

Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations

Joint report of the Director-General and the President of the International Narcotics Control Board

1. In response to resolution WHA58.22 on cancer prevention and control, the Director-General and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) examined the feasibility of a possible assistance mechanism that would facilitate the adequate treatment of pain using opioid analgesics, and concluded that such a mechanism would be feasible within the existing mandates and resources of both bodies. The findings of the assessment are contained in the joint report of the Director-General and the President of INCB.¹
2. As a result, WHO has prepared a framework² for an assistance programme – the Access to Controlled Medications Programme (“the Programme”) – in consultation with INCB.
3. Activities of the Programme will tackle all identified impediments to access, with a focus on regulation, attitude and knowledge. The Programme consists of two parts. Bearing in mind resolutions WHA58.22 and 2005/25 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and also INCB’s mandates stemming from the international drug control treaties, INCB has found that it can associate itself with the implementation only of Part 1 of the Programme. INCB has and will continue to provide its expertise to this part of the Programme.
4. In view of the overall responsibility of WHO regarding the use of medicines, and recognizing that major barriers to access to controlled medicines for different health conditions are common, the Programme will in addition to opioid analgesics focus in Part II on access to other medicines listed in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines made from substances controlled under the three international drug-control treaties.³
5. For various categories of controlled medicines, depending on the evidence for insufficient access, activities for improvement will be undertaken immediately, or surveys on the extent of the problem will be held first, after which it will be decided whether any further action is necessary. The

¹ http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/quality_safety/Joint-report-WHO-INCB.pdf.

² http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/quality_safety/AccessControlledMedicinesProgr.Framework.pdf; printed text available on request.

³ Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

Programme will address factors that cause impediments for access, but will not donate or finance the purchase of the medicines themselves.

6. The Programme will be implemented by WHO within its existing mandates arising out of relevant Health Assembly resolutions. Other interested parties are invited also to support the implementation of this Programme with a view to facilitating access to opioid analgesics and other controlled medicines for the treatment of disease worldwide.

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