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**Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean**

Guatemala City, 4–7 October 2022

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures****Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation****Report of the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The present note provides information on regional cooperation initiatives and assistance in countering drug trafficking and related crimes provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on developments since the twenty-ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima from 7 to 11 October 2019.

**II. Precursor control****Colombia**

2. UNODC, through the Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring, has continued to provide technical advice to government authorities on the development of evidence-based strategies, through research and draft studies on specialized production infrastructures, and on trends in the use of chemical substances for the transformation process of illicit cocaine hydrochloride.

3. The Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring has continued to support the Government of Colombia in the chemical description of the psychoactive substance known as ketamine, which is marketed in a mixture with other types of synthetic drugs such as MDMA, allowing its dissemination within Latin America and the Caribbean.

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\* Available only in English, French and Spanish, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.

\*\* [UNODC/HONLAC/30/1](#).



**Brazil**

4. In Brazil, UNODC is supporting the structuring of the early warning system on drugs, which aims to rapidly identify the emergence of new psychoactive substances in the country through cooperation between different Brazilian institutions. In 2022, UNODC published the first report from the early warning system, presenting data and analysis on new psychoactive substances. The initiative is the work of the Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction, a partnership between UNODC, the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

**Central America and the Caribbean**

5. In January 2022, with technical support from the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and UNODC, El Salvador launched its early warning system on drugs and new psychoactive substances and has since sent out several alerts. With this, El Salvador joins Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay as countries with established early warning systems.

**Regional and subregional levels**

6. Through the safe handling and disposal of drugs and precursor chemicals programme, UNODC has contributed to the institutional strengthening of strategies to carry out the adequate and expeditious final disposal of drugs and chemical substances seized in Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru. That includes the design of software that allows the administration of institutional databases on chemical substances with an emphasis on the application of geographic information systems, the design of guidelines for disposal plans, the review of national disposal capacities and a normative review.

7. During the first quarter of 2022, UNODC supported training webinars on early warning systems and emerging drugs provided by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission in Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay, with technical presentations on the role of forensic laboratories for early warning systems.

**III. Legal assistance and anti-money-laundering****Colombia**

8. In Colombia, with the support of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, UNODC has delivered specialized training to increase actions to counter illicit financial flows from deforestation. One hundred and eighty civil servants have benefited from this effort and strengthened their knowledge of the detection and investigation of specific typologies of asset concealment and their possible relationships with illicit financial flows from deforestation in Meta, San José del Guaviare, Caquetá, and Putumayo. The training also supported coordination and collaboration within national and local authorities with environmental and law enforcement responsibilities, ensuring the sustainability of those activities.

9. UNODC supported the City Council of Bogotá in the design of a money-laundering and terrorist-financing risk management system, aimed at creating, expanding and improving the capacities of public officials of 72 district entities to prevent and combat such crimes in the field of public administration.

10. The UNODC office in Colombia held a commemoration of the National Day for the Prevention of Money-Laundering to raise awareness and strengthen actions to prevent and counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism in the public and private sectors.

### **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

11. Since 2021, the UNODC office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia has been working with and providing technical assistance to the Financial Investigations Unit, with a view to complying with the national risk assessment on money-laundering under the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America joint evaluations round and strengthening the institutions of the judicial system.

### **Ecuador and Peru**

12. Through a programme on solutions, training and advice for disposal of narcotics, UNODC has developed a legal assessment related to the disposal of seized drugs and chemical precursors and advice is being provided to implement its recommendations.

## **Central America and the Caribbean**

### **Panama**

13. The UNODC Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean has provided continuous technical assistance to institutions such as the Public Defence Institute and the Office of the Public Defence for Victims, related to the revision and update of its “management model”.

14. From 2019 through 2022, construction has been taking place of a public defence building for the judiciary in Chiriquí Province. The building is scheduled to be transferred to the judiciary in August 2022.

15. In 2020, UNODC completed the construction of a courthouse in the indigenous community of Llano Tugri, including all the relevant processes for bidding, coordination and inspections at the construction site. The building was transferred to the judiciary on 18 November 2020, enabling communities from remote areas to have access to justice.

