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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 4 of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean****Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean****Note by the Secretariat**

1. 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, adopted a set of recommendations following the consideration by working groups of the issues set out below.
2. In accordance with established practice, a questionnaire on the implementation of those recommendations was dispatched to Governments on 6 June 2022, together with information relating to the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, with a deadline for replies of 13 July 2022.
3. The present document contains a brief summary of the information provided to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) by Governments in reply to that questionnaire.
4. As at 8 August 2022, replies had been received from the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Spain and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). These replies have been summarized in the present document.

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

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



**Issue 1. Intelligence-led policing based on criminal intelligence collection, collation, analysis and sharing at the national, regional and international levels**

**Recommendation 1**

**Governments are encouraged to develop or update training materials and tools on criminal intelligence analysis and practice regular training in this area, specifically by the specialized law enforcement training and education institutions. Training programmes might be focused on various levels, that is, for managers, front-line officers and intelligence analysts.**

5. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the International Centre for Specialization in Anti-Narcotics Intelligence and Police Investigation became fully operational in 2022. It provides training to police officers on the collection, processing and analysis of data and intelligence.

6. The Colombian anti-drug academy runs diploma courses on, inter alia, strategic counter-narcotics intelligence. Academic programmes are offered at a school for intelligence and counter-intelligence of the National Police of Colombia and the Regional Anti-Drug Intelligence School of the Americas (ERCAIAD).

7. In Costa Rica, training activities have been conducted with the Police Community of the Americas, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the Ibero-American School of Police, as well as in cooperation with the United States of America, Colombia and Costa Rica, among others. Those training activities have focused on the analysis of intelligence, strategic analysis and operations analysis. At the Judicial School, a module on police intelligence was delivered to 200 officials in 11 courses (2020–2022).

8. In El Salvador, the Counter-Narcotics Division of the National Civil Police has an ongoing training plan that covers topics related to criminal intelligence for personnel in the area of analysis and included personal with investigative functions and in special operations. Fifty-one training events, for 247 staff members, were organized in 2021.

9. In France, criminal intelligence is collected, collated analysed and shared at the national, regional and international levels, for example through the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and a number of liaison offices of France, for example in the Caribbean. Training is differentiated according to specific job functions and levels. All customs officials also receive periodic training in intelligence analysis.

10. In Guatemala, an advanced specialization course in criminal analysis was developed by the General Subdirector for Studies and Doctrine of the National Civil Police, with the support of UNODC in Guatemala.

11. Officers of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit of Guyana and the Guyana Police Force participated in the period 2021–2022 in approximately 22 courses, including the international basic intelligence-gathering analysis training (El Salvador) and national training events offered by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

12. In Honduras, the ongoing capacity-building of all police staff is fostered with support from police training schools and other national or foreign agencies involved in law enforcement and criminal prosecution.

13. In Mexico, according to the records kept by the Office of the Attorney General (specifically, the Professional Ministerial, Police and Expert Career Service), over the last three years, 47 educational activities relating to the analysis of digital information and intelligence, cybercrime and social media and their impact have been delivered. The National Institute of Criminal Science is the sub-body of the Office of the Attorney General tasked with providing higher education and technical and vocational training, conducting academic, scientific and technological research and contributing to the development of public policies on criminal justice and public security.

14. In Nicaragua, the Institute of Higher Studies of the Walter Mendoza Martínez Police Academy conducts annual training programmes for new and regular staff specialized in the investigation of drug trafficking offences, for both managerial and front-line officers.

15. In Peru, the General Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior carried out 29 training activities for different areas and institutions in the period from 2020 to June 2021, reaching 418 officials. The National Police, through the schools of its relevant specialized directorates, provided training course on intelligence and investigation to the units specialized in drug trafficking and related offences.

16. Portugal has over recent years ensured specialized and continuous training for professionals in gathering, analysing and processing criminal information with a view to preventing and fighting drug trafficking and associated money-laundering.

17. In Spain, according to the country's training policy, in-person and online activities are provided for heads of units and technical personnel on various drug-related issues including intelligence. National databases have been enhanced with a view to gathering strategic intelligence.

18. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Centre for Advanced Studies on Drugs held, in 2021, 50 training activities on drug supply and demand for 2,600 individuals from various public sector bodies, civil security groups and institutions of the public health system.

## **Recommendation 2**

**Governments should regularly undertake the necessary steps to support trust-building initiatives between law enforcement agencies at the national, regional and international levels, to facilitate exchanges of actionable criminal intelligence.**

19. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the General Directorate of the Bolivian Special Force to Fight Drug Trafficking established channels of communication with its counterparts at the regional and international levels for the exchange of information and intelligence. It participates actively in the implementation of bilateral and regional agreements.

20. In Colombia, the exchange of criminal intelligence is mainly related to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. Strong inter-agency relationships are in place with various other countries, and joint operations have been successful. There is a need to improve inter-agency communication channels and mechanisms for sharing feedback and lessons learned.

21. In Costa Rica, the police forces attached to the Ministry of Public Security regularly carry out joint operations with the national law enforcement bodies involved in combating crime. At the regional level, information is shared through the Latin American and Caribbean Police Intelligence Community, technical subcommissions of INTERPOL and the Commission of Police Chiefs and Directors of Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Colombia.

22. In 2021, the Counter-Narcotics Division of the National Civil Police of El Salvador sent 86 requests to counterparts regarding drug-related information; to date, 47 requests have been submitted in 2022. In 2021, El Salvador responded to six requests, and have responded to one request to date in 2022. El Salvador participates in the UNODC global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme.

