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Follow-up to the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem

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 2019, where the data are available.

Higher yields were reported in the main opium-producing areas for 2019, as neither disease nor drought – as had occurred in previous years – reduced annual production. As in the past, Afghanistan accounted for the largest area under illicit cultivation globally in 2019. The amount of heroin seized globally increased sharply in 2016, 2017 and 2018; in 2019, it totalled about 86.6 tons, down from the previous year's total of 94.4 tons. Coca bush cultivation remained at a high level and the amount of cocaine seized globally reached record levels, with 31 countries reporting seizing the highest amounts ever.

Cannabis herb continued to be cultivated and seized in most countries worldwide and in all regions, while the production of cannabis resin remained confined to a few countries in South-West Asia and North Africa, the most prominent of which were Afghanistan and Morocco. Worldwide, seizures were concentrated in those two regions and in Europe, where the main consumer market is located. Meanwhile, the amount of amphetamine-type stimulants seized reached the highest levels ever reported.

* [E/CN.7/2021/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of developments in the illicit production of and trafficking in the main drugs at the global and regional levels. The analysis includes information available to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) up to 1 December 2020.

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 2019, where the data are available. Section III contains a discussion of drug trafficking and seizures, focusing on seizure statistics for 2019 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, where available. In addition, replies by Governments to part IV of the annual report questionnaires for 2019 and previous years provide the primary source of information on drug trafficking patterns and drug seizures.

4. As of December 2020, UNODC had received replies to part IV of the annual report questionnaire that included seizure data for 2019 for 110 States and territories, a significant improvement on the data available for 2018, which covered 88 States and territories. Supplementary sources of information include official, published government reports and the UNODC *World Drug Report 2020*.

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

A. Cannabis herb cultivation and cannabis resin production

5. Cannabis continues to be the most widely produced drug worldwide. In contrast with the production of other plant-based drugs, which is concentrated in a limited number of countries, cannabis is produced in almost all countries. In the past two decades, there have been rapid advances in cannabis plant cultivation techniques. Reports of cannabis cultivation and eradication reveal that a wide range of practices exist globally, from the growing of a small number of plants for personal consumption to large-scale commercial operations in indoor warehouses, on farmland and in forests.

6. The amount of cannabis herb seized globally fell to its lowest level in two decades in 2018, most notably in North America, where the amounts seized fell by 84 per cent over the course of the previous 10 years. The figures for 2019 show a marginal increase. The overall drop in the amounts seized can be largely attributed to the expansion of legal markets from 2018 to 2019, as a correlation can be seen between the areas where there were reductions in the amounts seized and areas where markets have been legalized. However, 40 per cent of users still relied on illegal sources for some of their cannabis products in 2019.¹

7. In Morocco, the area under cannabis cultivation was reduced to less than 50 per cent of the previous year's figure, at 21,049 ha, the lowest figure recorded in recent years.

8. Over the period 2010–2018, about 151 Member States, representing 96 per cent of the world's population, reported to UNODC the illicit cultivation of cannabis in their countries on the basis of either direct indicators (cultivation or eradication of

¹ *World Drug Report 2020*, booklet 1, *Executive Summary: Impact of COVID-19 – Policy Implications* (United Nations publication, 2020).

cannabis plants and eradication of cannabis-producing sites) or indirect indicators (seizure of cannabis plants).²

B. Opium poppy cultivation

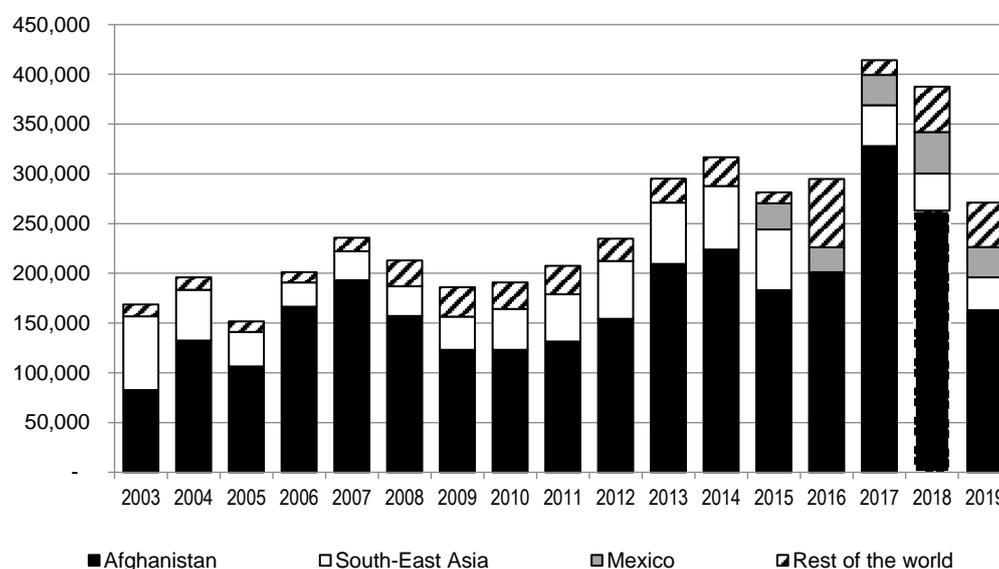
9. Opium is illicitly produced in some 50 countries worldwide, although the three countries (Afghanistan, Mexico and Myanmar) where most opium is produced have accounted for about 97 per cent of global opium production over the past five years.³

10. Preliminary data suggest that 2019 witnessed a decline of 30 per cent in the cultivation of opium poppy, to 240,800 ha (see figure I). Despite reductions in the global area under cultivation during the period 2017–2019, it continued to be more than 26 per cent greater than it was a decade previously.

11. Between 2010 and 2016, the average area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan had been about 175,000 ha. After having reached an unprecedented 328,000 ha in 2017, the area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan decreased to 263,000 ha in 2018, and again to 163,000 ha in 2019. Despite that decrease, Afghanistan again accounted for the largest area under illicit opium poppy cultivation globally.

Figure I
Opium poppy cultivation, by location (2003–2019)

(Hectares)



12. Global opium production in 2019 remained stable, at 7,610 tons, compared with the previous year's 7,620 tons, which still makes the third-largest total since UNODC started systematic monitoring in the 1990s. However, this represents a 26 per cent reduction from its peak in 2017 (10,270 tons). The three main opium-producing countries (Afghanistan, Mexico⁴ and Myanmar) are estimated to have accounted for roughly 96 per cent of the amount of opium produced globally in 2019. Afghanistan alone accounted for 84 per cent of that total by producing 6,400 tons, the same level as in 2018.⁵ Despite the decline in the area under opium poppy cultivation in 2019,

² *World Drug Report 2020*, booklet 3, *Drug Supply* (United Nations publication, 2020).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ UNODC data for Mexico were not available at the time of drafting the present report. United States, Office of National Drug Control Policy, "White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) announces record reduction in poppy cultivation and potential heroin production in Mexico", 31 July 2020.

⁵ Data on the potential opium production for 2019 were obtained from the UNODC illicit crop monitoring programme. The same methodology was used as in previous years for yield

opium production remained stable, with higher yields reported in the main opium-producing areas, as neither disease nor drought – as had occurred in previous years – reduced production in 2019.