16. In 2021, UNODC completed the construction of a courthouse in the indigenous community of Kusapin. The process included preparation of terms of reference, bidding, daily coordination and inspections at the construction site. The building was transferred to the judiciary on 17 May 2021.

17. In the period 2021–2022, UNODC offered nationwide online training on basic aspects of investigation with digital evidence to investigators of the Public Defence Office, assistants of the Public Defence Office for Victims, who carry out investigative work, and investigators of the Directorate of Judicial Investigation of the National Police.

18. A series of six nationwide webinars on the importance of judicial ethics in the development of just societies was held in 2021, with the objective of raising awareness among the actors of the judiciary branch on topics related to judicial ethics. At the same time, the curriculum of the course was shared with the Instituto Superior de la Judicatura for their instructors to replicate.

19. UNODC organized the XXIX Conference of Public Defence, jointly with the Instituto Superior de la Judicatura, at which topics related to money-laundering and asset forfeiture were discussed.

20. UNODC has facilitated the development and revision of procedure manuals, management indicators and a research unit was created to provide a quality legal representation service from the beginning of the process. Other tools and publications have also been produced: guides to the fundamentals of investigation, to the processing of facts at the scene, to verification of oral activities at the hearing and to the fundamentals of investigation with digital evidence.

**Other States**

21. In Honduras, UNODC is planning a general meeting of focal points of the Network of Asset Recovery of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, to be held in September 2022. The meeting will allow the focal points to exchange experiences and discuss common challenges on strategic issues to guarantee the sustainability of the Network in the future. It will also be an opportunity to present the results of international cooperation through the Network, not only with the Latin American region but with other regional networks and in particular with the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network.

22. Efforts are also being made and legal assistance is being provided, together with the Financial Intelligence Unit, to reform the Honduran money-laundering law. On 18 and 19 November 2020, a workshop aimed at the Superior Court of Accounts and the General Directorate of Public Procurement was held on the prevention of corruption in public procurement, at which the use of the methodology and guide on anti-corruption measures in public procurement and in the management of public finances and good practices for achieving compliance with article 9 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption was highlighted.

23. In Belize from 22 to 24 September 2021, a workshop on the Convention against Corruption was held for the private sector, aimed specifically at teachers' unions and focusing on the law contemplated in the Convention regarding the participation of society in the prevention of corruption and money-laundering.

24. On 29 October 2020 and 2021, UNODC in coordination with the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force commemorated the campaign for the International Day for the Prevention of Money-Laundering, with activities throughout the month of October, including the dissemination of awareness-raising messages to the public and private sectors.

25. On 9 December 2020 and 2021 UNODC, in coordination with counterparts in Central America and the Caribbean, commemorated International Anti-Corruption Day.

26. During 2021, four workshops on integrity and institutional ethics and preventing and combating corruption and money-laundering were developed, aimed at the authorities of the Financial Intelligence Units, the judicial investigation bodies, the Public Prosecutors' Offices, the police, forensic auditors and the Anti-Corruption Commissions in Costa Rica and Honduras.

27. In February 2021, two online training sessions of five days each were delivered on the UNODC anti-corruption training workshop for investigating and prosecuting techniques for cases of corruption, with the aim of enhancing the capacity to prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute and judge corruption and money-laundering crimes, aimed at prosecutors, judges, the police and analysts and investigators from the Financial Intelligence Units of the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

28. From June to October 2020, UNODC, in coordination with the school of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Dominican Republic, developed two five-week sessions of the diploma on corruption and money-laundering, aimed at prosecutors.

## **IV. Strengthening of national police forces and cooperation initiatives**

### **Colombia**

29. UNODC assisted the Government to improve the capacities of the armed and police forces for the collection, analysis and processing of data to register forced manual eradication actions. As a result, more than 330 officials increased their knowledge and ability to record eradication operations in compliance with the

parameters and standards for data to be included in the Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring.

30. Under the UNODC project on trafficking in drugs in Latin America (Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the office in Colombia conducted five technical workshops centred on the use of key indicators and technical knowledge as a tool to tackle illicit cocaine production and trafficking within the subregion, contributing to improving the understanding and capacities of more than 200 officers from police bodies.

