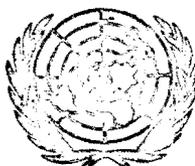


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Item 14 of the provisional agenda

Communication from the Ministry of
Public Health of Colombia

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to forward to the members of the
Commission the following memorandum communicated by the Government of Colombia.

54-10602

MEMORANDUM ON THE COCA LEAF

In Colombia, the problem of the chewing of the coca leaf is confined to the Departments of Cauca, Huila, Santander and Boyacá.

According to the information transmitted recently by the Public Health Offices of these Departments, the number of shrubs is at present as follows (approximate figures):

Huila	110,000 shrubs
Cauca	75,000 "
Santander	38,000 "
Boyacá	2,500 "

The Public Health authorities have been striving to combat this evil for a long time and a series of legislative provisions have been promulgated on the subject, namely:

Resolution No. 578 of 1941. Calls for a census of plantations and forbids new plantings. Also provides that a special permit from the Health Inspectorate concerned is required for the wholesale sale of coca leaf.

Act No. 45 of 1946. Provides that any person who without the permission of the Public Health authorities cultivates or has in his possession plants from which narcotic substances may be extracted shall be liable to imprisonment for six months to five years and to a fine ranging from fifty to one thousand pesos.

Decree No. 896 of 1947. Orders the destruction of all plantations and the confiscation of coca leaf found in the possession of private individuals. It also prohibits the payment of wages in coca leaf.

Decree No. 1472 of 1947. As a result of the difficulties encountered when the authorities attempted to apply Decree No. 896, it became necessary to issue Decree No. 1472 which postponed the destruction of the plantations and ordered a new census of coca shrubs in Colombia.

Since the problem in Colombia is similar, mutatis mutandis, to that in Peru and Bolivia, it would seem advisable to apply in our country the recommendations of the Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council which studied the problem in the aforementioned countries.

It is therefore suggested that a programme be undertaken for the gradual destruction of the coca plantations to be completed in five years.

Attempts will be made to replace the shrubs destroyed by crops which will benefit the farmers (coffee, soya bean, sugar cane and the like).