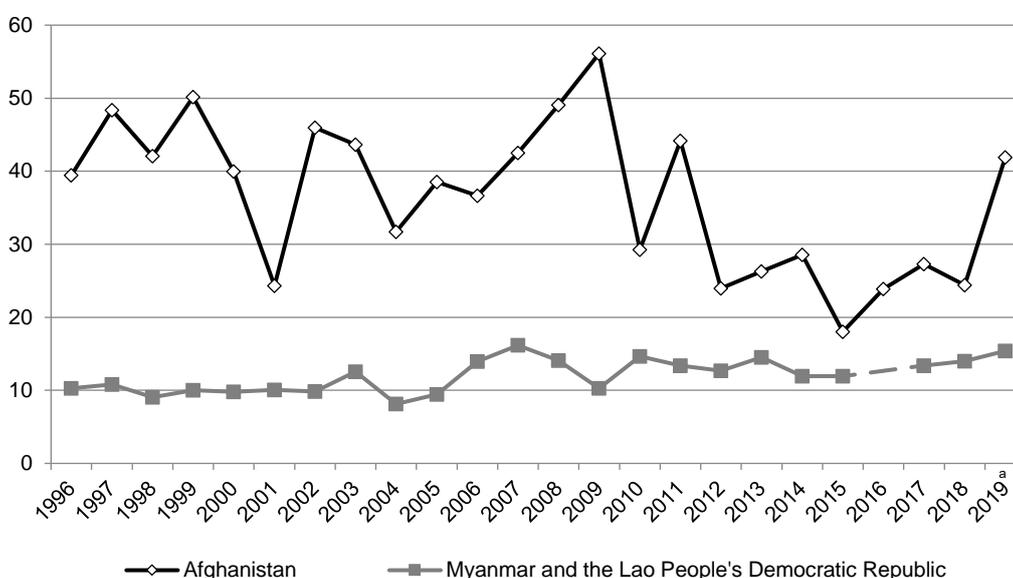
13. The area under opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar was estimated at 33,100 ha in 2019, 11 per cent down from 2018, and continuing the downward trend observed since 2014.⁶ That was the lowest level of cultivation recorded since 2010, which was possibly a consequence of a continuing reduction in demand for opiates sourced in Myanmar, likely stemming from the record increases in production in Afghanistan in recent years, as well as the huge and continuing upsurge in the manufacture and use of synthetic drugs in the markets of East and South-East Asia.⁷

14. The opium poppy yield in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar has traditionally been significantly lower than that of Afghanistan (see figure II), owing mainly to the geographical and soil conditions of the areas where the opium poppy is cultivated in those countries. The Myanmar opium survey for 2019⁸ reported that the yield in Myanmar was about 15.4 kg per ha, a 11 per cent increase compared with the estimated yield of 13.9 kg per ha in 2018.

Figure II

Yield of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar (1996–2019)

(Kilograms per hectare)



^a Data for the Lao People's Democratic Republic for 2019 were not available.

C. Coca bush cultivation

15. Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru continued to account for the vast majority of coca bush cultivation worldwide. The total area under such cultivation in the three countries showed a decrease, from 246,234 ha in 2018 to 234,155 ha in 2019 (see figure III). The year 2019 witnessed an increase of about

measurement and estimation of potential opium production. These results were not validated by the Government of Afghanistan and are not recognized by the Government as its official estimate.

⁶ UNODC and Myanmar, Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, *Myanmar Opium Survey 2019: Cultivation, Production and Implications* (Bangkok, 2020).

⁷ UNODC, *Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia 2020: Latest Developments and Challenges* (Bangkok, 2020).

⁸ UNODC and Myanmar, Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, *Myanmar Opium Survey 2019*.

10 per cent in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, with Colombia reporting a 9 per cent decrease and cultivation remaining stable (an increase of 0.96 per cent) in Peru.

16. In Colombia, despite the reduction in the area under cultivation (154,000 ha compared with 169,000 ha in 2018), potential cocaine manufacture increased, to 1,137 tons in 2019 compared with 1,120 tons in 2018.⁹ That increase in manufacture was accompanied by an increase in the number of laboratories used for the extraction of cocaine paste and base that were dismantled, from 4,567 in 2018 to 5,461 in 2019, representing a significant increase of 20 per cent.¹⁰

17. The increase in the area under coca bush cultivation in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, from 23,100 ha in 2018 to 25,500 ha in 2019, can be explained by a reduction in the rationalization and eradication effected in October and November 2019 as a result of sociopolitical conflicts. There was an overall decrease in those activities of 18 per cent, from 11,174 ha in 2018 to 9,205 ha in 2019.¹¹

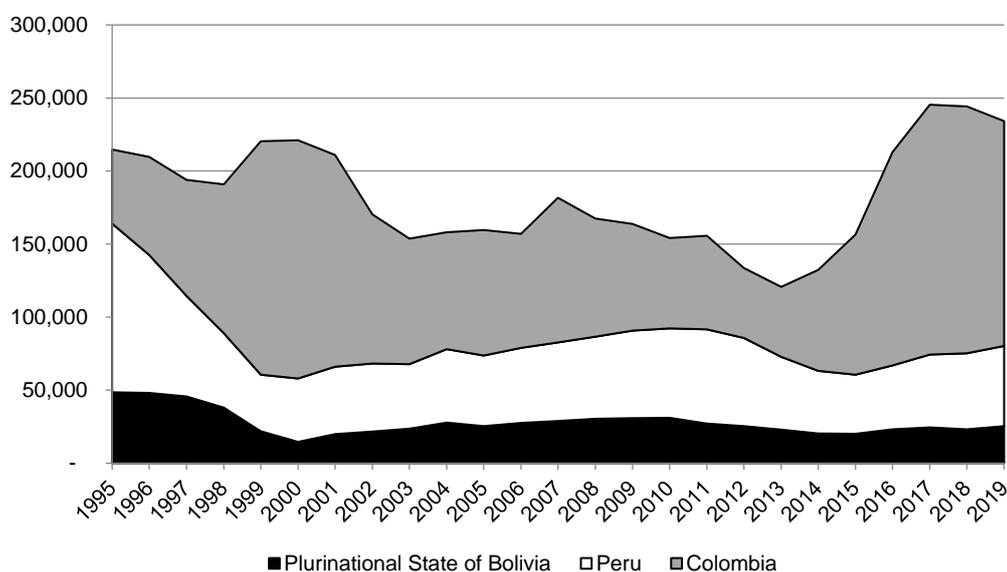
18. In addition, the 2019 survey in the Plurinational State of Bolivia identified coca cultivation in several locations that corresponded to areas deforested in the previous year, evidencing a worrying effect on forest ecosystems, especially in protected areas.

19. Estimates for coca production in the Plurinational State of Bolivia were within the range of 37,000–46,100 tons, an increase of 11 per cent compared with 2018.

Figure III

Coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru (1995–2019)

(Hectares)



20. In 2015, the area under coca bush cultivation in Peru was 40,300 ha, the smallest area recorded since 1999. In 2019, the size of the area increased for the fourth year in a row and reached 54,655 ha, an increase of 36 per cent compared with 2015, giving a potential production of 705 tons of sun-dried coca.¹²

⁹ UNODC, *World Drug Report 2020*, booklet 3.

¹⁰ UNODC and Colombia, *Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2019* (Bogota, July 2020).

¹¹ UNODC and Plurinational State of Bolivia, *Bolivia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2019* (La Paz, July 2020).

¹² Peru, National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs, “Devida reporta 54,655 hectáreas de cultivos de hoja de coca en producción al 2019”, press release (30 November 2020).

