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**Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National
Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin
America and the Caribbean**

Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

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

1. The present note provides information on regional cooperation initiatives and assistance in addressing and countering the world drug problem 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-ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima from 7 to 11 October 2019.

2. While most countries in the region are currently investing efforts and resources in ensuring an adequate public health response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and in mitigating this socioeconomic crisis, it is important for policymakers to remain alert to the consequences related to, inter alia, illicit drugs and organized crime. Drug production and trafficking networks could prosper, using the chaos of a pandemic for long-term geographical market expansion and diversification, alongside shorter-term exploitative retail pricing.

II. Precursor control**Central America and the Caribbean**

3. Under the framework of the global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme, a series of training sessions was conducted in Panama, aimed at law enforcement agencies and forensic laboratories of the 13 countries initially covered by the SMART programme (Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago), on the use of

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TruNarc, a detection device donated to each Member State participating in the programme. The global SMART programme further developed national diagnostics aimed at assessing Member States' capabilities (in terms of strengths, weaknesses, communication and level of coordination) and national early warning systems for synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances. In the third quarter of 2019, the programme delivered two TruNarc devices to El Salvador and, together with the Drug Enforcement Administration of the United States of America, provided training to key stakeholders of the drug observatory of the Dominican Republic in the identification of synthetic drugs and the use of TruNarc devices. A webinar was also delivered under the programme for the drug observatory, law enforcement agencies and laboratories in El Salvador on the identification of synthetic drugs. Three diagnostic evaluations were conducted, in Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. In January and February 2020, together with the Canada Border Services Agency, training on synthetic drugs was conducted for laboratories and law enforcement and first responders agencies of Barbados and Saint Lucia. In June and July 2020, the global SMART programme and the drug observatories of South America and Central America ran two virtual forums on the impact of COVID-19 on synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, with the objective of better understanding new trends and how the pandemic was affecting the synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances market, and how that had subsequently affected consumers.

4. In the last quarter of 2019, El Salvador adopted a country strategy for institutional strengthening of the interdiction of drugs and chemical precursors, under the framework of the implementation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat project on strengthening institutional capacity to improve drug trafficking control in Latin America (Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador).

Colombia

5. UNODC, through the Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring, continued to provide technical advice to the Ministry of Justice and Law and the National Police of Colombia on several initiatives, including technical and normative tools and workshops on the control of substances from a law enforcement perspective.

6. In the framework of the study on the dynamics of chemical substance trafficking in Colombia, a methodology was developed and implemented in the Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring to estimate the quantities of chemical substances required in the illicit production of alkaloids derived from coca in Colombia, which strengthened the capacities of public institutions responsible for monitoring and investigating the use of chemical precursors in drug production. In addition, UNODC conducted a study on the chemical characterization and marketing dynamics of psychoactive and inhalable substances present on the domestic drug market.

Mexico

7. The Government of Mexico, through the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks and the Ministry of Health, and in cooperation with the UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico, continues to operate the National Drug Control System. The seventh version of this computer-based system for the international control of precursors is currently in operation.

III. Legal assistance and anti-money-laundering

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

8. In August 2019, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in coordination with the Financial Investigations Unit and the Attorney General's Office and with the support of the UNODC Country Office in Colombia, published a booklet on money-laundering typologies. The booklet contains a description of the modalities by which money-laundering is carried out and of the warning signs that make it possible to identify.

Brazil

9. In Brazil, in March 2019, UNODC and the National Council of Justice entered into a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of the country's "Justice present" programme, with a view to strengthening pretrial detention hearings in all 27 federal states. The joint initiative is aimed at reducing the prison population by reducing the number of pretrial detentions. A total of 27 UNODC specialized advisers, one for each federal state, provide guidance to state judicial partners on international guidelines and good practices for professionals working in the field. The advisers also assist magistrates and state courts in structuring social protection networks to prevent drug abuse, address vulnerabilities related to involvement with crime, and strengthen the skills of magistrates and other personnel involved in detention hearings. The initiative also provides for actions aimed at introducing alternatives to incarceration.

Colombia

10. In 2019, UNODC designed and conducted seven mock criminal investigation cases in money-laundering, during which 160 public officials from different institutions of the Government of Colombia participated in four technical training sessions, addressing issues such as theory, standards, detection and investigation of specific money-laundering typologies and their possible relationship with economic sectors. A "trainers network" was established to promote the continuity and sustainability of those activities.

