds the level of 2014 – the third-highest level recorded – by 17 per cent, or 39,000 hectares. Potential opium production was estimated at 6,400 tons in 2018, a decrease of 29 per cent from its 2017 level (9,000 tons). The average opium yield in 2018 was estimated at 24.4 kilograms per hectare (kg/ha), which was 11 per cent lower than in 2017. The number of poppy-free provinces in 2018 remained at 10, the same number as in 2017. Nuristan province regained its poppy-free status; however, Takhar province, which had been poppy-free since 2008, lost that status. The number of provinces affected by opium poppy cultivation remained at 24.

2. The estimates of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for 2016 suggest that 57 per cent of opium is processed into heroin, with the remaining 43 per cent left unprocessed. However, the massive increase in the opium supply may have an impact on this ratio, which will only be able to be seen through the seizure data of the coming years. In 2017, opium prices decreased in all regions of Afghanistan compared with 2016. Worth between \$4.1 billion and \$6.6 billion in 2017, the overall opium supply was of considerable size compared with Afghanistan's overall economy, namely the equivalent of between 20 per cent and 32 per cent of the gross domestic product of Afghanistan. The value of the illicit opiate economy is the

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

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farm-gate value of opium combined with revenues from heroin production and the trafficking of opiates to the Afghan border.

3. In 2018, 406 hectares of opium poppy were eradicated in four provinces, compared with 750 hectares in 14 provinces in 2017. During the 2018 eradication campaign, five people died, and two were injured, compared with 2017, when six died and eight were injured.

4. Addressing the opiate problem in Afghanistan remains a shared responsibility. Only a small share of the revenues generated by the cultivation and trafficking of Afghan opiates remains in Afghanistan. This year's decrease of the farm-gate value of opium means that less money is available for Afghan farmers to purchase food, pay for medical expenses and purchase everyday products. If no legal alternatives are made available to help Afghanistan and its impoverished rural population to cope with its economic and social challenges, the current negative consequences of the already existing large-scale production of opiates will be reinforced.

5. The Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, held on 27 and 28 November 2018, renewed the commitment of the international community for partnership and cooperation for Afghanistan's peace, prosperity and self-reliance. The communiqué of the Conference calls for increased efforts to fight corruption and illicit narcotics; while the Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework builds on prior frameworks to include a priority area on anti-corruption, governance, rule of law and human rights.

II. Regional and subregional cooperation

6. Regional cooperation continues to be recognized as the most viable way to effectively tackle illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and use, and the related political, security, development and socioeconomic harm in Afghanistan, West and Central Asia and the wider international community.

7. The record levels of production and cultivation create multiple challenges both inside and outside the country, including increased insurgency and funding to terrorist groups and the availability of more high-quality, low-cost heroin in consumer markets. Moreover, an expanding illicit economy has permeated rural societies in Afghanistan, led to greater dependency of communities on opium, further constrained development of the licit economy and potentially further fuels corruption.

8. The established regional working groups on precursors, forensics and law enforcement training were very active, with information on illicit drugs and precursors shared between States of the region, and operations were planned and conducted. Many regional workshops took place, bringing countries together to discuss emerging threats, global best practices and responses in critical areas relating to drug trafficking, illicit financial flows, the increasing use of the Internet for criminal purposes, and trafficking in persons, among other things. An important development resulting from the UNODC-supported regional workshops on corruption and asset recovery was the establishment of an inter-agency asset recovery network for West and Central Asia.

9. The countries continued to share their experiences on drug prevention, treatment and HIV prevention among vulnerable groups under the framework of the regional programme and to strengthen networks and mutual support in that crucial area. There was further development and expansion of the Family and School Together programme and the Strengthening Families Programme for drug use prevention, which are helping protect children across the region and strengthen the capacity of families and schools to address potential risks.

10. A very important element of UNODC efforts is to continue building partnerships, and the regional programme works with various organizations, agencies and frameworks that tackle drugs and crime in the region, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the European Union Agency for Law

Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), other United Nations agencies and other major bilateral projects. The “one UNODC concerted approach” interconnecting Europe with West and Central Asia coordinates closely with both the Paris Pact initiative and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, of which UNODC is an official observer. Both those initiatives are playing an important and active role in addressing the drug problem, and UNODC supports them in an operational capacity, building synergy between the two initiatives.

III. Paris Pact initiative

11. Made up of 58 countries and 23 organizations, including UNODC, the Paris Pact initiative is a partnership responsible for defining counter-narcotics priorities and implementing measures to combat opiate trafficking along the major routes, in line with the Vienna Declaration,¹ based on the principle of shared responsibility.

12. The Paris Pact, whose efforts have been recognized by the Security Council in its resolutions [2274 \(2016\)](#), [2344 \(2017\)](#) and [2405 \(2018\)](#), remains today the only global cooperation mechanism dedicated to illicit opiates.