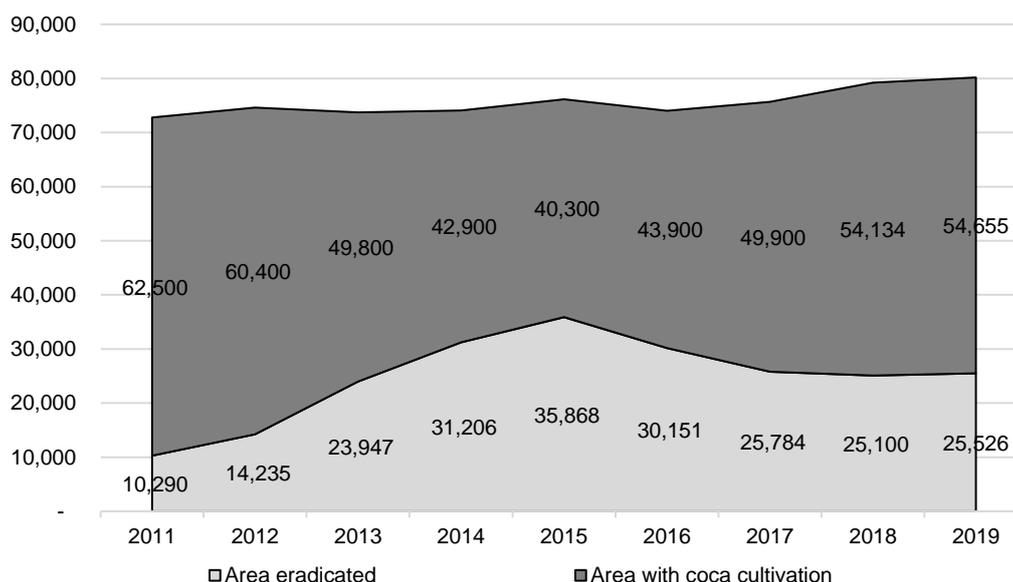
21. Peruvian authorities reported the eradication of 25,526 ha of coca bush cultivation in 2019, a slight increase from the 2018 figure. The increase in eradication mirrors the increase in the area under cultivation in that country (see figure IV).

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. Several countries in South America, including Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), reported the detection of clandestine laboratories processing coca leaf derivatives. In Europe, Belgium, Greece, Poland and Spain also reported the detection of such laboratories.¹³

Figure IV

Coca bush cultivation and eradication in Peru (2011–2019)

(Hectares)



III. Global trends in illicit drug trafficking and seizures

23. The table below shows the quantities of major drug types seized globally and reported to UNODC in the period 2016–2019.

Global drug seizures and trends, 2016–2019 (Tons)

Drug type	2016 seizures	2017 seizures	2018 seizures	2019 seizures ^a
Cannabis herb	4 770.5	5 112.0	4 298.6	4 656.1
Cannabis resin	1 675.7	1 161.5	1 305.5	1 329.0
Cocaine ^b	1 128.2	1 275.9	1 305.0	1 8.0
Heroin	90.9	102.6	94.4	86.6
Illicit morphine	62.3	87.0	43.2	25.1
Opium	662.0	692.8	703.8	724.2
Amphetamine	70.7	50.8	19.3	76.6
Methamphetamine	158.6	184.8	227.6	270.9
“Ecstasy”-type substances	11.0	14.0	11.7	25.1

^a As data for 2019 were incomplete at the time of preparation of the present report, totals for that year are preliminary.

^b Includes base, salts and “crack” cocaine.

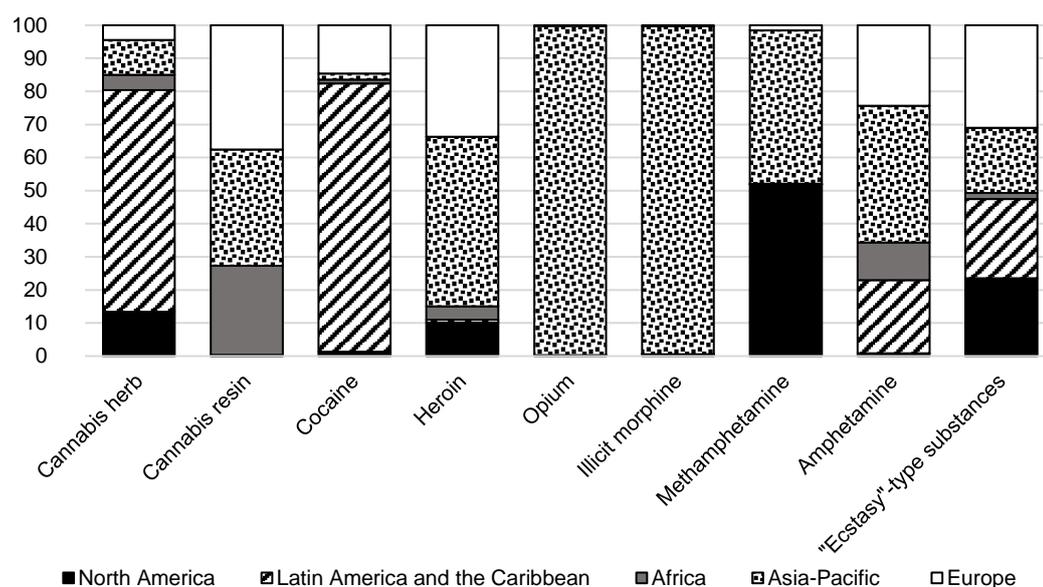
¹³ Annual report questionnaires for 2019 from those countries submitted to UNODC.

24. At the global level, there were increases in the amounts seized of almost all drug types (amphetamine, methamphetamine, cocaine, “ecstasy”-types substances, cannabis herb, cannabis resin and opium), with decreases only in the amounts of illicit morphine and heroin seized. In 2019, the Americas accounted for 62 per cent of the cannabis seized globally, compared with 71 per cent in 2018. The United States of America recorded its tenth consecutive annual decrease in the amount of the drug seized, most likely attributable to continuing decriminalization measures. Europe accounted for some 38 per cent of the cannabis resin seized, while the Asia-Pacific region¹⁴ and Africa accounted for 35 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively (see figure V). In 2019, for the third time on record, the amount of cannabis herb seized in South America was higher than that seized in North America. The Asia-Pacific region accounted for about 37 per cent of “ecstasy”-type substances seized and 51 per cent of heroin seized.

Figure V

Geographical distribution of seizures by drug type (2019)^a

(Percentage)



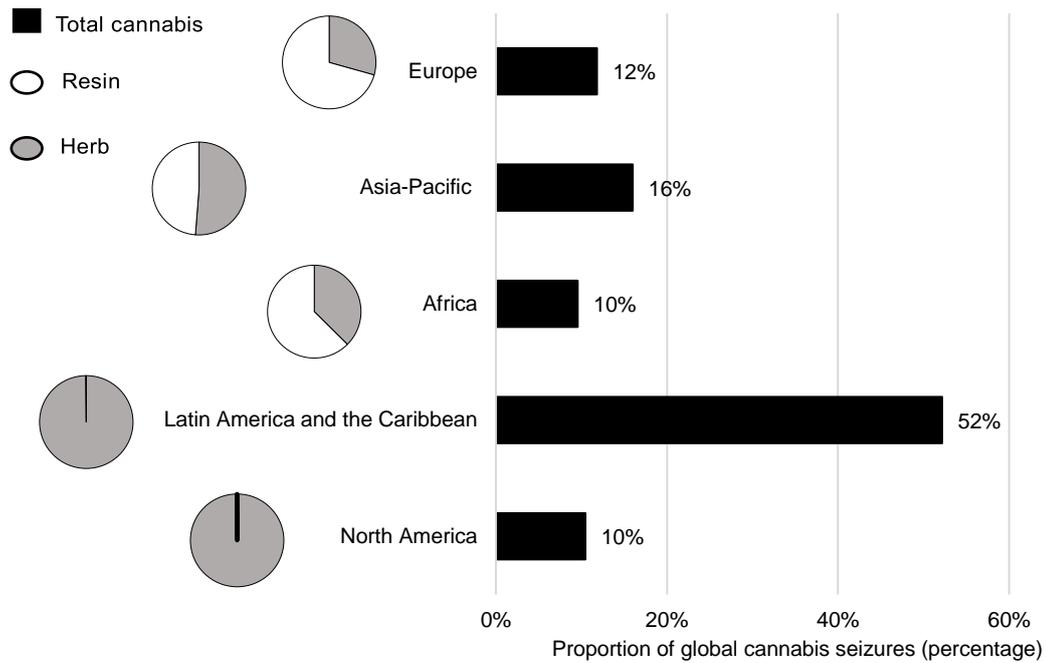
^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

A. Cannabis

25. The total amount of cannabis herb and cannabis resin seized globally in 2019 increased by 6.8 per cent compared with the previous year, reaching 5,985 tons. Of that amount, 52 per cent was seized in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Cannabis resin accounted for most of the cannabis seized in Europe and Africa (see figure VI).

