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**Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Heads of
National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies,
Latin America and the Caribbean**

Guatemala City, 2-6 October 2017

Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

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

1. The present note provides information on regional cooperation initiatives and assistance in countering drug trafficking and related crimes provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on developments since the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago from 3 to 7 October 2016.

II. Precursor control**Colombia**

2. The Integrated Illicit Crops Monitoring System continued to provide technical advice to the Ministry of Justice and Law of Colombia on a number of initiatives, including research and the drafting of studies on the control of substances.

Mexico

3. In 2017, the UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico and the Federal Commission for Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS) of Mexico completed the installation of the latest versions of two precursor control software platforms: the National Drug Control System (NDS) program suite and the International Import and Export Authorization System (I2ES), making Mexico the first country in Latin America to deploy the updated software. Since the installation, the UNODC NDS team and COFEPRIS have been working to correct

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** [UNODC/HONLAC/27/1](#).



implementation errors and develop user training in the form of practical case exercises.

Peru

4. In February 2017, UNODC provided to the National Office for Controlled Chemical Precursors and Assets of Peru 100 kits for the preliminary identification of precursors and chemical substances. For the first time, the kits were harmonized with the list of controlled chemical substances in Peru and supplemented with personal protection equipment.

5. As proposed by UNODC, the list of controlled chemical substances in Peru was augmented by the National Office to achieve better control of all chemical substances, regardless of their level of concentration.

6. The UNODC Country Office in Peru conducted several workshops on the use of global positioning system methodologies in order to support the gradual implementation of a GPS-based methodology that, for the first time in Peru, georeferences users listed in the registry of users of controlled chemical substances.

III. Legal assistance and anti-money-laundering

Central America and the Caribbean

7. In the context of the UNODC Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, the UNODC Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean in Panama continued to provide technical assistance to 13 Member States in the region in the area of cash smuggling, in particular in the implementation of recommendation 32 of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering.

8. The UNODC Regional Office continued to provide support to national authorities in El Salvador in the reform of the country's Law against Money-Laundering with a view to aligning it with international standards.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

9. In March 2017, the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia promulgated two new laws that form the backbone of a new regulatory framework on drugs, replacing a law established in 1988: (a) the General Law on Coca; and (b) the Law against Illicit Trafficking in Controlled Substances. The latter includes an extensive section on asset forfeiture. UNODC, through its Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and in coordination with its headquarters in Vienna and the Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean in Panama, provided legal and technical assistance to the Government during the second half of 2016 through a detailed revision of the draft law against illicit trafficking in controlled substances. The Country Office held meetings and workshops to provide legal and technical assistance in line with the obligations of the Plurinational State of Bolivia under the Drug Control Conventions, including its reservation to the 1961 Convention. UNODC is currently providing assistance to the Government for the drafting of the corresponding by-laws.

Colombia

10. During the reporting period, UNODC staff in Colombia trained 403 public officials from law enforcement and the judiciary on techniques and best practices in investigating and prosecuting offences related to corruption and transnational and national bribery.

11. In November 2016, UNODC completed the second cycle of a series of activities in Colombia of the mock criminal investigation on financing of terrorism, which included a total of 17 workshops in 14 different cities nationwide. UNODC

also exchanged experiences and good practices with the Government of Argentina in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases related to the financing of serious crimes, including terrorism.

12. UNODC exchanged experiences and good practices with the Government of Colombia on the investigation and prosecution of cases related to transnational bribery and compliance.

Panama

13. In 2016, in close cooperation with the Universidad Latina de Panamá, the Regional Office in Panama developed and delivered the first diploma programme on money-laundering, terrorism and its financing, which was attended by 30 officials from the Office of the Attorney-General of Panama.

14. The Regional Office in Panama provided assistance to the Office of the Attorney-General in the establishment of a specialized unit on money-laundering, as well as in the drafting of a manual on asset recovery, which is expected to be approved by the Attorney General shortly.

Peru

15. In September 2016, Peru hosted the fourth international forum on the prevention of money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. UNODC participated in the forum and promoted the enhancement of measures to combat money-laundering, especially in areas where cultivation of coca and drug trafficking are usually reported.

