

Welcome delegates my name is Ross McDonald I am a second year graduate student in the School of Marine Affairs at the University of Washington. I think we have a very exciting opportunity to learn more about the many important issues the Organization of American States.

History & Overview of the Committee

Topic I: Illegal Drug Production and Trafficking

Statement of the problem

The production and distribution of illegal drugs causes problems on many levels throughout the world. Barry McCaffrey, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy for the United States, adeptly described the multiple threats posed by drugs. In a speech given at a session of the OAS in 1997 he said, "They kill and sicken our people, sap productivity, drain economies, threaten the environment, and undermine democratic institutions and international order."

Although the health issues raised by illegal narcotics are immense, this committee session will focus on topics specifically related to drug production and trafficking. In 1996, ninety percent of homicides in Arizona were related to methamphetamines. The drug market has adverse effects on the economies of the Americas as well. Drug usage in the United States costs \$67 billion each year, internationally that figure is close to \$400 billion. That sum constitutes 8% of all international trade. The proceeds from drug sales are often laundered and threaten financial markets. Drug trafficking has also been implicated as a source of financing for terrorists.

The potential profits from growing drugs provide incentive for farmers to grow illegal narcotics, despite the potential consequences. Efforts have been made to contradict this incentive, but farmers in Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia are beginning to grow opium poppies as well as coca.

The drug trade is carried out in large part by powerful, international criminal organizations. These groups have a lot of money, and often an unfortunate amount of influence on local politics. In Colombia, Right-wing warlords are beginning to take over the cocaine markets, an area once controlled by left-wing guerrillas. The warlords have chosen to work with factions of the government through corruption, whereas the left-wing guerrillas challenged the government. This shift in production is challenging traditional enforcement methods, which are unprepared to deal with institutional corruption. Whether the drug market is centrally controlled or not, the amount of violence stemming from drug trafficking is undeniable.

All members of the OAS, and indeed of the world, are plagued by problems related to drugs, but countries are affected in different ways. The United States is affected by production, trafficking, and consumption. Brazil's drug market is more decentralized than Colombia's. Nations like Peru are primarily affected by production. In 1993, Bill Clinton refused to certify thirteen members of the OAS on narcotics cooperation because they were determined to be major illicit drug producing and drug transit countries-

Despite bilateral cooperative agreements, air interdiction campaigns, money-laundering legislation, and regulation of precursor chemicals, drug trafficking and productions are still prevalent in the Americas.

History of the Problem

Drug use seems to be perennially on the rise. According to the 1997 *World Drug Report* by the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), global production of coca leaves doubled between 1985 and 1994. Since 1985, opium poppy production has tripled. Even though the drug problem has occupied a considerable portion of the American media for several decades, the Report still holds that “accurate and objective drug facts” are not commonly known, and that exaggeration of the seriousness of the drug issue has itself become a complication. Today’s climate on drug prevention therefore remains one of fact-gathering, coupled with diplomatic efforts to exert pressure on governments and train police forces.

The Organization of American States includes as its members several leading narcotic producers—including Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, and others—and one of the largest consumers—the United States. But drug control did not become a specific OAS priority until the foundation of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (known by its Spanish acronym, CICAD) in 1986, with an explicit goal to eliminate the illicit traffic in and abuse of drugs. Efforts were not consolidated until 1998 with the creation of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, when facts began to be collected in a more regular, objective manner.

Nevertheless, the recent increase in narcotics seizures among OAS members is generally impressive. In the period 1995–2000, cannabis seizures nearly doubled, from 1.8 million kilograms to 3.7 million kilograms, with particularly noteworthy increases in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States. Cocaine seizures have also increased over the same five-year period, though only by 24% to 330,527 kilograms in 2000; this statistic, however, hides the trend that has doubled seizures in Colombia. While these numbers are promising, such statistics do not, however, clearly denote an improvement of the overall drug situation in the Americas. For example, unofficial studies show that Peru’s coca production has increased roughly proportionate to the decrease in Colombia, and that Mexican coca production is also on the rise. Clearly, fact-gathering remains a major necessity.

The role of producers such as Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico is clear and well-documented. But it should not be ignored that Central American farmers are increasingly tempted with the relative financial solidity that drug production can bring. Many Caribbean states remain financial havens, and drug-related money laundering has gained increasing attention in recent years. The laboratory production of methamphetamines continues in the richer states of the north. Through production, consumption, trafficking, and money laundering, every member state in the OAS plays a role in the increasingly dangerous drug industry.

Past OAS Action

As mentioned above, the OAS drug imperative began only recently, with the 1986 formation of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). CICAD works with member countries to strengthen laws, provide training in prevention programs, promote alternative development, improve law enforcement and stem the illegal trafficking of narcotics and related chemicals and arms.