11. In October 2019, to encourage and facilitate the development and integration of anti-money-laundering measures in the public and private sectors, UNODC organized a campaign to mark the eighth National Day for the Prevention of Money-Laundering in Bogotá and Medellín, with the participation of the Vice-President of Colombia, the Minister of Justice and Law and the Director of the Financial Information and Analysis Unit.

Ecuador

12. Under the framework of the joint activities carried out by the UNODC-World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) initiative and the Prosecutor's Office of Ecuador, specialized webinars were delivered to relevant counterparts on issues related to money-laundering, corruption and the detection of assets of illicit origin, among others. UNODC also provided technical assistance to the Office of the Controller General of the State through an e-learning platform on topics related to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In September 2019, the Inter-institutional Liaison Group for Asset Recovery was established. It is composed of 11 State entities and its objective is to improve asset recovery processes among international jurisdictions.

El Salvador

13. In El Salvador, UNODC provided technical assistance on criminal investigations and on countering corruption and money-laundering to the Division for Anti-Narcotics, the Division for Technical-Scientific Policing and the Asset Investigation, Termination of Ownership and Financial Crime Division of the National Police. Also in El Salvador, UNODC provided technical assistance to the Office of the Attorney General and the Supreme Court of Justice with the aim of strengthening the investigation and prosecution of money-laundering relating to drug trafficking.

Mexico

14. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico, in collaboration with the National Banking and Securities Commission, is building a comprehensive anti-money-laundering awareness campaign targeting private companies, government officials and citizens to raise awareness of the negative impact of money-laundering on society and its relationship to organized crime.

15. During 2019, a telephone survey was conducted to gather key information regarding the perception and knowledge of Mexican society with regard to money-laundering and to determine a baseline to monitor and evaluate the impact of the campaign. Working sessions were organized with representatives from the public, private and academic sectors. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico, supported by the UNODC Cybercrime and Anti-Money-Laundering Section, provided training on cryptocurrencies and, in early 2020, organized eight conferences for more than 9,000 participants on the subject.

Peru

16. In 2020, the UNODC project on criminal justice responses to forestry crimes in Peru supported inter-institutional cooperation and provided capacity-building to the Specialized Environmental Prosecutor's Office, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the customs authority and the Environmental Directorate of the National Police on investigating illicit financial flows in the forestry sector.

17. The UNODC Law Enforcement Assistance Programme to Reduce Tropical Deforestation supported the capacity-building of the High-Complexity Crime Investigation Division of the National Police in investigating and dismantling criminal organizations that are linked to illegal logging, among other crimes.

IV. Strengthening national police forces and cooperation initiatives

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

18. In February 2020, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Container Control Programme organized a study visit of officers of the Port Control Unit of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to Argentina and Uruguay to strengthen contacts and communication among the countries involved in the Paraguay-Paraná waterway. In April and May 2020, UNODC held two refresher theoretical training sessions for Port Control Unit staff. The Unit was also strengthened in July with the involvement of the National Service of Intellectual Property to improve capacities in investigating intellectual property crimes.

19. In May and July 2020, three training courses, on trafficking in persons, air cargo control and intellectual property crimes, were delivered by the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) to the joint airport interdiction task force staff at the international airports of Santa Cruz and La Paz.

20. In May and June 2020, two workshops, on controlled deliveries and asset forfeiture, were held under the framework of the CRIMJUST project, with the support of the network of anti-narcotics prosecutors from the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors and the UNODC Country Office in Colombia. In July 2020, an asset forfeiture introductory e-learning course was developed for judges, prosecutors and police officers in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

21. In October 2019 and February 2020, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in coordination with the CRIMJUST project, organized two case forums to strengthen regional and international cooperation in counter-narcotics investigations. The first one involved institutions from Belgium and Bolivia (the Plurinational State of) and the second involved institutions from Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Spain. The forums were focused on

cases of cocaine trafficking identified in the framework of the Container Control Programme and AIRCOP. The case involving Argentina and Spain was also supported by the network of anti-narcotics prosecutors from the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors.