23. The French Anti-Narcotics Office (OFAST), established on 1 January 2020, brings together police officers, gendarmes, customs officers and prosecutors/judges under a single body. A European network of customs focal points was also established. The Mission for the Control of Chemical Precursors (MNCPC) works closely with the National Directorate of Intelligence and Customs Investigations and OFAST. An

investigation by MNCPC in 2021 led to the dismantling by police of a clandestine laboratory in Montpellier.

24. In Guatemala, criminal intelligence has been exchanged between a number of national bodies and also with international intelligence agencies. The Public Prosecution Service has concluded an agreement for the establishment of an inter-institutional counter-narcotics centre in Guatemala. An international agreement has been concluded between Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico, which enabled intelligence-sharing and operational coordination, culminating in Operation Harpoon of Neptune. The first regional meeting of prosecutors for drug-related offences, held in November 2019, brought together prosecutors from nine countries. In June 2020, a virtual follow-up meeting was held.

25. In Guyana, law enforcement agencies carry out community outreach programmes and collaborative efforts with governmental and non-governmental agencies to regain societal trust. At the international level, various ministries addressing drug supply and drug demand have engaged in regional and international conferences and seminars.

26. Honduras promotes cooperation at different levels in order to obtain better intelligence data and results through joint work.

27. In Mexico, the Office of the Attorney General actively participates in the Ibero-American Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors of the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors.

28. Nicaragua, through various inter-institutional and international bodies, makes efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination for enhanced information exchange.

29. In Peru, the General Directorate for Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior maintains a continuous information exchange with intelligence agencies in México, Brazil and Colombia, among other countries. The responsible divisions regularly exchange information with the national intelligence system and with other national and international bodies. Further, the National Police has signed international treaties and agreements with various countries in the region regarding information exchange, parallel investigations, the exchange of experience and trend and risk evaluation.

30. In Portugal, measures have been taken to strengthen cooperation among national public sector entities and facilitate information exchange among them and with the private sector. The Criminal Investigation Police has supported initiatives for international information exchange.

31. In Spain, regular meetings are held among the State security bodies at the local, autonomous community and national levels to foster the exchange of information. At the international level, there is a continuous exchange of criminal intelligence bilaterally and through multilateral platforms such as INTERPOL, the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), and the Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries (SIRENE) cooperation network, as well as UNODC, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

32. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, bilateral meetings with a number of countries for intelligence exchange were held with positive results.

### **Recommendation 3**

**Governments should support the efforts of law enforcement agencies in strengthening criminal intelligence analysis capacities and in promoting and practicing intelligence-led policing.**

33. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, members of the Centre for the Coordination of Anti-Narcotics Operations took part in the first national workshop on intelligence,

as facilitators and trainees. The workshop was a training opportunity on criminal intelligence analysis in order to promote intelligence-led policing. Also, a number of manuals and protocols have been adopted in order to strengthen investigations and the analysis of criminal intelligence.

34. Colombia has adopted specialized investigation techniques in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Act 600 of 2000, including undercover policing and controlled deliveries (see recommendation 5 below). Furthermore, the work of the security forces draws on global cooperation mechanisms, international agencies and enhanced tactical cooperation with agencies such as Europol and INTERPOL and countries affected by drug production and trafficking.

35. In Costa Rica, a police management and administration model based on intelligence and evidence is currently being implemented; it has been certified as compliant with the ISO 9001:2015 international standard for quality management systems. Moreover, intelligence analysis has been strengthened through the recruitment of specialized personnel and the adoption of technological tools. There has also been international support for the development of intelligence work.

36. The Counter-Narcotics Division of the National Civil Police of El Salvador is in the process of designing, formulating and mapping the budget of a monitoring centre to enhance the use of intelligence.

37. In France, OFAST has a central intelligence unit in Nanterre as well as 13 regional and 11 local offices. Information is shared through the 104 counter-narcotics operational intelligence units (CROSS) which serve as OFAST intermediaries at the local level. The network of customs attachés have also been strengthened and have produced results in the disruption of criminal networks.

38. In Guatemala, the General Subdirector for Criminal Investigation of the National Civil Police analyses and interprets information with a view to generating intelligence products. Intelligence products and field investigation guide the Public Prosecution Service and set the course of the investigation.

39. The Government of Guyana has provided opportunities for officers to participate in international and local training on intelligence-led policing, community-oriented policing and intelligence operations.

40. Honduras has produced manuals and regulations in order to ensure the integrity of agents and information.

41. In Mexico, in accordance with the Act on the Office of the Attorney General, a system was established for the management of information that is useful in investigations, in intelligence work and in the development of, inter alia, tactical and operational strategies.

42. Nicaragua has created various information-processing and automation systems for gathering and processing information that assist in the analysis and production of intelligence, to facilitate intelligence-led policing.

43. In Peru, from December 2020 to June 2022, officers of the General Directorate for Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior, in coordination with institutions of the different regions of Peru, carried out five operations to counter drug trafficking, thereby dismantling various drug trafficking organizations. Further, based on information and intelligence, the General Directorate, in cooperation with several other national and local investigation agencies, as well as the Belgian police and customs authorities, seized 224.14 kg of cocaine chlorhydrate in the port of Antwerp, Belgium. Further, one individual was arrested for drug trafficking and murder in a joint operation of the General Directorate, INTERPOL and Ecuadorian investigators.

44. Portugal ensures continuous and specialized training of various professionals for the collection, analysis and processing of criminal information to prevent and combat drug trafficking and associated money-laundering.

45. In Spain, criminal intelligence units of the State security forces prepare strategy and operation reports that provide input for their specialized operations units.

46. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the National Anti-Drug Superintendency (SUNAD) has built up a pool of data that is used to produce counter-narcotics intelligence, which is then interpreted by the Office of the Public Prosecutor and disseminated to various State security bodies that combat drug trafficking. That process was crucial in carrying out arrests, seizures of illicit drugs and the confiscation of assets and properties associated with drug trafficking.

## **Issue 2. Understanding the *modi operandi* and activities of organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking**

### **Recommendation 4**

**Governments should develop and further strengthen capacities of their competent authorities to intercept, investigate and prosecute significant multinational illicit drug trafficking cases to enable the disruption of illicit drug trafficking channels and the dismantling of criminal groups involved.**

47. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, on 4 July 2022, the International Anti-Narcotics Training Centre conducted an anti-drug training course for judges and prosecutors whose work relates to drug interdiction.

48. In Colombia, joint operations and mutual legal assistance have been of vital importance. The capture of high-value targets and the apprehension of leaders, most notably the head of the Gulf Clan in October 2021, is noteworthy, as are the arrests of members of the same criminal group carried out in Panama. However, international cooperation should be stepped up to support transnational operations.

49. Costa Rica has adopted the Organized Crime Act (Act No. 8754). In addition, Act No. 9481 established a specialized jurisdiction tasked with investigating and prosecuting organized crime, including international drug trafficking and provided for the establishment of the police intelligence platform. In recent years, Costa Rica has been among those countries in the region having seized the largest quantities of drugs (cannabis and cocaine), which to a large extent is attributable to the sharing of information (intelligence) with countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and the United States.

50. In El Salvador, the National Civil Police has deployed the Coastal Police Division to strengthen interception of consignments in coastal areas. In 2021, 13 batches of cocaine (10,836 kg) were seized and 50 individuals are currently facing judicial proceedings. 15 national criminal groups with ties to international drug trafficking were dismantled and 129 traffickers and associates were prosecuted.

51. In France, OFAST brings together representatives of various agencies involved in the fight against drugs (police, customs and gendarmerie) and organizes technical and operational training. OFAST annually assesses the threat status of drug trafficking and associated activities in France.

52. In Guatemala, the National Civil Police has action and mobilization plans for special rapid response groups and has implemented plans for the identification and destruction of illegal landing strips. The Public Prosecution Service promotes continuous training of prosecutors on investigative and judicial matters.

53. Approximately 60 officers of the Guyana Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit, Coast Guard and Police Force attended training sessions on interception, investigation and prosecution of multinational drug trafficking. The SEACOP-V joint maritime training unit on rummaging vessels strengthened officers' maritime intelligence and riverine control skills, *inter alia*.

54. In Honduras, technological updates made it possible to conduct speedy and effective investigations, and a framework for surveillance between neighbouring countries was established.

55. In Mexico, the Office of the Attorney General, though the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Investigation of Organized Crime, has the capacity to carry out interventions and investigations.

56. Nicaragua has adopted a national policy bringing together all relevant national institutions and aimed at preventing or diverting the flow of drugs that traffickers seek to transport through the country's territory and at preventing any attempt by international organized crime organizations to establish a base in Nicaragua. On the basis of the policy, law enforcement agencies carry out interdiction operations, investigations and prosecutions.

57. In Peru, the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) is the authority responsible for building the capacity of agencies responsible for investigation and judgments in drug trafficking cases, as well as dismantling criminal organizations and the relevant national and international cooperation. In 2022, the National Police established the National Institute for Criminal Investigations, a training institute for the police.

58. Portugal has strengthened the capabilities of the competent national authorities with a view to detecting, intercepting and investigating relevant international drug trafficking cases.

59. The Government of Spain has recently allocated more resources to enhance police action. A special security plan for the region of Campo de Gibraltar addresses the special problems in that area. Positive results have been obtained regarding the trafficking of cannabis resin from Morocco.

60. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, SUNAD conducts science-based studies on national drug trends by analysing reports received from military units and police bodies, which has enabled them to focus efforts and achieve greater effectiveness.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**Governments should encourage their law enforcement agencies to use special investigative techniques, including controlled deliveries, infiltration and other undercover operations to identify major illicit drug trafficking groups and drug supply chains, as well as related financial flows, and consequently to undertake needed countermeasures.**

61. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Act No. 913 provides for the use of interception of telecommunications and controlled delivery, but not for infiltration or other undercover operations. This should be further discussed with a view to updating the current legislation. In April 2022, the Plurinational State of Bolivia exchanged experiences on special techniques for the investigation of drug trafficking in the context of an investigation with the authorities of Peru. Similar meetings are planned with the authorities of Argentina and Paraguay.

62. In Colombia, special investigative techniques have been used since the enactment in Colombia of the Act approving the 1988 Convention. Articles 15 and 16 of Act No. 1908 of 2018 empower undercover agents operating online to exchange or send files containing illicit content and analyse the results of the algorithms used to identify such illicit files (see also recommendation 2 above). Special investigative units have been created for the detection of the financial flows of criminal groups, criminal investigations of money-laundering and non-conviction-based confiscation. Criminal investigators have received additional training in the use of specialized techniques.

63. In Costa Rica, through the designated central authority under the international conventions that provide for the use of such investigative techniques, these techniques are frequently used, as are the mechanisms for international legal cooperation that are required for their implementation.

64. The Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities of El Salvador, adopted through Decree-Law No. 153, provides for the use of special investigative techniques such as controlled purchase (art. 58), controlled delivery (art. 59) and collaborators (art. 60). Work on updating the Law is currently under way with a view to improving the implementation and oversight of those techniques, with the assistance of UNODC.