The United States, as the principal consumer-state of illicit narcotics in the Americas, has increasingly used its economic and diplomatic influence to put pressure on Latin American governments to deal with the production issue themselves. However, the procedure of certifying OAS members on narcotics cooperation has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. Hence in 1998, CICAD created the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, which has gone far to consolidate efforts among OAS members, and to strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue, and hemispheric cooperation. However, this primarily fact-gathering endeavor remains in its beginning phases, and there are still several questions.

In January 2002, CICAD announced the completion of its first report on progress made in carrying out anti-drug recommendations. This report includes detailed country-specific data. Overall, the most progress has been in matters of money laundering, measuring land used for drug cultivation, and the development of independent national anti-drug plans. Nevertheless, it is increasingly clear that poorer countries lack the resources to combat fully the drug trade.

Notwithstanding a need for accurate information, the OAS and CICAD have been able to take action—with varying degrees of success—in various fields, including alternative development, laboratory drug production, firearms control, money laundering, issues involving women and drugs, transnational gangs, addiction and treatment studies, combating local government corruption, training local police, anti-drug intelligence operations, and maritime drug trafficking. Your debate may center on any of these or other aspects relating to the drug trade of the Americas.

Topic II: Destruction of Habitat of Endangered Species

Statement of the Problem

The loss of biodiversity due to destruction of habitat and other environmental factors is a growing problem facing the Americas as well as the rest of the world. Habitat destruction and modification is the most significant factor leading to species loss. The full impacts of these losses are unknown as species are dying out faster than their niche in the ecosystem can be understood. With the continued increase in human population the destruction is likely to only increase.

By far, the most important causes in the current loss of biodiversity are the destruction and alteration of habitats. The United Nations report that 80% of species decline is a result of habitat destruction. Because of the worldwide loss or conversion of

habitats that has already taken place, tens of thousands of species are already committed to extinction. The rapid destruction of forest is one example of habitat loss in Brazil an acre of rainforest is destroyed every 9 seconds, in Canada an acre of ancient forests is clear-cut every 12 seconds. Worldwide 76% of the planet's original primary forests have already been destroyed or degraded. This alone leads to anywhere between 40,000 and 60,000 unique types of forest-dependent plant, animal and insect species becoming extinct annually. Other major contributors include: the direct exploitation of plants, forests and wildlife, the introduction of species into areas where they do not naturally occur, and pollution. The alteration of the atmosphere, and hence global climate, will likely be an important component in the very near future.

Scientists estimate that there are 10 - 100 million species on the planet. While we now have names for approximately 2 million of these species, we have little idea how they function, how they interact or the roles that they individually and collectively play in maintaining the biosphere. There are also devastating consequences for indigenous human populations who are dependent upon these resources for their very survival. They are forced to move, their cultures are destroyed and frequently they have to adopt destructive practices themselves to feed them selves. This only adds to the problem and creates greater displacement and habitat destruction.

These problems are not likely to decrease unless there is significant change in human population growth and consumption levels. As human activities, consumption and population size continue to increase, it is expected that half of the Earth's species are likely to disappear within the next seventy-five years.

History of the Problem

The loss of biodiversity in North and South America is a problem with a long history. This is a problem associated with human practices to change or control the environment, which typically results in a loss of biodiversity. These changes compound over the years putting more species at risk and making it that much more difficult to protect them. The problems are also far reaching as a situation in one country can have an effect on animal populations in another.

The decrease in the number of raptors on the two continents is an example of the compounding affects of different human activities. Disappearing habitat and pesticides are the likely culprits behind lower numbers of some raptors counted this year in the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Mike Street, an Ancaster engineer, and long-time bird counter, says the annual count at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby has shown some categories of hawks, vultures and falcons are a little lower than past years. It's reflective of man's destruction of the natural landscape and damaging use of chemicals, he says. Final tallies aren't in, but it appears species such as the sharp-shinned hawk have dropped in number from the 20-year average of 3,700 spotted at Beamer, to about 2,000 for the last several years. The red-shouldered hawk has also declined by a few hundred.

The increasing demand for oil in the United States has led to habitat destruction in Canada where there has been an increase in oil extraction activities. In Alberta's oil patch a boom is under way that rivals the heady days of the Alaskan pipeline. Driven by high prices and a surging appetite in parts of the energy-starved United States, oil companies are finding billions of cubic feet of natural gas, seen as the cleanest and "greenest" of the

fossil fuels. But there's a profound downside to its use: the destruction of the boreal forest. By one measure, the boreal forest is currently losing land to agriculture at a faster rate than the Brazilian rain forest did in the 1970s. Still, gas exploration presents the most immediate and visible threat to much of the boreal forest, particularly in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The industrial activities in the forest already may be having a malignant effect on the area's wildlife. "We're seeing an alarming decline of some duck species that prefer to nest in the boreal forest, specifically scaups and scoters," said Stuart Slatterly, a biologist with Ducks Unlimited who is conducting waterfowl nest surveys in the sprawling forested wetlands of Canada's Northwest Territories. "Scaup were once very common, but they began declining in the mid-1970s," Slatterly said. "We're now seeing the lowest continental populations since surveys started in 1955. We don't know if it's related (to oil and gas) activity yet -- we're just starting to collect the data."

