

Ref.: C.L.2.2018

The World Health Organization (WHO) presents its compliments to Member States and Associate Members and has the pleasure of informing them that the 40th Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) will meet in Geneva from **4 to 8 June 2018**. The 40th ECDD will convene in a special session to review cannabis and cannabis-related substances on their potential to cause dependence, abuse and harm to health, and potential therapeutic applications. WHO will make recommendations to the UN Secretary-General on the need for and level of international control of these substances. Recommendations made from the 39th meeting can be found on the ECDD website (<http://www.who.int/mason/entity/medicines/news/2017/letter-DG-39thECDDrecommendations.pdf?ua=1>).

At its 126th session in January 2010, the Executive Board approved the publication “*Guidance on the WHO review of psychoactive substances for international control*” (EB126/2010/REC1, Annex 6)¹ which requires the Secretariat to request relevant information from Ministers of Health in Member States and to prepare a report for submission to the ECDD. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed to gather information on the legitimate use, harmful use, status of national control and potential impact of international control for each substance under evaluation. Member States are invited to collaborate, as in the past, in this process by providing accurate information as requested in the questionnaires and concerning substances under review.

It would be appreciated if a person from the Ministry of Health could be designated as the focal point responsible for coordinating answers to the questionnaires. A list of focal points designated by Member States for the 39th ECDD in November 2017 is attached. It is requested that if a focal point’s contact details (including email address) are to be added or amended, that Member States inform the Secretariat by **26 February 2018**. Any additions or amendments to focal point designations should be emailed to ecddsecretariat@who.int.

If no additions or amendments to focal point details are made by this date, the focal point from 2017 will be approached by the Secretariat for questionnaire completion. Where there is a competent National Authority under the International Drug Control Treaties, it is kindly requested that the questionnaires be completed in collaboration with such body.

¹ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB126-REC1/B126_REC1-en.pdf#page=58.

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Once the Secretariat has received the contact details, focal points will be given further instructions and direct access to an online questionnaire. The questionnaires will be analysed by the Secretariat and prepared as a report that will be published on the ECDD website (<http://www.who.int/medicines/access/controlled-substances/ecdd/en/>) prior to the 40th ECDD meeting. The provisional agenda for the meeting will also be made available in advance on the ECDD website.

Member States are also encouraged to provide any additional relevant information (unpublished or published) that is available to: **ecddsecretariat@who.int**. This information will be an invaluable contribution to the ECDD and all submissions will be treated as confidential.

The World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Member States and Associate Members the assurance of its highest consideration.

GENEVA, 30 January 2018

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