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Item 10 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of the Political Declaration and
Plan of Action on International Cooperation
towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to
Counter the World Drug Problem: supply reduction
and related measures****World situation with regard to drug trafficking******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. 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 2017 and, where available, 2018.

Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan reached the second-highest level on record in 2018, after peaking in 2017. The amount of heroin seized globally has increased sharply in recent years, after remaining relatively stable during the period 2008–2013. Coca bush cultivation and the quantity of cocaine seized globally also increased sharply during the period 2015–2017, with record amounts reported seized in South America. The amount of amphetamine-type stimulants seized globally increased sharply in 2017, for the fourth consecutive year. Cannabis herb continues to be cultivated and seized in most countries worldwide and in all regions of the world, while the production of cannabis resin remains confined to a few countries in South-West Asia and North Africa. Worldwide, seizures are concentrated in those two regions and in Europe, where the main consumer market is located.

* [E/CN.7/2019/1](#).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



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. The analysis includes information available to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) up to December 2018.
2. Section II of the report covers the illicit cultivation of drug crops and the production of plant-based drugs for the years up to and including 2017 and, where available, 2018. Section III contains a discussion of drug trafficking and seizures, focusing on seizure statistics for 2017 and previous years. It provides an update on trafficking trends for cannabis, opiates, cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants. Section IV contains brief conclusions.
3. The principal sources of information on the illicit cultivation of drug crops and the production of plant-based drugs are the most recent UNODC illicit crop monitoring surveys. In addition, replies by Governments to part IV of the annual report questionnaire for 2017 provide the primary source of information on drug trafficking patterns and seizures of illicit drugs.
4. As of December 2018, UNODC had received replies to part IV of the annual report questionnaire from 104 Member States and one territory. 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 2018* was also used in the analysis of the current situation with regard to drug trafficking. In total, seizure data for 2017 were available for 115 States and territories.

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

A. Cannabis herb cultivation and cannabis resin production

5. 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 and production difficult. Reports of cannabis cultivation and eradication show that a wide range of practices exist globally, from growing a small number of plants for personal consumption to large-scale commercial operations in indoor warehouses, on farmland and in forests.
6. 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.
7. Morocco reported that, in 2017, the area under cannabis cultivation in the country had remained stable, at about 47,000 ha, while annual production of cannabis resin stood at 714 tons.¹ National authorities estimated cannabis herb production in Morocco at 35,700 tons. Although Afghanistan had a significantly smaller estimated area under cannabis cultivation than Morocco, at 10,000 ha in 2012, it had an estimated potential cannabis resin production of 1,400 tons, almost double the estimated production for Morocco.
8. About 145 of the Member States reporting to UNODC over the period 2010–2016 reported, using either direct or indirect indicators, that cultivation of cannabis occurred in their countries. While that represented 85 per cent of all reporting Member States, the

¹ UNODC, annual report questionnaire, replies submitted by Morocco for 2017.

proportion varied from region to region, from nearly 100 per cent of countries in Europe and Africa, to about 85 and 65 per cent in the Americas and Asia, respectively.²

B. Opium poppy cultivation

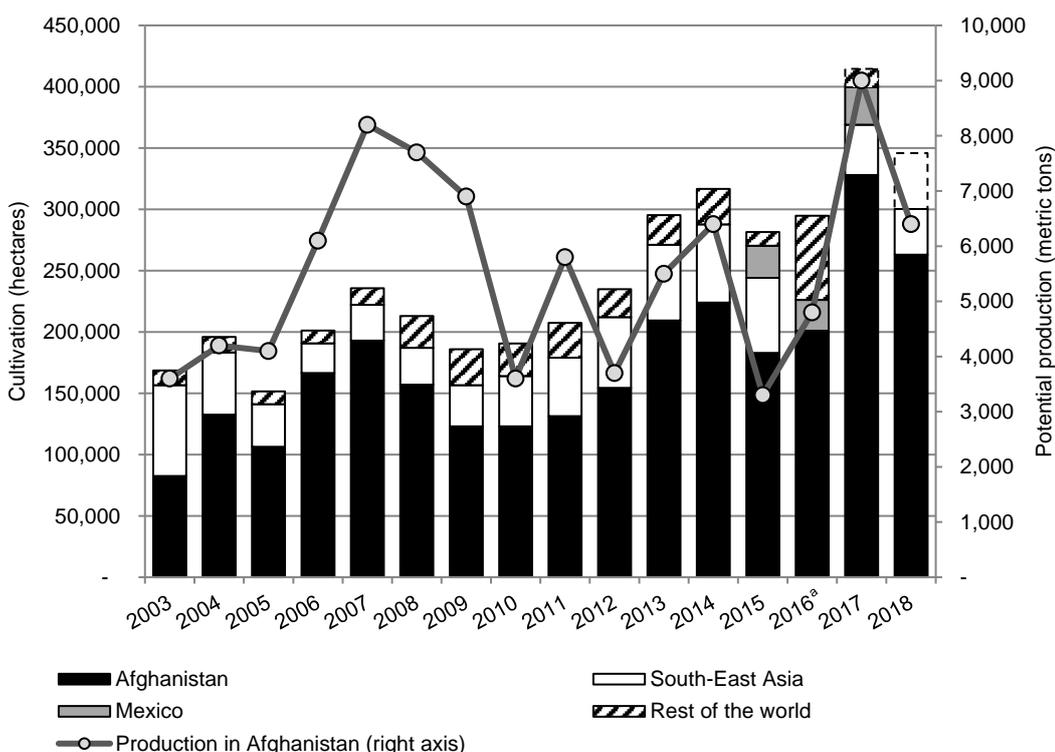
9. While Afghanistan and Myanmar continue to account for over 80 per cent of global opium poppy cultivation, the trends observed in those two countries have differed in recent years.

10. After increasing every year between 2009 and 2014, global opium poppy cultivation decreased in 2015, mainly owing to a decline in Afghanistan. However, cultivation in that country increased again in 2016 and reached unprecedented levels in 2017. As a result, global opium poppy cultivation reached record levels in 2017. According to preliminary data, a decrease in cultivation in Afghanistan in 2018 indicates that global opium poppy cultivation also decreased during that year, but remained at significantly higher levels than those observed before 2017 (see figure I).

11. Between 2010 and 2014, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan increased by about 80 per cent, from 124,700 ha to 224,000 ha. After reaching an unprecedented 328,000 ha in 2017, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan decreased to an estimated 263,000 ha in 2018, the second-highest level on record. That decrease was attributed to a drought in the northern region and parts of the western region of the country, and to low prices in regions less affected by the drought.³ While all regions of Afghanistan experienced a decline in cultivation during 2018, the sharpest decreases were observed in the northern and western regions. Those two regions accounted for about 70 per cent of the decrease in cultivation at the national level in 2018.

Figure I

Opium poppy cultivation, by region, and potential opium production in Afghanistan (2003–2018)



^a Only information on opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and the Shan and Kachin States of Myanmar was available for 2017. No information is available for South-East Asia for 2016.

² *World Drug Report 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.XI.9).

³ UNODC and Ministry of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018: Cultivation and Production* (Vienna, November 2018).

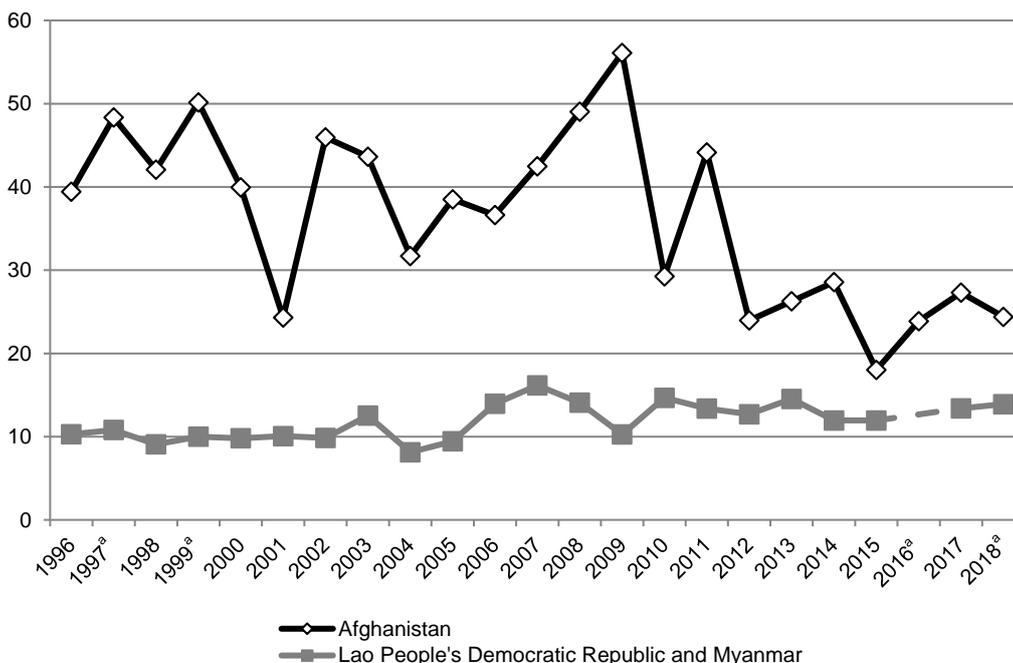
12. In 2018, potential opium production in Afghanistan reached 6,400 tons, a 29 per cent decrease compared with 2017 (9,000 tons). The decrease was a consequence of not only the notably smaller area under opium poppy cultivation in 2018 but also the lower average yield, which decreased from 27.3 kg per ha in 2017 to 24.4 kg per ha in 2018. The yield observed in recent years is significantly lower than the levels reached in the years prior to 2012, as seen in figure II.

13. In the *South-East Asia Opium Survey 2015*, it was estimated that illicit opium poppy cultivation in South-East Asia covered 61,200 ha. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, cultivation increased steadily, 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. 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. While no information is available on the extent of opium poppy cultivation in South-East Asia since 2016, partial estimates available for 2017 and 2018 show that opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar has decreased over the last three years. In the Myanmar opium surveys it was estimated that 41,000 ha were under opium poppy cultivation in the Shan and Kachin States of Myanmar in 2017,⁴ and 37,300 ha in the country as a whole in 2018.

