

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

[H. E. Mr. Ali Hachani]

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome you to this briefing meeting with the International Narcotics Control Board.

As you know, illicit drugs are today produced and consumed in almost all regions of the world. Some 200 million persons, or approximately 5 per cent of the world population aged between 15 and 64 years, used drugs in 2005. The number of cannabis users is now close to 160 million. And the number of users of amphetamines, opium, heroin and cocaine has also increased. These figures are not encouraging. They are an indication of the critical situation in which we find ourselves.

The Economic and Social Council has always been aware of the challenges posed by illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution in respect of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. All these matters are global in their scope.

Since 1946, the Economic and Social Council has focused its attention on the war against drugs. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs was established in 1946 as one of the subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council and is responsible for mounting and coordinating the international effort to combat drugs.

For the past decade, the Economic and Social Council has held a high-level debate on international cooperation to combat illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution in the context of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and member States have stressed the critical importance of the cooperation of the authorities and departments concerned at the international, regional and subregional levels in the effort to counter this cross-border scourge effectively. In this respect, they have commended the indefatigable efforts of the United Nations Drug Control Programme established in 1991. In 1997 the Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme merged to form the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

As to the International Narcotics Control Board, which is also a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, it was established in 1968 by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and is the independent and quasi-judicial control body responsible for monitoring the implementation of international treaties on drug control.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Drug delinquency and drug abuse are largely the consequences of social exclusion, especially long-term unemployment. Children who lack a proper social environment, who live in poverty and who are faced with unemployment or underemployment are likely to become users and sellers of drugs. Accordingly, the Economic and Social Council invites the International Narcotics Control Board to be represented in Geneva in July at its high-level segment on the theme of employment and decent work.

It is clear that we are far from triumphing over the scourge of drugs. In spite of all the efforts we have made, the challenge remains considerable. Allow me to stress again that the Council will remain mobilized with a view to bringing about a satisfactory result.

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**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Council, I thank Professor Hamid Ghodse, President of the International Narcotics Control Board, for his statement, and I thank all those who have taken part in the discussion. We hope that this interaction will continue in the years to come and that the work of the Board will become better known here in New York, given the Board's importance as a Council body whose action deserves to be highlighted.

The meeting is adjourned.