13. The Paris Pact global programme established by UNODC on behalf of the partnership facilitates the initiative’s intergovernmental process of dialogue on opiates at the expert and policy level. Currently, the fourth phase of the programme is under way.

14. The expert recommendation stocktaking exercise aiming to align with the Paris Pact partner-driven gap-analysis process was implemented at the Beijing and New Delhi expert meetings organized in the past year. The stocktaking exercise responds to the call made by the partnership at the fourteenth Consultative Group Meeting to prioritize existing Paris Pact expert recommendations to hone their operational focus and to explore the strengthening of the role of regional organizations in facilitating their implementation.

15. The meeting of the high-level expert working group on regional cooperation (relating to pillar I of the Vienna Declaration) was hosted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The meeting was held in Beijing from 13 to 15 November 2018. At the meeting, the partnership called for a strengthened role for the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Europol, INTERPOL and other key regional organizations in the coordination of strategic and operational matters related to combating the opiate threat.

16. A meeting of the Paris Pact expert working group on illicit financial flows (relating to pillar II of the Vienna Declaration) was held in New Delhi on 27 and 28 June 2019.

17. In connection with generating first-hand evidence for the Paris Pact partnership, the Paris Pact initiative continued to support the Drugs Monitoring Platform, a system that centralizes information on drug trends and generates national-level data to inform the annual reports questionnaire, as well as the *World Drug Report* and other publications.

18. The Drugs Monitoring Platform is an innovative online tool for collecting, monitoring, mapping and sharing drug-related data. The Platform provides information on the global illicit trade in opiates originating in Afghanistan, the mapping of emerging threats and the identification of drug trafficking routes. The

¹ The Vienna Declaration is the outcome document of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan, held on 16 February 2012.

knowledge generated by the Platform can be used to inform evidence-based policymaking.

19. To strengthen national, regional and international pictures on drug trafficking, the Paris Pact initiative research and liaison officers, located in UNODC offices in countries along drug trafficking routes in West and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, continued to contribute to the content of the Drugs Monitoring Platform.

IV. Cooperation in Afghanistan

20. On 8 March 2018, the Security Council adopted its resolution [2405 \(2018\)](#), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In that resolution, the Council expressed its deep concern about the significant increase in the cultivation, production, trade and trafficking of illicit drugs in Afghanistan and welcomed the continuing efforts of UNODC and the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics. The Council also called upon States to counter the threat posed by the production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs originating in Afghanistan, which significantly contribute to the financial resources of the Taliban and its associates and could also benefit affiliates of Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and other terrorist groups, and to act in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility, including through cooperation to counter trafficking in illicit drugs and precursor chemicals.

21. In 2018, UNODC supported the mobile detection teams of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan in the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar and Nimroz. Those teams are recognized by the international community as an effective enforcement arm capable of executing intelligence-led operations and delivering training sessions at the national and international levels. Since November 2018, the mobile detection teams conducted a total of 683 counter-narcotics operations, which resulted in the seizure of 371 kg of heroin, 1,701 kg of opium, 108 kg of methamphetamine, 6,012 kg of hashish, 3,384 MDMA tablets, 20,914 kg of henbane, 36,303 kg of solid precursor chemicals, 884 litres of liquid precursor chemicals and 390 kg of lapis lazuli stone. In addition, those operations led to the dismantling of three heroin-manufacturing laboratories; the arrest of 821 suspects; and the seizure of 176 vehicles, 607 weapons and 260 mobile telephones. A total of \$25,752 was also confiscated during those operations.

22. UNODC supported the Precursor Control Unit of the Counter Narcotics-Police of Afghanistan in provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Herat, Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Paktia and Takhar. The interdiction and investigation capacity of the Unit were enhanced, leading to intelligence-led operations, backtracking investigations and substantial precursor chemical seizures. Since November 2018, the Precursor Control Unit participated in 12 counter-narcotics operations in coordination with the intelligence units of the Counter-Narcotics Police, which led to the seizure of 268 litres of acetic anhydride, 75 litres of sulphuric acid, 100 litres of hydrochloric acid, 20 kg of ammonium chloride, 205 kg of carbon, 200 kg of sodium hydroxide, 13 kg of calcium oxide, 6 kg of sodium carbonate, 72,185 litres of toluene, 15,110 litres of acetone and 239 kg of methamphetamine. Those operations also led to the dismantling of 12 laboratories and the arrest of 13 suspects. Support was also provided to the forensic laboratory of the Counter-Narcotics Police through the provision of analytical instruments, equipment and consumables, in addition to regular mentorship by UNODC. Forensic intelligence has regularly been shared with operational law enforcement units. In addition, the laboratory of the Counter-Narcotics Police have submitted reports of sample analyses to judicial institutions that contributed to investigations and prosecutions.