14. Because of the geographical and soil conditions of the areas where opium poppy is cultivated in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar, on hillsides, with poor soil and no irrigation, the yield in those countries has traditionally been significantly lower than that in Afghanistan, as seen in figure II. In 2018, the yield in Myanmar was estimated at 13.9 kg per ha, a 4 per cent increase compared with the estimated yield of 13.4 kg per ha in 2017.

Figure II
Yield of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar (1996–2018)

(Kilograms per hectare)



^a The amounts shown for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar for 1997, 1999, 2016 and 2018 consist of the yield in Myanmar alone.

15. While typically 85–95 per cent of global opium poppy cultivation takes place in Afghanistan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar, cultivation also takes place in other parts of the world. According to the recent Mexico opium surveys, carried out

⁴ These two regions typically account for 98 per cent of national cultivation.

for the periods July 2014–June 2015, July 2015–June 2016 and July 2016–June 2017 by UNODC and the Government of Mexico, the areas under opium poppy cultivation were estimated at 26,100 ha, 25,200 ha and 30,600 ha, respectively, which represented about 7–9 per cent of global cultivation for those years. An estimated 462 ha were under opium poppy cultivation in Colombia in 2016, while other countries in Latin America, such as Ecuador and Guatemala, reported opium poppy cultivation in 2017 through indirect indicators such as the eradication of opium poppy cultivation sites.

C. Coca bush cultivation

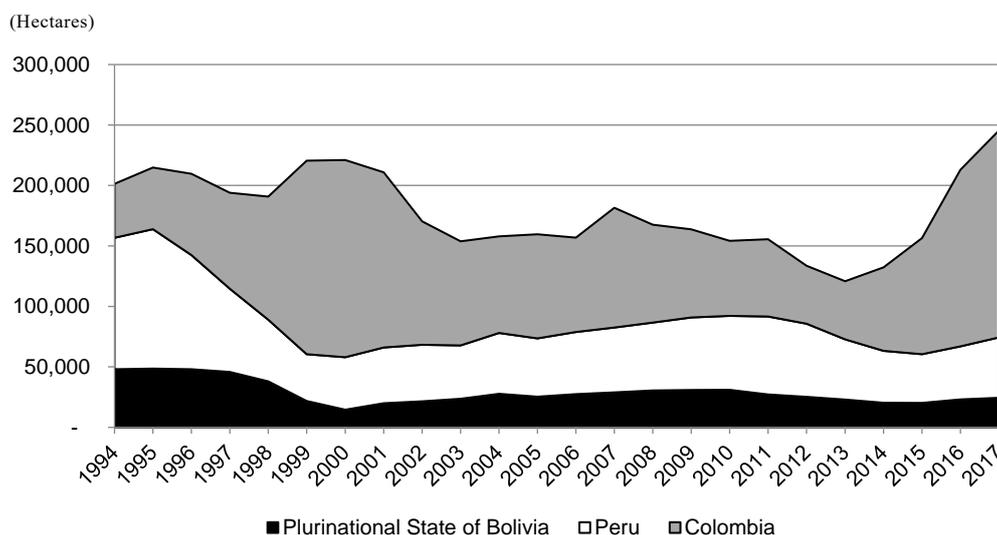
16. Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru continued to account for virtually all cultivation of coca bush worldwide. The total area under such cultivation in the three countries increased by 15 per cent, from 213,000 ha in 2016 to 245,400 ha in 2017, the highest amount on record (see figure III). That was mainly the result of increases of 17 and 14 per cent in Colombia and Peru, respectively, and a 6 per cent increase in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

17. After coca bush cultivation in Colombia fell to the historically low level of 48,000 ha in 2013, the Colombia coca cultivation survey for 2017, conducted jointly by the Government of Colombia and UNODC, showed that coca bush cultivation in Colombia had reached 171,000 ha in 2017, the highest value on record in the country. Sixty-four per cent of that increase was concentrated in the regions of Antioquia, Putumayo, Norte de Santander and Cauca.

18. After reaching 290 tons in 2013, the lowest value since the mid-1990s, potential cocaine manufacture in Colombia increased sharply, to 1,053 tons in 2016 and 1,379 tons in 2017. That increase in manufacture was accompanied by an increase in the number of laboratories for the extraction of cocaine paste and base that were dismantled, from 2,172 in 2014 to 4,252 in 2017.

19. According to the 2017 national coca monitoring survey for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the area under coca bush cultivation increased for the second consecutive year, from 20,200 ha in 2015 to 23,100 ha in 2016 and 24,500 ha in 2017. After decreasing in 2015 to the lowest amount since 2005, potential coca production in the country increased by 17 per cent, reaching 38,000 tons in 2016. In 2017, estimates for potential coca production were within the range 35,500–44,200 tons. Although the total area of coca bush eradicated in the Plurinational State of Bolivia increased from 6,577 ha in 2016 to 7,237 ha in 2017, those values were the lowest recorded since 2009.

Figure III
Coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru (1994–2017)

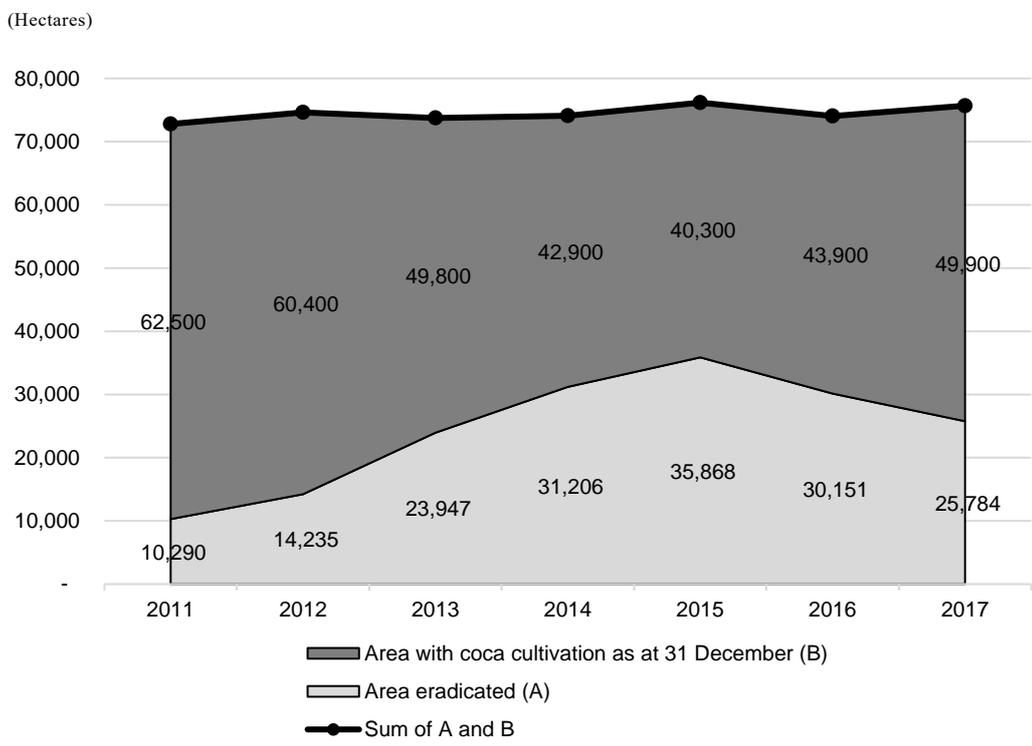


20. In 2015, the area under coca bush cultivation in Peru was 40,300 ha, the smallest area recorded since 1999. In 2017, the size of the area increased for the second year in a row and reached 49,900 ha, according to the 2017 national coca monitoring survey, conducted by UNODC and the Government of Peru. That increase resulted in an 11 per cent increase in potential production of sun-dried coca, from 106,000 tons in 2016 to 117,300 in 2017.

21. Peruvian authorities reported the eradication of 25,784 ha of coca bush cultivation in 2017, a 28 per cent decrease from the historical record of 35,868 ha eradicated in 2015. That decrease in eradication mirrors the increase in area under coca bush cultivation in Peru. Figure IV shows that relationship.

22. 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. Colombian authorities have identified a trend in which coca base is increasingly being trafficked and converted to cocaine hydrochloride outside the country.⁵ According to data from responses to the annual report questionnaire for 2017, several countries in South America, including Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), reported the detection of clandestine laboratories processing coca leaf derivatives. In 2017, Belgium, Greece, Slovenia and Spain also reported the detection of such laboratories.

Figure IV
Coca bush cultivation and eradication in Peru (2011–2017)



⁵ UNODC, annual report questionnaire, replies submitted by Colombia for 2016 and 2017.

III. Global trends in illicit drug trafficking and seizures

23. The table below shows the quantities of the major drug types seized globally and reported to UNODC in 2015, 2016 and 2017, and the estimated trend for 2017.

Global drug seizures and trends, 2015, 2016 and 2017

<i>Drug type</i>	<i>2015 seizures (tons)</i>	<i>2016 seizures (tons)</i>	<i>2017 seizures (tons)</i>	<i>2017 trend^{a,b}</i>
Cannabis herb	6 011.2	4 769.6	5 092.7	Stable (+8%)
Cannabis resin	1 537.7	1 683.4	1 161.1	Decrease (-30%)
Cocaine ^c	918.6	1 128.8	1 271.0	Increase (+13%)
Heroin	82.5	90.9	101.7	Increase (+20%)
Illicit morphine	9.6	65.3	87.0	Increase (+33%)
Opium	586.8	658.0	692.9	Stable (+5%)
Amphetamine	52.0	70.1	50.3	Decrease (-11%)
Methamphetamine	141.5	158.6	174.2	Increase (+11%)
“Ecstasy”-type substances	10.2	14.0	12.9	Stable (-9%)

^a Since data for 2017 were incomplete at the time of preparation of the present report, the trend was estimated by comparing the total quantities seized in countries and territories for which data were available for both 2016 and 2017. Totals for 2017 are preliminary.

