

The Republic of Colombia

Positions for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

I. Narcotics and Conflict Zones

Devoted to countering the proliferation of conflict through the use of narcotics, The Republic of Colombia notes that the solution to the drug world problem requires an integral approach. Integral actions are necessary at every aspect of the narcotics industry including offer, demand and other associated activities.¹ Narcotics in conflict zones pose social, development, and security issues that are interconnected, leading to a complicated connection between the use of drugs and conflict zones. In Colombia, multiple aspects of the drug supply chain take place, including drug crop cultivation, drug production, drug trafficking, and, ultimately, drug consumption; therefore an integrated approach is necessary to counterdrug efforts and anticrime programs in Latin America.²

A conflict spanning four decades between government forces and anti-government insurgent groups, principally the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army or (ELN), escalated during the 1990s. They are primarily funded through drug production and trafficking operations. Although the two groups differ in terms of size and territorial reach, both have increased their involvement in the drug trade from imposing “taxes” on coca harvesters and mid-level buyers to directly controlling multiple aspects of the drug supply chain. The FARC, in contrast to the ELN, is particularly known for its international contacts and relationships with foreign terrorist groups and transnational organized crime groups.³

The Colombian National Plan of Drugs or “Plan Colombia” was designed as a comprehensive strategy to strengthen democratic institutions, combat drug trafficking and terrorism, promote human rights, and foster economic development. Plan Colombia also aimed to reduce cultivation, processing, and distribution of illicit drugs by 50% over six years.⁴ Plan Colombia was reinforced under former President Uribe with a strategy of “democratic security” that focused on confronting illegally armed groups and improving public security. In 2007, Uribe’s security strategy further evolved to focus on “integrated action,” an approach applied in contested zones where poverty, violence, and illicit crop cultivation converge. Under this approach, security forces enter a contested zone to stabilize and hold the area so that civilian agencies can come in rapidly behind to provide social services including justice, education, health, and housing to assert a positive state presence.⁵

Recalling the recent capturing of powerful FARC high target value rebel leaders such as Raul Reyes and Jorge Briceño, Colombia has made a decisive turn in a half-century struggle against Latin America’s last remaining rebel army. As stated by President Juan Manuel Santos in his address to the General Assembly Plenary, “It is as if they told New Yorkers that Osama bin Laden had fallen.”⁶ To consolidate the progress from 2008 and prior years, Colombia will continue to strengthen government presence in conflict areas while improving institutional capacity to provide services and economic opportunities.⁷ Nationalizing counternarcotics funding and operations currently supported by the United States Government (USG) will remain a top priority.⁸ Due to the recent success of an integrated approach policy, and the transnational nature of this problem, The Republic of Colombia encourages Member States to adopt similar approaches to eliminate the funding and waging of war worldwide through the proliferation of narcotics and conflict zones.

II. Strengthening of the United Nations Machinery for Illicit Narcotics Control

As stated by former Colombian president Ernesto Samper, “No one is so free of sin as to be able to cast the first stone,” therefore, the Republic of Colombia strongly supports the principle of “shared responsibility” as the cornerstone of international drug control.⁹ Due to the transnational character of the drug world problem, all the nations involved are responsible to undertake actions towards the reduction of the internal consumption, production, trade and all the other problems connected to this world issue.¹⁰ The international

¹ Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

² Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

³ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

⁴ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

⁵ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

⁶ Death of Mono Jojoy, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/24/death-of-mono-jojoy-top-f_n_738037.html

⁷ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

⁸ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

⁹ UNGASS the Unwritten Story, http://www.ungassondrugs.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=82

¹⁰ Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

community has expressed a desire not to reopen all debates, but to build on those commonly defined strategies and broad principles, and to seek ways to further strengthen measures for drug control. Colombia has undertaken a comprehensive review of how the efforts against illicit drugs have evolved within the United Nations (UN) system, with the aim of identifying measures to strengthen future international cooperation against illicit drug.¹¹

Guided by the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988, Colombia encourages the design and development of policies that are a result of the country's internal dynamics and takes into account the legislative framework, the evolution of the drug problem, and the State's capacity to fight it.¹² Within a context of cooperation, reciprocity, balance and respect for the sovereignty of the nations, Colombia pleads in favor of the adjustment and implementation of an international policy in which involved states confront the different manifestations of the drug world problem and the activities that support it.¹³ Being recognized as one of the world's leading illicit producers of coca, opium poppy, and cannabis, the Colombian government has taken various successful measures to reduce the illegal distribution of narcotics.¹⁴ At the country level, the UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) elaborated guidelines to assist governments in the preparation of national drug control master plans. That is, national agendas that address both illicit demand and illicit supply reduction. UNDCP assisted the Government of Colombia in developing drug control components within that country's 10-year National Alternative Development Plan.