31. In partnership with the World Customs Organization, UNODC leads the implementation of the Container Control Programme in Colombia. In that regard, the capacity of the port control units was increased to enhance effective cargo control and improve integrated border management. As a result, the detection rates of illicit products from the containers examined were improved, based on profiling and risk assessment, as well as the recording of 155 cases associated with drug trafficking in the “ContainerComm” application, for a total seizure of 60,218 kg of cocaine, 886.1 kg of marijuana and 330 m<sup>3</sup> of round wood, equivalent to 145 logs.

32. UNODC has increased the capacities of police officers to provide real-time information, data and reports to improve the capacity of the institutional sources of environmental information. That has allowed environmental, defence and justice sector authorities to effectively disrupt and impact criminal structures and other actors behind deforestation, money-laundering and drug-trafficking offences in areas of ecological significance in Colombia, strengthening the interoperability and collaboration between authorities involved in the prevention and prosecution of crimes.

#### **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

33. In July 2021, a delegation of prosecutors and counter-narcotics police from the Plurinational State of Bolivia visited Asunción and held a meeting with their counterparts to discuss emblematic drug trafficking cases between the two countries, as well as more broadly in South America and Europe.

34. In 2021 UNODC and the Plurinational State of Bolivia signed a project document, funded by the European Union, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Bolivian strategy against the trafficking of controlled substances and control of the expansion of coca crops for the period 2021–2025.

35. In June 2022, UNODC promoted an online meeting to exchange experiences and knowledge between Bolivian and Panamanian police officers on cybercrime, drug trafficking and organized crime.

#### **Peru**

36. Under the Global Programme on Cybercrime, 30 police agents specialized in drug investigations and prosecutors countering money-laundering and organized crime from Peru and Paraguay were trained on criminal investigations in cyberspace, cryptocurrencies, blockchain and digital forensics. The Global Programme has strengthened capacities to investigate the online trafficking of synthetic drugs and synthetic opioids through an intensive training of 55 hours per country. The main goal was to address the whole cycle of drug-trafficking investigation in cyberspace from the initial phases of a case to trial. During these phases, different investigation tools and techniques are merged from a legal and technical aspect to achieve sound cases that could effectively lead to detentions, disruption of online trafficking and judicial rulings.

#### **Brazil**

37. In 2022, UNODC started the implementation of a pilot project for monitoring the illicit drug market in Brazil, aimed at building and implementing a methodology for monitoring that market with a focus on price information, inspired by the model

used in Colombia by the Colombian National Police and UNODC. The initiative is part of the Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction, a partnership between UNODC, the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management and UNDP. The results of the project will allow the construction, jointly with Brazilian law enforcement agencies, of a broader and more diversified monitoring system for the illicit drug market.

38. In Brazil, UNODC is implementing a law enforcement assistance programme to reduce tropical deforestation and has delivered training and technical assistance to the relevant authorities to identify and investigate financial crimes related to forestry.

39. UNODC has continued to work in partnership with the authorities on public safety and police effectiveness in the State of Rio Grande do Sul and in 2022, organized an international workshop on the theme of “Best practices in the integrity of the use of force: the experience of the police activity compliance index of Rio Grande do Sul”.

### **Central America and the Caribbean**

40. From May 2021 to May 2022, under the Global Programme on Cybercrime and the programme on strengthening criminal investigation and criminal justice cooperation along drug trafficking routes (CRIMJUST), 104 investigators and 88 prosecutors from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay were trained in open-source investigations, cross-border requests for digital evidence and due diligence in the acquisition and examination of digital evidence in the context of investigating cyberenabled illicit drug trafficking.

41. UNODC has enabled capacity-building through a series of workshops for police authorities, prosecutors, judges and forensic medicine officials in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. UNODC has trained investigators and prosecutors from those countries at the police drug laboratories in Tolima, Colombia, on cocaine production.