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

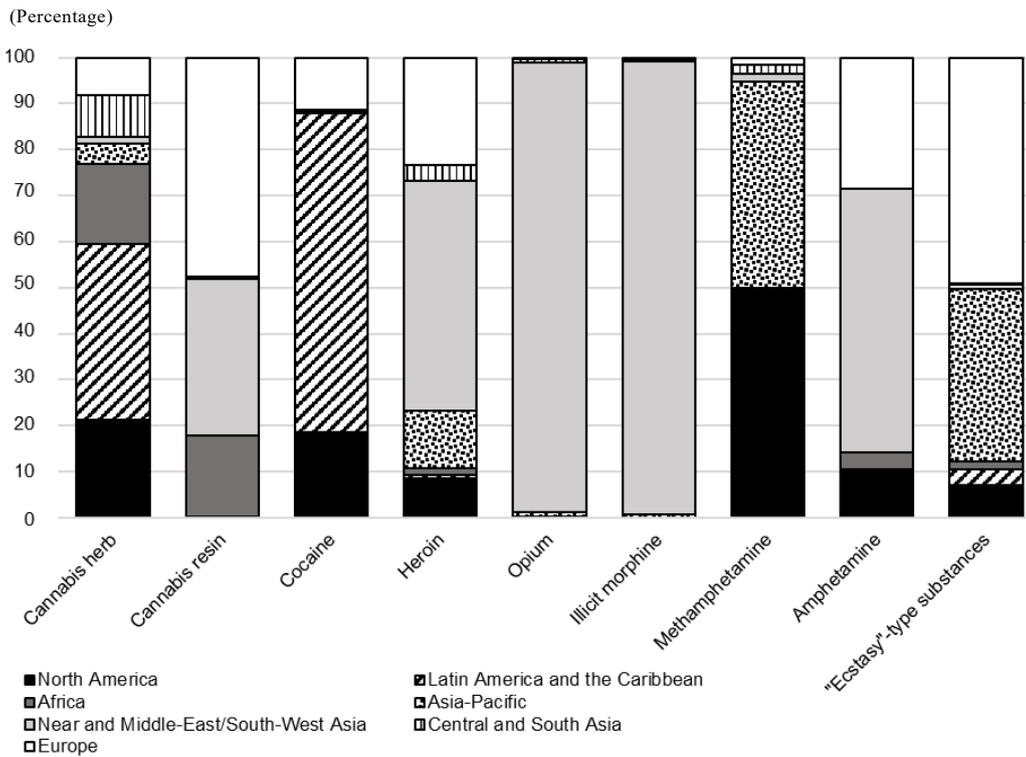
^c Includes base, paste, salts and “crack” cocaine.

24. The annual trend in global drug seizures for 2017 is estimated on the basis of the quantities of narcotic drugs seized by Member States and reported to UNODC.

25. At the global level, while there were large increases in the amounts of opiates and cocaine seized in 2017, the amounts of cannabis resin and amphetamine seized declined. For the first time on record, the amount of cocaine seized globally surpassed that of cannabis resin in 2017. In 2017, Africa accounted for between 15 and 20 per cent of the cannabis herb and resin seized globally and the Americas accounted for significant proportions of the cannabis herb, cocaine and methamphetamine (see figure V). In 2017, for the first time on record, the amount of cannabis herb seized in South America was higher than that seized in North America. Over 20 per cent of the cannabis resin, heroin, amphetamine and “ecstasy”-type substances seized globally were seized in Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region⁶ accounted for about 35 per cent of the “ecstasy”-type substances seized and 10 per cent of the heroin seized. South-West Asia and the Near and Middle East continued to account for about half of the opiates and amphetamine seized globally.

⁶ “Asia-Pacific region” refers to the regions of East and South-East Asia and Oceania collectively.

Figure V
Geographical distribution of seizures by drug type (2017)^a

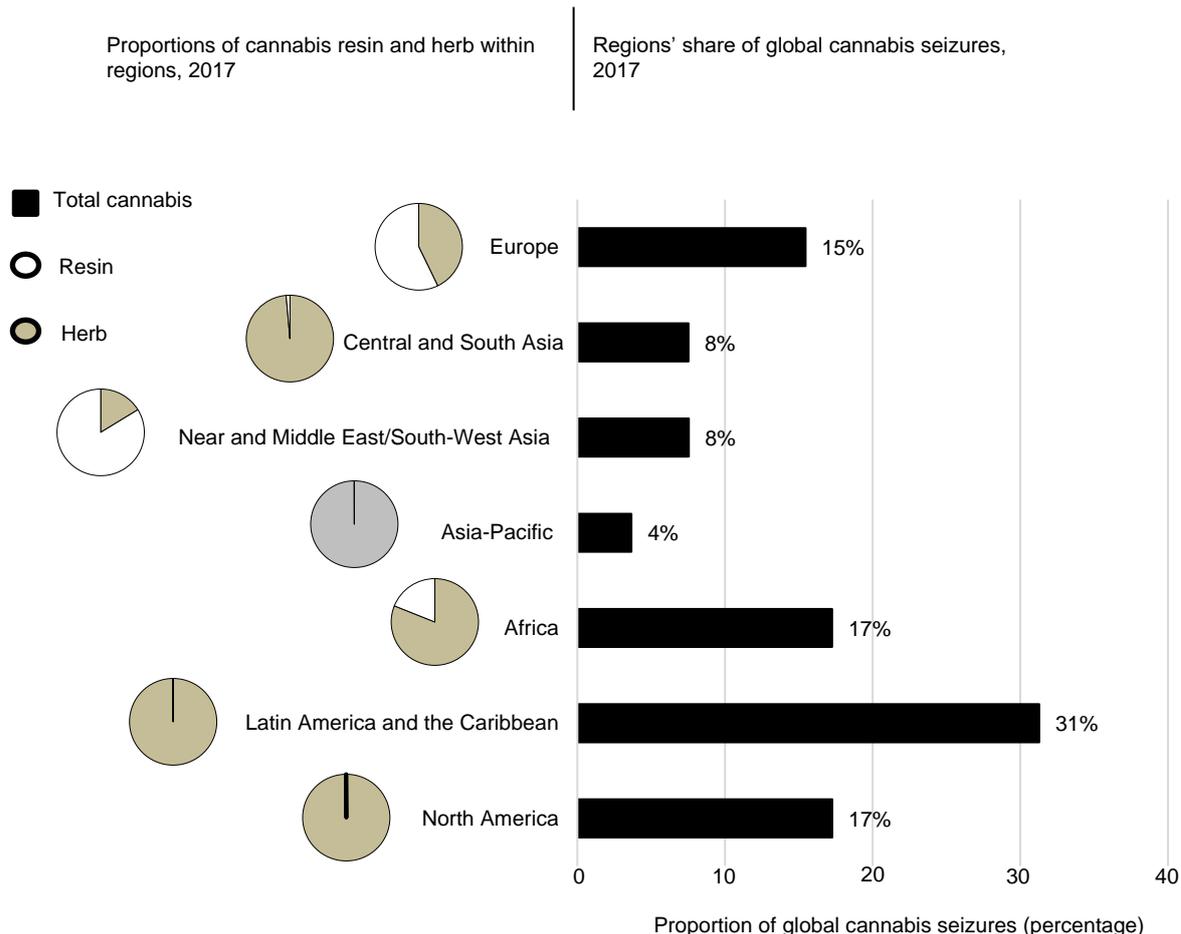


^a Data are preliminary.

A. Cannabis

26. About half of the cannabis seized globally in 2017 was seized in the Americas, where it is almost exclusively trafficked in herbal form. Significant amounts of both cannabis herb and resin are seized in Europe and Africa. In Africa, most of the cannabis resin is produced and trafficked in North Africa; in sub-Saharan Africa, cannabis is trafficked almost exclusively in herbal form. Despite an increase in trafficking in herbal cannabis in recent years, cannabis resin continues to account for most of the cannabis seized in Europe. Large amounts of cannabis are trafficked in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia, almost exclusively in resin form (see figure VI).

Figure VI
Proportion of global cannabis seizures, by region and type (2017)^a



^a Data are preliminary.

Cannabis herb

27. The Americas have accounted for more than 60 per cent of cannabis herb seized globally every year since the early 1990s. Between 2010 and 2012, a decline in the amount seized in North America resulted in a decrease at the global level. Between 2013 and 2015, the decline in North America was offset by increases in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, with the amount of cannabis herb seized globally increasing slightly (see figure VII). In 2016 and 2017, the amount of cannabis herb seized globally remained at lower levels than observed in previous years, mainly owing to further decreases in North America.

28. The amount of cannabis herb seized in North America decreased sharply, from 4,700 tons in 2010 to under 1,900 tons in 2016. In 2017, it decreased further, by 41 per cent, to under 1,100 tons, the lowest value on record since 1993. In 2017, Mexico and the United States of America reported sharp declines in the amount of cannabis herb seized, of 32 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively. United States authorities reported that the continued decreasing trend in cannabis herb trafficking observed since 2010 may also be related to the legalization of recreational use in some states and the corresponding increase in domestic production.⁷

29. Unlike in North America, the amount of cannabis herb seized in South America has increased notably since 2009, from under 600 tons in that year to over 1,900 tons in 2017. The amount of cannabis herb seized in the countries reporting seizing the greatest amounts in the subregion, Colombia, Brazil and Paraguay, increased

⁷ UNODC, annual report questionnaire, replies submitted by the United States for 2016.

significantly in 2017. The amount of cannabis herb seized in Paraguay reached an historical high of 1,070 tons, the highest value reported by any country in 2017, while Brazil and Colombia reported seizing 350 tons and 235 tons, respectively.

30. Between 2009 and 2016, cannabis herb seizures in Western and Central Europe doubled, from 65 tons to 137 tons, partly owing to the fact that domestically produced herbal products have become more prevalent in recent years, displacing imported resin in many countries.⁸ An increase in the amount of cannabis plants seized in Europe reflects both the increase in cultivation and a change in the priorities of law enforcement authorities, namely to target cultivation more intensively.⁹ In 2017, the amount of cannabis herb seized in Western and Central Europe increased by almost 60 per cent compared with 2016, reaching almost 216 tons, the highest value on record for the region since 1995.