65. France actively uses special investigative techniques (controlled deliveries, infiltration operations, etc.) as well as financial investigations. Numerous training events on these topics have been held for law enforcement agencies in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

66. In Guatemala, the law against organized crime provides for undercover operations, controlled deliveries and the interception of telephone conversations and other communications. Successful investigations have been conducted since 2009 using the interception of telephone conversations. An inter-institutional cooperation agreement between the prosecution service and the Ministry of the Interior on the application of special investigative techniques has been concluded. A surveillance and tracking section was established in the National Civil Police.

67. The Government of Guyana has strengthened its law enforcement agency and increased the level of covert operations. This has resulted in the apprehension and prosecution of members of drug trafficking organizations.

68. Honduras indicated that training and legal support are required in this field.

69. In Mexico, the Act on the Office of the Attorney General, in its article 19, foresees “issuing protocols governing investigative techniques, controlled delivery and undercover operations”, as well as infiltration, controlled delivery and undercover operations. The Federal Act against Organized Crime, in its chapter two, “Special investigative techniques”, sets forth the techniques of this kind that officers of the Public Prosecution Service may use when investigating offences covered by the Act. These tools have been successfully used.

70. In Nicaragua, Act No. 735 on the prevention, investigation and prosecution of organized crime and the administration of seized, confiscated and abandoned property provides mechanisms for the use of special investigative techniques.

71. In Peru, the Anti-Drug Directorate has different operational groups that carry out special investigative techniques such as controlled delivery, undercover and special operations and mail and communication interception and surveillance. The Public Prosecution Service, in particular the office of the Anti-Drug Prosecutor, coordinates such operations with the Ibero-American Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors.

72. For many years, the judicial police of Portugal has been using various special criminal investigation techniques.

73. In Spain, these investigative techniques are regularly used by the criminal investigation police units in the fight against organized crime. Recently, greater use has been made of online undercover agents in the fight against cybercrime.

74. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in accordance with the law against organized crime (Official Gazette No. 39.912 of 30 April 2012), special investigations have been conducted and have led to various arrests and prosecutions.

### **Recommendation 6**

**Governments should ensure the regular exchange of information with counterparts on modi operandi, concealment methods, trafficking routes, criminal groups and their members, as well as best practices and effective countermeasures in tackling illicit drug trafficking.**

75. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the General Directorate of the Bolivian Special Force to Fight Drug Trafficking has opened up more than 500 channels of communication with other countries for the regular exchange of this kind of



information. Since the start of 2022, it has held more than 10 virtual meetings with counterparts, mostly in the region. It regularly exchanges information through the Regional Centre for Anti-Narcotics Intelligence and has appointed focal points for a number of countries.

76. In Colombia, work with various national and international law enforcement authorities has been strengthened, such as Europol, the Police Community of the Americas (AMERIPOL) and EMPACT. The National Police compiles information in its statistical, criminal, misdemeanour and operations-related information system. Through cooperation mechanisms such as AMERIPOL, Europol and INTERPOL, the National Police can deploy joint operations.

77. In Costa Rica, information is exchanged and, at the same time, the training of personnel is strengthened at bilateral and multilateral meetings. Appropriate and regular use is made of informal international cooperation. Multilateral bodies such as AMERIPOL have specialized subcommissions on specific types of crime in order to discuss, for example, *modi operandi* and routes. Joint operations are also conducted.

78. The National Civil Police of El Salvador has established channels for the exchange of information with its counterparts on *modi operandi*, concealment methods, trafficking routes and criminal groups. Moreover, information is exchanged between the Subcommission against Drug Trafficking and the Cooperative Situational Information Integration system of the United States Southern Command.

79. France exchanges information regularly with its partners in Latin America and the Caribbean at bilateral and multilateral gatherings, such as the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD), the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATFS), the national central bureaux of INTERPOL in Latin America, Europol and the Lisbon-based MAOC-N and through exchanges within the framework of the Europe-Latin America Technical Assistance Programme against Transnational Organized Crime (El PACCTO) programme.

80. Guatemala currently shares such information through a number of national authorities as well as contacts in international intelligence agencies.

81. Guyana regularly shares information and collaborates with regional and international partners through the exchange of intelligence and information as well as through regular conference and exchange visits. The Guyana Police Force and the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit have memorandums of understanding with partners in Brazil, the Caribbean Community and other partners.

82. Honduras stressed the need for a strategy and priorities for related programmes, as well as the improvement of training.

83. The international position of Mexico is aligned with the principle of common and shared responsibility. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General affirms its international commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.

84. The National Police of Nicaragua maintains a fluid exchange of information with specialized counter-narcotics units and specialized international organizations, for example, the Commission of Police Chiefs and Directors of Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Colombia and of INTERPOL, AMERIPOL and UNODC.

85. In Peru, the Anti-Drug Directorate coordinates and has cooperation agreements with a number of countries of the region, which allow for joint operations. This has led to positive results with Bolivia (Pluractional State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. Peru also participates in binational teams, which has strengthened trust and made possible, for example, joint controlled deliveries in 2021 with Brazil and Colombia.

86. Portugal regularly exchanges such information with international counterparts.

87. Spain participates in international forums and initiatives for the exchange of such information. Each year, up-to-date information on the situation of drug trafficking Spain is presented to various international bodies, including through participation in meetings under COPOLAD and/or projects of the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies.

88. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, SUNAD has established a system for the exchange of intelligence with France, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Mexico, Italy and the Russian Federation. Such exchanges of information have supported counter-narcotics operations, bringing the successful dismantling of organizations that traffic in illicit substances, as well as early warnings of possible trafficking operations.

### **Issue 3: Improving the capacity of countries to detect emerging drug threats through early warning**

#### **Recommendation 7**

#### **Governments should continue to encourage the development of their early warning systems on new emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances.**

89. Argentina has continued to maintain and improve its integrated early warning system. A new coordination structure between the drug policy authority, the Secretariat for Comprehensive Drug Policies (SEDRONAR) and the Ministry of Security has been implemented, including civil society. SEDRONAR is currently improving, inter alia, the systematic collection of all information drawn from the nodes.

90. The Pluraactional State of Bolivia is currently carrying out an analysis with a view to including new precursors in the lists of nationally controlled substances, as the country's legislation does not provide for immediate action with respect to new precursors or emerging drugs. The Centre for Technical and Scientific Research in Toxicology and Controlled Substances participates as a UNODC-accredited laboratory in the issuing of early warnings. Early warning capacities need to be increased at the operational level (portable equipment).

91. The early warning system of Colombia is based on an inter-agency information exchange network (health, control and interdiction). This system detects emerging drug supplies and emerging substances, assesses risks associated with consumption, production and trafficking and issues warnings to concerned populations.

92. Costa Rica has mechanisms in place for operational coordination, enabling law enforcement agencies to share intelligence about new drugs and new forms of trafficking in those drugs. In Costa Rica, such detection is carried out by the Forensic Science Laboratory. The findings subsequently remain in the records, but a mechanism for their systematic comparison is needed in future.

93. In the period 2020–2021, El Salvador implemented an early warning system with the support of the UNODC global SMART programme and on the basis of a guide issued in 2020 under the second phase of the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD II).

94. On 25 May 2022, the French Observatory for Drugs and Drug Addiction alerted the European Union's Early Warning System on New Psychoactive Substances to the identification of the presence for the first time in France and in Europe of MEAI (5-methoxy-2-aminoindane, or 5-MeO-AI). Institutions of France are also members of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) and receive and disseminate the notices issued by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The Customs Service of France is a fully fledged participant in the warning system established by European legislation.

95. Guatemala is working together with various international organizations – including UNODC (through the global SMART programme) and the Inter-American

Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) – on the establishment of an early warning system in Guatemala.

96. The Ministry of Health of Guyana has various departments with roles related to demand reduction, which have been playing a major role in the monitoring and early warning systems on new emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances.

97. In Honduras, using forensic medicine techniques in the chemistry and toxicology unit, training is provided with regard to new substances.

98. In Mexico, The Office of the Attorney General participates in Project Ion of the International Narcotics Control Board and uses the Project Ion Incident Communication System (IONICS) to monitor new emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances. The National Customs Agency of Mexico issues early warnings.

99. In Peru, the Anti-Drug Directorate of the National Police has information on prevalence of all kinds of drugs and on the issuance of early warning to other authorities; however, national legislation does not foresee an early warning system. The National Police therefore coordinates joint actions for prevention and new psychoactive substances with the Public Prosecution Service and the General Directorate for Medicines.

100. Portugal is represented in the European Union Early Warning System which provides information on survey of measurements and allows a quick exchange on new substances.

101. The early warning system (SEAT) of Spain was established for the detection of, exchange of information on, assessment of and response to the emergence of new substances. It operates at the national level and at the level of the autonomous communities. Spain also participates, through the IONICS secure communication platform, in Project Ion of INCB.

102. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a process of technical support has been launched by UNODC to strengthen the detection of new psychoactive substances and emerging drugs.

### **Recommendation 8**

#### **Governments should continue to invest in training their forensic technical staff in the detection of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.**

103. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, training on the use and handling of new emerging drugs is held on a regular basis by the training division of the General Directorate of the Bolivian Special Force to Fight Drug Trafficking. International support is needed for the provision of forensic technical training and for ensuring the necessary equipment and reference standards.

104. In Colombia, the Ministry of Justice and Law as part of the early warning system facilitates specialized courses on emerging drug-related issues (40-hour online course for laboratory chemists complemented by certified reference materials). Further, 23 judges and 23 prosecutors were trained in related investigation and prosecution techniques and methodologies. Eight sessions on synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances were held in different regions for more than 200 officers of the National Police.

105. Costa Rica has a department specializing in the forensic analysis of evidence in the judicial police, which consists of highly trained specialist personnel. However, training in the detection of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances has been confined to that offered by international organizations.

106. In El Salvador, officials from a number of institutions have participated in training offered by the UNODC global SMART programme and OAS. UNODC donated TruNarc narcotics analysers and trained the receivers in the use of those devices. The National Civil Police has trained a number of individuals in the analysis

of controlled substances, the use of new analytical equipment and validation of methods for the analysis of cannabinoids and cocaine (in 2021, there were eight training events reaching 74 individuals).

107. In France, relevant staff receives training through participation in workshops, such as those organized by the European Academy of Forensic Science Conference and UNODC. Networks of analysis focal points have been established to ensure better sharing of information among forensic laboratories.

108. In Guatemala, the current management of the National Institute of Forensic Sciences seeks to ensure that continuous training is provided through the School of Forensic Studies, as well as through international cooperation. The Head of the Controlled Substances Laboratory participated in the International Symposium of Forensic Drug Testing Lab Directors (Singapore, 2019) under the auspices of the Colombo Plan.

109. The Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory has the necessary equipment. However, there is still a need for additional training to detect new psychotropic substances and synthetic drugs.