42. During the period August 2019 to March 2022, UNODC trained 1,140 investigators from police units and prosecution offices on specific cybercrime and cyber-enabled investigations from Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and on digital evidence requests, cybercrime and cybersecurity basics and prosecution, along with 175 digital forensic examiners, who were trained on digital evidence reports in those countries. UNODC also strengthened the capacities of 335 judges in the same countries, who were trained on basic cybercrime and handling of digital evidence.

43. UNODC provided hardware and specialized equipment in Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala for the efficient functioning of their Cybercrime Units. That allowed for the refurbishment of the Cybercrime Unit of the National Civil Police of Guatemala and the establishment of regional technical assistance units for the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Guatemala. In addition, the equipment and software provided in Belize allowed for the creation of a cybercrime forensic laboratory within the Police Department.

44. UNODC continued to support the national authorities in El Salvador in implementing urgent action mechanisms for the disappearance of persons and strengthened their technical capacity to investigate forced disappearances related to organized crime, including operative and forensic areas. UNODC also provided technical assistance to El Salvador in the development of a task force initiative against forced disappearances that was integrated into the 14 departments of the country by the Attorney General’s Office, and the National Civil Police.

45. In 2021, as part of Operation Azure (an operation to seize cocaine at airports), judges, prosecutors, forensic medicine officials and investigators from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama were trained on topics such as the use of the Raman Tru-Narc handheld narcotics analyser; use of

crime scene equipment; safe handling of synthetic opioids; controlled deliveries; guidelines for following, profiling and detecting packages containing illicit substances; and the provision of forensic evidence in synthetic opioid cases.

46. In El Salvador, UNODC contributed to the National Public Security Academy course on higher studies in security for congressperson, high-ranking government officials and police officers, with a presentation on strategic communication. It also contributed to the special anti-gang investigations course run by the International Law Enforcement Academy for law enforcement officials of Latin America and the Caribbean by presenting on the subject of gangs as a threat to the security of States.

47. UNODC has organized several investigative case forums, with the support of the Network of Drug Prosecutors of Ibero-America, in which countries of the region have participated, including Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. In February 2022, the Office of the Superior Prosecutor specialized in drug crimes of Panama requested UNODC support in generating contacts between the Prosecutor's Office and the port of Valencia, Spain. In June, support was provided to the Prosecutor's Office with an online forum, during which the opportunity to generate contacts between the Prosecutor's Office and the port authorities in Valencia was provided.

48. UNODC has delivered workshops on ethics and integrity directed to police units in the Dominican Republic and Panama, in synergy with the Airport Communication Project, the Seaport Cooperation Programme and the Container Control Programme. The workshops were entirely practical and used concrete cases, offered in synergy with the anti-corruption and criminal procedure reform programmes in Panama. In 2021, UNODC conducted several asset-recovery workshops for countries in the region, in synergy between the UNODC regional offices for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone and for Central America and the Caribbean in Panama.

49. UNODC has provided capacity-building enhancement through continuous training for members of the Panamanian police forces, including training in the areas of criminal intelligence, ethics for intelligence services, prospective police intelligence and investigations in the accusatory criminal system.

#### **Regional and subregional levels**

50. In Brazil and Paraguay, UNODC is implementing a project to promote the use of innovative and inter-agency practices to enhance prison management in line with international minimum standards, with a focus on addressing the challenges posed by organized crime in prisons, including drug trafficking operated from within prisons. In 2022, the project held an international conference on national and international good practices for addressing organized crime within prisons, with the attendance of authorities from 22 Brazilian states, including police forces.

51. On 24 February 2022, UNODC conducted an online forum for forensic laboratories on the theme "Analysis of seized tablets: challenges and solutions for forensic laboratories". Forensic experts from laboratories in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and the UNODC Drugs, Laboratory and Scientific Services Branch shared experiences, good practices and lessons learned in the analysis of synthetic drug tablets with 91 counterparts from all over the region. UNODC has provided 28 Tru-Narc handheld electronic drug analysers and training on their use for forensic labs and law enforcement personnel in 16 countries in the region, strengthening their synthetic drugs detection capabilities (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago).

