

Forum: The General Assembly

Issue: Implementing and strengthening the role of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to reduce the trafficking and consumption of illegal substances

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Introduction

In preparation for the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Summit, secretary-general Ban Ki-moon declared, on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in 2010, that “we must recognise the major impediment to development posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking”, and reinstated that: “our work to achieve the MDGs and fight drugs must go hand-in-hand”. The threat of Drug abuse and trafficking is neither only the discussion of the past, nor is it only the discussion of the present: It is a problem the UN faces, growing more and more prominent despite efforts attempting to stunt its popularity. The Millennium Development Goal has not been met; it is already 2017 and there has not been enough measures taken to halt its incline. Narcotic organisations make a turnover of 320 billion US dollars per year; 3.2 times more than that of what taxpayers pay in order to pursue the ambition, to end the war on drugs.

The main problem lied in the failure of the 1961 UN single convention on Narcotic drugs, the primary supplier of profits for the illegal narcotic organisations. By prohibiting the production and supply of a number of various substances, it created a niche market for these business to profit off, backfiring from its original efforts to divert from drug abuse. The convention was a scintillation for business; a source of profit, a start of a market. This has led to millions of people being criminalised for non-violent drug offences, leading to approximately 1.4 million arrests in the US in solely the year of 2014. In countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, executions for drug trafficking have reached its zenith. The death toll has reached numbers inextricable for the UN to sit and watch this disastrous event unravel. In Mexico, 30 people a day are dying in the battle between drug cartels and government

forces, and these are only the countable deaths. Last month a commission set up by the *Lancet* medical journal and Johns Hopkins University declared that the drugs laws had not only failed to curb drug use and fuelled violent crime, they had also helped to spread HIV and hepatitis C by encouraging unsafe injecting.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) acknowledges its failure. Its own analysis notes claim that: “Global drug control efforts have had a dramatic unintended consequence: a criminal black market of staggering proportions. Organised crime is a threat to security. Criminal organisations have the power to destabilise society and governments. The illicit drug business is worth billions of dollars a year, part of which is used to corrupt government officials and to poison economies.”

Nations are changing and adapting their national policies, realising that attempts to wage a war on drugs is a futile attempt which has a very small likelihood of coming out with a positive outcome: coming out with more than a breakeven of what has been inputted in the process. More and more governments are starting to agree: Portugal decriminalised all drugs in 2001, while Switzerland pioneered the policy of heroin prescription. Individual states in the United States, namely Washington and Colorado have legalised the sale of marijuana for recreational purposes. In May 2014, Uruguay unveiled reforms to make it the first country in the world to legalise sales of marijuana. A year later, Justin Trudeau, Canada’s newly elected prime minister, announced that possession of marijuana for recreational use would be legalised. Within the same year, the Mexican Supreme Court concluded that national laws making it illegal personally to produce, possess and consume marijuana violated the rights of Mexicans, advocating for the decriminalisation of possession of marijuana. There has also been an explosion in harm reduction initiatives at the subnational level. Drug consumption rooms and drug testing laboratories – allowing users to consume or check their narcotics without fear of prosecution – have mushroomed across cities in Canada, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Definition of Key Terms

Millennium Development Goal

Set in September 2000 during the Millennium summit, the largest ever gathering of World Leaders, The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for combatting extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. It stands for basic human rights amongst all

people, promoting the right for every person on this planet to have an undisputed right to health, education, shelter, and security.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The United Nations' (UN) International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking falls on June 26 each year to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society.

1961 UN single convention on Narcotic drugs

This Convention aimed to combat drug abuse by coordinated international action, consisting of two distinct forms of intervention and control that work together. First, it seeks to limit the use, possession, and trade, in distribution, import, export, manufacture, and production of drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes. Second, it combats drug trafficking through international cooperation to deter and discourage drug traffickers.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office at Vienna, it aims long-term to better equip governments to handle drug-, crime-, terrorism-, and corruption-related issues, to maximise knowledge on these issues among governmental institutions and agencies, and also to maximise awareness of said matters in public opinion, globally, nationally and at community level. Approximately 90% of the Office's funding comes from voluntary contributions, mainly from governments.

Major Parties Involved

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Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)

Created by President Nixon in 1973, the goal of this establishment was, and still is, to combat “an all-out global war on the drug menace”. The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce the controlled substances, laws, and regulations of the United States and bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States, or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the production, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances entering or destined for illicit traffic in the United States, and to recommend and support non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Until the Millennium Summit in 2000, not much has been done to directly prevent the production and distribution of Drugs outside of the United States. The Millennium Development Goals was a major turning point where all countries agreed to rid of all drugs.

Date	Description of Event
20 March 1961	UN Single Convention on Narcotic drugs
29 September 1969	Nixon Administration launches Operation Intercept
17 June 1971	President Nixon declares “War on Drugs”
1 July 1973	Nixon Administration creates the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)
1 March 1982	Pablo Escobar Granted immunity from Columbian Courts
25 September 2000	Millennium Summit – Millennium Development Goals established

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs is a good example of the United Nations approaching this matter. However, this convention was effectively a flop as it not only failed to prevent production and distribution of Narcotic Drugs, in encouraged cartels and gangs to make profit off Drugs as a business, encouraging it in the process.

Possible Solutions

A possible solution can be to allow the usage of first degree drugs such as marijuana for medical purposes in all member nations. This method will collapse the narcotics business, stopping cartels and other businesses from making massive turnover profits. This is achievable as the generable public will now no longer need to turn to illegal measures to attain first degree drugs as it has been de-criminalised (following the policies as that of Canada and the Netherlands).

Another possible solution can be to legislate even more draconian laws such as ones utilised by nations such as the Philippines, or the Peoples Republic of China, in that any possession of drugs will result to execution or for foreigners and juvenile citizens, deportation. By promoting such laws, the addiction to drugs will be overwhelmed by the fear of such a harsh punishment that the people will be deterred from drugs whatsoever. However, this method is slightly risky as it can cause an emergence in the topic of Human rights.

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