31. The largest amount of cannabis herb seized in Western and Central Europe was reported by Italy, where a record 90 tons were seized in 2017, more than double the 41 tons seized during the previous year. Record amounts were also reported by Greece and Spain in 2017, with 25 tons and 34 tons, respectively. In South-Eastern Europe, the total amount of cannabis herb seized increased by over 20 per cent in 2017, with Albania and Turkey reporting 78 tons and 94 tons, respectively.

32. With the exception of 2015, when it surpassed 1,600 tons as a result of a record amount seized in Nigeria, the amount of cannabis herb seized in Africa has remained within the 780–880 ton range since 2013, reaching 875 tons in 2017. While information on cannabis herb seizures in the region is limited,¹⁰ some countries reporting seizing large amounts have consistently responded to part IV of the annual report questionnaire. Egyptian authorities have reported the seizure of more than 200 tons of cannabis herb every year since 2013, and 313 tons, 296 tons and 283 tons were seized in 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively, the highest levels in that country since 2004. With the exception of the 871 tons reported in 2015, the amount of cannabis herb seized in Nigeria fluctuated between 100 tons and 350 tons annually in the period 2005–2017.

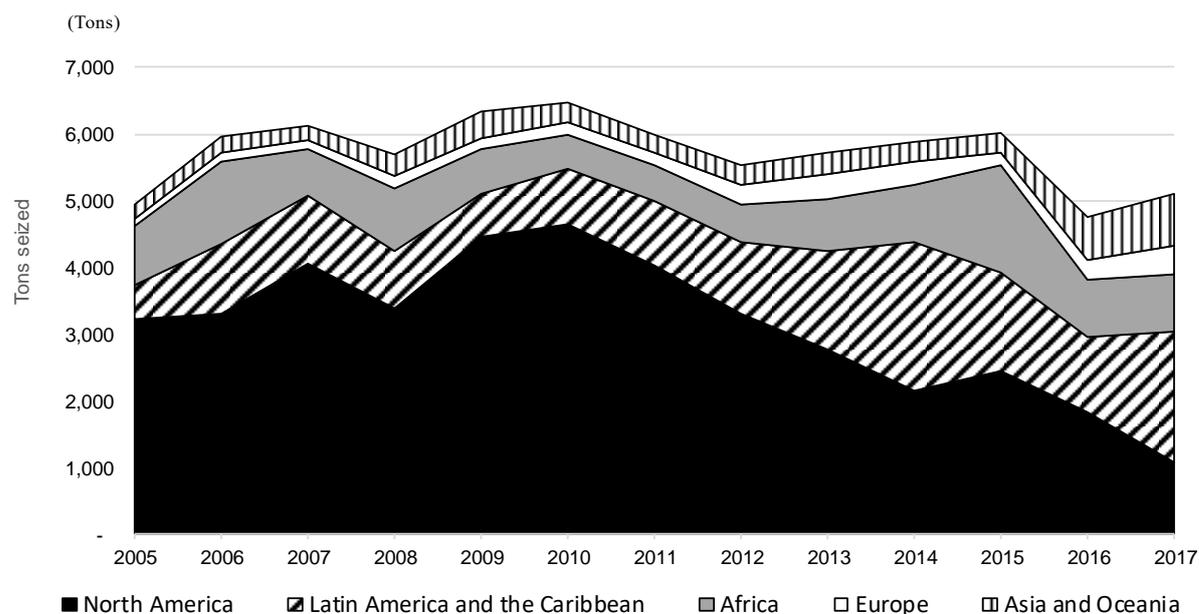
33. Within Asia, cannabis herb trafficking has traditionally been most prominent in South Asia, with Bangladesh and India accounting for over half of the total amount seized in the region. In 2017, the amount of cannabis herb seized in Indonesia reached record levels, with over 151 tons, the second-highest amount reported by any country in Asia, surpassed only by India. In Central Asia, seizures are concentrated mostly in Kazakhstan, where a record amount of cannabis herb was seized in recent years, with 34 tons in 2015 and 2017 (29 tons in 2016).

⁸ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and European Police Office, *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016).

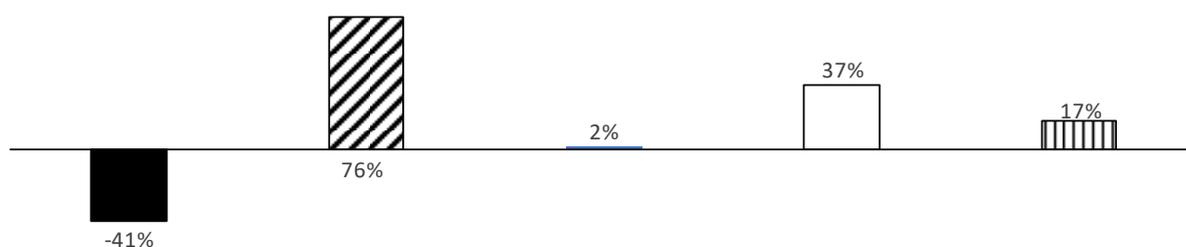
⁹ EMCDDA, *European Drug Report 2017: Trends and Developments* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2017).

¹⁰ At the time of writing, 12 countries in Africa had reported cannabis herb seizures in their annual report questionnaire responses for 2017.

Figure VII
Cannabis herb seized, by region (2005–2017), and the change in regional seizures from 2015 to 2017^a



Change in cannabis herb seizures by region, 2016–2017



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

Cannabis resin

34. Unlike the cultivation of cannabis herb, the production of cannabis resin is concentrated in a small number of countries, primarily Afghanistan and Morocco. Consequently, statistics show that seizures of cannabis resin are also concentrated in North Africa, South-West Asia and Western and Central Europe, which is the main consumer market (see figure VIII).

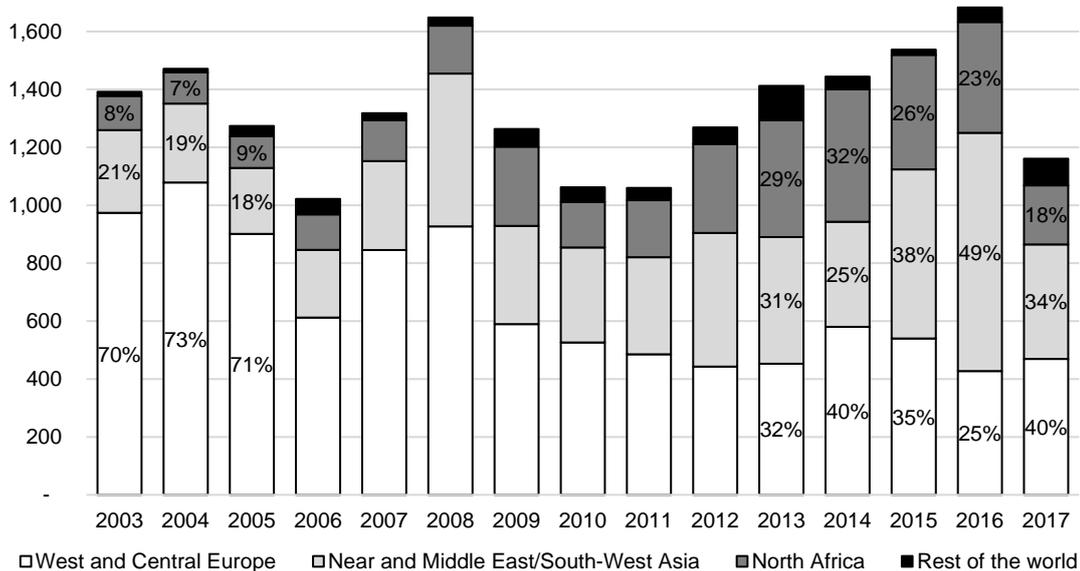
35. As the main entry point for cannabis resin trafficked from Morocco into Western Europe, Spain has traditionally been the country seizing the largest amount of cannabis resin in the world. In 2017, Spain reported seizing a total of 335 tons of cannabis resin, a slight increase compared with the 324 tons reported in 2016. The total amount of cannabis resin seized in Western and Central Europe increased from 427 tons in 2016 to 469 tons in 2017, mostly as a result of increases in the amount seized in Spain and neighbouring countries. While France reported seizing 67 tons of cannabis resin in 2017, a 28 per cent increase compared with 2016, Portugal seized almost 15 tons, more than double the 7 tons reported during the previous year. The amount of cannabis resin seized in Italy has declined sharply in recent years, from a peak of 113 tons in 2014 to under 19 tons in 2017. In contrast, the amount of cannabis resin seized in Turkey increased notably, from 7.8 tons in 2015 to over 36 tons in 2016, and 81 tons in 2017, the second-highest level on record for that country.

36. After increasing every year between 2010 and 2014, from 157 tons to a record 458 tons, the amount of cannabis resin seized in North Africa declined to 204 tons in 2017, a 47 per cent decrease compared with the 383 tons reported in 2016. In 2017, Algeria and Morocco reported sharp decreases of over 50 per cent compared with 2016, with 53 tons and 117 tons of cannabis resin seized, respectively. This represents the fourth consecutive annual decrease in the amount of cannabis resin seized by Algeria, after the record 212 tons reported in 2013. After peaking at 84 tons, the amount of cannabis resin seized in Egypt decreased to about 30 tons in 2015 and has remained stable since.

Figure VIII

Global cannabis resin seizures, by region (2003–2017)^a

(Tons)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

37. Seizures of cannabis resin in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia are concentrated in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan. After reaching record levels in 2016, with 823 tons seized in the region in 2016, the amount seized decreased sharply, to 396 tons in 2017. The decrease was mainly a consequence of a sharp decline in Afghanistan, where under 37 tons of cannabis herb were seized in 2017, down from 352 tons in 2016. The amount of cannabis resin seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran reached the highest levels on record in 2016 and 2017, with 115 tons and 109 tons, respectively. According to Iranian authorities, 20 per cent of the cannabis resin seized in the country in 2017 was destined for local consumption, 55 per cent was being trafficked into the other Gulf States and the remaining 25 per cent was en route to Turkey and the Caucasus.¹¹ In 2017, the amount of cannabis resin seized in Pakistan reached 210 tons, the lowest reported level since 2012. The majority of reported seizures in the Near and Middle East took place in Saudi Arabia, where 30 tons were seized in 2017, down from 41 tons in 2016.