## V. Border control

### Colombia

52. Through the Container Control Programme and with the participation of the Colombian customs, anti-narcotics, sanitary and phytosanitary authorities with a presence in the port terminals of Barranquilla, Buenaventura, Cartagena and Santa Marta, and in the National Police Orientation Centre, a total of 54 training events have been conducted, increasing the capacities of officials with responsibilities for the control and inspection of containers. Specialized equipment has also been provided to support inspection processes and the use of online platforms for the exchange of information with other authorities in the region has been promoted. Technical cooperation has led to at least 323 seizures of narcotics in different port terminals.

53. Supported by Germany, UNODC in Colombia has developed an assessment of what is needed to face transnational organized crime in the border area between Colombia and Ecuador and understand the trends and dynamics of transnational organized crime in those strategic zones. The analysis showed that the institutional presence was concentrated on operational actions, such as control and judicialization. Also, violent acts against the civil population have increased due to the presence of armed criminal organizations aiming at territorial control. As regards drug trafficking, the assessment revealed that illicit economies influence local legal markets, hindering the socioeconomic development of the population in border areas.

### Brazil

54. In 2022, UNODC co-organized the first international seminar on narcotrafficking through ports and maritime vessels, in partnership with the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management. The event aimed to promote inter-agency cooperation through a broad discussion on strengthening prevention, control, inspection and repression of transnational crimes in maritime and riverine environments, such as ports, rivers, the Brazilian coast and maritime borders. The seminar gathered together participants from Brazilian and international security forces, such as police attachés, Brazilian and foreign police officers, and representatives of embassies and international organizations.

55. UNODC is implementing a project to promote cooperation between Brazil, Peru and Colombia on combating drug trafficking in the Amazon region, through holding exchange visits, workshops and training for Brazilian Colombian and Peruvian law enforcement agencies.

### Central America and the Caribbean

56. UNODC has established a Port Control Unit in Freeport (Bahamas) and Nassau and consolidated other Caribbean port Control Units in the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname. As a result of the engagement of the Dominican authorities in the Container Control Programme, in October 2021 the existing memorandum of understanding was extended to new institutions and counterparts in the Dominican Republic who will fully participate in Container Control Programme activities in the future. In support of the Maritime Operations Centres and maritime and air forces of the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, UNODC is establishing a subregional operational network to enhance border management. Draft memorandums of understanding for maritime law enforcement cooperation and search and rescue are currently under review for subsequent approval by the line ministries. Through this effort, maritime domain awareness platforms have been provided, thanks to the United States Southern Command and Skylight, the platform for maritime domain awareness provided by the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence, and over 15 operators trained on their use.



57. New port control units have also been established in the ports of Puerto Plata and Manzanillo, Dominican Republic, and on the land border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti in Dajabon.

58. In Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, activities have been focused on the re-engagement of local authorities with the Container Control Programme and renovation or re-energization of the signed memorandum of understanding. Meetings with all the counterparts and the relevant ministries have been held. A new memorandum of understanding has been forwarded and is currently being discussed.

## **VI. Regional networks and exchange of information**

### **Regional and subregional levels**

59. UNODC participated in the 2022 annual meeting of the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies, at which the discussion and debate was centered on the implementation of strategic actions to improve the design and application of policies related to reduction in the demand for and supply of drugs in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, guaranteeing that they are based on evidence, public health, gender and human rights.

## **VII. Trend analysis and studies on drug trafficking and related issues**

### **Colombia**

60. In July 2021, UNODC released the annual coca survey, according to which, as of 31 December 2020 the area of coca cultivation was 143,000 hectares. A reduction of 7 per cent was recorded, compared to 154,000 hectares in 2019, consolidating the downward trend that started in 2017. Despite this reduction, the area under coca cultivation is three times higher than in 2013, the lowest point in the historical series.

61. UNODC contributed to the development of technical studies to understand the trends and dynamics of illicit cocaine hydrochloride production. In 2021, the production and coca crops yield study for the Putumayo-Caquetá region was delivered, including an analysis of alkaloid content and purity, and the characterization of production infrastructures and productive enclaves.