¹⁴ “Asia-Pacific region” refers to the regions of Asia and Oceania collectively.

Figure VI

Proportion of global cannabis seizures, by region and type (2019)^a

^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

Cannabis herb

26. According to the preliminary data, eight countries (Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, India, Mexico, Paraguay and United States) reported seizing in excess of 200 tons of cannabis herb in 2019. The Americas have accounted for over 60 per cent of the amount seized globally every year since the early 1990s. In 2019, the Americas accounted for 80 per cent of the amount seized, or 3,744 tons.

27. The amount of cannabis herb seized in North America continued its sharp decline and, in 2019, reached its lowest level since its peak in 2010 (see figure VII). Unlike in North America, the amount of cannabis herb seized in South America has increased notably over the past decade. In 2019, the amount seized in Colombia rose for the fourth consecutive year, to a total of 376 tons. By contrast, Paraguay reported a significant decrease, of 62 per cent compared with the previous year, with 391 tons seized.

28. The amount of cannabis herb seized in Western and Central Europe decreased to 110 tons in 2019, a four-year low. The largest amounts reported seized in the region came from Spain (39.9 tons), Italy (23.6 tons) and France (21.9 tons).

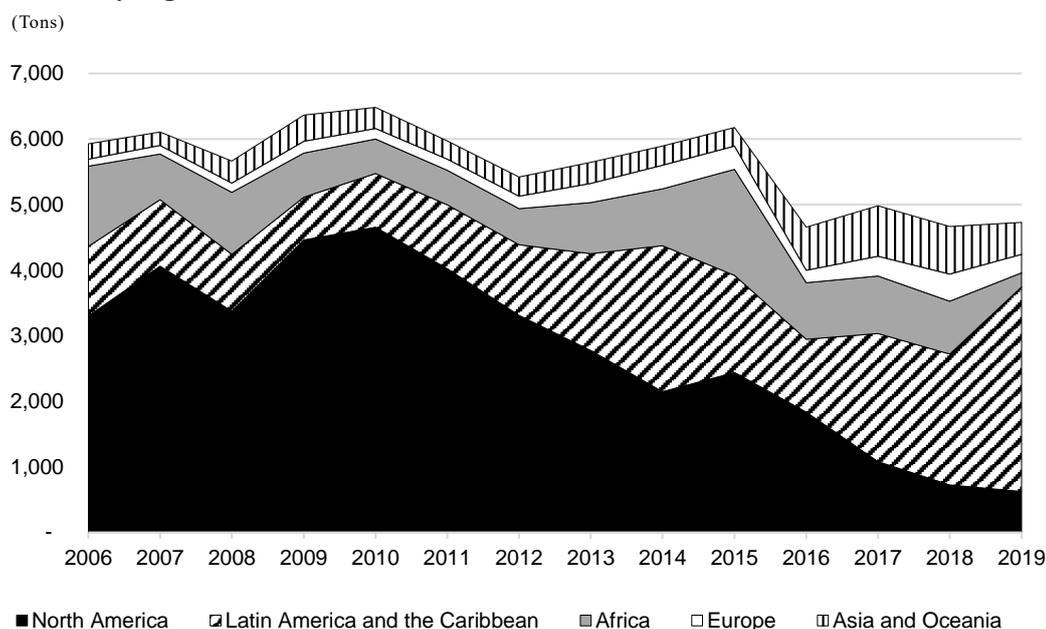
29. In South-Eastern Europe, a total of 83 tons of cannabis herb were seized, with Turkey accounting for 75 per cent of that total. Serbia accounted for 7 tons and Albania for 6.3 tons.

30. Preliminary data show that the amount of cannabis herb seized in Africa (214.5 tons) decreased by 78 per cent in 2019 compared with the average of 1,000 tons seized over the previous five years. Between 2003 and 2017, Egyptian authorities reported the seizure of an average of over 280 tons annually; the latest seizure report from 2019 indicates that 62 tons were seized in that year. At the time of writing, no figures were available for Nigeria, which had reported average seizures of 336 tons of cannabis herb over the previous five years.

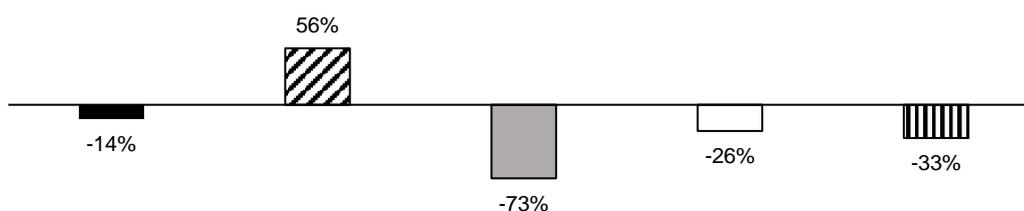
31. Within Asia, cannabis herb trafficking has traditionally been most prominent in South Asia, with India accounting for 70 per cent of the total amount seized in the region. In 2019, the amount seized in Indonesia decreased for the third consecutive

year, to 36.6 tons; Thailand showed a decrease of 33 per cent, to 26.8 tons; and Pakistan reported a small increase, to 39.3 tons. In Central Asia, the majority of seizures were again concentrated in Kazakhstan, where 12.9 tons were seized in 2019, the lowest level since 2001.

Figure VII
Cannabis herb seized, by region (2006–2019), and the change in the amounts seized, by region, from 2018 to 2019^a



Change in amount of cannabis herb seized, by region, from 2018 to 2019



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

Cannabis resin

32. Unlike the cultivation of cannabis herb, the production of cannabis resin is concentrated in a small number of countries, primarily Afghanistan and Morocco. Morocco reported seizing an average of 165 tons of cannabis resin in the period 2015–2018. However, that country reported a significant rise in the amount seized in 2019, totalling a record 320 tons. Seizures in Afghanistan amounted to 191.5 tons in 2019, a slight increase over the previous year. Statistics show that seizures of cannabis resin are fairly evenly concentrated in North Africa, South-West Asia and Western and Central Europe, the main consumer markets (see figure VIII).

33. As the main entry point for cannabis resin trafficked from Morocco into Western Europe, Spain has traditionally seized the largest amount of this product. This remained the case in 2019, when a total of 350 tons were seized. The total amount of the drug seized in Western and Central Europe decreased from 667 tons in 2018 to 467 tons in 2019, mostly as a result of reductions in the amounts seized in 10 countries. The most notable reductions during 2019 were in Italy and Denmark (73 per cent each) and Sweden (48 per cent). In South-Eastern Europe, Turkey has

consistently reported seizing the highest amounts, although, following the reduction witnessed in 2018, the amounts seized in 2019 fell again, to 27 tons.