IV. Strengthening of national police forces and cooperation initiatives

Central America and the Caribbean

16. All UNODC initiatives being implemented in Central America continued to support, either directly or indirectly, the implementation of the Central American Integration System's Central American security strategy.

17. In April 2014, the UNODC Regional Office in Panama and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) launched the UNODC Regional Programme in support of the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2014-2016, which established the basis for the development of UNODC operations and programmes in the Caribbean. In August 2015, UNODC re-established its presence in the Caribbean by launching its Programme Office for the Caribbean in Barbados. A second UNODC presence in the Caribbean is expected to be established in Guyana in the third quarter of 2017 for the purpose of implementing a new national anti-corruption initiative.

18. UNODC provided assistance to police forces in Central America through the delivery of training activities in the field of cybercrime, in particular through the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force programme.

19. UNODC continued to support the work of the Cybercrime Unit established within the national police force of El Salvador, including through training activities, the purchase of equipment and software and the provision of assistance in the development of its annual operations plan.

20. In Panama, as part of the Security Cooperation in Panama (SECOPA) project, UNODC continued to provide assistance to the National Security Council in setting up the first national criminal intelligence platform in Panama to link the databases of relevant institutions with a view to enhancing operational cooperation and just-in-time exchange of information in the fight against crime. UNODC assistance

included the acquisition and adaptation of hardware and software, as well as tailor-made training activities on criminal intelligence.

21. In the context of the interregional programme Strengthening criminal investigation and criminal justice cooperation along the cocaine route in Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa (CRIMJUST), UNODC provided technical assistance to the offices of the Attorney General in Panama and the Dominican Republic. As part of the initial activities implemented under the initiative, training on institutional integrity was delivered to law enforcement officials of beneficiary countries in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

22. In May 2017, UNODC conducted an international training course to support the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in following up on the operational recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

23. During the first half of 2017, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in cooperation with the UNODC Country Office in Colombia, organized the second international training course on the chain of custody and training on synthetic drugs, to support the Special Force to Combat Drug Trafficking (FELCN) and the Office of the Attorney General. In May and June, the Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in coordination with the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section in Vienna, conducted a training course in Vienna for experts from the laboratories of FELCN, the Forensic Investigation Institute and the Laboratory for Quality Control of Medications and Drugs. The training consisted of practical laboratory exercises with an analytical approach, chain of custody and documentation, as well as preparation and extraction of samples and quality management, among other things.

24. In February 2017, within the framework of the activities of the CRIMJUST programme implemented by UNODC in coordination with the International Criminal Police Organization and Transparency International, FELCN participated in a an inter-agency drug working group meeting held in Argentina that included representatives of Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. FELCN also participated in Operation Lionfish III, a major police operation involving 5,000 police officers from 13 countries of Latin America and East Africa (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Panama and Peru).

Colombia

25. During 2016, the UNODC Country Office in Colombia continued to provide technical assistance to national and local governments in the design and formulation of plans for security and peaceful coexistence. The plans are aimed at strengthening, prioritizing and coordinating a set of strategies and specific actions to reduce crime and enhance peaceful coexistence in different regions of the country. Microtrafficking in drugs was prioritized by the national police within the framework of the plans.

Mexico

26. In October 2016, upon the initiative of the Mexican presidency of the Police Community of the Americas (AMERIPOL), UNODC was invited to join the Community as an observer. The Mexican presidency also invited the UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico to act as its adviser in the design and implementation of its training component for the biennium 2016-2017.

27. As a result, UNODC and the federal police of Mexico will jointly deliver the 2017 LE TrainNet (Law Enforcement Training Network) training event in Mexico

City from 30 August to 1 September 2017 as part of the AMERIPOL calendar of activities. The 2017 training event will cover subjects such as the use of cryptocurrency by criminal and terrorist groups, the criminal use of the darknet, disruption of illicit financial flows, and the monitoring, investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking.

28. In the period under review, the UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico and the National Security Commission of Mexico strengthened considerably their technical cooperation through the signing of two new project agreements aimed at preventing and combating corruption within police forces and providing assistance to victims of gender-related violence. The new projects implemented by UNODC are part of the bilateral Merida Initiative of Mexico and the United States of America.