110. In Honduras, training is provided through national and international agencies.

111. In Mexico, the drug profiling programme of the Office of the Attorney General allows the identification of precursors and essential chemicals used in the production of synthetic drugs, as well as trends in their use and factors that contribute to understanding of the criminal market for drugs, such as purity, concentration, the combination of substances and ascertainment of their licit and illicit uses. Additionally, various training activities have been implemented.

112. Nicaragua provides refresher training on techniques and technologies to officials working in forensic laboratories.

113. In Peru, capacity-building is organized in the framework of bilateral and international cooperation, inter alia, with the Federal Police of Brazil and UNODC.

114. Portugal invests continuously in the training of forensic experts at the Forensic Science Laboratory of the judicial police.

115. In Spain, the Guardia Civil is currently participating in the European project “White Snow”, led by Poland, and the “CHEMTEC” project, led by the Netherlands, which include technical training on the topic. The State security forces prepare technical materials that provide updated guidance on the investigation and dismantling of laboratories that manufacture drugs, including new psychoactive substances.

116. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela plans to establish a centre for scientific investigation, although necessary financial and human resources are still pending.

### **Recommendation 9**

**Governments must strengthen the capacities of national forensic laboratories for the detection of newly emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances, by modernizing their equipment and analytical capabilities.**

117. The Plurinational State of Bolivia was provided by the European Union in 2020 with three new pieces of technological equipment: a gas chromatography–mass spectrometry instrument, an infrared attenuated total reflection spectrometer and a headspace gas chromatograph. The General Directorate of the Bolivian Special Force to Fight Drug Trafficking strengthens the capacity of national forensic laboratories in that area. There is a strong need to establish regional narcotics laboratories in the various departments of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

118. Colombia has upgraded its equipment, in 2021, through portable Raman and Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometers. Also in 2021, a chemistry laboratory was set up within the Counter-Narcotics Directorate of the National Police. An ultra-

high-performance liquid chromatograph with quadrupole time-of-flight mass spectrometer, a gas chromatograph attached to a single quadrupole mass detector, a gas chromatograph with flame ionization detector, a UV-Vis-spectrophotometer and a FTIR spectrophotometer were acquired.

119. Costa Rica has only one forensic laboratory. To ensure that it is not overwhelmed, field testing is carried out by the police forces themselves. Analytical capacity has been enhanced through the purchase of equipment, and the laboratory is liaising with other entities for the purchase of reference materials. Over the past three years, the Department of Forensic Science has achieved international certification in accordance with the toxicology and ballistics standards (inter alia, the ISO 21043-2 standard).

120. In El Salvador, the relevant laboratory of the National Civil Police strengthened its capabilities for the identification of amphetamine-type substances, precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances and has obtained accreditation under the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard for two analysis methods.

121. France is in the process of modernizing and purchasing new analytical tools (gas chromatography–mass spectrometry, liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry, and infrared). In 2021, five headspace gas chromatography with flame ionization detection devices (HS-GC-FID) and three gas chromatography with flame ionization detection devices (GC-FID) and portable detection devices were purchased.

122. In Guatemala, technical forensic laboratories have special equipment. Among others, the TruDefender and FirstDefender devices are used. Investigations or undercover operations in the deep web or dark web have not yet been conducted. A few years ago, the National Institute of Forensic Sciences acquired a gas chromatograph for the Controlled Substances Laboratory. It is necessary to continue acquiring specialized equipment.

123. The Government of Guyana has provided the necessary equipment to forensic laboratories to detect emerging drugs and psychoactive substances. More training, however, is required to facilitate the operation of these machines.

124. Honduras has acquired new technologies (scanner, X-ray and reagents) and provided the respective training.

125. Mexico continuously updates and strengthens forensic capabilities to detect drugs through various programmes, including the drug profiling programme of the Prosecutor General's Office. Various training activities have been implemented, including an annual training programme and an induction training course for police officers.

126. Nicaragua has the technical and technological capabilities to detect new emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances in a number of relevant entities and laboratories.

127. In Peru, the Anti-Drug Directorate of the National Police has strengthened its equipment with high technology with a view to analysing seized drugs. The European Union supports Peruvian institutions with equipment for substance analysis and early warning.

128. In Spain, laboratories are provided with new equipment in accordance with forensic laboratories' requirements and availability of budgetary funds.

129. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, forensic laboratories fulfil the country's needs in terms of identifying seized drugs for purposes of national statistics.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**Governments should continue to stimulate inter-agency and information-sharing work on emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances, both nationally and internationally. They should also strengthen training in their law enforcement**

**agencies on the recognition and detection of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, and provide them with detection and protection equipment for the management of synthetic drugs.**

130. The Plurinational State of Bolivia participates in Project Ion and the global Operational Partnerships to Interdict Opioids' Illicit Distribution and Sales (OPIOIDS) project of the INCB. It took part in Operation GAPZ (2021). Training on the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS) was provided in 2020.

131. In Colombia, the strategy on synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances includes actions to promote the definition of technical and legal instruments to improve the functioning of the judiciary and seeks to strengthen the network of institutions to address issues relating to synthetic drugs, emerging drugs and new psychoactive substances.

132. In Costa Rica, information has been shared through the INTERPOL Technical Counter-Narcotics Subcommittee. Equipment to enable detection in the field and personal protection equipment for the handling of dangerous synthetic drugs are not available, but efforts have been made to obtain antidotes and to arrange for training on their administration.