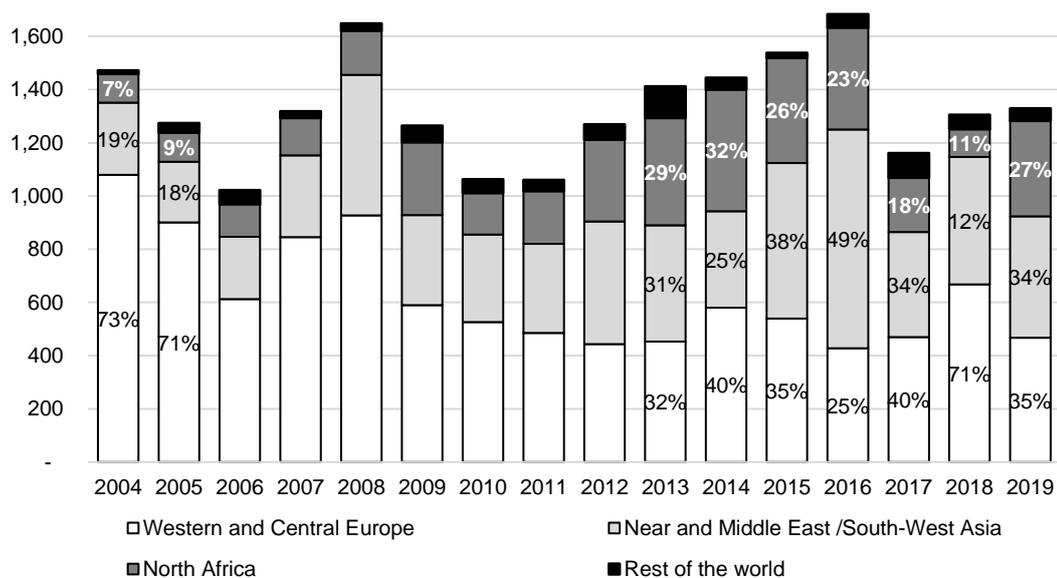
34. After annual declines since 2014, the amount of cannabis resin seized in North Africa increased, from 104 tons in 2018 to 358 tons in 2019. After Morocco, the largest amounts reported seized in the region were from Egypt, totalling 36 tons in 2019. At the time of drafting the present report, figures for Algeria for 2019 were not available.

35. Seizures of cannabis resin in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia are concentrated in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries of Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan. The amounts seized in those three countries in 2019 amounted to 427.6 tons, some 94 per cent of the regional total. In 2019, Pakistan reported seizing 162 tons, the lowest reported level since 2008.

Figure VIII

Global cannabis resin seizures, by region (2004–2019)^a

(Tons)



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

B. Opiates

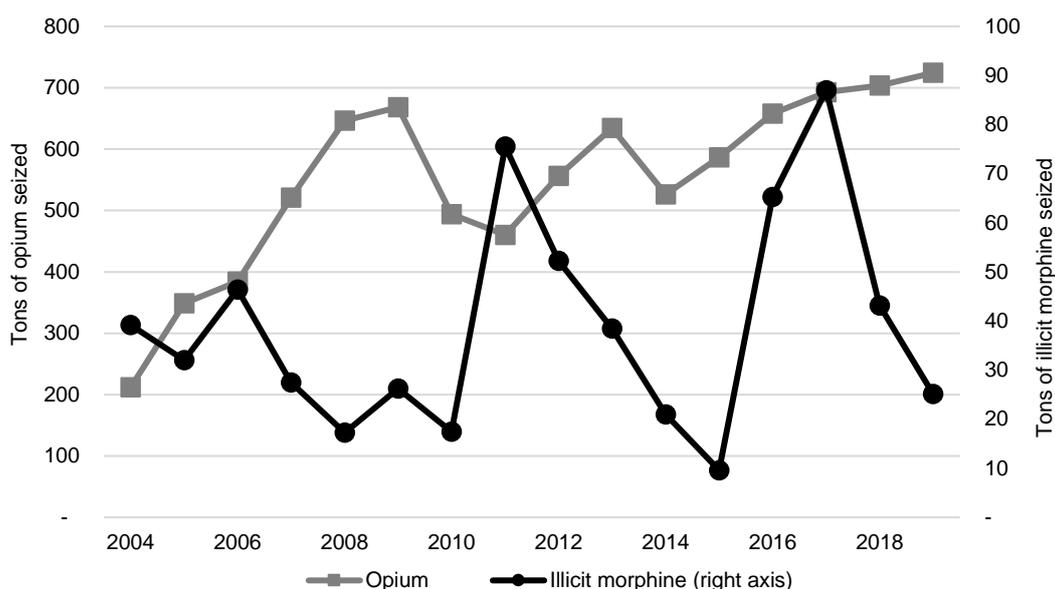
Opium and illicit morphine

36. The Near and Middle East and South-West Asia accounted for 98 per cent of the opium and illicit morphine seized globally in 2019. Seizures in the region occur almost exclusively in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries of Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

37. Since 2014, the amount of opium seized has increased, and it reached over 710 tons in 2019, the highest level on record (see figure IX). About 92 per cent of the opium seized globally in 2019 was seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

38. Conversely, the amount of illicit morphine seized globally reduced to 24.5 tons in 2019, the lowest for four years (see figure IX). The Islamic Republic of Iran once again reported the highest quantities, seizing 18.2 tons, an 11 per cent decrease compared with the 2018 figure of 20.6 tons.

Figure IX
Global opium and illicit morphine seizures (2004–2019)^a



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

Heroin

39. In contrast to seizures of opium and illicit morphine, seizures of heroin occur in a range of regions and countries (see figure V above), in particular around the larger markets in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Each of those three markets is supplied in the main by a different producing region.

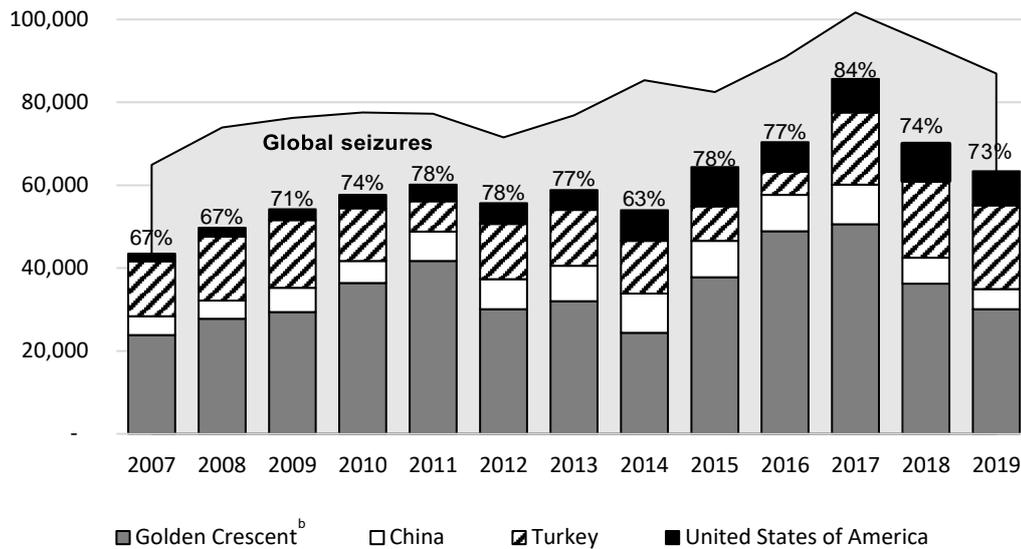
40. At the global level, the amount of heroin seized remained relatively stable, at between 72 and 78 tons, in the period 2008–2013. After having increased to 102 tons in 2017, it dropped again to 94 tons in 2018 and to 86 tons in 2019. Since 2007, the six countries seizing the largest amounts (Afghanistan, 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).

41. In the Asia-Pacific region, heroin seizures are concentrated in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the average amount of heroin seized annually is about 19 tons. In 2019, the total amount seized in that country was 17.4 tons, representing a 31 per cent reduction compared with the previous year. The average annual amount seized in the Asia-Pacific region over the past decade is 52.6 tons; in 2019, the figure was 44.4 tons. The amount seized in Australia continued the downward trend seen since 2015, and totalled 211 kg in 2019, the lowest figure in a decade. Malaysia and Myanmar reported significant reductions in the amounts seized, from 1,441 and 1,099 tons in 2018 to 710 and 690 tons, respectively, and reductions were also noted in Afghanistan, China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

42. Although seizures of heroin along the northern route, which originates in Afghanistan, once accounted for approximately 10 per cent of the amount seized globally, the proportion decreased gradually to just 1 per cent in 2018.¹⁵ The Russian Federation, which, in 2017, reported seizures of less than 500 kg of heroin for the first time since 1998, reported an increase to 721 kg in 2018; however, the amount fell again in 2019, to a total of 502 kg.

¹⁵ UNODC, *World Drug Report 2020*, booklet 1.

