Introduction

The United Nation’s UNODC is obligated to assist the involved Member States with their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism, specifically fighting transnational crime in all its dimensions, redoubling the efforts to remain committed to opposing the world drug problem and taking actions against international terrorism. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”

The introduction of this issue at hand, dates all the way back to 1914, when the U.S government issued the “Harrison Act” in hopes of destroying illicit drug use in the U.S, the opposite of the intended goal happened. Although it has made drugs less accessible and reduced the levels of drug abuse, it also led to unintended consequences. The Drug War resulted in violence around the world, mass imprisonment in the U.S. and political destabilization in Latin America.

With the law of supply, as the supply decreases and demand increases, the price increases. However, it is important to note that drugs are not price-sensitive. People, no matter how inexpensive or expensive the drugs are, will go all out to get access to get drugs to satisfy themselves. The psychological and physical drives cause compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the drug addict and those around them. Therefore, as markets for drugs production in the U.S were banned, markets for drugs production in the areas of Colombia, Peru, and Mexico increased.
Drug trafficking consequences does not stop at violence and organized crime killings. It is linked to terrorist activities, criminal activities like money laundering, human and weapons trafficking, and political corruption.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Drug Cartels**

Any criminal organization that has been developed with the sole purpose of supplying drug trafficking operations. This term is used to refer to any criminal narcotic related organization. They may range from being loosely managed agreements among drug traffickers to formalized commercial enterprises. They may also be known as ‘Falcons’, ‘Hitmen’, ‘Lieutenants’, and ‘Drug Lords’.

**Drug trafficking**

A global illicit trade, involving the processes of cultivating, manufacturing, distributing and selling of substances which are often prohibited by laws.

**Pangas**

Well-purpose built opened boats, anywhere from 25 to 35 feet long with multiple outboard engines. These were specifically designed to smuggle drugs into the United States. These boats have been increasing in number compared to the old-fashioned boats, called picuda boats, as they are cheaper, easier to build and navigate, more lightweight, faster and blend better in the environment of the Baja California region.

**Money Laundering**

This is the process of transforming the profits of crime and corruption and making it appear like the profits come from ‘legitimate’ clean, legal resources. Essentially, the money from the illicit activity is considered dirty, and in this process, the money is ‘laundered’ to make it look clean. The three steps involved in this process is known as: placement, layering and integration. During placement, ‘dirty money’ is introduced to the drug traffickers or drug cartels. Layering is
when they go through series of complex transactions and bookkeeping tricks to conceal the money to make it look 'clean.' The last step, integration, refers to the act of 'laundering,' the act of turning that money into legitimate means.

**Inelastic Demand**

When the increase or decrease in the price of the product does not affect the demand for a product in any way. One scenario of an inelastic demand is illustrated through the demand for gasoline. Drivers must purchase the same amount of gasoline, whether the price increases or decreases. Gasoline is essential for their everyday use in getting to and from places.

**History**

**1860s**

Since coca was discovered, there was immense curiosity in the leaf due to the belief that the coca leaf power allowed peasants and slaves alike to work with great feats of strength. Entrepreneurs such as Vin Mariani, started experimenting with coca by infusing the plant into an energy drink. These drinks were then exported to German pharmaceuticals, which led to the discovery of cocaine alkaloid from an imported Peruvian leaf by a German graduate.

**1886**

The international market for coca products, specifically the medicinal cocaine, increased immensely. Europe and America accepted cocaine for its medical use. Peru economic growth and trade started becoming largely dependent on cocaine. Two-dozen cocaine factories were in active operation by 1905.

**19th Century**

From the late nineteenth century to 1945, while Mexico dominated the illegal trade in opium and marijuana, due to its advantage in geographic location located in the center of drug-producing countries, Peru controlled the legal trade in cocaine products, with cocaine continue to being legal then.

**1914**
After seeing threats and challenges to the society, the United States issued the Harrison Act which imposed prohibition of cocaine. The nation banned cocaine completely, following the period of America’s alcohol Prohibition in 1920s. Around the same period, Peru was still adamantly supportive of legal cocaine. Shortly after the establishment of the “Harrison Act”, El Narco, an immediate black market trade for opium and cocaine was established.

1971

U.S President Nixon declared a “war on drugs” and stated that drug abuse is the country’s biggest threat. He quoted, “No drugs equal no problem.” Some policies that resulted from this war is seen in the ‘100 to 1 sentencing disparity’ law passed by the Congress in 1986. When drug lords are seen trafficking five grams of powder cocaine or crack, they are required under the federal court to receive a minimum sentence of five years in federal prison. Possession of 500 grams of powder cocaine carries the same sentence.

4 July, 1973

The Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed on July 4, 1973 by Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. This did not come into effect until August 1 1973. This treaty also established the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, which is a development strategy put together by the governments of the CARICOM.

Key Issues

Homicide Issues

The Right to Bare Arms

With a long history of civil conflicts in the area of Central America, the use of weapons is not an uncommon practice. However, more than three million weapons are in circulation in the region as a whole, composed of more illegally possessed weapons than legally owned arms. The security forces of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have implemented repressive methods, such as assassination, extrajudicial execution,
torture, and kidnapping when dealing with civil wars, domestic opposition, the supporters of rebellion groups and illegal drug traffickers. Applying harsh methods may be ineffective and even promote further levels of violence.