B. Opiates

Opium and illicit morphine

38. The Near and Middle East and South-West Asia account for between 95 and 100 per cent of the opium and illicit morphine seized globally. Seizures in the region

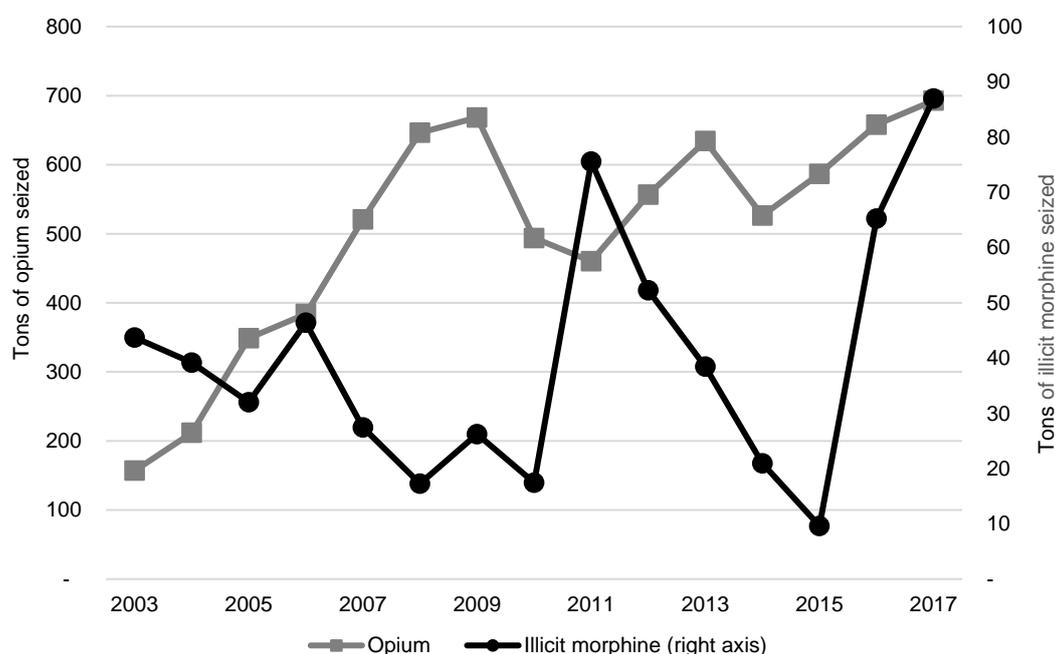
¹¹ UNODC, annual report questionnaire, replies submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran for 2017.

occur almost exclusively in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

39. After decreasing in 2010 and 2011, the amount of opium seized since then has followed an increasing trend, reaching over 690 tons in 2017, the highest level on record (see figure IX). About 70–90 per cent of the opium seized globally is seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and global trends are heavily influenced by what happens in that country. The amount of opium seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran increased from 529 tons in 2016 to a record 630 tons in 2017. In 2017, the amount seized in Afghanistan and Pakistan decreased to 7 tons and 40 tons, from 50 tons and 65 tons in 2016, respectively.

Figure IX

Global opium and illicit morphine seizures (2003–2017)^a



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

40. From 75 tons in 2011, the amount of illicit morphine seized globally decreased sharply, to just over 9 tons in 2015 (see figure IX), the lowest level on record since the early 1990s. In 2016 and 2017, however, the amount of illicit morphine seized globally increased notably, to 65 tons and a record 86 tons, respectively, mainly owing to sharp increases in the amount seized in Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

41. After reaching only 18 kg in 2015, the amount of illicit morphine seized in Afghanistan increased notably, to 47 tons and 63 tons in 2016 and 2017, respectively. In Pakistan, 7.3 tons of illicit morphine were seized in 2017, an 11 per cent increase compared with 2016 and the highest level on record since 2008. Authorities from the Islamic Republic of Iran reported seizing over 15 tons of illicit morphine, a 38 per cent increase compared with 2016.

Heroin

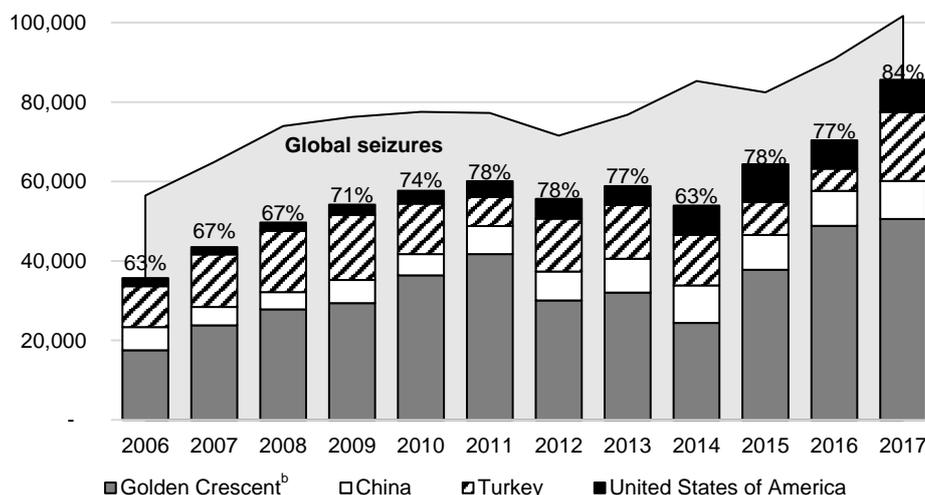
42. Compared with seizures of opium and illicit morphine, heroin seizures occur in a much greater range of countries (see figure V), in particular around the larger markets in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Each of those three markets is mostly supplied by a different producing region. While East and South-East Asia are supplied mainly 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.¹² The northern route continues to be used for trafficking heroin from Afghanistan to markets in the Russian Federation.¹³ In North America, the United States is mostly supplied by heroin produced in Latin America.

43. At the global level, the amount of heroin seized remained relatively stable, at between 72 tons and 78 tons, in the period 2008–2013, but has increased since then, reaching almost 102 tons in 2017. Since 2006, the six countries seizing the largest amounts (Afghanistan, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Turkey and the United States) accounted for between 63 and 84 per cent of the amount seized globally (see figure X). The amounts seized in those countries heavily influence global trends.

44. 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. The amount seized in China has remained relatively stable since, reaching 9.5 tons in 2017. In 2016, national authorities reported that over 90 per cent of all heroin seized in China had entered the country from Myanmar.¹⁴ The amount of heroin seized in the Asia-Pacific region followed an increasing trend in the period 2008–2015, from about 5.5 tons to 13 tons. Countries including Australia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam reported sharp increases in the amount seized over that period. In recent years, the amount seized in the region has stabilized, reaching 12.6 tons in 2017. While the amount of heroin seized in Australia decreased significantly in 2016 and 2017, to about 250 kg, the amounts seized in South-East Asian countries such as Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam have remained high, reaching 603 kg, 570 kg, 599 kg and 907 kg, respectively, in 2017.

Figure X
Heroin seizures worldwide and in selected countries and regions (2006–2017)^a
 (Kilograms)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

^b The Golden Crescent countries are Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

45. Seizures of heroin originating in Afghanistan are increasingly concentrated in the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan). While those countries accounted for less than 30 per cent of the heroin seized outside of the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, in 2003 and 2004, the proportion has increased steadily over the last decade, reaching almost 70 per cent in recent years. The increase is mostly the result of sharp increases in the amount of heroin seized in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, from a total of 8 tons in both countries in 2004, to over 48 tons in 2017.

¹² UNODC, *Afghan Opiate Trafficking through the Southern Route* (Vienna, June 2015).

¹³ UNODC, *The Illicit Drug Trade through South-Eastern Europe* (Vienna, March 2014).

¹⁴ UNODC, annual report questionnaire submitted by China for 2016.

46. While seizures along the northern route of heroin originating in Afghanistan accounted for about 25 per cent of the heroin seized globally, outside of the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, in 2004, the proportion decreased gradually, to under 5 per cent in 2016 and 2017. In 2017, the Russian Federation reported seizing less than 500 kg of heroin for the first time since 1998, while countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which often reported seizing several tons of heroin annually during the period 2000–2010, reported seizing 110 kg and 12 kg, respectively, in 2017.

47. The most commonly used route for transporting Afghan heroin into Europe continues to be the Balkan route, with large amounts of heroin seized in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey. Iranian authorities reported that 85 per cent of the heroin seized in 2017 had entered the country through Pakistan, while 70 per cent was being trafficked onwards to Turkey and the Caucasus.¹⁵ The amount of heroin seized in South-Eastern Europe reached record levels in 2017, with 18.2 tons, almost triple the 6.4 tons reported in the region in 2016. In 2016, after reaching the lowest value since 2003, at 5.6 tons, the amount of heroin seized in Turkey increased sharply in 2017, to a record 17.4 tons.

48. The amount of heroin seized in Western and Central Europe depicts a decreasing trend, falling from 11.6 tons in 2000 to 3.9 tons in 2016, the lowest level on record since 1990. In 2017, the amount seized in the region increased to 4.9 tons, mainly owing to increases in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Italy and Spain, where 1,110 kg, 844 kg, 610 kg and 524 kg were seized, respectively. Networks operating between Pakistan and Europe have become dominant in recent years and are targeting Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for trafficking via the southern route.¹⁶

49. Significant trafficking routes are developing in various regions in Africa.¹⁷ In Egypt, record amounts of heroin have been seized in recent years, with over 500 kg being seized every year since 2015, and a record 856 kg in 2017. Countries in East and Southern Africa, such as Kenya, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, reported seizing over 100 kg of heroin each in 2017. Nigerian authorities reported that most heroin trafficked in the country had arrived from Pakistan via Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.¹⁸

50. In the Americas, the amount of heroin seized more than doubled between 2007 and 2010 and remained stable until 2013 before increasing in recent years. After reaching a record 10.9 tons in 2015, the amount of heroin seized in the region remained high, at 9.5 tons in 2017, owing mostly to significant amounts seized by the United States. Mexico is the main source, and Colombia the secondary source, of heroin trafficked in the United States.¹⁹ While heroin seized in the United States amounted to over 8 tons in 2017, Colombia and Mexico reported seizing 444 kg and 321 kg, respectively, that year. The amount of heroin seized in Ecuador reached 381 kg in 2017, the highest value on record since 2010.