Figure X
Heroin seizures worldwide and in selected countries and regions (2007–2019)^a
 (Kilograms)



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

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

43. The most commonly used route for transporting Afghan heroin into Europe continues to be the Balkan route, with large amounts continuing to be seized in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey. This route accounted for 58 per cent of the heroin seized outside of Afghanistan in 2018.¹⁶ The amount seized in South-Eastern Europe reached record levels in 2019, at 21.2 tons, of which Turkey accounted for 20.1 tons.

44. Preliminary data show that the amount of heroin seized in Western and Central Europe fell from 9 tons in 2018 to 6 tons in 2019, with decreases of 57 per cent in Belgium and 37 per cent in Italy, where 1,900 kg and 614 kg were seized, respectively.

45. Significant trafficking routes continue to develop in various subregions in Africa. In Egypt, record amounts of heroin have been seized in recent years, with an average of 730 kg seized every year since 2015, reaching 856 kg in 2017. Although no figure was received for 2018, by 2019 it had leapt significantly, to 3,194 kg.

46. In the Americas, the amount of heroin seized has ranged between 8.6 and 10.3 tons over the past six years, attributable mostly to significant amounts seized by the United States, where the average annual amount seized during that period was 8.2 tons. According to analysis of samples profiled in the United States, Mexico is the source of 93 per cent of heroin seized in that country; South America accounts for 2 per cent and South-West Asia less than 1 per cent.¹⁷

C. Cocaine

47. The main consumer markets for cocaine, Latin America and Western and Central Europe, continue to be supplied by cocaine originating in South America, with global seizures concentrated in those regions (see figure V). The amount of cocaine seized globally has increased sharply in recent years, from about 650 tons in 2014 to 1,388 tons in 2019 (see figure XI).

¹⁶ Ibid.

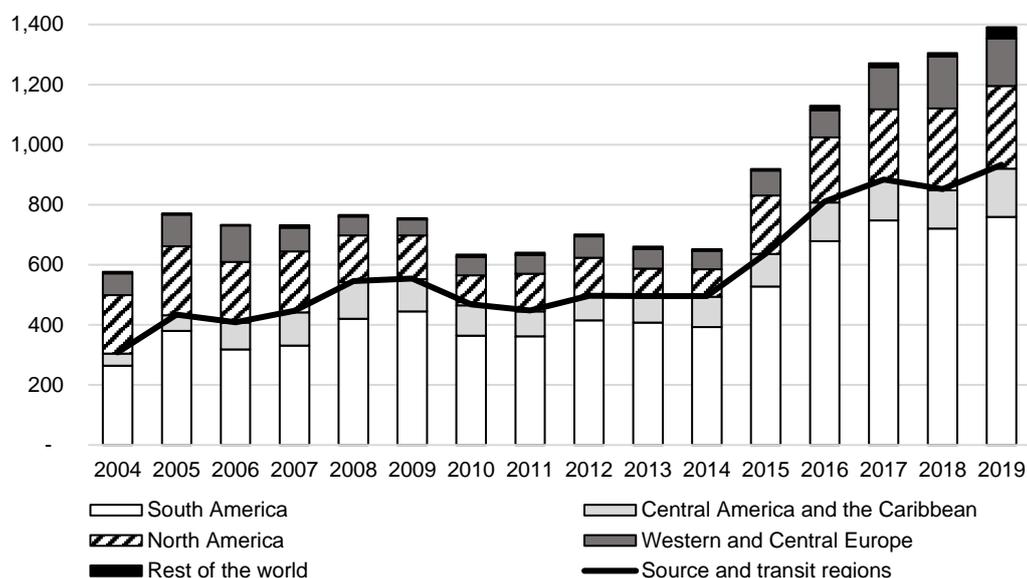
¹⁷ United States, Drug Enforcement Administration Intelligence Program and Office of Forensic Sciences, "The 2018 Heroin Signature Program", Joint Intelligence Report (April 2020).

48. The amount of cocaine seized in South America reached a peak of 760 tons in 2019. The amount seized in Colombia alone exceeded 400 tons each year during the period 2017–2019, reaching 493 tons in 2019. The amounts seized in Brazil have also reached record levels: they rose progressively from 27 tons in 2015 to 104 tons in 2019. These increases are largely ascribed to the many seizures made from shipping containers in the region through the UNODC and World Customs Organization Container Control Programme.

Figure XI

Global seizures of cocaine (base, paste and salts), by region (2004–2019)^a

(Tons)



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

49. The amount of cocaine seized in Panama and Costa Rica remained at record levels in 2019, at 84 tons and 31.1 tons, respectively, representing increases of 54 per cent and 12.7 per cent, respectively, over the previous year's figures. As a result, cocaine seized in Central America and the Caribbean in 2019 amounted to 760 tons.

50. Significant seizures in Cabo Verde and Morocco led to an increase of 272 per cent in the amount seized on the African continent, with a total of 12.6 tons seized.

51. The amount of cocaine seized in North America has increased every year since 2014, and has more than tripled in recent years, from about 91 tons in 2014 to 275 tons in 2019. This can largely be ascribed to increases in the amounts seized annually in the United States, which rose markedly over the same period, from 86 to 250 tons. In Mexico, the quantity of cocaine seized in 2019 returned to the seven-year average of about 10 tons from a peak of 16.5 tons the previous year.

52. In 2019, for the fourth consecutive year, Belgium seized the largest amount of cocaine in Europe, with 65.2 tons, a 23 per cent increase over the 53 tons reported in 2018. The amount seized in Spain reduced to pre-2017 levels in 2019, at 37.9 tons, down from 48.4 tons in 2018. Overall seizures in Europe amounted to 163 tons, but this does not include figures for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which were unavailable at the time of writing.

D. Amphetamine-type stimulants

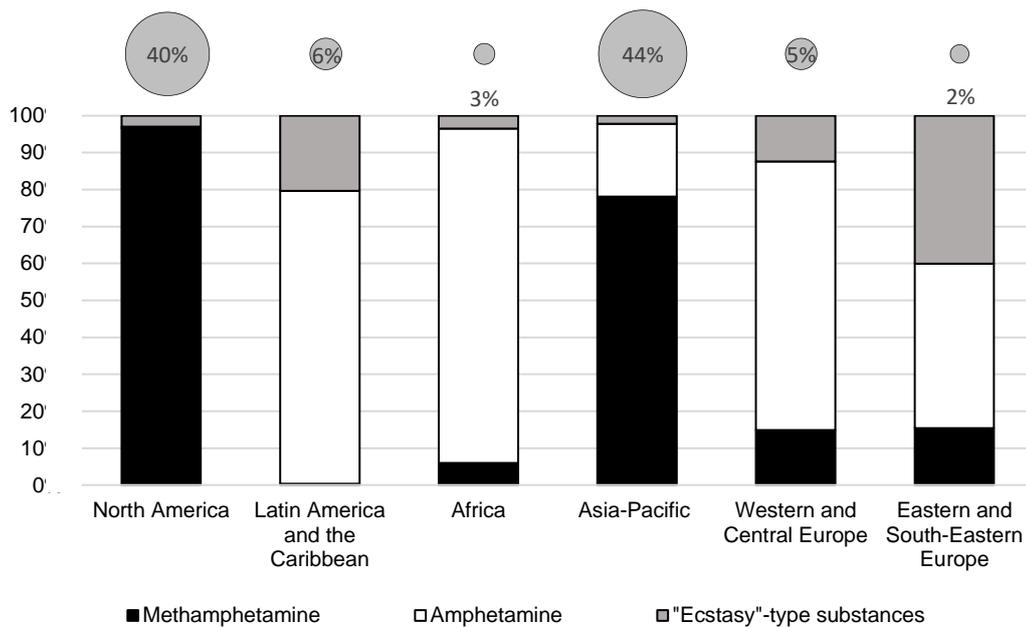
53. Unlike the collection of seizure data for plant-based drugs, the collection of high-quality seizure data relating to amphetamine-type stimulants depends heavily on the proper identification and classification of seized controlled substances.

