

## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

*"The scourge of drug trafficking, that favors violence and sows the seeds of suffering and death, requires of society as a whole an act of courage."*

**Pope Francis, Head of the Catholic church.**

### **Topic A: "Drug trafficking in the American Continent."**

Drug trafficking can be defined as the international illegal trade of drugs, considering their cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale. This global trade involves growers, producers, couriers, suppliers and dealers. Criminal networks traffic a range of drugs. While cocaine, heroin, and marijuana have long figured as primary trafficked products, in the recent past drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) have increased shipments of methamphetamines. As international borders become penetrable, the global consumption and abuse of these substances has risen and spread exponentially in the last decades.

The movement of Opium and Marijuana in Mexico and the US, alongside with the production of coca and coca-based goods in Peru marked the beginning of drug-trafficking in the continent. The continent's trafficking development can be separated into four periods:

1. From the late nineteenth century to 1945, Mexico controlled the illegal trade in opium and marijuana, and Peru dominated the mostly legal trade in cocaine products.
2. Throughout the second period (1945-1960s) traffickers emerged and trafficking began to organize into networks.
3. Colombia rose as the main producer in the continent in the third era (1960s-1984). Mexico's attempt to restrain the production of marijuana and Opium sent back some other drug trafficking countries such as Bolivia, Chile, and Cuba. This period is characterized by the exponential increase of violence as well.
4. Mexico regained its title as main drug producer in 1984. Meanwhile, drug-trade violence has kept escalating.

The trafficking of illicit drugs is a signature Latin American contribution to our globalized world. Today Colombia and Mexico are the main drug producers and distributors.

Throughout the pandemic, Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel has remained the leader of methamphetamine production and trafficking, massively producing the drugs to satisfy the growing demand in North America.

The US is at the heart of the international meth trade, in 2020 accounting for nearly half of worldwide drug interceptions and seizing roughly 140 tons of methamphetamine products according to the UNODC.

Colombia is currently in the top two coca bush producing countries in the world, as stated in the UNODC. A new annual survey conveyed by the committee reported that the total area harvested for coca leaves grew 43% in 2021, for in many rural parts of the country, coca crop growing became the only sustainable economic activity.

Far from achieving a drug-free world, decades of intense commitment to prohibition and the drug war have witnessed vast growth in the scale of illegal drug markets. It can be concluded that drug trafficking threatens good governance and fuels corruption, creating a vicious cycle where criminal justice institutions falter and the drug trade grows. Ordinary people become caught up in violence, extortion and drug addiction. Money laundering from drugs reduces economic growth and reinforces income inequality. Furthermore, many rural families have turned towards drug cropping, for it is the only job that can get them out of poverty. What's worse is that homicide, incarceration and communities' criminalisation rates keep rising in the American continent.

As previously mentioned, delaying discussing possible solutions will only allow the problem to grow. The current drug wars experienced across the American continent will continue to escalate, and the consequences may be far beyond human losses. Drug addictions, organized crime and corruption will rule across the countries, and it's the UNODC's responsibility to prevent such catastrophes from happening.

The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime's duty is to fight against illicit drug traffic. As such, it is expected that, throughout the sessions, the nations are able to develop a strategy to reduce drug trafficking in the American continent. With a comprehensive, balanced and coordinated approach that addresses both supply control and demand reduction, together with the appropriate application of the principle of shared responsibility, this committee urges the nations to seek the best resolution to this issue.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

- What are the main drug trafficking routes?
- In what ways are drugs currently trafficked?
- What are the main strategies used to detect drugs? Can they be improved? How?
- How can customs, airports and other international barriers improve their security measures to detect drug trafficking?
- What solutions could be proposed to cities and families that depend on the income of drug trafficking?
- How can other nations cooperate to come up with solutions without interfering with the sovereignty of the other country?
- How can drug addiction be reduced throughout the continent?
- Are there any drug regulations that have been implemented? Have they worked or not? Can they be improved?
- Should drug cropping become legal?

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