Peru

29. During the first half of 2017, drug control officials — prosecutors and police — were trained by UNODC personnel on: (a) identifying and handling chemical precursors, practising with real chemical substances for the first time; (b) improving investigation strategies on chemical precursor diversion in line with the latest chemical precursor control norms and procedures approved in Peru; and (c) improving inter-institutional cooperation.

V. Border control

Regional and subregional levels

30. During the biennium 2016-2017, the UNODC-WCO Global Container Control Programme team for Latin America and the Caribbean was very active in the region. At the time of reporting, the programme was being implemented in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Peru and Suriname. Brazil joined the Programme in February and Cuba in June 2017. Activities being implemented under the initiative include, but are not limited to, the provision of basic and advanced training, operational monitoring and oversight of the established Joint Port Control Units, and the acquisition of relevant equipment.

31. The Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) has also been very active in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to expanding its operational coverage in the region. The Programme is being implemented at international airports in Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica, Panama and Peru. In addition, UNODC has been considering holding discussions with Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Colombia that would set the stage for those countries to join the initiative in the near future.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

32. In March 2017, UNODC organized a study mission of Bolivian counterparts to Panama to showcase the achievements and functioning of the Global Container Control Programme. The Bolivian delegation, led by the Vice-Minister of Social Defense and Controlled Substances, comprised the Director of the Special Force against Drug Trafficking and representatives of the Police Centre for Coordination of Anti-Narcotics and the General Prosecutor's Office. The mission paved the way for the implementation of the Programme in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In addition, in April 2017, FELCN participated in the fifth Global Meeting of AIRCOP in São Paulo, Brazil.

VI. Regional networks and exchange of information

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

33. The UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia continued to coordinate activities and cooperation with other offices of the region in the following areas: (a) the development and implementation of programmatic tasks in the prevention and treatment of drugs (the PREDEM project) (Country Office in Peru and Programme Office in Ecuador); (b) container control (Regional Office in Panama); (c) airport communications (AIRCOP); and (d) chain of custody, test management and control of synthetic drugs (Country Office in Colombia).

34. In 2016, the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia announced the creation of an information and intelligence exchange centre between Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil and Peru. The initiative was supported by UNODC within the framework of the two proposals presented by the Country Office in 2016 to facilitate regional drug control cooperation. Following up on those proposals during the first half of 2017, the Country Office held meetings with embassies of the neighbouring countries to promote cooperation in the region.

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

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

35. In January 2017, UNODC presented its annual report on the validation of information on the incineration and/or destruction of seized drugs in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The report showed an increase in cocaine hydrochloride seizures in comparison with previous figures (from 8,602 to 17,764 kilograms), while cocaine base and marijuana seizures registered a decrease (respectively, from 12,682 to 12,193 kilograms, and from 26,198 to 15,190 kilograms). UNODC planned to present in July 2017 the report on incineration and/or destruction observed during the first half of 2017, as well as its coca crop monitoring report for 2016. The law against illicit trafficking in controlled substances recently enacted by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia is expected to facilitate a study on coca-cocaine conversion factors, to be carried out in coordination with UNODC. An additional study, on the yield of coca crops, is expected to be initiated by the end of 2017.

Colombia

36. UNODC continued to provide technical assistance for capacity-building at the national and regional levels focusing on the implementation and adjustment of the Methodological Toolkit for the Monitoring of Department Drug Plans.

37. The UNODC Country Office in Colombia launched a report on the chemical characterization of marijuana marketed in Colombia. The study determined that, given its high concentration of *delta*-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and low levels of cannabidiol (CBD), the marijuana produced in the country does not have therapeutic characteristics.

Mexico

38. Between June 2016 and June 2017, the joint UNODC-National Institute of Statistics and Geography Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Public Security, Victimization and Justice provided online and on-site training on victimization surveys to 70 experts from 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica and Mexico) and the Asia-Pacific region (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey and Viet Nam).

39. The Centre, in collaboration with the Regional Office in Panama, provided technical assistance in the implementation, analysis and final publication of the first National Victimization Survey. The Survey was published in Panama in March 2017.

40. In June 2016, the UNODC Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme, in coordination with the Government of Mexico, issued its first public report on the monitoring of poppy cultivation in Mexico. The report covered the period from July 2014 to June 2015 and included estimates on the scope of poppy cultivation, as well as the inputs, methods and procedures used to generate those estimates. Work under this project continued throughout the biennium 2016-2017, expanding its coverage to include the development and testing of a methodology for estimating opium poppy yields.