23. UNODC established airport interdiction units at Hamid Karzai International Airport and Kandahar International Airport and are now fully operational and being used as an effective tool in identifying and arresting traffickers operating through air

routes to international destinations: mainly to New Delhi, with a few attempts to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

24. Since November 2018, the successes listed below have been achieved by units:

(a) *Hamid Karzai International Airport*. During their operations, the airport interdiction unit seized 150 kg of heroin, 17 kg of methamphetamine, 16 kg of hashish and 990 grams of raw gold. They also confiscated \$270,000 and arrested 154 traffickers during those operations. In addition, members of the airport interdiction units were able to conduct follow-up investigations on arrested cases and undertake operations outside the airport;

(b) *Kandahar International Airport*. During their operations, the airport interdiction unit seized 92 kg of heroin, 1 kg of methamphetamine and 4 litres of precursor chemicals. They also arrested 150 traffickers during those operations.

25. In Afghanistan, UNODC provided support for law enforcement agencies, including the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan, the Afghan Border Police and the Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance. The Counter-Narcotics Training Academy, the training cadre of the Counter-Narcotics Police, has an established ability to train new recruits in Kabul and to provide in-service training to provincial officers. Since November 2018, Afghan law enforcement authorities have conducted a total of 2,454 counter-narcotics operations, which resulted in the seizure of 2,194 kg of heroin, 3,648 kg of morphine, 10,331 kg of opium, 720 kg of methamphetamine, 299,573 kg of hashish, 38,308 MDMA tablets, 27,116 kg of henbane, 1,467 kg of poppy seeds, 88,774 kg of solid precursor chemicals and 97,977 litres of liquid precursor chemicals. In addition, those operations led to the dismantling of 123 heroin-manufacturing laboratories, the arrest of 2,842 suspects and the seizure of 413 vehicles and 605 weapons. Meanwhile, a total of 42 members of the Afghan National Security Force were wounded, and another seven were killed.

26. The UNODC country programme for Afghanistan for the period 2016–2019 enhances assistance at the provincial level; creates sustainable alternative livelihoods for opium poppy farmers; expands health care, drug demand reduction and HIV prevention; and enhances the capacity of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics to conduct research, surveys and analysis.

27. The Russian Federation has renewed its support for specialized training on drug interdiction for Afghan law enforcement officials, to be delivered by the Domodedovo Training Centre. The initiative was funded by the Government of Japan under a triangular cooperation framework.

V. Cooperation in Pakistan

28. Pakistan shares a 2,430 km border with Afghanistan, the world's leading opium producer. There are only three official transit points between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Two of those points – Torkham, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and Chaman, in Balochistan province – have an international status, as they serve as main avenues of trade for both countries. The mountainous topography and the fact that it is largely unstaffed make the area especially vulnerable to trafficking activities. The vast majority of opium production occurs in the southern and western provinces of Afghanistan, which border Pakistan. The Afghan provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz and Zabul, which adjoin Balochistan province in Pakistan, are of particular importance.

29. Traffickers of drugs and precursors are thought to have strong allegiance to the transnational criminal groups involved in terrorism, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, smuggling of weapons and explosives, kidnap for ransom, smuggling of contraband items and other criminal activities. Terrorist organizations can potentially generate profits from drug trafficking or other types of illicit trade. In addition, drug trafficking and online precursor trade through the use of darknets continues to grow rapidly, despite successes in shutting down popular trading platforms. This

supply-driven expansion of drug markets is creating multiple challenges for the Governments to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While there has been an upward trend in bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the last two years, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, recently directed officials to keep the Torkham border-crossing point operational around the clock, in order to boost bilateral trade ties and people-to-people contacts between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It warrants increased counter-narcotics measures, as illegal activities disguised as bilateral trade and socioeconomic development could negatively impact public safety, security, health and economic stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and even beyond.

30. Pakistan is also seriously affected by drug use and related problems. According to the national survey on drug use conducted by the Government of Pakistan and UNODC in 2013, 4.25 million people were considered dependent on substances and required structured treatment for their drug use disorders. An estimated 860,000 people, or 0.8 per cent of the population aged 15–64 years, used heroin regularly in the year preceding that survey. Among the problem drug users, an estimated 430,000 people aged 15–64 injected drugs, with 73 per cent reporting that they shared needles and syringes and thus were at increased risk of drug-related harms, including the acquisition of blood-borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.

31. The country programme for Pakistan for the period 2016–2019, with a total budget of \$77 million, is composed of three subprogrammes: (a) countering trafficking and border management; (b) criminal justice and legal reforms; and (c) drug demand reduction, prevention and treatment. Another project, entitled “Pakistan action against counter-terrorism” is conducted with support from the European Union. Through the country programme, UNODC provides and facilitates platforms for the Government of Pakistan to conduct various regional and international forums and other multilateral cooperation initiatives. The UNODC Country Office in Pakistan works closely with the Government and the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan, including the foreign law enforcement community in Islamabad, to promote the rule of law in the country. The country office actively supports efforts to enhance the technical and operational capacities of the country’s law enforcement officials at the international level, in particular in the areas of countering trafficking and border management, criminal justice and drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention.