C. Cocaine

51. The main consumer markets for cocaine, North America and Western and Central Europe, continue to be supplied by cocaine originating in South America. Therefore, global cocaine seizures are concentrated in those regions (see figure V). In line with the sharp increase in coca bush cultivation and potential cocaine manufacture in the Andean region, the amount of cocaine seized globally has

¹⁵ UNODC, annual report questionnaire submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran for 2017.

¹⁶ *Afghan Opiate Trafficking through the Southern Route*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Country report submitted by Nigeria to the Twenty-seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.

¹⁹ United States, Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, *2018 National Drug Threat Assessment* (October 2018).

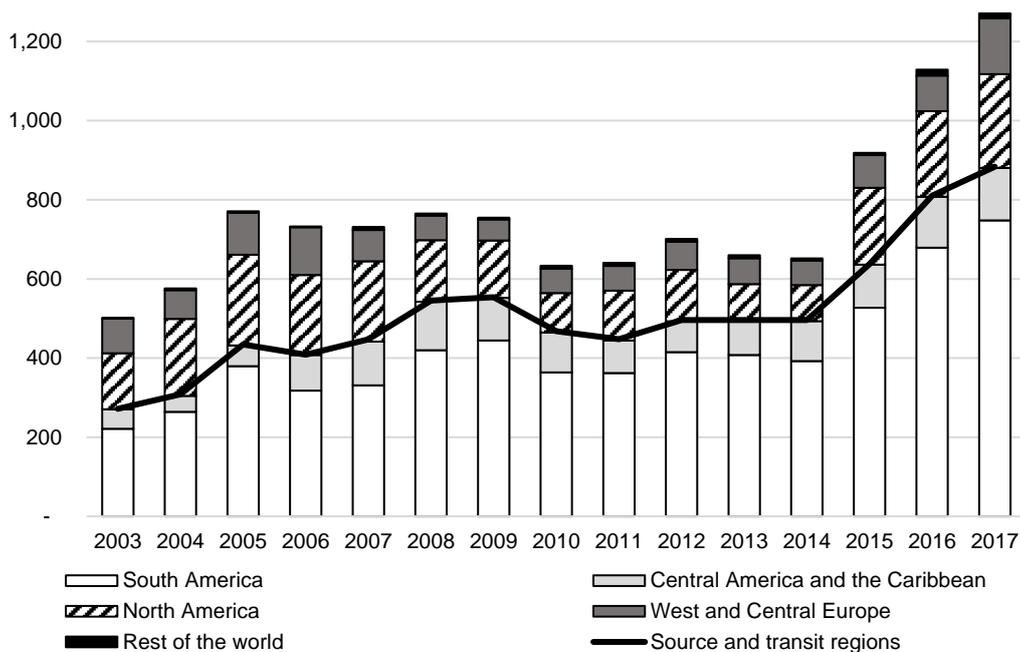
increased sharply in recent years, from about 650 tons in 2014 to over 1,270 tons in 2017, according to preliminary data (see figure XI).

52. While source and transit regions accounted for less than 55 per cent of the cocaine seized globally during the early 2000s, that proportion has varied between 70 per cent and 75 per cent since 2008. After remaining relatively stable between 2008 and 2014, at about 400 tons, the amount of cocaine seized in South America increased sharply, reaching a record 748 tons in 2017. The amount seized in Colombia more than doubled between 2014 and 2017, from 191 tons to an unprecedented 490 tons. After increasing every year since 2010, from 15 tons to 98 tons in 2016, the amount of cocaine seized in Ecuador declined to 84 tons in 2017, the second-highest value on record. The amount of cocaine seized in Brazil reached a record 48 tons in 2017, up from a reported 41 tons in 2016.

Figure XI

Global seizures of cocaine (base, paste and salts), by region (2003–2017)^a

(Tons)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

53. In 2017, five countries in Europe (Denmark, Italy, Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland) listed Central America and the Caribbean, in particular Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama, as transit and departure points for the cocaine seized by their authorities. Those three countries reported seizing the largest amount of cocaine in the region in recent years. The amount of cocaine seized in Panama, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic remained at record levels in 2017, at 65 tons, 28 tons and 15 tons, respectively. El Salvador and Guatemala have reported seizing significant amounts of cocaine in recent years, with totals reaching 13.6 tons and 7.2 tons, respectively, in 2017. As a result, the cocaine seized in Central America and the Caribbean amounted to 132 tons in 2017, the highest value on record.

54. The amount of cocaine seized in North America has increased every year since 2015, and has more than doubled in recent years, from about 91 tons in 2014 to over 237 tons in 2017, owing mostly to an increase in the United States. The amount of cocaine reported seized in the United States reached 223 tons in 2017, an 11 per cent increase compared with 2016. National authorities estimate that at least 93 per cent of cocaine trafficked to the United States mainland is of Colombian origin, while 4 per cent originates in Peru.²⁰ In 2016, after reaching the highest level since 2009,

²⁰ 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment.

with almost 13 tons, the amount of cocaine seized in Mexico decreased slightly in 2017, to just under 12 tons.

55. The amount of cocaine seized in Western and Central Europe peaked at 121 tons in 2006, then declined to an average of 62 tons between 2008 and 2014. Since then, the amount of cocaine seized in the region has more than doubled, reaching a record 140 tons in 2017. In recent years, the increasing use of maritime containers to smuggle cocaine appears to have become a major threat. As a result, cocaine seizures in the region have shown a geographical shift, from the Iberian Peninsula to Belgium and the Netherlands, in recent years. In 2017, for the second consecutive year, Belgium was the country that seized the largest amount of cocaine in Europe, with almost 45 tons, a 15 per cent increase compared with the 39 tons reported in 2016. The amount of cocaine seized in the Netherlands reached 14.6 tons in 2017, the highest value on record since 2003. After falling in 2016 to the lowest level since 2000, at 16 tons, the amount of cocaine seized in Spain increased sharply in 2017, reaching 41 tons.

56. A secondary route for cocaine trafficked across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe involved countries in West Africa as transit points. Countries in West Africa have reported seizing large amounts in recent years, with Nigeria recording over 90 kg every year since 2003, Benin seizing an average 173 kg during the period 2014–2017, and Ghana seizing a total of 1.3 tons during the period 2013–2014. Of concern is the use of cannabis routes in North Africa or heroin routes in East Africa to traffic cocaine.²¹ Egypt reported seizing a record 532 kg of cocaine in 2014, and Morocco reported seizing record amounts of 1,621 kg in 2016 and 2,837 kg in 2017, while the United Republic of Tanzania seized an average of 67 kg of cocaine annually between 2010 and 2017, up from the average of 3.7 kg per year in the previous 10 years.

57. In most parts of Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Asia and Oceania the availability of cocaine remains limited compared with other types of illicit drugs. In 2017, significant amounts of cocaine were reported seized by Australia (4,142 kg), Turkey (1,485 kg) and Saudi Arabia (519 kg).

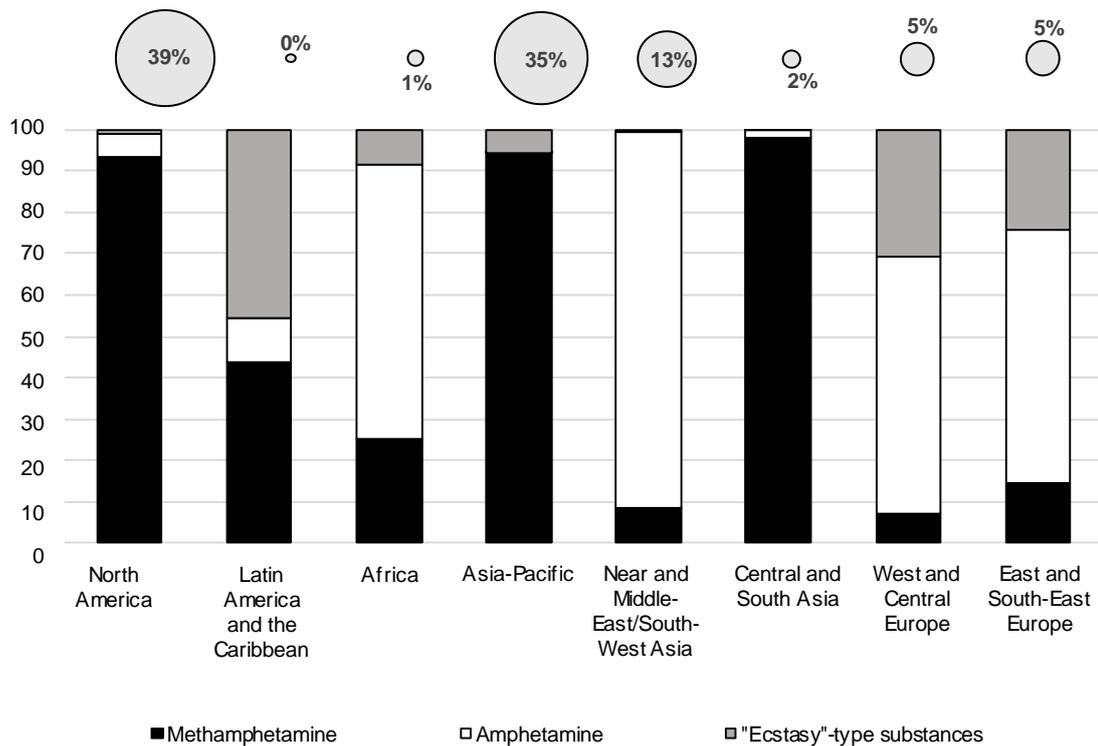
D. Amphetamine-type stimulants

58. Unlike the collection of seizure data for plant-based drugs, the collection of high-quality seizure data relating to amphetamine-type stimulants greatly depends on the proper identification and classification of seized controlled substances.