Panama

41. Under the SECOPA initiative, UNODC supported the Integrated System of Criminal Statistics of Panama in the establishment of a national Centre of Excellence on analysis of trends in drugs and crime. With a view to enhancing the quality of statistics and trend analysis of crime- and drug-related matters in the country, UNODC provided training and technical assistance to the personnel of national institutions involved in the work of the Integrated System.

Peru

42. In July 2016, the UNODC Country Office in Peru and the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) published and presented the 2015 edition of the annual coca cultivation survey. The survey estimated that, as at 31 December 2015, the area under coca cultivation in Peru stood at 40,300 ha, 6.1 per cent less than in 2014 (42,900 ha). The figure consolidated the downward trend observed since 2011 (62,500 ha), and coincided with the Government's implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy 2012-2016.

43. In April 2017, UNODC and DEVIDA signed a new technical cooperation agreement based on a project revision for the biennium 2017-2018 that was agreed with the Government. The objective of the agreement was to produce an annual report that provides reliable information regarding coca-related activity to the authorities. It is expected to include analysis of trends relating to coca crops, the cocaine supply chain and illegal mining that converges with coca cultivation areas.

VIII. Demand reduction initiatives

Regional and subregional levels

44. Under the PREDEM project, UNODC carried out the third epidemiological study on drug use among university students in the Andean Community (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador and Peru).

Central America and the Caribbean

45. UNODC continued to support drug demand reduction efforts in Central America through the Strengthening Families Programme, which is being successfully implemented in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The Programme is based on scientific evidence and works with families in selected at-risk communities on the development of parenting skills and approaches to drug abuse-related risk factors.

46. In the Dominican Republic, UNODC implemented a number of activities under the project HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support for people who use drugs and people in prison settings, aimed at improving the quality of life of

drug users through the establishment and strengthening of a sustainable model of comprehensive care that leads to a decrease in risk behaviours related to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases among people who use heroin.

47. UNODC also continued to implement a national drug demand reduction programme focused on the strengthening of parenting skills in the Dominican Republic, in close coordination with the National Drug Council of the Dominican Republic.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

48. The UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia provided technical assistance on drug abuse prevention in 139 educational communities in five departmental capitals to more than 3,900 teachers who will reach more than 92,000 students. Training was also provided to 1,000 facilitators and 7,000 parents on the problem of drug use and better parenting skills.

49. In collaboration with the PREDEM project, the UNODC Country Office continued to support the Andean Youth Initiative by expanding young people's access to social networks to prevent drug misuse. The Country Office also provided technical assistance on drug prevention for the departmental and municipal governments and trained personnel selected by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the implementation of the Strong Families Programme, which had benefited a total of 200 families as of December 2016. As of June 2017, a total of 269 drug health professionals were trained in the application of drug abuse rehabilitation and treatment standards through Treatnet, the international network of drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation resource centres.

Brazil

50. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Brazil was awarded a grant to discuss the International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders with the National Secretary for Drug Policy of Brazil as a contribution to the development of national evaluation strategies for drug services in the country. As the Standards had been produced jointly by UNODC and the World Health Organization (WHO), the initiative was being carried out together with the country and regional offices of the Pan American Health Organization, in its capacity as the Regional Office for the Americas of WHO.

51. In December 2016, the Office in Brazil supported a workshop for policymakers on the nature, prevention and treatment of drug use disorders, which was attended by 50 people, mostly from countries in Latin America, including government officials, health professionals and social workers. Discussions were based on the UNODC publication *Manual for the Training of Policymakers on the Nature, Prevention and Treatment of Drug Use Disorders*.

52. In order to have a broader portfolio and multilevel initiatives, the Office in Brazil has been exploring possibilities to establish new government partnerships at the city and state levels. Initial discussions were held with the city of Recife to provide technical assistance on drug policy strategies, with a special focus on drug prevention.

53. In December 2016, UNODC started the implementation of a project on crime prevention through sports called "Line Up Live Up" in the Federal District and Rio de Janeiro. The initiative is part of the UNODC Global Programme on the Doha Declaration and focuses on life skills to strengthen young people's resilience in the face of crime, violence and drug abuse.