Colombia

22. UNODC continued to deliver capacity-building for law enforcement institutions responsible for countering drug trafficking in Colombia, in the context of the programme on strengthening criminal investigation and criminal justice cooperation along the cocaine route in Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa (CRIMJUST). UNODC held three technical training sessions on technical and chemical processes in cocaine manufacture in order to strengthen capacities to detect, investigate and prosecute manufacturing of and trafficking in cocaine. The training sessions offered an overview of the cultivation, infrastructure, processes, chemical substances and socioeconomic dynamics related to cocaine manufacture.

23. UNODC further continued to provide technical assistance to public institutions with a mandate in drug trafficking interdiction and precursor control in Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador, including through the provision of support in the design of national strategies for institutional strengthening in the interdiction of trafficking in drugs and chemical precursors.

Mexico

24. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico continued to implement the project on strengthening police response and attention to victims of violent crime to enhance the capacities of first responders with regard to gender-based violence and improve their coordination with police forces, emergency call centre operators and women's centres.

25. From 2016 to 2020, a total of 12,849 police officers and emergency call centre operators from 25 states of Mexico and 30 municipalities were trained, with funding from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States and in collaboration with the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection of Mexico. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico implemented a certification on investigating femicide, with the objective of creating a network of specialized police officers from 23 states.

26. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico supported the National Institute of Statistics and Geography in conducting the first national survey on professional training and standards for police, as part of which 56,116 police officers covering five different police corporations at the national, state and local levels were surveyed. The Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Victims of Crime, Public Security and Justice is currently conducting an in-depth analysis of the capacities of all 32 state police forces.

Peru

27. During the reporting period, UNODC provided technical assistance and capacity-building to the offices of the special prosecutors for drug trafficking and the National Police. Skills development and technology transfer were focused on strategies targeting the diversion of chemical precursors by applying the area control methodology with the support of geolocation systems. This work promoted the efficient flow of information, resulting in more performant inter-institutional coordination among local and national competent authorities.

V. Border control

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

28. Under the framework of the Container Control Programme, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia is working with Member States to explore further options to strengthen border security along the Paraguay-Paraná waterway crossing in the south of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (located at Busch Port in Santa Cruz).

Colombia

29. In July 2019, the Government of Colombia and UNODC signed a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of the Container Control Programme. Several workshops were conducted to enhance the operative capacity of the national authorities involved in port control and cargo inspection, such as the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Law and the Directorate of National Taxes and Customs.

VI. Regional networks and exchange of information

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

30. The UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia continued supporting the development of the Regional Counter-Narcotics Intelligence Centre to strengthen regional and international cooperation. Based on the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre model, the centre, located in Santa Cruz, between the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Southern Cone countries in the scope of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), is aimed at promoting the exchange of information, intelligence analysis and joint counter-narcotic operations. The Centre, which is still in the initial stage of being transformed into an international organization, has already facilitated the arrest of high-level criminals and has supported several investigations, which resulted in the dismantling of criminal groups and the seizure of large quantities of drugs.

Colombia

31. In November 2019, UNODC supported the interregional investigative case forum between Belgium, Colombia and Ecuador. Law enforcement officials and prosecutors discussed current cocaine trafficking trends affecting their countries and the current state of their criminal justice cooperation. Experts outlined the legal framework and tools in drug trafficking cases. Law enforcement officials described drug trafficking trends and challenges and identified emerging developments and foreseen impacts.

32. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNODC country offices in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru contributed to a study entitled *COVID-19 and the Drug Supply Chain: From Production and Trafficking to Use*. According to the study, illicit economies such as drug trafficking have seen their supply routes of inputs and raw materials hindered, and distribution has been hampered by increased police deployment and the confinement of the general population.

Peru

33. In July 2019, CRIMJUST and the Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring delivered a technical workshop for officers of the Anti-Drug Directorate of the National Police of Peru on existing international legal tools and procedures to prevent trafficking in controlled substances.

34. The UNODC country offices in Colombia and Peru and investigative and prosecution institutions of Peru organized three specialized round-table discussions

on preventing and countering complex crimes through the effective use of legal tools within the oral accusatory judicial system. The discussions were aimed at public prosecutors. Three additional discussions were held between public prosecutors and judicial police officials on the strengthening of criminal investigations.