32. In July 2018, the UNODC Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific and the Country Office in Pakistan provided technical support for a bilateral dialogue between the National Narcotics Control Commission of China and the Anti-Narcotics Force of Pakistan, more specifically to establish counter-narcotics border liaison offices at their common border. On 16 September 2018, a border liaison office was inaugurated in Tashkurgan, Pakistan, by the Deputy Secretary-General of the National Narcotics Control Commission and the Regional Representative for the Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific. On the same evening, a ground-breaking ceremony was held in Sost, Pakistan, for the establishment of the counter-narcotics border liaison officer under the auspices of the Country Office in Pakistan.

33. The thirteenth senior official meeting of the Triangular Initiative was hosted by the Ministry of Narcotics Control of Pakistan on 11 and 12 December 2018. It brought together counter-narcotics partners from Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan to discuss ways and means to strengthen cooperation against the trafficking of Afghan opiates. As a result of the meeting, the three sides agreed, inter alia, to strengthen regional cooperation through the border liaison offices and to coordinate more simultaneous patrolling operations and intelligence-led interdiction operations along their common borders. Senior officials from the three countries expressed interest in utilizing each other’s counter-narcotics training academies, with a view to ensuring better understanding and operational coordination.

34. A workshop on the topic of controlled delivery operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan was facilitated by the Country Office in Pakistan at the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime in Ankara on 17 and 18 December 2018. Counter-narcotics intelligence officials from the two countries revamped their willingness to strike against drug trafficking networks through intelligence-led operations, as well as fine-tuned technical modalities for conducting the first-ever controlled delivery operation between the two countries.

35. UNODC in collaboration with Ministry of Narcotics Control is planning to conduct a survey to measure drug use in Pakistan in the period 2019–2020. That survey will provide updated information on the extent, patterns and trends of drug use, together with its related social and health problems, thus enhancing the understanding with regard to the levels of drug-related health and social consequences and perceived accessibility and uptake of drug treatment services and other interventions for people with drug use disorders.

36. In collaboration with ministries of narcotics control, health and education, UNODC is investing in building the capacity of the drug dependence treatment and drug prevention professionals on the scientific and evidence-based universal treatment and universal prevention curricula.

37. In collaboration with the ministries of narcotics control and provincial health departments, UNODC is implementing a pilot project on drug dependence treatment interventions in rural settings, with a view to improving access to drug treatment services. The pilot project focuses both on strengthening the capacity and mobilization of community resources and their participation in the continuum of care for substance users in rural settings.

VI. Cooperation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

38. The annual report for 2018 of the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that law enforcement authorities and anti-narcotics police had conducted 1,557 operations against drug trafficking networks and kingpins, which resulted in the dismantling of 2,114 drug gangs and 133 amphetamine-type stimulant laboratories. The operations resulted in the arrest of 236,551 drug traffickers and drug distributors. In those operations, the law enforcement authorities and anti-narcotics police seized 25,436 kg of heroin, 20,611 kg of morphine, 643,683 kg of opium, 102,621 kg of hashish, 2,989 kg of methamphetamine, 11,470 kg of other types of drugs and 24,969 litres of precursor chemicals.

39. The seizure figures clearly illustrate the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in combating the flow of drugs from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the transit of heroin and morphine from the country to European destinations through the Balkan route.

40. Several new complex corridors have been opened in recent years by organized narco-terrorist networks, transnational organized groups and drug kingpins between the Islamic Republic of Iran and its neighbours: Afghanistan and Pakistan in the East, and Iraq in the West. The narco-terrorist and extremist gangs use these labyrinth corridors for trafficking in opiates and precursors, illicit financial flows and trafficking in persons.

41. The production of morphine and heroin is highly dependent on the availability of precursors in Afghanistan. Together with Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains one of the targeted countries for the trafficking of acetic anhydride and other illicit chemical precursors into Afghanistan for the production of heroin and morphine.

42. Maritime transport remains a primary route used by international organized criminal groups and terrorist organizations for the trafficking of drugs and illicit chemical precursors, trafficking in human beings and illicit financial flows from the region. The heroin seizure data in the last five years indicate that there are several

maritime drug trafficking routes used to ship opiates from the ports of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to destinations in Europe and East and West Africa.

43. The Drug Control Headquarters annual report for 2018 reported that several drug prevention and cultural activities had been conducted for various social groups and settings including families, schools and university students, and workers, among others. In 2018, a total of 7,439 government and private outpatient clinics throughout the country provided treatment and social support to all types of individuals. There were 254 drop-in centres and 324 mobile teams that offered harm reduction and HIV care services to drug users in the country.