59. As shown in figure XII, the two regions in which the largest total amounts of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in 2017 were North America and the Asia-Pacific region, which are the two main markets for methamphetamine worldwide. Large seizures were recorded in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia, where most of the global amphetamine trafficking occurs (see figure V). Countries in Europe also reported seizing significant amounts of amphetamine-type stimulants, accounting for a large portion of the global “ecstasy” market (see figure XII), with no major differences in terms of distribution between Western and Central Europe and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

²¹ *EU Drug Markets Report: Strategic Overview*.

Figure XII
Proportion of amphetamine-type stimulant seizures, by region and drug type
(2017)^a
 (Percentage)



^a Data are preliminary.

Methamphetamine

60. The Asia-Pacific region and North America account for most of the methamphetamine seized globally, and the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine has traditionally been concentrated close to those two consumer markets. However, it has recently spread to other countries and regions, with reports of methamphetamine being smuggled from other regions, such as Africa, Europe and South-West Asia during the period 2012–2015.²² The amount of methamphetamine seized globally reached record levels in 2015, 2016 and 2017 (see figure XIII).

61. In North America, the amount of methamphetamine seized remained high in 2017, at 86 tons, after reaching a record 87 tons in 2016. The amount of methamphetamine seized in the United States reached the highest level on record for the fourth year in a row in 2017, at 62 tons, a 20 per cent increase compared with 2016. National authorities reported that domestic manufacture had been decreasing in the United States since 2004, with most of the methamphetamine trafficked within the country being manufactured in Mexico and smuggled across the south-western border.²³ After increasing sharply to 35 tons in 2016, the amount of methamphetamine seized in Mexico in 2017 decreased to 2015 levels, at 23 tons. Methamphetamine is produced in the country using precursors imported by sea mainly from China, Japan and Singapore.²⁴

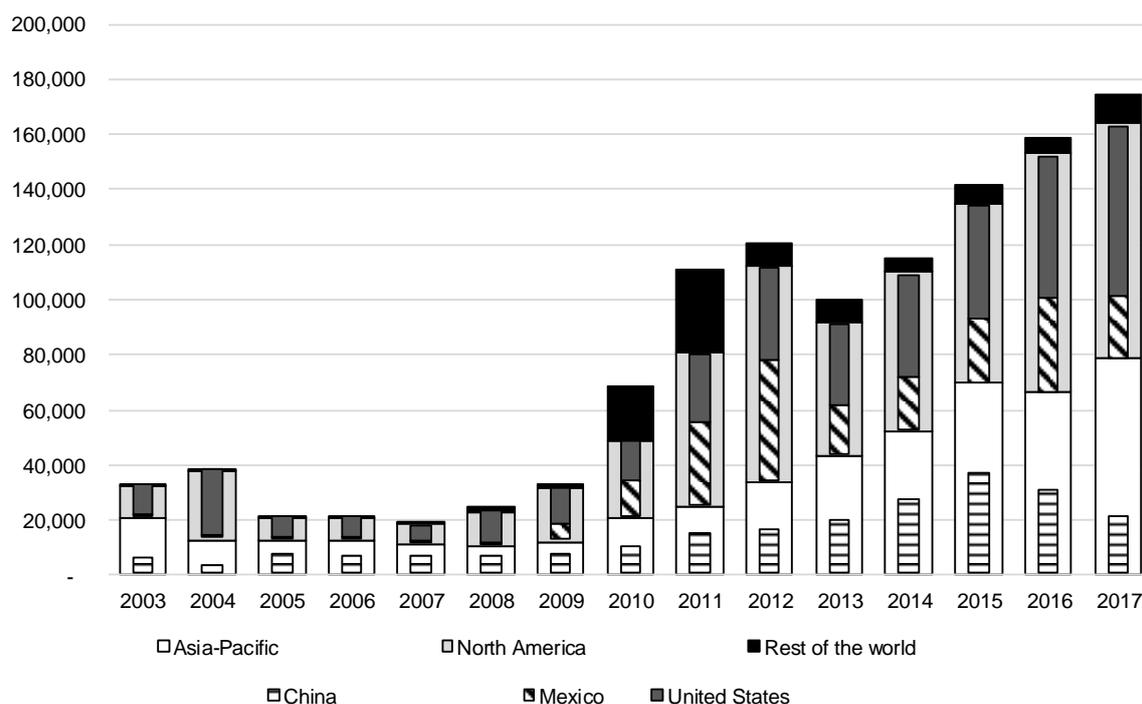
²² UNODC, *Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment: Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances* (Vienna, 2017).

²³ 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment.

²⁴ UNODC, annual report questionnaire replies submitted by Mexico for 2017.

Figure XIII
Global seizures of methamphetamine, by region (2003–2017)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

62. In the Asia-Pacific region, the amount of methamphetamine seized has been increasing almost every year since 2008, with the total amount seized in the region increasing sevenfold over the period 2008–2017. In East and South-East Asia, methamphetamine is trafficked in tablets and in crystalline form; tablets are manufactured and trafficked mostly within the Mekong subregion, and crystalline methamphetamine trafficking is spread throughout the region.²⁵ The high prices of crystalline methamphetamine in some countries such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea may be a key driver of the increased manufacture observed in China and South-East Asia in recent years.²⁶

63. The amount of methamphetamine seized in China increased every year between 2008 and 2015, from 6 tons to over 36 tons. After remaining above 30 tons in 2015 and 2016, the amount of methamphetamine seized in China decreased sharply, to under 21 tons in 2017. As seen in figure XIV, the record 79 tons of methamphetamine seized in 2017 in the Asia-Pacific region were a consequence of sharp increases in many countries in the region that offset the decrease in China. In 2017, Thailand was the country with the highest reported amount of methamphetamine seized in the region for the first time since 2003, with a record 30 tons. Indonesia also reported seizing a record amount of methamphetamine in 2017, with 7.4 tons, while the amount seized in Australia increased by 28 per cent, to 5.6 tons, and Myanmar reported seizing another 8.5 tons.

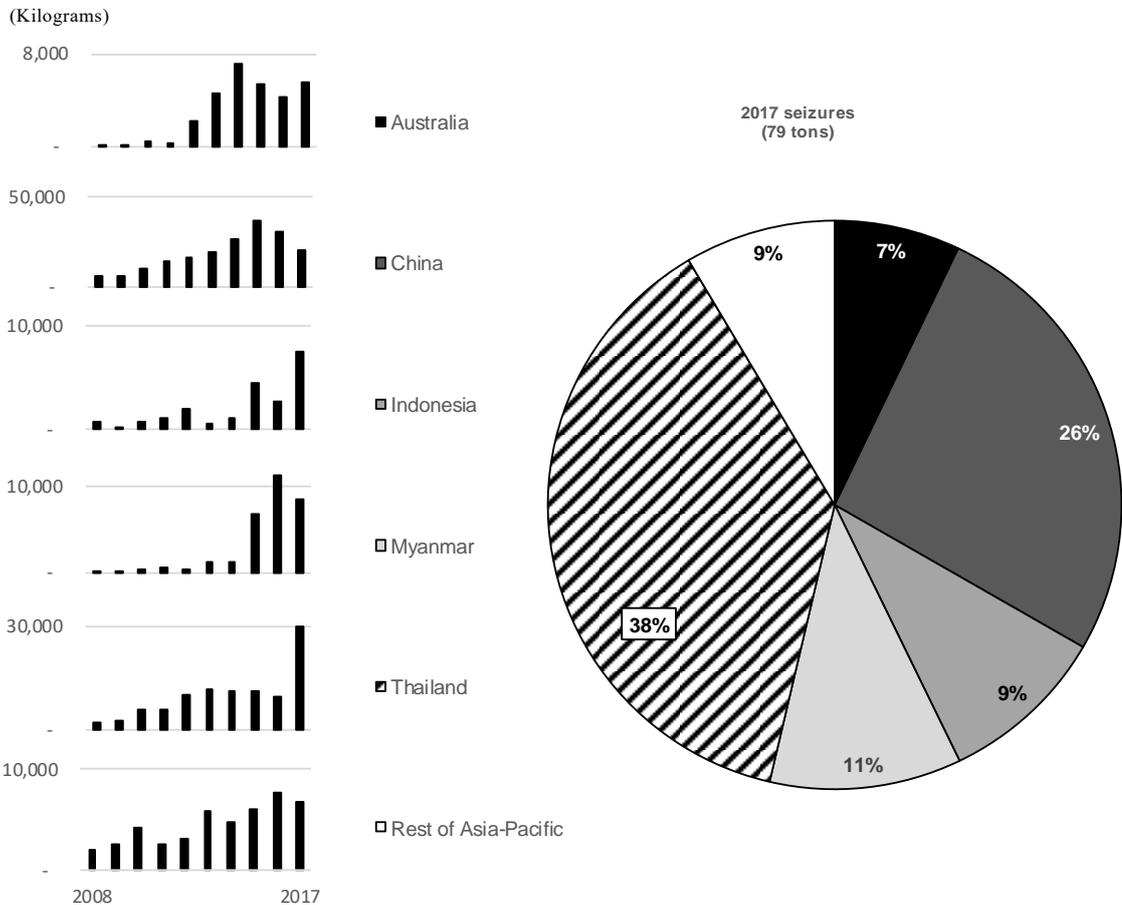
64. Chinese authorities reported that, in 2017, efforts were made to crack down on crimes related to drug production, in particular the production of synthetic drugs such

²⁵ 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 — A Report from the Global SMART Programme* (2015).

²⁶ UNODC, *The Challenge of Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia: Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances — A Report from the Global SMART Programme* (2017).

as methamphetamine.²⁷ As a result of those efforts, domestic drug production in China declined and moved from key areas such as Guangdong and Fujian to other regions, making it more difficult for law enforcement officials to seize those products. Chinese authorities reported that the Golden Triangle, in particular Myanmar, was one of the main overseas sources of methamphetamine. Thai authorities reported an oversupply of methamphetamine in the country that was mostly trafficked over the border with Myanmar, which resulted in record amounts being seized and a significant decline in the price of the drug.²⁸

Figure XIV
Geographical distribution of methamphetamine seizures in the Asia-Pacific region in 2017, and annual seizures in selected countries (2008–2017)^a



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

65. Outside the two main markets, significant amounts of methamphetamine are often reported seized by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian authorities have reported seizing over 1 ton of methamphetamine every year since 2010 (2.3 tons in 2017) and detected 141 clandestine laboratories in 2017 alone. In 2017, significant amounts of methamphetamine were also reported seized in Bangladesh (3,607 kg), the Russian Federation (1,131 kg) and Turkey (658 kg).