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

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

35. In January 2020, UNODC presented the annual report on the validation of information on the incineration and/or destruction of seized drugs in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The coca cultivation survey and the validation of information on the eradication of coca crops were presented in July 2020. UNODC is expecting to present the results of two further studies on coca-cocaine conversion factors and the potential yield of coca crops in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in October 2020.

Brazil

36. In April 2020, and as part of the initiatives aimed at strengthening regional and interregional cooperation, UNODC signed an agreement with the National Anti-Drug Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and UNDP to design and implement the Centre of Excellence for Supply Reduction of Illicit Drugs. The Centre's objective is to produce studies and analyses on trends and threats represented by the different types of trafficking and transnational organized crime, enabling the National Anti-Drug Secretariat to draw up strategies to address drug supply. One of the main activities that will result from the partnership is the conduct of strategic studies, including on drug trafficking, cross-border trafficking, illicit markets and organized crime; illicit financial flows and management of seized and confiscated assets in cases of drug trafficking; and violent crime in the context of illicit drug supply. Another key area of the partnership is the support provided for the early warning systems for identifying trends in illicit markets and trafficking in new psychoactive substances, and the dissemination of data, information, statistics and trends on the supply of those substances.

Colombia

37. To promote the comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of drugs and through the development of studies on the trends of coca grown in territories, during 2019, UNODC conducted several technical studies aimed at strengthening the information on territorial dynamics in areas affected by illicit cultivation. One of them was focused on the measurement of licit economies in coca-growing areas and provided data on costs and incomes in the licit and illicit economies in areas with coca crops.

38. UNODC conducted research on illicit drug prices in Colombia. Price data (for cocaine, opiates and cannabis derivatives) were collected monthly in growing areas, as well as on relevant websites. The work was undertaken together with the Anti-Drug Directorate of the National Police of Peru.

39. UNODC implemented socioeconomic characterization studies in territories affected by opium poppy in Colombia, with the objective of preventing and controlling illicit crop cultivation by identifying the territories presenting the most favourable conditions for that activity. The model developed merged biophysical conditions with socioeconomic historical information and spectral mapping. The studies contributed to the establishment of methodologies to increase the capacities of local governments to prevent and monitor the development of illicit crop cultivation.

40. UNODC promoted the use of remote sensing tools in Colombia to evaluate public policy and allow the Government to strengthen decision-making on public policies concerning illegal land exploitation. As a result, UNODC delivered the

2018 figures on alluvial gold exploitation. According to the report, 92,046 hectares were affected, with more than half of those detected located in protection and conservation territories.

Ecuador

41. In 2019, an inter-agency initiative involving the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Population Fund and UNODC, in partnership with the European Union, was launched and is providing specialized information on trends in illicit crops, dynamics of drug trafficking, and activities driving deforestation. The initiative includes a monitoring and early warning mechanism for rapid responses to human rights violations on the country's northern border.

42. Under the framework of the project on diagnosis of institutional needs to tackle crime and violence on the northern Colombia-Ecuador border, a preliminary analysis document on transnational organized crime, an open-source geographical database and a document containing an analysis of forces of landscape change for 2001, 2009 and 2017 were produced and presented.

Mexico

43. Under the framework of the Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme in Mexico, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, the Navy, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, during the reporting period UNODC received a new financial contribution to extend the crop monitoring partnership until 2023. The Programme will continue to estimate the area under opium poppy cultivation throughout the Mexican territory, the crops' estimated yield and the opium gum's morphine content.

44. With funding from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, UNODC is implementing a project on strengthening the process of data collection in activities to eradicate illicit crops, through which an automated system to report in real time the destruction of opium poppy and cannabis crops has been developed. The system has been fully functional since October 2019 and there are currently more than 380 devices assigned to Mexican security institutions active in crop eradication across the country. The system has processed more than 8,000 eradication events since national implementation began in October 2019, and more than 400 officials have been trained in the use of the system.

Peru

45. The National Commission on Development and a Life without Drugs and UNODC, with the support of the European Union, renewed their partnership in June 2020. Under the renewed partnership, UNODC provides technical assistance to Peru in the implementation of its monitoring system to control the production of and trade in cocaine. The collaboration is reinforcing technical expertise and promoting research and analysis to ensure the reliability of data and studies carried out by national authorities.