The Republic of Colombia believes that the approach to the drug problem should be based on an institutional consensus. In such scenario, the policies and measures to be implemented take into account all the relevant institutions involved in Plan Colombia. Colombia has stepped up efforts to reassert government control throughout the country, and now has a presence in every one of its administrative departments.¹⁵ Because the focus of Plan Colombia has gradually changed to address the societal and institutional effects of the drug trade and related criminality and violence, the Colombia suggests a shift in our efforts from law enforcement to prevention and treatment, thus strengthening non-repressive approaches to consumption and eradication of narcotics. Colombia further recommends more interagency collaboration between UNDCP, UNDP, and UNAIDS, and a change in the focus of the CND since recently its role has been undermined as the principal UN policy-making body on drug control. Consequently, stronger coordination between UNDCP donor and recipient countries and the inclusion in the regular CND session of "Thematic Debates" is paramount in order to have more focused and substantive discussions on key policy issues in order to improve the existing machinery for drug control in the UN system.¹⁶

III. Addressing the Social and Economic Factors of the Narcotic Production

In its fight against the different manifestations of the drug world problem, The Republic of Colombia has learned that repressive actions have limited reach. These actions must be complemented with activities of high social content that allow the enhancement of the human being in a sustainable manner. Moreover, the community should obtain benefits from the fight against the drug world problem through the use of confiscated properties and goods related to this illicit activity.¹⁷

The Obama Administration has continued U.S. support for Plan Colombia, but is gradually broadening the focus of those aid packages to address the societal and institutional effects of the drug trade and related criminality and violence, rather than mainly funding supply control efforts.¹⁸ The USG and Government of Colombia increased joint efforts to encourage farmers to abandon the production of illicit crops in an area of roughly one-half of the country, covering about 80 percent of Colombia's population. By 2008, USG alternative development (AD) initiatives were supporting the cultivation of over 238,000 hectares of legal crops and completed 1,212 social and productive infrastructure projects in the last seven years.¹⁹ More than 291,000 families have benefited from these programs. In addition, to ensure that Colombians are provided with agricultural and employment alternatives, the USG has worked with Colombia's private sector to create an additional 273,000 full-time equivalent jobs and to leverage over \$700 million in private capital to fund AD initiatives.²⁰ Furthermore, the USG is working with the Colombian government in three regions of the country to pilot integrated counternarcotics initiatives that include security, eradication, and development under one implementation umbrella. In La Macarena, Colombia, for example, the Colombian government has had success by focusing its efforts on improving security conditions and government services in that area by coordinating eradication with food security for farmers and with alternative

¹¹ UNGASS the Unwritten Story, http://www.ungassondrugs.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=82

¹² Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

¹³ Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

¹⁴ CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>

¹⁵ CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>

¹⁶ UNGASS the Unwritten Story, http://www.ungassondrugs.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=82

¹⁷ Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

¹⁸ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

¹⁹ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

²⁰ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

livelihoods projects.²¹ Alternative livelihood organizations such as International Relief & Development (IRD) focus their operations in regions of the world that present social, political and technical challenges. IRD implements targeted cost-effective relief and development programs that improve the lives of these vulnerable groups.²²

On November 7, 2008, the U.S. Ambassador launched the “No Apagues Tu Luz” (“Do Not Turn Off Your Light”) drug demand reduction initiative which fosters community development and social mobility opportunities for children at risk of getting involved in drug use in order to raise awareness of drug consumption in Colombia.²³ It is the action and the decision of the Colombian government to share and offer a clear and objective vision of the country's conflict situation to the international community; thus support for the Peace Process is shown through technical and economic cooperation in order to contribute to the reestablishment of society and the economy in areas of armed conflict. In this way, peace can be sustainable over time, and for the good of all.²⁴ Colombia will continue to consolidate the gains made under Plan Colombia by successfully coordinating aerial and manual eradication efforts and AD programs to inhibit the rapid replanting of coca and increased illicit cultivation in no-spray zones.²⁵ The Republic of Colombia strongly recommends the combination of jointly implemented eradication, alternative development, and interdiction rather than the independent application of any one of these three strategies in order to increase the impact of counternarcotics initiatives in other Member States.²⁶

²¹ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>

²² Alternative Livelihood Development, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/res.nsf/db900SID/OCHA-86GBK4>

²³ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

²⁴ Permanent Mission Statement of Colombia to the UN, http://www.colombiaun.org/english/modelo_onu.htm

²⁵ 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116520.htm>

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