133. In El Salvador, information is shared with the UNODC global SMART programme and the OAS/CICAD Early Warning System for the Americas. Under the UNODC global SMART programme, virtual workshops and meetings have been held on the identification of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances. Relevant institutions took also part in regional virtual meetings conducted by the OAS/CICAD Inter-American Observatory on Drugs.

134. In France, exchanges of information at the international level are conducted within ENFSI and EMCDDA. The relevant authorities in France use handheld infrared detectors and Raman devices (NIRLab, Tactiscan, TruNarc). Police departments have less contact with such new substances than has the Customs Service. Regular training for customs officials in the identification of chemical precursors is provided. For example, in 2021, a joint training was held for customs, police and prosecution officials.

135. In Guatemala, although there have been no seizures of new psychoactive substances, the related alerts and special notices disseminated by INCB have been shared with the relevant national institutions. Personnel from Guatemala has participated in operations to identify new psychoactive substances and in various virtual workshops on synthetic drugs, opioids and fentanyl.

136. In Guyana, in collaboration with the OAS/CICAD, officers are trained on the identification of various types of emerging synthetic drugs through the Demand Reduction Unit of the Ministry of Health. Law enforcement authorities have seldom encountered these types of drugs, and synthetic drugs are typically seized in extremely small quantities.

137. Honduras indicated that information is shared by way of inter-agency operations.

138. Mexico cooperates with international agencies in exchanging information and international good practices. Channels for communication with various private sector actors in the chemical industry have been established through the Technical Group for the Control of Synthetic Drugs. Furthermore, the Office of the Attorney General has a training and professional career service centre.

139. Nicaragua uses at the international level tools and resources provided by specialized international organizations such as INCB, UNODC, INTERPOL and the Commission of Police Chiefs and Directors of Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Colombia.

140. Peru is a cocaine-producing country; therefore, personnel is highly specialized in detecting it. Training and awareness-raising is conducted for the recognition of

synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances through the TruNarc equipment. Peru participates in the workshops of the CICAD Inter-American Observatory on Drugs and relevant joint commissions.

141. Portugal has stimulated work on sharing information on new psychoactive substances nationally and internationally and has provided law enforcement authorities with specific training on the detection of new psychoactive substances and protection equipment.

142. The early warning system (SEAT) of Spain ensures sharing of information on new drugs and psychoactive substances, and Spain participates in various relevant international projects.

143. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, working sessions were held to design training content on new psychoactive substances at the Centre for Advanced Studies on Drugs.

#### **Issue 4. Expanding the scope of national illicit crop monitoring systems: experiences and opportunities**

##### **Recommendation 11**

**Governments should establish comprehensive national monitoring systems that are based on scientific evidence. This requires coordination and joint analysis of national agencies at the technical level, as well as coordination at the highest political level to ensure that the resulting analysis feeds into programming and policymaking.**

144. The Colombian Drug Observatory centralizes the information generated by the different departments and conducts studies and research on the different aspects of the drugs value chain. The UNODC Integrated Illicit Crop Monitoring System generates technical and scientific evidence on the dynamic of illicit crops and the level of illicit crop cultivation in areas of special interest, and analyses how this dynamic correlates to associated phenomena such as alternative development, armed groups and environmental conditions, thus generating timely information for the competent authorities in order to align public policies, as required.

145. In Costa Rica, the police intelligence platform retrieves data from various sources of public and private information that are relevant to judicial investigations and to the maintenance of public security. The use of this tool should be further promoted.

146. In El Salvador, the police carries out georeferencing analysis of areas in which plants have been seized. In El Salvador, there are few areas under cannabis cultivation.

147. In Guatemala, policies, plans and strategies are implemented across public institutions for combating drug trafficking, which are meant to be developed on the basis of scientific evidence and previously analysed information.

148. To reduce the cultivation of illicit crops, such as cannabis, Guyana is developing a framework that will address and monitor illicit crop cultivation and focus on sustainable alternatives.

149. In Honduras, the sole system based on scientific evidence is the interception of communications.

150. Mexico cooperates with UNODC in a project entitled “System for monitoring illicit crops in Mexican territory”, which is aimed at measuring the productivity of cultivation areas and assessing the economic impact and supply on the market – specifically, relating to poppy, opium gum, dry opium gum and the concentration of morphine in opium gum. Moreover, Mexico recently concluded the implementation of another UNODC project, entitled “Strengthening the collection of data on eradication activities”, which was aimed at strengthening the capacity of the

Government of Mexico to monitor, collect and report information on activities related to the eradication of illicit crops at the national level.

151. In Nicaragua, there are no significant illicit drug crops, and the country is not a drug-producing country.

152. In Peru, the Ministry of the Interior has a permanent monitoring system covering illicit cultivation zones, which works in cooperation with the other relevant drug control institutions to monitor new zones and prioritizes eradication action. Since 2021, DEVIDA has operated the “Citizen Social Pact”, through which local organizations have committed to participate in addressing illicit drug production, trafficking and use. The Pact prioritizes integrated and sustainable alternative development.

153. In Spain, a national action plan is currently being formulated to counter crime associated with the cultivation of, production of and trafficking in cannabis. The María project of the Guardia Civil seeks to identify illicit crops (principally cannabis) through the use of artificial intelligence. It works with power companies to detect anomalous consumption levels as a means of identifying such crops.

154. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, SUNAD conducts science-based studies on national drug trends.

## **Recommendation 12**

**Governments should make the best use of existing structures and mechanisms for regional and international cooperation, including for the exchange of experiences and expertise on national monitoring tools, including illicit crop monitoring.**

155. In Colombia, the UNODC Integrated Illicit Crops Monitoring System generates technical and scientific evidence on the dynamic of illicit crops. The national Government also participates in regional and international forums that facilitate the exchange of experience, including UNODC, OAS/CICAD, the Southern Common Market, the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States high-level dialogue and COPOLAD III.