44. The use of stimulants among both socially integrated and marginalized young people has been increasing in the Islamic Republic of Iran. A qualitative study in the country identified three groups of young methamphetamine users. The majority were those who had started using methamphetamine, known locally as “shisheh” (glass), as a way of coping with their current opioid use, either to self-treat opioid dependence or to manage its adverse effects. Another, smaller group were those who had used “shisheh” during their first substance use or after a period of cannabis use, as a novelty-seeking measure and to experience a new “high”. The last group were those who had switched to methamphetamine use after participating in an opioid withdrawal programme and abstaining from opioid use for a period.

VII. Cooperation in Central Asia

45. The Government of Uzbekistan organized an international conference on Afghanistan, entitled “Peace process, security cooperation and regional connectivity”, which was held in Tashkent on 26 and 27 March 2018. The Declaration of the Conference acknowledges that peace and security in Afghanistan are essential for ensuring stability and prosperity in the region. It stressed the importance of intensified practical efforts by the Government of Afghanistan in cooperation with regional and international partners to address drug production and trafficking, as well as trafficking in precursors and weapons smuggling as the main sources for the financing of terrorism.

46. The UNODC regional programme for Central Asia (2015–2019) has four subprogrammes, dividing activities into four thematic areas: countering transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism; criminal justice, crime prevention and integrity; drug prevention, treatment and reintegration, and HIV prevention; and research and trend analysis.

47. UNODC utilizes a mechanism of integrated response to drug-related challenges and border security issues. The Office’s initiatives strengthen both national inter-agency coordination and regional cross-border cooperation by establishing port control units, border outposts and inter-agency mobile teams in Central Asian States. Additionally, CARICC serves as the information and coordination platform for combating the trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors.

48. UNODC continued to work closely with drug control agencies of Central Asian States, with a view to enhancing their capacities to counter drug trafficking. Those capacity-development efforts were aimed at supporting national legislation on drug control, national operational capacities on drug law enforcement, as well as at enhancing the capacities of other competent authorities in maintaining the legal turnover of controlled narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors under the ratified United Nations conventions.

49. Analytical capacity-building, coordination in regional operations and facilitation of information-sharing in Central Asia are supported through the initiative to establish CARICC. CARICC is a regional multilateral platform that is designed to lead the fight in the region against narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime. It is a unique platform, which is linked to other UNODC initiatives and law

enforcement agencies worldwide. Through its staff of analysts and liaison officers seconded from law enforcement agencies from Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Central Asia, CARICC is geographically and geopolitically positioned to be an effective agent in countering narcotics trafficking, organized crime, money-laundering and terrorism. CARICC seeks to further leverage its position by participating in the UNODC “networking the networks” initiative. At the global level, through the networking approach, UNODC enhances intelligence-sharing and cooperation between CARICC and neighbouring regions through the Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, among others.

50. In 2018, CARICC facilitated the exchange of intelligence between the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan and CARICC member States, including Iran (Islamic Republic of), Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which in turn has facilitated new investigations into transnational organized crime. Moreover, the first regular session of the CARICC National Coordinators Council was convened in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 20 September 2018. During that meeting, positive feedback from member States and other partners regarding the CARICC-facilitated operations and projects was noted. In particular, participants highlighted the “Reflex” Regional Operation on countering new psychoactive substances, the “Substitute” Regional Operation on countering trafficking of precursor chemicals and the Regional Programme for the System-Wide Fight against Organized Drug-Related Crime by Weakening its Financial Resources.

51. In the reporting period, UNODC continued its support to the 15 operational border liaison offices in the region, which were established in geographically remote and vulnerable border control police in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan since 2010. That support included capacity development, technical assistance and expert advice in improving the work of border liaison offices. All capacity development activities were targeted for the staff of the relevant law enforcement agencies to make their technical capacities more efficient during seizures of illicit drugs. That initiative was once again supported by the countries during the meeting held in Almaty on 11 and 12 December 2018, which was aimed at ensuring continuity of the existing inter-agency and cross-border cooperation mechanism among the border liaison offices and at opening new border zones, in particular along the border with Afghanistan, in order to respond to additional concerns of the region that are in line with the UNODC strategy in the region.

VIII. Cooperation in Turkey

52. The partnership between UNODC and Turkey continues to play an important role in South-Eastern Europe and in West and Central Asia.

53. Turkey remains a transit route for drugs between Asia and Europe. Heroin, opium and cocaine are generally trafficked through Turkey to European markets, and amphetamine-type stimulants are trafficked to markets in the Middle East and South-East Asia. Authorities in Turkey continue to seize large amounts of opiates and hashish in the country, and the Government of Turkey remains committed to upholding its international drug control obligations. The National Counter-Narcotics Department of Turkey is the country’s most proactive force countering drugs in the country. Components of the Ministry of the Interior also have some drug control responsibilities, and the Ministry of Health is responsible for regulating pharmaceutical products and the importation of chemicals for legitimate use.