This lack of information is one of the major problems that face policy makers when trying to decide the best decision to make. Due to the many different potential causes of biodiversity loss and the little information on some species population size it has been difficult to make the decisions that have to be made. The Hippocamelus bisulcus one of Chile's most unique and treasured animals is an example of this. The native deer was also memorialized by Chile's Nobel prizewinning poet, Gabriela Mistral, who compared its refined senses, alert intelligence, strength and grace to her beloved compatriots. In the mid 19th century, there were at least 22,000 huemul in Chile and Argentina. Today, that number has dwindled to less than 1,000 in each country. In Chile the species is now only found in the south, in the area between the Bio Bio River and far-southern Magallanes province. Like many species around the world, the huemul face possible extinction due to the destruction of their natural habitat by an expanding human population. The deer have also suffered from the introduction of new diseases by agricultural livestock. The huemul are highly-secretive and their presence is usually only detectable by hoof prints, feces and tufts of hair. That secrecy has complicated conservation and recuperation efforts initiated nearly two decades ago by the National Forestry Corporation (Conaf) and the National Flora and Fauna Defense Committee (Codeff). It was not until last year that conservationists were so much as able to take photographs of some of the remaining members of the species.

Bloc Positions

United States: Strongly favors environmental protection and preservation of habitat. Wants other countries to adopt stronger standards when it comes to environmental practices. Has historically dominated the OAS but is not as strong now.

Canada: Only recently join the OAS in the 1990's for most of the group's history, Canada viewed it as a club dominated by the United States, and Canadians were reluctant to play in "the American sandbox. Now they are active members and push for more environmental protection.

South American Countries: Support the OAS to varying degrees dependent upon their ability. See the loss of biodiversity as a significant problem but also have to deal with issues of severe poverty in parts of their countries. Push for efforts to develop sustainable development to achieve both economic development as well as preserve biodiversity.

Past OAS Action

The Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment (USDE) is the principal technical arm of the OAS General Secretariat for responding to the needs of member states on issues relating to sustainable development within an economic development context. Technical issues addressed by the USDE include transboundary management of water resources, reduction of vulnerability to natural hazards, public participation in decision-making, climate change/sea-level rise, coastal-zone management, renewable energy planning, and biodiversity.

Formed in 1963, the Unit has evolved from one dealing with natural resource surveys on a national scale, to the group whose principal charge is to follow up on the mandates of the UNCED-Agenda 21 and those emanating from the Bolivia Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development. The Unit currently manages a portfolio of US\$44 million, primarily from externally generated funds, with staff based at headquarters in Washington, D.C., and with field-based consultants. One of the principal roles of the Unit is to assist member states of the OAS in the preparation of projects for loan consideration by bilateral and multilateral agencies and other interested non-governmental, academic, and research organizations.

Biodiversity management considerations form part of many of the Unit's technical assistance projects. In response to a mandate from the Bolivia Summit on Sustainable Development, the Unit serves as an interim secretariat for the development of the [Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network \(IABIN\)](#). The OAS co-sponsored two expert meetings and collaborated with the Government of Brazil in a hemispheric meeting to better define the issues involved in establishing the Network.

IABIN grew out of informal discussions among countries of the Americas concerning the need to share biodiversity information across national borders. Several countries were establishing national biodiversity information infrastructures to meet their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, other treaty obligations, and their own internal conservation and development objectives, and senior officials recognized that collaboration between countries could enhance local initiatives, provide access to a greater store of information, eliminate duplication of effort, and leverage the scarce resources available to address the information needs of the biodiversity community.

Both Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity called for cooperation in the production and dissemination of information needed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In addition, the United Nations Environment Program and the Brazilian government sponsored two workshops in the early 1990s as part of the BIN21 initiative that called for the implementation of a clearing-house mechanism for biodiversity information.

Proposed Solutions

Increase funding for research to gather the necessary information for conducting assessments of protection efforts. This will also allow for a better understanding of the problem that is faced.

Washington State Model United Nations Topic Synopsis:
Organization of American States

Strengthen efforts to decrease population growth and habitat destruction two closely tied issues. If population growth can be brought under control it will make it easier to preserve the remaining resources.