54. As shown in figure XII, the two regions in which the largest total amounts of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in 2019 were North America and the Asia-Pacific region, the two main markets for methamphetamine worldwide (see figure V). Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 40 per cent of all “ecstasy”-type stimulants seized globally.

Figure XII

Proportion of amphetamine-type stimulant seizures, by region and drug type (2019)^a

(Percentage)



^aData for 2019 are preliminary.

Methamphetamine

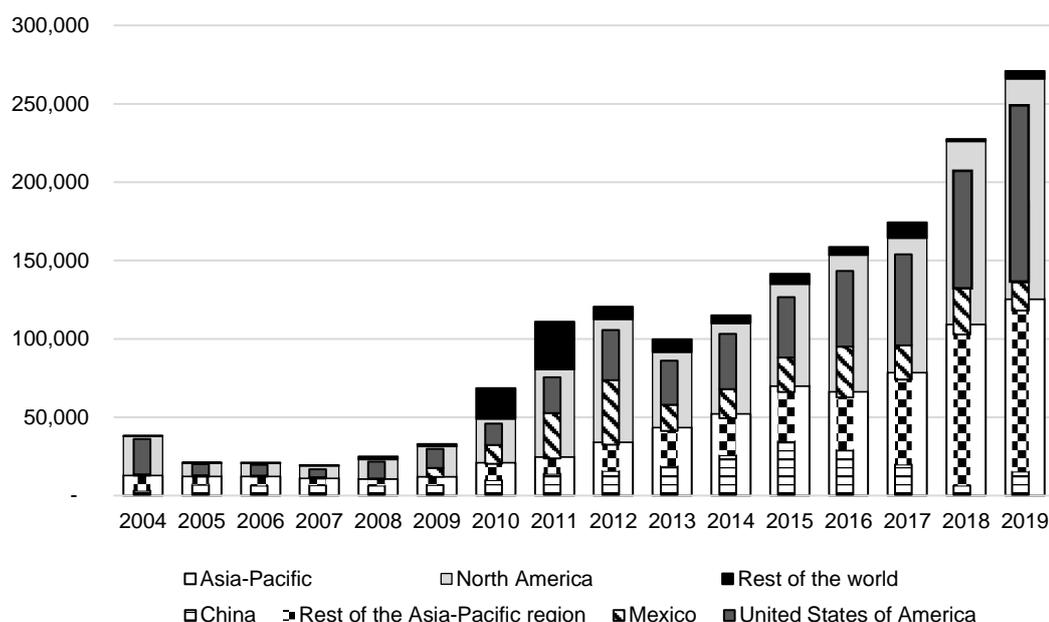
55. Methamphetamine in crystalline form has seen a sharp increase in popularity, particularly in South-East Asia. Preliminary data show that at least 63 tons of the drug were seized in the region in 2019, an increase of more than 50 per cent compared with the preceding year. Organized criminal groups have been able to provide better-quality methamphetamine products at cheaper prices, which indicates reduced production costs and a change in business models.¹⁸ The amount seized globally reached record levels between 2015 and 2019, peaking at over 270 tons in 2019, a tenfold increase over the previous 12 years (see figure XIII).

56. In North America, the amount of methamphetamine seized reached a record 117 tons in 2018; it rose again, to 140 tons, in 2019. This represents a 116 per cent increase in the amount seized in the region over a five-year period. The amount of methamphetamine seized in the United States reached the highest level on record for the sixth year in a row in 2019, at 120 tons, a 44 per cent increase compared with 2018. The quantity seized in Mexico decreased sharply, to 19.5 tons, the lowest in a decade.

¹⁸ UNODC, *Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia 2020*.

Figure XIII
Global seizures of methamphetamine, by region (2004–2019)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

57. In the Asia-Pacific region, the amount of methamphetamine seized continued to increase, reaching a record 125 tons in 2019 (see figure XIV). In East and South-East Asia, manufacture continues to intensify within and around the Golden Triangle, as well as nearby countries such as Cambodia and Viet Nam, indicating that manufacture of the drug is now consolidated in the lower Mekong region.¹⁹ Seizures of methamphetamine in Viet Nam rose to a high of 5.6 tons.

58. In 2019, a 39 per cent reduction was seen in the amount of methamphetamine seized in Thailand, to 39 tons, compared with 65 tons the previous year. As a result, the prominence of methamphetamine in the region diminished, from 50 per cent to 30 per cent of drugs seized. The amount of methamphetamine seized in Australia decreased by 29 per cent, to 3.4 tons, and in New Zealand it increased significantly, from 300 kg in 2018 to 1,796 kg in 2019. Japan reported seizures of 2.6 tons, a rise of 116 per cent compared with the previous year, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported a 79 per cent increase, from 37 tons to 66 tons.

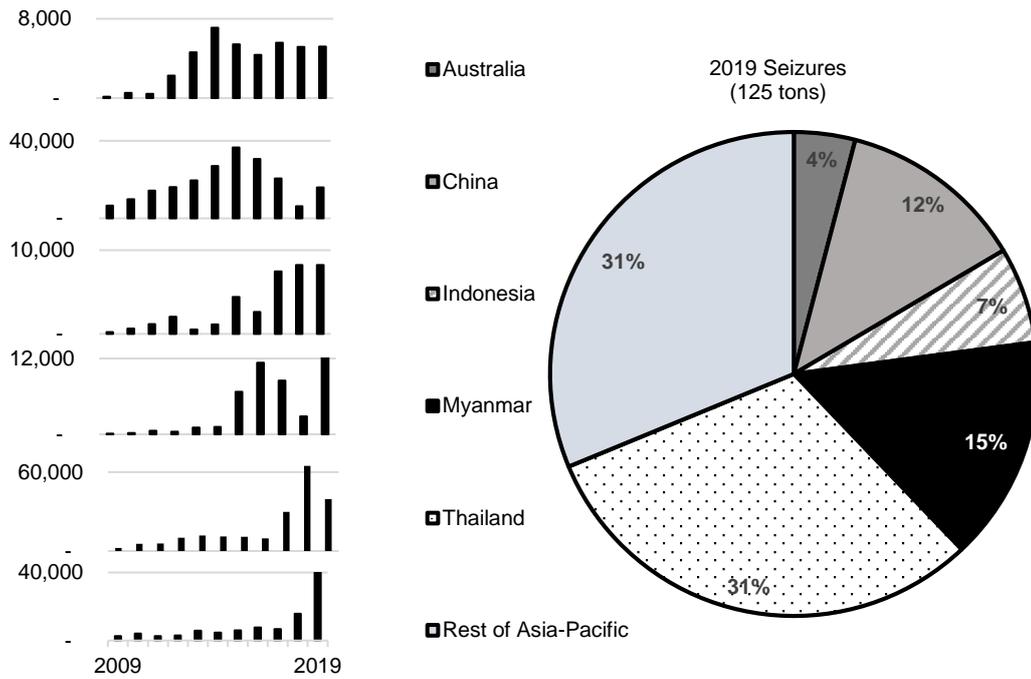
59. China and Myanmar reported increases in the amounts seized of 158 per cent and 579 per cent, respectively, to 15 tons in the former and 19 tons in the latter. In those countries, about 50 per cent of the amounts seized were of the variant known as "yaba", a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine popular in the region.