54. Most heroin trafficked through Turkey is destined for Western Europe. Transnational criminal networks reportedly have interests in heroin conversion laboratories operating in the Islamic Republic of Iran, near the border with Turkey. The Government strictly controls licit opium poppy cultivation and pharmaceutical morphine production, with no apparent diversion into the illicit market.

55. According to the *World Drug Report 2019*, the world's single largest heroin trafficking pathway continues to be the Balkan route, which sees drugs smuggled from Afghanistan through the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and the Balkan countries and on to various destinations in Western and Central Europe. Seizures made by countries along the Balkan route accounted for 47 per cent of global quantities of heroin and morphine seized outside Afghanistan in 2017.

56. Law enforcement bodies in Turkey conducted successful operations between 1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019, which resulted in the seizure of 175,714 kg of cannabis, 1,476 kg of cocaine, 17,752 kg of heroin, 8,605,662 MDMA tablets and 26,271,790 "captagon" tablets.

57. From 1 March 2018 to 28 February 2019, the Turkish Coast Guard Command was involved in 13 drug-related incidents, 10 of which were carried out with other law enforcement agencies. Those incidents resulted in 39 suspects being taken into custody. Turkish law enforcement authorities detained 24,809 suspects in connection with drug-related crimes, which resulted in 8,237 convictions.

58. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime provides advanced training to law enforcement professionals from Turkey and neighbouring States. The Academy provides various training sessions to the personnel of the national law enforcement agencies as well as to those from South-Eastern Europe and West and Central Asia. The Academy is also a significant contributor to the training projects organized within multinational organizations and institutions, including UNODC, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization International Secretariat and the Economic Cooperation Organization, among others. Turkey is a strong supporter and donor to the work of UNODC in South-Eastern Europe, with regular capacity-building activities taking place in the Academy premises in Ankara, as well as through the participation of the expert from Turkey in the UNODC activities in the South-Eastern European region.

59. In 2018, Turkey supported the interregional meeting between South-Eastern Europe and West and Central Asia on building partnerships to counter illicit financial flows organized under the framework of UNODC regional programmes for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and South-Eastern Europe, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia. The event included an overview of the trends and analysis of illicit financial flows along the three drug trafficking routes from Afghanistan. The overview was provided by UNODC, which also presented the updated report on the trafficking of opiates along the Northern Route. The meeting not only contributed to the exchange of best practices among participants of both regions, but also raised awareness of the critical importance of cooperation at the regional and interregional level and on the need to support Afghanistan in its endeavour to fight drug trafficking and organized crime.

60. A national anti-drug strategy for the period 2018–2023 was adopted in May 2018. In July 2017, the Ministry of the Interior adopted its own institutional plan to implement specific projects in that field. The implementation policy on the fight against drugs (2017–2018) was updated in the period 2018–2019.

61. Illegal drug use in Turkey is relatively low compared with other countries in the region, but there seems to be an increase in the number of people seeking treatment. Turkey does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotics or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. No senior-level government official is alleged to have participated in such activities in 2018.

62. The bilateral relations between Turkey and other enlargement countries and neighbouring European Union member States were generally good. Turkey has continued its policy of engagement in the Western Balkans, and actively supports regional cooperation through bilateral agreements and strategic partnerships. Turkey

also continued to support the stability of the region through the South-East European Cooperation Process.

IX. Cooperation in the Arab States

63. In North Africa and the Middle East, the work of UNODC continued to be implemented in the framework of the Regional Programme for the Arab States to Prevent and Combat Crime, Terrorism and Health Threats and Strengthen Criminal Justice Systems, in line with International Human Rights Standards (2016–2021). Cooperation with the six member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Council's General Secretariat also continues to be enhanced through the strategic partnership, endorsed in conjunction with the Regional Programme, and is informed by the specific challenges, available resources and common institutional characteristics of the Council countries.

64. In close partnership with the League of Arab States and the 18 Arab countries covered by the Regional Programme, UNODC organized the third annual meeting of the steering and follow-up committee. The meeting was held in Cairo in November 2018 and was attended by representatives from the ministries of foreign affairs, the interior, justice and health. They reviewed achievements and explored ways to facilitate further cooperation, especially in the area of countering organized crime, including combating drug trafficking as well as on drug use, treatment and prevention. Member States renewed their commitment to the partnership with UNODC and the League of Arab States and agreed on a set of priorities for the upcoming year, including to continue to strengthen border control and regional cooperation to counter organized crime, including drug trafficking, and to support national and regional counter-terrorism efforts.