62. UNODC has assisted territories affected by opium poppy cultivation in Colombia and contributed to the development of methodologies for collecting and analysing data. A sampling study was undertaken to describe lots, sowing methods, harvest yields and the use of agrochemicals.

63. In terms of promoting gender equality in vulnerable populations, UNODC has included a cross-cutting approach to its studies and analysis conducted in the territories affected by the presence of illegal economies. In partnership with the Ministry of Justice, it has launched a joint study on women's participation in the drug-trafficking chain, making it possible to understand the participation, the gaps and the effects experienced by women involved in illicit activities, allowing the problem to be visible from a different perspective and thus offering inputs for the design of differentiated public intervention policies aimed at addressing the specific needs of women according to their territories. As a consequence, an event on the national and international experiences of women and drug trafficking was held, consisting of thematic discussions on the drug supply chain, including the role of rural women in illicit crop production, the involvement of women in trafficking and distribution networks and the difficulties experienced by women in accessing justice, and drug abuse from a gender perspective.

64. Another exercise to assess the impact of drug production and trafficking on vulnerable populations in Colombia was conducted by UNODC and the Ministry of

Justice. Through the development of a differential approach strategy, the Inga and Awá indigenous communities in Putumayo enhanced their capacities to counter drug problems. As a result of a participative and constructive process, both communities designed a methodological proposal to understand the impact caused by drugs in their territories, as well as ways to address this problem from their own knowledge and traditions, thus seeking to strengthen the horizons of good living and community life.

#### **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

65. In May 2020 and December 2021, UNODC presented annual reports on the validation of information on the destruction of drugs seized in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

#### **Ecuador**

66. UNODC has developed the *sistema de alerta temprana* (early warning system) report, producing baseline information, and has collected and analysed data on illicit cultivation and the dynamics of drug trafficking and deforestation, in particular deforestation caused by illegal logging and mining.

#### **Brazil**

67. The Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction is the result of a partnership between UNODC, the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management UNDP. The Centre contributes information on the supply of illicit drugs in Brazil by preparing and disseminating studies on trends and the threats posed by drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. In 2021, the Centre published a strategic study entitled “COVID-19 and drug trafficking in Brazil: the adaptation of organized crime and the actions of police forces during the pandemic”, which was referred to by the Brazilian authorities as a turning point in the national drug policy. The Centre has also published thematic bulletins on topics that are relevant to the national authorities, such as the management of assets from drug trafficking and the early warning system on drugs.

68. In 2022, UNODC published research mapping the network of services for the treatment of drug use disorders in the State of Pernambuco. The research methodology was applied outside Europe for the first time and involved 1,900 teams from the Psychosocial Care Network and therapeutic communities in 184 municipalities. The results will be used to inform policymaking related both to addressing the drug problem and to promoting crime prevention.

#### **Mexico**

69. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico is implementing a project entitled “Monitoring system of illicit crops in the Mexican territory”, which provides reliable information on opium gum yield and production through the application of a scientifically proven and internationally accepted method. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Navy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Federal Prosecutor’s Office and has been extended until May 2023 to continue activities to estimate the total area of poppy fields in Mexico, the opium yield of the poppies cultivated and a chemical analysis to determine the concentration of morphine in opium gum.

70. Under the project on strengthening the process of data collection in eradication activities of illicit crops, UNODC has implemented a system to collect and transfer information in real time regarding poppy and marijuana fields that have been destroyed. The project was implemented together with the Federal Prosecutor’s Office and the Ministry of Defence. After training more than 600 operatives on the use of the system in the field and collecting data and evidence for more than 2,800 hectares of illicit crops destroyed, UNODC transferred the operation of the system to the Government in 2022. The system is aligned with the national protocol for the destruction of illicit crops.

### Regional and subregional levels

71. In October 2021 in Cartagena, Colombia, the subregional cooperation strategy to strengthen interdiction of trafficking in drugs and chemical precursors was approved by the authorities of the countries concerned. The strategy is based on the country strategies for institutional strengthening in the interdiction of drugs and chemical precursors in Costa Rica and El Salvador and the drug policy of Colombia, in which a series of cooperation and information exchange actions have been prioritized, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the institutions responsible for controlling trafficking in illicit drugs and chemical precursors in Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador, through South-South cooperation.