VIII. Demand reduction initiatives

Brazil

46. In the State of Pernambuco, Brazil, UNODC partnered with the Secretariat of State for Drug and Violence Prevention Policies and UNDP to provide technical support in the implementation and monitoring of part of the Pernambuco crime and violence prevention programme, in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The agreement between UNODC, the Secretariat of State for Drug and Violence Prevention Policies and UNDP is aimed at supporting the production of technical subsidies to strengthen the prevention of

violence and treatment of drug use disorders in the state. The partnership also provides for the development of a matrix of indicators to contribute to the monitoring of policies for the prevention of crime, violence and drug abuse, focused on adolescents and youths aged 12 to 29 who are exposed to violence and various situations of social vulnerability in the 20 integrated security areas prioritized by the State of Pernambuco (special citizenship territories).

Central America and the Caribbean

47. At the end of 2019, UNODC conducted a workshop for policymakers on the latest developments, international standards and evidence-based strategies and policies in the areas of prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

48. In 2020, UNODC expanded its work in El Salvador on the implementation of drug use prevention programmes through the “Lions Educating” programme. This initiative is coordinated with the National Drug Commission and several municipalities in the country.

49. Also in 2020, UNODC, in coordination with the Executive Secretariat of the Commission on Drug Addiction and Trafficking in Guatemala, developed training materials on strengthening life skills for youth with the aim of preventing drug use disorders. These training materials are disseminated at regular events with teachers and students from schools participating in the Executive Commission’s prevention programmes.

50. Further in 2020, UNODC, together with the relevant national drug commissions and ministries of health, launched a quality-assurance project for treatment centres for substance use disorders covering four countries in Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Panama), as well as Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Colombia

51. In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Law of Colombia, UNODC continued to implement the Strengthening Families Programme, which provided support to a total of 539 families (1,617 people) in six territories: Sincelejo, Loricá, Montería, Quibdó, Mocoa and San José del Guaviare, in cooperation with civil society organizations.

52. In Colombia, UNODC supported strategies and actions focused on drug use prevention and addressing the criminal responsibility system for adolescents, with 10 service units strengthened and nearly 2,400 care providers supported. The UNODC Live Up, Line Up programme, aimed at mitigating and reducing risk factors, was delivered, including to 450 community leaders.

53. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC delivered virtual conferences with the participation of experts on topics such as management of abstinence among persons deprived of their liberty, self-care practices in health-care emergencies, reduction of risks and harm, psychological first aid, and challenges, support groups, mutual aid groups and the prevention of suicidal behaviour in prisons.

Ecuador

54. In 2019 and as an operational follow-up to the memorandum of understanding signed between Ecuador and UNODC in 2019 to address the socioeconomic phenomenon of drugs with an emphasis on health, a number of activities were implemented, including the development of a webinar on good practices in mental health care in residential treatment centres in the context of COVID-19; and a protocol for the entry of new patients with drug use disorders to specialized treatment centres. In addition, a proposal for a joint pilot survey by UNODC and the World Health Organization on facilities and management in specialized treatment centres was developed, with a view to helping local governments collect information and better understand and plan treatment systems and promote quality standards.

Mexico

55. The UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico is taking part in the implementation of a new initiative within the international network of drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation resource centres (Treatnet II), supported by the Government of Spain. The initiative is aimed at setting up quality control mechanisms for treatment services in Latin America. In Mexico, the project is focused on mapping out the capacities of treatment centres that currently operate without formal recognition by the Government of Mexico, as well as generating a diagnosis of institutional arrangements and capacities required to ensure that international quality standards are adopted by all treatment centres in the country.

56. In January 2020, UNODC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Mexico, organized a four-day training session for policymakers on good practices for prevention and treatment policies based on scientific evidence. UNODC and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs are currently exploring the development of an online version of that course for implementation in all 32 states in Mexico.

Peru

57. During the second half of 2019, under the direct aid programme of the Australian Embassy, the Ministry of Education of Peru, the Municipality of Lima and UNODC, the violence prevention strategy “Act without violence” was implemented.

58. The “Act without violence” strategy offers video games and workshops on parenting skills and for school coexistence on a recreational digital platform. Its strategy is based on addressing all forms of violence against girls and boys in public educational institutions and brings together principals, teachers, tutors, family members and children. Priority was given to the participation of families belonging to the peaceful coexistence committees and school self-protection brigades. Training activities were focused on the management of school coexistence and the prevention of drug use and school violence. More than 20 directors and tutors of preschools and primary schools and 225 girls and boys participated in the project.