65. Under the Container Control Programme, UNODC continued providing its support to Jordan by procuring six precursor identification kits and six drug identification kits for the port control unit at the Port of Aqaba and the air cargo control unit at Queen Alia International Airport. The port control unit and the air cargo control unit consist of Customs, the Public Security Department's Special Branch and the Anti-Narcotics Department, the Department for Military Security and the General Intelligence Directorate. UNODC also delivered technical capacity-building with a specific focus on profiling, selection and inspection of counterfeit and falsified medicines to officers at the units. Important seizures of illicit drugs have been made in Jordan as a result of the assistance provided.

66. In Oman, the Container Control Programme continued its support to the Royal Oman Police, in particular to the Directorate General of Customs and the Directorate General of Narcotics Control, and its activities gained momentum with the delivery of practical training programmes and mentoring activities. Accordingly, a port control unit at the seaport of Salalah and the air cargo control unit at the airport in Muscat are to be inaugurated during the last quarter of 2019. Through the Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Region, UNODC also provided support for a train-the-trainers programme delivered to the Directorate General of Narcotics Control. Through its overall partnership with the Royal Oman Police, UNODC is assisting in creating synergies between the different agencies in Oman as well as creating a group of experts that could provide activities related to drug prevention in the country and beyond.

67. In October 2018, the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa signed a memorandum of understanding with the League of Arab States with the aim of strengthening collaboration in the area of health. The memorandum provides a policy framework for cooperation between the two entities in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention and care, drug use prevention, and the care and treatment of drug disorders.

68. During meetings between UNODC and authorities in Iraq that took place during the reporting period, the authorities identified drugs as the second highest national

security threat after terrorism. In that context, in April 2019 the National High Committee for the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances launched a nationwide awareness-raising campaign entitled “No to Drugs”.

69. Further to several cooperation and assistance requests from the Government of Iraq, UNODC conducted three partnership-building missions to Iraq between July 2018 and February 2019, focusing on how UNODC could support Iraq in the areas of border control, criminal information analysis, forensics, anti-corruption, crime prevention and criminal justice, drug use and HIV prevention, treatment and care. During its first mission, which focused on drug trafficking, UNODC met with the Ministry of the Interior (Anti-Narcotics Directorate in Baghdad, Basra Anti-Narcotics Police Department, border forces, and Directorate of Intelligence and Counterterrorism), the Ministry of Finance (the General Directorate of Customs), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Border Commission and the Ministry of Transportation and Customs. A series of recommendations were identified to assist the authorities in Iraq to effectively address drug trafficking, including the streamlining of the mandates of agencies involved in investigation; capacity-building in investigation, in particular special investigation techniques; and in forensics, combined with upgrading of equipment. Specialized capacity-building activities for members of law enforcement were highlighted. Those activities addressed issues including profiling, identification and interception of suspected passengers and illicit cargo on land, at sea, or in the air. Mechanisms of regional cooperation and the exchange of experience were also highlighted.

70. The Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) continued to gain momentum as a platform allowing authorities to better detect and interdict suspicious and high-risk passengers and suspicious airfreight in order to counter criminal activities, including drug trafficking. The programme is being implemented in consultation with several Governments in the region with a view to tailoring the initiative to national contexts and needs. Building on the ongoing efforts in Jordan, a second joint airport interdiction task force is expected to be established at King Hussein International Airport in Aqaba in the framework of an integrated border management programme. During the reporting period, discussions were under way to support the targeting capacity of Customs in Lebanon in cooperation with the Container Control Programme. AIRCOP has initiated activities in Iraq as part of a dedicated programme to support that country in disrupting terrorist and organized criminal operations. In response to official requests from Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, UNODC engaged with the authorities of those countries to present its integrated border control and management initiative, including AIRCOP.

71. In the Gulf region, UNODC continued supporting the Gulf Cooperation Council member States in adopting comprehensive and evidence-based drug control strategies with a balanced emphasis on drug supply and demand reduction, tailored to their national needs and priorities. During the past year, the UNODC Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries implemented a national drug use prevention policy and management project in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme in Kuwait. UNODC provided technical support to the Drug Enforcement General Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of Kuwait with the aim of enhancing the capacities of key stakeholders for the development of the strategy in line with international standards related to the prevention of drug use. UNODC also supported a rapid situation assessment of the drug demand situation and the existing structures and services for drug demand reduction in Kuwait as well as a study of the economic impact of drug addiction in that country. The key findings and recommendations of those two assessments have been used to better inform the development of the national drug control strategy.

72. The joint project between UNODC and the Abu Dhabi Police Forensic Evidence Department entered its second phase, establishing training capacities and resources for the Department to disseminate good forensic evidence practices, which will further promote the reliance of the criminal justice system on quality forensic evidence and practices in line with international standards. During the reporting

period, a train-the-trainers programme resulted in the establishment of a group of trainers in the Department, which will facilitate the dissemination of good practices in the field of forensics in the Gulf region and beyond.