![Figure 2: Map of Homicide Rates in Central America](image)

The Prevalence of Youth Gangs

The mass migration from Central America to the United States in the 1980s led to an increase in the number of gangs, not only in the United States but also in Central America and Mexico. In the 1990s, the U.S government deported gang members back to their homelands: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. They established local gangs there, while still maintaining connections to the American organizations. With extremely limited education, the youth gang members started to go on a path where violence, conflicts, and money become the driving force and motivations behind their actions.

Violence affects youth, as statistics show that homicide rate is the highest among adolescents and young adults. While some forms of physical violence such as bullying, hitting or slapping may cause more emotional harm than physical harm, other forms of physical violence such as robbery, assault or rape can lead to serious injuries or even death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2011, there were more than 612,000 youths having to be treated in
U.S emergency departments because of physical assault-related injuries. Everyday 13 young people in the United States are being murdered. Homicide is noted to be the number one cause of death for African-American youths.

**Poverty**

Throughout Central America, there are regions with high levels of poverty - regions living on less than two US dollars a day. These include Guatemala, with 37% of the population living in poverty, Honduras with 44%, El Salvador with 58% and Nicaragua with an overwhelming 80%.

**Unemployment**

When addressing poverty issues, unemployment levels must also be taken into consideration. Young people with no work find themselves having too much time on their hands, therefore exposing them to plenty of temptations to engage themselves in drug abuse, gang activity, and crime activities such as drug trafficking. In the national survey of Honduras, 20% of the 13-15 year olds and 28% of the 16-18 year olds neither worked nor attended school. Central America’s population is mostly made up of young teenagers ranging from age 12-20, but if the numbers of idle young people are large, the issue seems alarming as these young people are, according to the Crime and Development in Central America, “susceptible to absorption by the youth gangs that are currently troubling the area, which are alleged to be playing a key role in the region’s drug trade.”
Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Mexico

According to the U.S Drug Enforcement Administration, Mexican drug trafficking organizations are known to be the largest foreign suppliers of heroin, methamphetamines and cocaine to the United States. Cocaine, which is produced in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, is transported through Mexico to other parts of the United States. With this underground business, most of the profits for the drug organizations usually come from the United States alone. Mexican drug cartels are also another issue the government is persistently trying to combat. Cartels use the profits from the drug trade to sponsor government opposition movements. Furthermore, they pay off judges, police, politicians and other officials. The drug cartels also frequently get into violent fights with one another to dominate control.

The Mexican report on drug violence estimates that organized-crime-style killings take up one-third of the total homicides in a year. The conflict started when President Felipe Calderon declared war on the drug cartels. The following Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto has been involved in an ongoing conflict with drug traffickers since he claimed presidency during December of 2006. With the U.S’s commitment to providing 2.5 billion dollars in funding and technical assistance over more than a decade, the Mexican military was able to capture and kill twenty-five of the top thirty-seven most wanted drug cartels in Mexico.
The Caribbean Region

The Caribbean’s main trade is marijuana and cocaine with 16% of cocaine imports into the United States coming through the Caribbean islands. Europe is accountable for percentages higher than the United States. Drug traffickers’ aim to satisfy the thirst of Europe’s increasing appetite for cocaine by shipment along the exploited routes through the Caribbean, with the incentives of the euro’s advance against the dollar. This region suffered from the world’s highest murder rates, according to the research done by the UNODC and World Bank. The increasing rates of homicide and gun proliferation is also known to be directly related to drug trafficking. U.S. officials estimated that the proportion of drugs shipped through the Caribbean had tripled, as the amount of cocaine traveling through the region saw an increase from 5% to 16%. Most of the routes are headed towards the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico from Venezuela, Colombia, Honduras and Panama. Moreover, in the Dominican Republic, only one out of six ports, the Caucedo, is certified under the Container Security Initiative that allows United States’ officials to examine the cargoes being arrived.

The Caribbean Governments have been aware of this situation and because they feel that security is extremely vital, they had established the Treaty of Chaguaramas to ensure security in the needed regions. While the community also cooperated with the UNODC to implement the “CARICOM Social and Development Crime Prevention Action Plan 2009-2013”, the Heads of State had also adopted the “Santo Domingo Pact,” which “aimed to enhance policy coordination in the field of drug trafficking and organized crime.” Several countries have also acted on developing new legislation on trafficking and have been participating in regional, multilateral and bilateral levels of cooperation.

Peru

Peru has been a cocaine exporter since the 19th century; most of its product being exported into the United States legally until the early 20th century when Washington outlawed the drug. Cocaine gets shipped out via drug cartels such as Medellin and Cali Cartels. Peru, since the 1980, holds the title to being the world’s biggest producer of cocaine, often going head on for the title with another world’s leading cocaine producer, Colombia. These illegal transactions bring in a net worth of $3 billion a year.