IX. Alternative development

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

59. During the reporting period, the UNODC Country Office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia supported the review of the National Strategy on Alternative Development in coordination with the national authorities and the European Union, with a special focus on international markets and partnerships with international fair trade companies. In July 2020, the French company Malongo and a farmers’ organization from La Asunta signed a commercial agreement for the export to France of high-quality coffee from the alternative development programme of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Colombia

60. The UNODC Country Office in Colombia supported the Government’s efforts to substitute illicit crops and foster a culture of lawfulness. During 2019, a total of 35,996 hectares of illicit crops was voluntarily eradicated by rural communities, which represented a compliance rate of 95 per cent with the agreed commitments for voluntary crop substitution.

61. Through the verification process undertaken, baseline, midterm, follow-up and end-line data were gathered to analyse the social, economic, environmental and institutional changes resulting from government interventions. In 2019, 16,118 families were surveyed for baseline data collection and 4,996 follow-up surveys were conducted.

62. UNODC supported the National Comprehensive Illicit Crop Substitution Plan of the Government of Colombia. The Plan included: (a) the implementation of a voluntary eradication strategy; (b) support to 61,183 families through technical assistance services in 56 municipalities of 14 departments in Colombia; and (c) support to food security projects for 59,940 families.

63. Land titling is a key factor in the transition of communities to lawfulness through alternative development. UNODC assisted the National Land Agency in the formalization of property titles in territories affected by illicit cultivation. A total of 13,000 families benefited from the “legalizing for substituting” programme. During 2019, a total of 854 titles were delivered, 40 per cent of which were exclusively for women.

64. As part of the comprehensive strategy for illicit crop substitution in Colombia, UNODC supported the implementation of the “community agent’s initiative”, targeting coca leaf collectors. As part of the initiative, 3,336 collectors took part in community maintenance activities; community infrastructure was rebuilt and recovered; and nearly 1,000 km of rural paths and roads were repaired. This resulted in considerable cost savings for the Government, of about \$13 million.

65. The current COVID-19 conditions have made the provision of primary materials for food security assistance initiatives difficult as government regulations on confinement and limited transit have had an impact on the delivery of goods to beneficiaries. UNODC developed a contingency plan, allowing operation under strict security measures, in close cooperation with the Government. In addition, during the COVID-19 crisis, “community agents” in San Miguel, Putumayo, produced 150 face masks to be donated to vulnerable persons in the department.

X. Conclusions

66. Continued support is needed to reinforce the enhancement of capacity through the training of practitioners such as investigators, prosecutors and judges on key issues, including money-laundering resulting from drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption and forest crime. Capacity of that type can be reinforced through platforms that facilitate the exchange of intelligence, such as the Regional Counter-Narcotics Intelligence Centre based in Santa Cruz, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and the Centre of Excellence on Supply Reduction launched in Brazil in 2020, as well as initiatives facilitating police and border control cooperation, such as the Container Control Programme, AIRCOP and the CRIMJUST project.

67. Most of the technical assistance delivered by UNODC is financed directly by the beneficiary Governments. This feature is a guarantee of ownership and sustainability. Considering the nature of the illicit drug problem and the principle of shared responsibility, financial support from international partners would be beneficial to complement, reinforce and enhance the sustainability of nationally funded initiatives and strategies. This consideration is particularly important in view of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is seriously affecting the Latin American region and is having a severe impact on the socioeconomic situation.

68. Member States and UNODC need to continue to foster intraregional and interregional dialogues on the production of, trafficking in and consumption of illicit substances. Cooperation with civil society, academia and the private sector needs to be strengthened. An integrated approach and increase in regional cooperation and coordination would be opportune to deliver efficient and sustainable results and would contribute to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

69. Joint efforts to reduce the production of illicit crops requires continued efforts to strengthen national alternative development policies and strategies, which are key factors in bringing legal income generation to vulnerable communities. Countries in the region have requested UNODC to continue to support efforts to voluntarily

substitute crops, formalize land titles, and undertake and process baseline surveys to better understand the social, economic, environmental and institutional factors at play in territories affected by illicit crop cultivation. In this context, it is of paramount importance to recognize the impact of such cultivation on the security, development and prosperity in the region.