73. In the framework of its long-standing partnership with the Dubai Police general headquarters, the UNODC Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries co-hosted the fourteenth annual International Hemaya Forum on drug control-related issues in April 2019 under the theme “Learn to Protect”. Some of the issues discussed during the conference included: (a) the relationship between law enforcement bodies and educational institutions and the mechanisms needed for consolidating sustainable partnerships; and (b) the social responsibility of governmental and private institutions in supporting security and education to combat drug abuse.

74. On 24 May 2019, UNODC and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding. The University was established as part of a resolution on the part of Arab countries to form the first Arab university specializing in graduate studies, research and training in all areas of security. It is the academic body of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers and serves the local and regional communities. Several areas of cooperation are covered by the memorandum, including the fight against drug trafficking. During the reporting period and as part of the cooperation that paved the way for the signing of the memorandum, UNODC delivered a train-the-trainers course to a group of selected instructors of the University. Those instructors will form the core group of trainers who will be tasked with reviewing the training curricula at the University.

X. Cooperation in India

75. The geographical location of India between the two largest opium producing countries of the world affects not only national security but also the health of innumerable people. The recent bumper crop of opium poppy cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan is likely to have repercussions for India, which has a large youth population and shares a border with several countries. The latest government sources of information point to an increase in trafficking of heroin, a 10-fold increase in the quantity of amphetamine-type substances seized; smuggling of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; new seizures of synthetic opioids including tramadol and fentanyl; and the abuse of and the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances.

76. The Government of India hosted the Paris Pact expert working group meeting in New Delhi on 27 and 28 June 2019. The meeting, which was focused on illicit financial flows deriving from trafficking in opiates originating in Afghanistan, drew expert participation from 15 countries, six international organizations and UNODC, for the purposes of deliberating on new trends and challenges related to illicit financial flows and trafficking in opiates.

77. National efforts alone are not adequate to deal with the drug problem. It is essential to have bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Areas requiring extensive international cooperation are the coordinated action against the abuse of new psychoactive substances and effectively controlling the trafficking of precursors for use in the manufacture of drugs. In order to enhance information exchange to counter the trafficking of tramadol between Ghana, India and Nigeria, UNODC convened a tripartite meeting in India in May 2019, in close cooperation with the Narcotics Control Bureau of India. The strengthening of the communication mechanism is aimed at providing the country with the opportunity to organize intelligence-led law enforcement operations.

78. India is firmly committed to the three international drug control conventions. Several steps are being taken to strengthen activities for supply and demand reduction, as well as treatment and aftercare facilities, by taking a public health approach. The most noteworthy development was the launch of the national survey on substance abuse in India in early 2019, after a gap of over 15 years. The report

prepared on the basis of the survey highlights the latest substance abuse trends and patterns and puts forth key recommendations for action. The Government of India also drafted a five-year action plan for addressing the substance abuse problem in the country. The National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018–2023) is aimed at employing a multi-pronged strategy – involving education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families – to address the issue.

79. To estimate the extent, trends and patterns of drug movement as well as drug use in selected areas of India that border Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal, UNODC commissioned a situation assessment, including a capacity assessment of law enforcement officers at several of those border locations.

80. In order to enhance regional cooperation to combat crimes related to drugs and money-laundering in the region, India, in coordination with UNODC and other countries of South Asia, is advancing in the establishment of the South Asian Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre on Transnational Organized Crime, which may provide the most effective response to an unprecedented drug challenge in the region. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation has also expressed interest to be an observer to the South Asian Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre initiative.

81. Under its new Regional Programme for South Asia for the period 2018–2021, UNODC is also promoting a balanced approach to the drug problem. The regional office actively supports efforts to enhance the technical and operational capacities of counterparts at the international level, with respect to countering trafficking and border management, criminal justice and drug demand reduction, and HIV/AIDS prevention. To mainstream health and human rights as part of the overall approach to drug control in the South Asian region, UNODC convened a regional consultation in New Delhi in April 2019. The consultation was aimed at the development of a comprehensive approach to address the drug problem in South Asia, with a focus on Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Representatives from regional bodies, including the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation; law enforcement agencies; health-care providers; and civil society organizations from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal participated in the discussions. Participants reflected on the regional trends in drug trafficking and substance use and called for effective regional platforms to strengthen evidence-based interventions and exchange of information and data. The regional nature of the meeting provided a forum to jointly discuss how cooperation on the drug control approach within and across the South Asian region could be strengthened.

82. For the past few years, the Government of India has funded the UNODC South Asia regional drug law enforcement project, which has been successful in imparting effective capacity-building to law enforcement and forensic officers in South Asia. To that end, UNODC convened a three-day regional workshop in Chandigarh, India, in October 2018, for senior drug law enforcement entities and policymakers from South Asia, with a view to raising awareness of the issue and fostering collective action and carving out recommendations to counter trafficking in opiates in South Asia.