The Peru government aims to bring coca cultivation down to 38,000 hectares from
42,890 hectares by 2021. However, that faces a political challenge as traditional uses of the coca leaf remains to be legal. Most of the coca growers are known to be a strong political force as well. A lack of police forces needed to combat organized crime and corruptions still remain an issue. This has also been an undermining cause of this illegal drug trafficking, in the lands of Peru. The economic growth led by the cocaine trafficking has also opened several incentives for organized crimes. Two former presidents are currently facing investigation for political corruption and for having secret ties with drug trafficking.

**CARICOM**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is made of up twenty countries, stretching from the Bahamas in the north to the Suriname and Guyana in South America. This group came into being on July 4, 1973 after the Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed. CARICOM is focused on their four main pillars: economic integration. Foreign policy coordination, human and social development and security. Four out of nine objectives: to improve standards of living and work, the full employment of labor and other factors of production, accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence and organization for increased production and productivity pinned by the CARICOM are close to being violated through the illegal activities of drug trafficking, organized crime-killings, and the newly emergences of drug cartels.

**Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

**Marijuana Legalization**

In 2012, starting from Colorado and Washington, the United States have sought to legalize the sales and usage of marijuana with the hopes of decreasing the drug violence in Mexico. Since marijuana makes up 60% of the drug cartel’s profit, the landscape of the black market has altered significantly with a decrease in consumers. Fewer consumers would decrease the power the drug cartels have, which would in turn decreases violence near the United States and Mexican borders. However, despite these benefits, some drawbacks exist as well. The remaining 40% of drug cartels’ sales come from selling methamphetamine, cocaine, brown sugar and black-tar heroin still bring in significant profits. By legalizing marijuana, the cartels could also participate in the now-legal market of marijuana.
The Declaration of the Drug War

President Felipe Calderon, in attempts to counter the increasing number of Drug Trafficking Organization (DTOs), declared a war on the cartels in 2006. He commanded thousands of military personnel to replace the local police forces. Due to his efforts, some of the larger cartels were broken up into eighty new, smaller drug trafficking gangs. Intensified rivals and competition between cartels led to more violence, more cases of kidnapping to replace their incomes, and increased deaths of mayors and other politicians as cartels went face to face with the government for political power. The homicide rates skyrocketed as the number went from 90,000 homicides to 120,000 homicides just in a mere two year span.

Subsequently, mass protests erupted in 2014, when forty-three students disappeared in the town of Iguala. Mexican investigators found out that the police handed the students over to a local drug gang per request of the mayor, who had been involved in a scandal for intertwining with other drug leaders. This shows that political failure is also linked closely with the killing of thousands of civilians and disappearances of people.

Enforcing More Aggressive Laws
In 1989-1993, the Colombian government faced a conflict with the Medellin cartel which was the most dominant cocaine importer during that time. When the government sought to implement harsher laws with harsher penalties, the cartel’s leaders, with the fear of facing execution and imprisonment and the notion of ‘fighting fire with fire’, declared a war on the government. The Medellin Cartel has been accused of blowing up airliners, exploding numerous bombs in public places, and murdering politicians, judges, journalists and thousands of police officers. The government responded with an assassination of the cartel’s leader. Following his death, the cartel gangs broke up into small groups, while maintaining the same level of violence. Profits from drugs remain high. The traffickers have access to more cash on their hands. They have better resources, equipments, and weapons to bribe the criminal justice officials and invest in more up-to-date weapons. Funding to curve the illegal drug trade becomes more imperative as the cartels continue to increase their resources.

**Possible Solutions**

According to the Third Committee of the General Assembly (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), tackling the issue requires ‘regional and international’ strategies rooted in global cooperation in order to handle an issue as complex and multifaceted as this one. The UN General Assembly has suggested starting at the root of the problem to eliminate the problem entirely. They agree that long-term solutions cannot be solely reliant on “aggressive policies and imposing regulations” as heavy handed responses have had limited success in the past.

Many children usually decide whether to drink or use drugs before turning the age of 12. Therefore, **education and awareness**, specifically drug education in primary school is essential. All teachers and courses should reinforce it. Information on drugs and alcohol must be taught effectively through knowledgeable teachers and other educators who understand the psychological process from experimentation and dependency along with the negative short term and long term effects after using drugs.

At local levels, especially in cities where drug use is now producing devastating effects, **law enforcement at street levels** must exist to help parents maintain control over the environments that their children encounter. Street Law is a global program of legal education targeted at secondary school students. It is an approach to teaching practical law to large populations using various interactive teaching methods. Whether this enforcement will stop drug
related crime completely or not can be debated further upon. However, by getting assistance from the treatment programs, which, nowadays, are more easily accessible and less expensive in MEDCs due to the high demand, those enforcement would improve the condition of drug users by motivating the users directly or indirectly to seek treatment.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- How can the government help reduce the conditions of demand for drugs?
- How can family skills training programmes for drug abuse prevention be implemented securely to ensure promising results?
- How can the government of LEDCs be aware and keep track of the drug trafficking gangs taking patrol in the state borders in a quick, effective manner to cease the possible violences and conflicts?
- What kind of bilateral/multilateral agreements exist between international cooperation to help solve this issue as a whole?
Bibliography