156. In Costa Rica, joint operations, information-sharing and training are key to sharing information on emerging drugs, *modi operandi* and other information of interest in the fight against illicit drugs. However, further information and coordination on illicit crop monitoring are required.

157. In El Salvador, in 2020 and 2021 the exchange of experience and expertise was limited to group discussions via videoconferencing platforms.

158. Guatemala has on occasions received information from the region on the location of areas under illicit cultivation and on the results of operations to eradicate illicit crops and cultivation areas, and considers that strengthening the exchange of information and good practices in this regard would be beneficial for all countries involved.

159. Guyana is constantly collaborating with countries in the region on this issue, primarily through information-sharing, training and exchange programmes. All existing structures are being used, and new partnerships with partner countries throughout the region, primarily Brazil and Colombia, are being formed.

160. In Honduras, education and training is in place to update police staff in topics such as new crops, routes, extent of coverage and methods of eradication.

161. Mexico is cooperating with various agencies and, in particular, sharing experience related to the monitoring of crops through its participation in above-mentioned UNODC project. Official figures are published in annual reports.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The most recent report is *México: Monitoreo de Plantíos de Amapola 2018–2109*, available (in



162. Although Nicaragua does not consider itself a drug-producing country, it participates in relevant events organized by specialized international organizations (including UNODC, INTERPOL and INCB) for the exchange of experience and expertise on monitoring tools, including tools for the monitoring of illicit crops and production.

163. In 2021 and 2022, Peru held a number of joint meetings with other countries during which information and lessons learned were exchanged and joint action was coordinated.

164. In Spain, monitoring of illicit crops is focused on cannabis, making use of land-based and air-based technical means as well as artificial intelligence. Inspections are conducted on crops of industrial hemp in order to detect the presence of plants with high tetrahydrocannabinol content.

165. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has participated in the Conference on Regional Interoperability of Air Space Surveillance and Security, an international initiative led by the Secretariat of National Defence of Mexico. The virtual exercise held on 6 June 2022, related to Camazot 2022, obtained excellent results in terms of the coordination of air surveillance of illegal flights. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has also established an early warning system for drug trafficking by sea and has activated the international incident reporting system.

### **Recommendation 13**

**The international community should provide support to address the issue of illicit cultivation, production and trafficking, as well as the establishment of national monitoring mechanisms, through the provision of specialized technical support and financial resources.**

166. In Colombia, financial resources are managed with Germany (through the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)), in the context of trilateral cooperation with Peru, for technical assistance for the alternative use of the forest as a productive asset, to ensure the protection of natural areas and the reduction of illicit crop-growing areas. In this tripartite cooperation, a new project for comprehensive and joint solutions to the common problem of illicit crops in national protected areas and buffer zones in Colombia and Peru has been approved, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of countries to identify selection criteria for strategic zones for comprehensive intervention, monitor special management zones (national parks affected by the cultivation of illicit drug crops) and map social and environmental conditions of rural families engaged in the cultivation of illegal crops.

167. Costa Rica works closely with the Government of the United States, which provides specialized technical support and funding to address illicit cultivation, production and trafficking. It is important to establish similar cooperation arrangements with other destination countries. The Governments of Colombia and Panama have joined such initiatives. The cultivation of coca plants has not yet been detected in Costa Rica, but the cultivation of cannabis does occur in mountain regions. Costa Rica would welcome technical advice and training with a view to establishing national mechanisms for the monitoring of illicit crops.

168. In El Salvador, the Counter-Narcotics Division of the National Civil Police is supported by international bodies such as UNODC and the European Union, and such support focuses on sharing experience and analysing policies and strategies for drug supply reduction.

169. France contributes funding to UNODC alternative development projects and participates in the El PAcCTO programme.

170. Guatemala receives support through international cooperation for the conduct of illicit crop eradication campaigns and for the alternative development projects

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Spanish only) at [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org).

accompanying such eradication efforts. It would likewise be extremely helpful to be able to draw on international support and technical assistance for the mapping of illicit crops by means of satellite imagery, and to have long-range drones, GPS devices and satellite phones, among other equipment.

171. Guyana has taken a proactive approach to addressing illicit cultivation, production and trafficking and to establishing national monitoring mechanisms. Its initiative aims to provide farmers with the opportunity to earn a sustainable licit income, and that approach has the potential to reduce illicit crop cultivation. International assistance is welcome because many countries can share experience and further guide the country in its efforts.

172. Honduras has received assistance by the international community through technology and training to police staff.

173. In Mexico, international cooperation is of key importance in addressing illicit cultivation and production, as exemplified by its above-mentioned cooperation with UNODC.

174. In Peru, DEVIDA in cooperation with all other drug-related institutions, strengthens the monitoring and control through international cooperation, including through participation in CRIMJUST (UNODC), SEACOP, COPOLAD, the CICAD Expert Group on Maritime Drug Trafficking and the Container Control Programme (UNODC and the World Customs Organization).

175. Spain participates in the European Clearing Board for Innovation, a forum associated with Europol for establishing contact between technical experts and investigators so that technological solutions that meet the needs of investigators can be found.

176. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with the relaunching of the COPOLAD Latin American cooperation programme, working sessions were reconvened to address the implementation of sustainable alternative development programmes. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has participated in three virtual meetings on the exchange of road maps and the environmental impact that illicit crops have locally.

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