Colombia

54. In 2017, within the framework of the PREDEM project, an international seminar on prevention of the use of psychoactive substances that focused on experiences and challenges in mobilizing preventive actions based on evidence was

held in Medellín, Colombia, enabling an exchange of experiences and scientific information.

55. Regarding the early warning system developed by the Colombian Drug Observatory, the UNODC drug demand reduction programme continued to strengthen the capacity of the network of national institutions involved in the monitoring of psychoactive substances to identify the characteristics and effects of chemical substances and the actions needed to be taken by the early warning system.

Ecuador

56. During the reporting period, the UNODC Country Office in Peru and the UNODC Programme Office in Ecuador implemented three local, selective prevention projects aimed at street children, adolescents and juvenile offenders.

57. Within the framework of the prevention programme “Strong Families”, UNODC trained 76 facilitators, benefiting more than 600 families in Ecuador.

58. UNODC trained young leaders of the Youth Initiative in Ecuador to promote prevention activities through social networks. Moreover, UNODC trained 685 trainees under the Treatnet training programme, which is based on scientific evidence.

Mexico

59. In 2016 and 2017, the UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico actively participated in the closed-door dialogues on drug policies and follow-up to the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Peru

60. During the reporting period, UNODC developed four intervention models for prevention and treatment programmes aimed at vulnerable populations in Peru. The Office also implemented 22 mental health modules in community centres throughout Peru and provided support for the development of technical standards for the treatment of persons with acute intoxication due to the use of psychoactive substances.

61. The UNODC Country Office in Peru conducted five workshops to train facilitators for the “Strong Families” prevention programme in the regions of Ayacucho, Pucallpa, San Martín, La Libertad and Tacna. An exchange of experiences was carried out with parents from five different regions to evaluate the development of the programme.

Paraguay

62. In December 2016, UNODC delivered to the Government of Paraguay the final draft text for its National Drug Policy. The National Anti-Drug Secretariat of Paraguay, the lead institution on this matter, envisaged August 2017 as the tentative date for the Policy’s official enactment.

IX. Alternative development

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

63. The UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia continued to deliver alternative development technical assistance in the municipality of La Asunta. The Office emphasized food security, the production of plant material in local greenhouses to expand and consolidate the coffee value chain, the establishment of integrated farms within agroforestry systems, forest management

by means of forest plantations and forest management plans, and strengthening the capacity of producers and productive associations to access private loans.

Colombia

64. The UNODC Country Office in Colombia, through the comprehensive monitoring component of its alternative development programme, monitored the Government's strategies for alternative development and illicit crop substitution. In the territories targeted for intervention, the comprehensive monitoring component was responsible for gathering data (baseline, mid-term, follow-up and endline) on the verification of illicit crops, as well as the social, economic, environmental and institutional conditions in those territories, in order to support the Government's efforts to strengthen the territories by making them free of illicit crops and fostering a culture of lawfulness.

65. UNODC provided support to land access efforts in regions with alternative development programmes through cooperation with the National Land Agency in the formalization of land property titles in territories with illicit crops. Land titling has been a key factor in integrating communities into the Colombian legal economy.

66. UNODC also supported the Government of Colombia in the implementation of a new illicit crop substitution programme within the framework of the peace agreements. The programme seeks to eradicate illicit crops through voluntary replacement, as well as to overcome poverty conditions by providing new productive opportunities to farmers and strengthening the capacities of the agricultural organizations to obtain access to national and international markets.

X. Recommendations

67. There is a need to promote more effective international, regional and bilateral cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and a balanced approach to supply and demand reduction strategies.

68. Drug policies and programmes should be evidence-based, consider human rights as a priority issue and be properly monitored and evaluated.

69. Additional efforts to promote drug prevention and treatment based on international standards and good practices are necessary.

70. Specialized support to prosecutors in charge of money-laundering investigations is necessary to strengthen their capacity in financial forensic analysis.

71. Considering the increased relevance of synthetic drugs, their manufacture, trafficking and use in the region, and the advances in international chemical precursor control mechanisms, Governments of the region should consider upgrading their national precursor control platforms to the latest versions of the NDS program suite and I2ES, as well as strengthening sharing of information on regional trends.