72. In March 2022, under the UNODC opioid strategy, the UNODC Global Programme on Cybercrime, in cooperation with the UNODC Drugs, Laboratory and Scientific Services Branch and with the funding of the Government of the United States of America, presented a threat analysis of the online trafficking of synthetic drugs and synthetic opioids in Latin America and the Caribbean. The report assesses the online trafficking of synthetic drugs and synthetic opioids and the linkages with transnational organized crime groups, and discusses their ability to traffic synthetic opioids on the clearnet and the darknet. The anonymity provided by heavily-encrypted darknet marketplaces and forums undoubtedly makes investigation more challenging; however, detection, attribution, enforcement and prosecution remain possible. The analysis shows that criminal activities conducted over both the clearnet and the darknet are predictable and preventable. The UNODC analysis will inform policymakers, as well as supporting law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and providing opportunities for focused crime prevention.

## VIII. Demand reduction initiatives

### Colombia

73. In 2019, UNODC assisted the Government by increasing the understanding of trends in drug demand and other related problems in Bogotá, demonstrated by the development of diagnoses and the characterization of injectable and *bazuco* drug use. Similarly, UNODC supported the strengthening of the Colombian Observatory on Drugs, the national early warning system and that of Bogotá.

74. UNODC designed and technically supported the implementation of models, guidelines and protocols to strengthen prevention, risk and harm reduction and treatment programmes aimed at reducing and raising awareness of drug demand in schools and community and institutional environments (including prisons). Accordingly, more than 50 technical tools and documents were produced to increase the participation of professionals, community leaders, fathers, mothers, young people and teachers.

75. In partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Law, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute and local government, UNODC designed and implemented evidence-based strategies and programmes on drug use prevention and associated factors. By means of promoting family bonds and positive parenting guidelines, life and leadership skills for young people and prevention strategies with indigenous and ethnic communities, around 21,000 community actors strengthened their capacities. In addition, selective prevention strategies were conducted for adolescents in conflict with the law, for people deprived of liberty and for the post-prison population.

76. UNODC supported the strengthening of the capacities of 23,000 institutional actors in drug demand reduction from the education, health, justice, police and prison sectors, who participated in advocacy actions and technical assistance and exchanged successful experiences.

**Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

77. UNODC is supporting the national authorities in the implementation of municipal drug use prevention plans and providing technical assistance for the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of people with drug addictions.

**Brazil**

78. In 2021, UNODC held an online training session on the nature, prevention and treatment of disorders associated with drug use, aimed at Brazilian policymakers. The event was organized in partnership with the National Secretariat for Drug Care and Prevention and gathered public policy managers as well as federal and state government representatives, including 30 state coordinators for drug policies.

79. In 2022, UNODC initiated the implementation of a project with the National Secretariat for Drug Care and Prevention aimed at implementing a national system for the prevention of the use of alcohol and other drugs, based on a national coordination mechanism and communication and advocacy actions and on strengthening drug use prevention programmes, including the elaboration of a prevention course focused on the school environment.

80. UNODC is implementing a project to strengthen pretrial detention hearings in partnership with the National Council of Justice. In the scope of the initiative, social protection networks in the context of such hearings were created or improved, addressing the vulnerabilities of certain prisoners, including drug users. The project has also delivered training on a national scale on HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis in the prison system. In the State of Sergipe, the project is creating specific flows of care and referrals for prisoners with HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis, which are frequently associated with the use of drugs.

81. In 2021 UNODC provided technical assistance to the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, with a view to improving the quality of treatment and care for drug use disorders. That assistance included training on quality assurance based on UNODC international standards for drug treatment, assessments of quality criteria, analysis of the quality systems in each country and development of a road map for quality improvement; a tool to map the services and treatment centres for drug abuse in those countries; the development of a national study on drug use and related factors; technical assistance on the methodology for elaborating a drug demand reduction strategy; technical assistance for a proposal to strengthen a public health approach to the treatment of drug use disorders; and technical assistance for the revision of the guide and protocols for the treatment and care of people taking psychoactive substances.