Amphetamine

66. Since 2004, global amphetamine seizures have been concentrated in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia (see figure XV). The amounts seized in several countries in the Near and Middle East have increased notably over the past decade,

²⁷ Country report submitted by China to the Forty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.

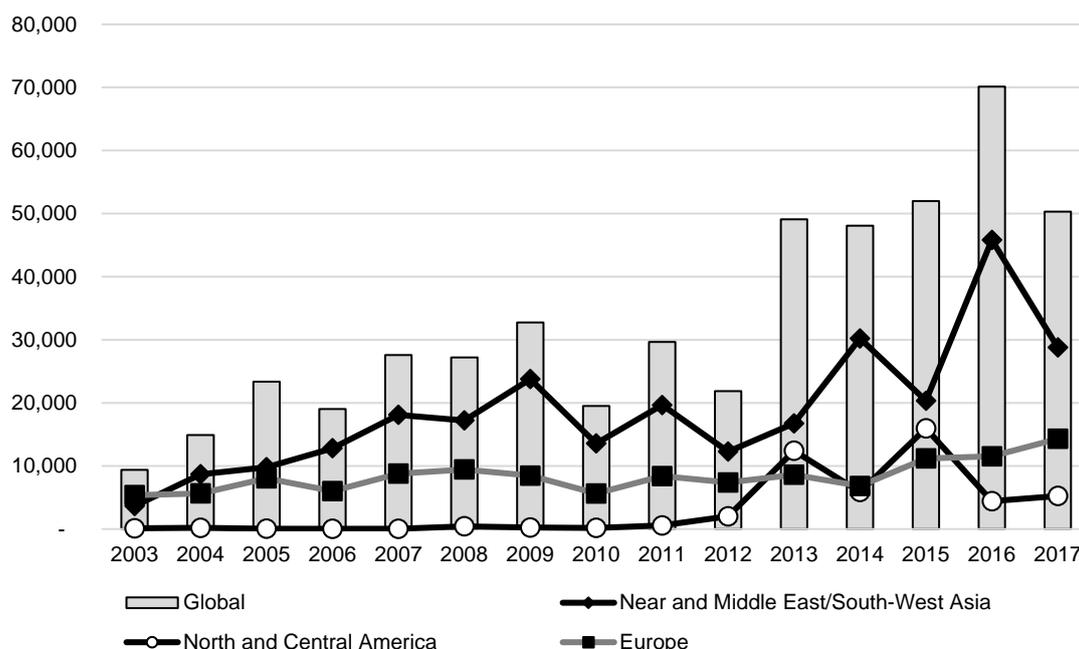
²⁸ Country report submitted by Thailand to the Forty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

with amphetamine being trafficked almost exclusively in “captagon” tablet form. The amount of amphetamine seized in Saudi Arabia increased from less than 100 kg per year prior to 2003 to a record 17.8 tons in 2016, and over 16 tons in 2017. In Jordan, the amount seized increased from 500 kg in 2003 to a record 13.5 tons in 2016,²⁹ while annual seizures in Lebanon averaged 2.8 tons over the period 2013–2017. Other countries in the region have also reported seizing record amounts in recent years, with the Syrian Arab Republic seizing 4.2 and 1.5 tons in 2015 and 2017, respectively, and the United Arab Emirates seizing 6.3 tons in 2016 and 7.8 tons in 2017. In South-West Asia, the amount of amphetamine seized has increased in recent years as well, with Pakistan reporting record levels between 2015 and 2017, with an annual average of 2.9 tons during that period.

Figure XV

Global seizures of amphetamine, by region (2003–2017)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary and do not include Jordan as no information was available for that country at the time of writing.

67. In Western and Central Europe, the amount of amphetamine seized has remained relatively stable since 2005, totalling 6.8 tons in 2017, an 11 per cent decrease from 2016. While Germany has consistently reported between 1,000 kg and 1,700 kg every year since 2008, the amount of amphetamine seized in the United Kingdom returned to the previous levels of between 1.2 tons and 1.4 tons in 2016 and 2017, after declining to 742 kg and 561 kg in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Some of the main amphetamine manufacturing countries in the region are Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland.³⁰ While the Netherlands reported seizing 122 kg in 2017, a sharp decrease from the 1.5 tons reported in 2015, the amount of amphetamine seized in Poland has increased in recent years, from an average of 370 kg per year in the period 2003–2011 to a record 945 kg in 2016 and 633 kg in 2017. In recent years, there has been an increased amount of amphetamine trafficking in South-Eastern Europe, with Turkey reporting the seizure of a record 6.7 tons in 2017, the largest amount reported by a country in Europe in that year.

68. In recent years, there has been an increased presence of amphetamine in the Americas, in particular in North and Central America (see figure XV). The United

²⁹ No information for 2017 was available at the time of writing.

³⁰ European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, *European Union Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment — Crime in the Age of Technology* (The Hague, 2017).

States has reported seizing an average of 5.9 tons of amphetamine annually since 2013, with 5.2 tons being seized in 2017. In Guatemala, over 1.5 tons were seized in 2014 and 12.7 tons in 2015, mostly owing to an unprecedented multi-ton seizure that year. Mexico also reported seizing a record 300 kg of amphetamine in 2015.

69. There has also been a recent increase in the amount of amphetamine seized in Africa. While seizures in the continent were virtually insignificant until 2012, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan reported seizing several tons of amphetamine in 2013 and 2014, respectively, and Egypt reported seizing an average of 3.4 tons annually between 2015 and 2017.

“Ecstasy”-type substances

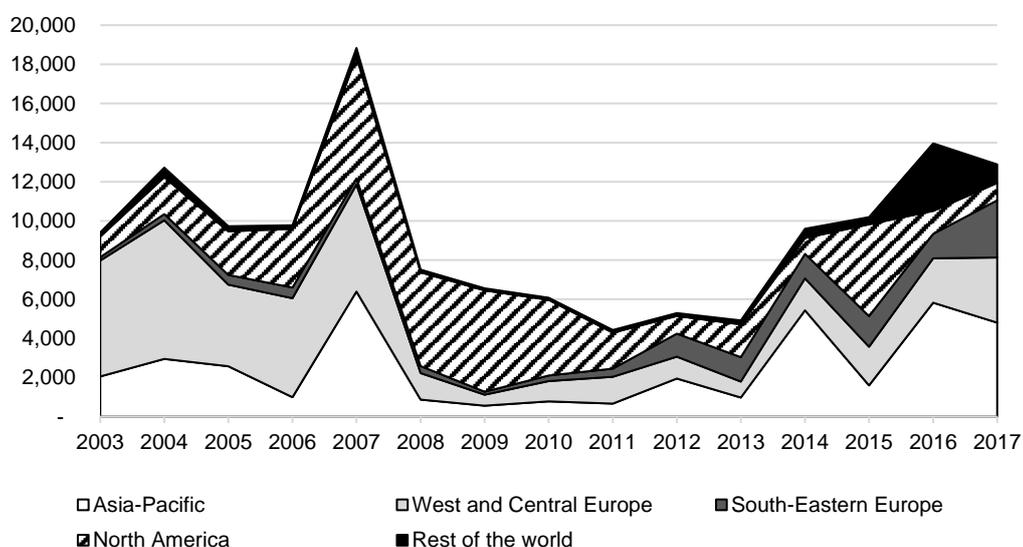
70. In 2017, the amount of “ecstasy”-type substances seized globally remained at the high levels reported in 2016, mainly owing to increases in Europe, which almost offset the declines observed in North America and the Asia-Pacific region. As seen in figure XVI, the amount of “ecstasy”-type substances seized followed a decreasing trend between 2003 and 2013, mostly owing to declines in the North American and Western and Central European markets, and has increased since. It has been considered in recent years that the Asia-Pacific region might be becoming an emerging driver of the global market for “ecstasy”.³¹ Other countries, in particular Turkey, have also seen sharp increases in the amounts of “ecstasy”-type substances seized in recent years.

71. After reaching record levels of 4.8 tons in 2016, the amount of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) seized in Australia decreased to 3 tons in 2017. The amount of “ecstasy”-type substances seized in Western and Central Europe has increased in recent years, from 817 kg in 2013 to 3.3 tons in 2017, the largest amounts on record since 2007. In 2017, 894 kg were seized in North America, a decrease of 24 per cent compared with the previous year, which was mainly the result in a decline in the amounts seized in the United States. In 2017, the amount of MDMA seized in Turkey reached a record 2.3 tons, the second-highest value reported by any country that year. That country reported an average of over 1.3 tons each year between 2012 and 2017, up from 285 kg during the previous nine years.

Figure XVI

Global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances, by region (2003–2017)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2017 are preliminary.

³¹ *The Challenge of Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia and Oceania* (2015).

IV. Conclusions

72. 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, the amount of cannabis herb seized decreased in 2016 and 2017 compared with the levels observed in 2015 and previous years.

73. After reaching unprecedented levels in 2017, preliminary data indicate that global opium poppy cultivation decreased in 2018, albeit remaining at higher levels than those observed previously. Global seizures of opium and illicit morphine remain concentrated in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, while heroin seizures cover a wider geographical area. The amount of heroin seized globally has followed an increasing trend since 2013 and reached record levels in 2017.

74. After reaching historically low levels in 2013, the total area under coca bush cultivation has increased every year since, driven mostly by sharp increases in Colombia. The amount of cocaine seized globally increased sharply once again in 2017, reaching unprecedented levels, with sharp increases in South America and Western and Central Europe.

75. The amount of amphetamine-type stimulants seized has reflected a sharp increasing trend since 2008 and remained at record levels in 2016 and 2017. While the amount of methamphetamine seized globally increased sevenfold between 2008 and 2017, the amount of amphetamine and “ecstasy”-type substances reported seized globally since 2014 is significantly higher than those observed a decade ago.