60. Iranian authorities reported seizing an average 2.7 tons of methamphetamine during the period 2010–2018; however, this rose significantly in 2019, to a total of 13.5 tons. Significant amounts were also reported seized in Spain (1,610 kg) and Turkey (1,042 kg).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Figure XIV
Geographical distribution of methamphetamine seizures in the Asia-Pacific region in 2019, and annual seizures in selected countries (2009–2019)^a

(Kilograms)



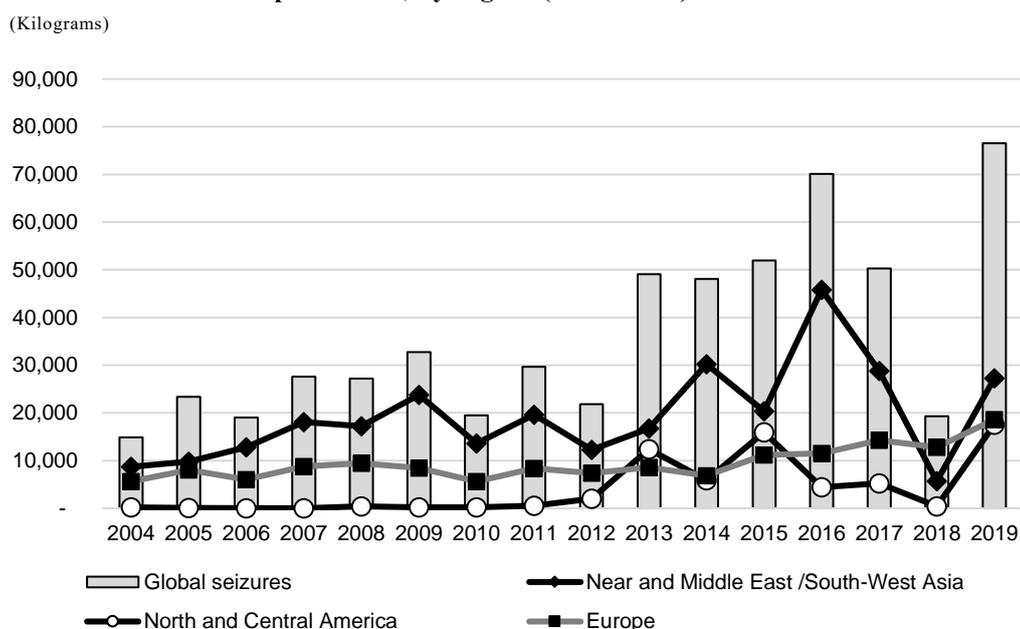
^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

Amphetamine

61. During 2019, a record amount of amphetamine was seized globally, with the following countries reporting their highest ever levels: Belgium (1,027 kg), Egypt (8,729 kg), Greece (9,739 kg), Guatemala (16,877 kg) and Saudi Arabia (24,789 kg). Austria, with a modest average seizure rate of 42 kg per year since 2010, reported a threefold increase, to 122 kg, and Hong Kong, China, in which the previous high of 38 kg had been reported in 2011, reported record seizures totalling 570 kg.

62. The Near and Middle East and South-West Asia continued to account for most of the amphetamine seized globally in 2019. The total amount seized that year amounted to 27 tons, following an uncharacteristic drop to 5.7 tons in 2018 (see figure XV). Saudi Arabia accounted for 91 per cent of that amount. Pakistan is of secondary prominence in that region; however, the amount reported seized by that country in 2019 stood at 1 ton, the lowest level recorded since 2014.

Figure XV
Global seizures of amphetamine, by region (2004–2019)^a



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

63. In Western and Central Europe, the amount of amphetamine seized rose markedly, to 15.2 tons, in 2019, up from 6.2 tons in 2018. While seizure data from the United Kingdom for 2019 were not available at the time of writing, the country had reported average seizures of 1,400 kg over the previous three years. Amphetamine manufacture in Europe takes place mainly in Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland, and to a lesser extent in Germany and the Baltic States.²⁰ Belgium recorded seizures of 1,027 kg of amphetamines in 2019, up from 18 kg in 2018. Greece reported seizing 9.7 tons in 2019 in the form of “captagon” tablets. Turkey also reported the seizure of 2,803 kg of “captagon” tablets in 2019. It is likely that those seizures in Greece and Turkey were of “captagon” manufactured in Europe for export, principally to markets in the Middle East.²¹

64. In North and Central America, a record 17.5 tons of amphetamines were reported seized in 2019 (see figure XV); however, 96 per cent of this amount was seized in Guatemala; only 642 kg were reported seized in the United States.

65. In Africa, seizures of “captagon” tablets amounting to 8.7 tons in Egypt accounted for 99.9 per cent of that continent’s total figure.

“Ecstasy”-type substances

66. The amounts of ecstasy”-type substances reported seized also reached the highest levels since an atypical peak observed in 2007 (see figure XVI). The global figure, 19 tons, represented a 64 per cent increase compared with the preceding year.

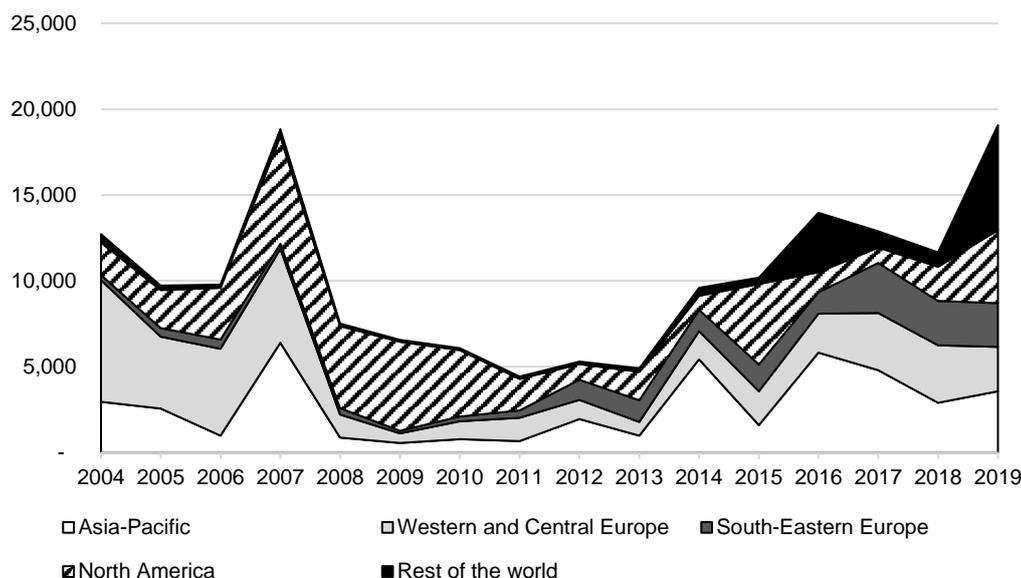
67. According to preliminary data for 2019, the amount of “ecstasy”-type substances seized in Western and Central Europe fell from 3.3 tons in 2018 to 2.6 tons. North America witnessed a second significant annual increase, of 115 per cent: 4.3 tons were seized, of which the amount seized in the United States comprised over 98 per cent. In 2019, the amount of “ecstasy”-type substances seized in Turkey was 2.6 tons, which represented 92 per cent of the overall amount seized in South-Eastern Europe.

²⁰ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, *European Drug Report 2020: Trends and Developments* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020).

²¹ Ibid.

Figure XVI
Global seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances, by region (2004–2019)^a

(Kilograms)



^a Data for 2019 are preliminary.

IV. Conclusions

68. The cultivation of cannabis plant continues in most countries worldwide and in all regions, while production of cannabis resin remains confined to a few countries. Globally, the amount of cannabis herb seized continues to remain dominated by the Americas.

69. After reaching unprecedented levels in 2017, global opium poppy cultivation again decreased in 2019, to the lowest level since 2012. 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, which had followed an increasing trend between 2014 and 2017, dropped for the second year in 2019, to 86 tons.

70. The total area under coca bush cultivation showed its first year-on-year reduction since 2013. The amount of cocaine seized globally continued to increase, to 1,388 tons in 2019.

71. The number of amphetamine-type stimulants seized reached record levels in 2019, showing a 59 per cent increase compared with the previous year's figures. The Asia-Pacific region and North America account for most of the methamphetamine seized globally; in general, the illicit manufacture of that substance remains close to those two consumer markets. The amounts of amphetamine, methamphetamine and “ecstasy”-type substances seized all reached all-time highs, indicating an increasing global problem.