**Mexico**

82. In 2022, UNODC held four workshops with local policymakers on the nature, prevention and treatment of drug use disorder in order to increase access to quality, evidence-based treatment and care and rehabilitation services.

**IX. Alternative development****Colombia**

83. Together with the German Agency for International Cooperation and the Government of Colombia, the UNODC country office in Colombia implemented initiatives centred on promoting environmental protection practices within the framework of the alternative development programme. Through the payment for environmental services scheme and the strengthening of productive initiatives focused on green businesses, 60 families located in forest reserve areas will benefit.

84. UNODC also continued to support government authorities in the implementation of inclusive business models with a gender approach aimed at

empowering and increasing income opportunities for 600 female former coca collectors and their families, which are linked to the National Integral Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops.

85. In Antioquia, UNODC is also promoting alternative development strategies with a gender perspective, including actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation led by women. In that context, through capacity-building training offered to more than 250 women across 40 municipalities, economic empowerment and the transformation of the living conditions of women and their families are expected.

86. UNODC and the private sector are also making joint efforts to strengthen the productivity, competitiveness and marketing capacities of the Kankawarwa, Yeiwin, Bunkuamake, Singuney and Windiwa indigenous communities, who are dedicated to the production of sugarcane. Thanks to the joint efforts, the productive and commercial capacities of those communities are expected to increase, as well as the food security of more than 600 families who were previously affected by the presence of illicit crops.

87. Land titling has been a key factor in moving communities towards the legal economy and the rule of law in Colombia. In that regard, UNODC has continued to assist land access efforts in cooperation with the National Land Agency, through the formalization of property titles in territories with illicit crops. As part of the programme, more than 600 families have benefited from legal assistance in regulating their land titles.

#### **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

88. UNODC continues to support Bolivia in its efforts to promote alternative development, in particular in the municipality of La Asunta. In July 2019, managers of the French company Malongo visited La Asunta to gather information about coffee plantations and explore the establishment of commercial partnerships. As a result, 13.6 tons of coffee were exported to Europe. In 2022, Malongo managers again visited La Asunta to sign a trade agreement with the Federation of Agricultural Producers of Coffee of La Asunta for the export of coffee to France over a five-year period.

## **X. Conclusions**

89. The work with source countries to reduce the production of illicit crops requires continued efforts to strengthen national alternative development policies and strategies, which are key factors in bringing legal income generation to vulnerable communities. Countries in the region have requested UNODC to continue to support efforts to voluntarily substitute crops, formalize land titles and collect and process baseline surveys to better understand the social, economic, environmental and institutional factors at play in territories affected by illicit crops. Most of that support is financed by source countries, which ensures ownership and sustainability. However, financial support from international partners is needed to enhance their actions and results.

90. Continued support should be provided to the Governments of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru for the estimation of cocaine production figures and for conducting specialized studies on the quantities of coca leaf and chemical inputs required for the production of cocaine. Such efforts have demonstrated the relevance of monitoring illicit crops combined with work on the chemical description of new psychoactive substances. Efforts of that type need to be reinforced as part of regional efforts to address the illicit drugs problem.

91. Member States and UNODC need to continue to foster intraregional and interregional dialogues on the production and consumption of and trafficking in illicit substances.

92. Sustained intraregional cooperation is needed to develop more cooperation to tackle synthetic drugs and identify, trace and combat money-laundering.

93. Continued support is needed to reinforce the enhancement of capacity through the training of practitioners, such as investigators, prosecutors and judges, on key issues, including money-laundering resulting from drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption and forest crime. Capacity of that type can be reinforced through platforms that facilitate the exchange of intelligence such as the Regional Counter-Narcotics Intelligence Centre based in Santa Cruz, Plurinational State of Bolivia, and initiatives facilitating police and border control cooperation, such as through the Container Control Programme and the Airport Communication Project.

94. Considering the relevance of evidence-based drug policies and programmes that incorporate human rights and public health, efforts to support the design and implementation of national strategies should continue and be expanded further.

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