

The World Drug Report 2010: A Response from the International Drug Policy Consortium

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The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) is a global network of NGOs and professional networks that specialise in issues related to illegal drug production and use. The Consortium aims to promote objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. It produces occasional briefing papers, disseminates the reports of its member organizations about particular drug-related matters, and offers expert consultancy services to policymakers and officials around the world.

On June 23 at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC or *Office*) launched the *World Drug Report 2010*. In addition to the UNODC Executive Director, taking part in the launch were Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and, perhaps as a portent of the impending changes within the *Office*, the Director of the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation, Victor Ivanov. As is the norm with this flagship publication, the 2010 *Report* contains impressive and wide-ranging data collated and analyzed by the UNODC. Similarly, it also contains a more subjective, revealing and at times problematic statement of the *Office's* position on specific aspects of the drug policy debate. Having had some time to assess the outcomes of the High-Level Segment of the 2009 Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), this year's *Report* is, however, framed within the context of the core commitment made by member states at the conclusion of that event. It will be recalled how, reaffirming commitments made at the 1998 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) and still "gravely concerned about the growing threat posed by the world drug problem," states agreed to work towards the elimination or significant reduction of illicit drug production and abuse by 2019. With this in

mind, and cognizant of challenges to drug control posed by urbanization and increases in the global population, the 2010 *Report* sets out to help "improve our understanding of how illicit transnational drug economies operate" (p. 11 & p. 35.) Consequently, a significant amount of space is devoted to transnational drug market analysis in relation to heroin, cocaine and Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS.) Cannabis is omitted from such specific analysis since it is "increasingly produced within the country of consumption and often dealt informally through social channels" (p. 11.) Such an analytical approach complements the standard statistics and trends sections of the document to provide an extremely fine-grained and "cross-sectoral" examination of the global situation. In headline terms, the *Report* subsequently shows that drug use is shifting towards new drugs and new markets. Opium cultivation is declining in Afghanistan, as is coca cultivation in the Andean countries, and drug use has stabilized in the so-called developed world. While this is the case, there are signs of an increase in drug use in "developing" countries and growing use of ATS and prescription stimulants around the world.

The aim of this review is to provide an overview and analysis of the contents of the *Report* and highlight a number of key issues of interest and concern. We once again begin with a critique

of Mr. Costa's contribution to the publication and often the only part of the 300-page document that receives significant attention: the Executive Director's Foreword. We also take this opportunity to reflect briefly upon his tenure at the UNODC between 2002 and 2010. Mindful of the volume of market related and trend oriented data within the *Report*, we then move onto to provide a summary of the global picture as presented by the UNODC in the main body of the text. Within this section, we also highlight ongoing examples of the *Office's* increasingly sophisticated and transparent methodology. This approach emphasizes the continually high levels of uncertainty concerning many aspects of the global market. This is followed by discussion of a reoccurring theme running throughout the *Report*; the issue of displacement. The final section is devoted to a discussion of chapter three of this year's publication, "The Destabilizing Influence of Drug Trafficking on Transit Countries: The Case of Cocaine."

The Executive Director's Foreword

The Foreword to the 2010 *Report* reviews the current state of global drug policy and the United Nations control system. In this, the final Foreword of his directorship, Antonio Maria Costa judges that "drug control has matured" over the past decade, with policies "becoming more responsive to the needs of those most seriously affected, along the whole chain of the drug industry - from poor farmers who cultivate it, to desperate addicts who consume it, as well as those caught in the crossfire of the traffickers" (p. 4.) He finds increased levels of international cooperation, and greater willingness to resort to the pool of expertise now available.

Alongside this maturity, the drug control system has, according to Mr Costa, become more "balanced." His use of the term refers to issues of what is called, in the UN's internal discourse,

system wide coherence: the recognition that the management of drug problems is intimately interwoven with economic and social development, governance, security, health and other broad contextual factors that must be addressed in tandem with drugs in order to produce real and lasting results. A third characteristic of recent policy changes is identified by Mr. Costa as the most important - a return "to the roots of drug control, placing health at the core of drug policy" (p.4.) As we will discuss below, this has been a theme of the later years of the Costa period, the recuperation of an original impulse that is supposed to have driven the founders of the international drug control regime in the early 20th century. As the IDPC has previously observed, while welcoming the recent focus on health rather than punishment, the historical beginnings of the regime were in fact rather less noble than they appear in the UNODC version, with public health motivations being joined among other factors by those of racial superiority, economic and geopolitical power and domestic political calculations.¹ This does not, of course, detract from the relevance of the point Mr. Costa makes when he states that, "Slowly, people are starting to realize that drug addicts should be sent to treatment, not to jail" (p. 4.), but we should also remember that, for the early years of his 8-year tenure, Mr. Costa was a key element of the resistance to this health-led view of drug control. He also remarks positively on the expansion of scientific addiction treatments and their growing inclusion in mainstream healthcare—issues that raise the question about what his successor's approach will be in this regard. Mr. Fedotov, a Russian Federation career diplomat, has taken over the role of Executive Director since the Report's publication.² His country's hawkish stance on Afghanistan opium poppy crop, its publically stated belief that human rights do not belong in debates over drug policy, and its continuing insistence on the illegality and therapeutic ineffectiveness of methadone treatment—flying in the face of a mass of scientific evidence – all stand in sharp contradiction to the policy

positions that the Foreword supports. The initial statements of Mr Fedotov have been encouraging in this regard, but how rhetoric relates to practice remains to be seen.³

Mr. Costa continues his upbeat assessment of the present state of global drug control, noting that the *Report* includes a trend of declines in the supply of opiates and cocaine, supplemented by the disease affecting the current poppy crop in Afghanistan. He warns, however, against what he sees as the potential for complacency. “Most worrisome are events in the third world...the world’s biggest consumers of the poison (the rich countries) have imposed upon the poor (the main locations of supply and trafficking) the greatest damage” (p. 5.) This more gloomy appraisal stems from the growth in consumption in these producing and transit states, an increase which they do not possess the resources, healthcare and otherwise, to adequately address—“another drama in lands already ravaged by so many tragedies.” Mr. Costa’s fear (and one we share) is that, while the problems are being managed in the developed world, this is little use if it comes at the cost of displacing them to the developing world.

Another form of displacement the Foreword seeks to address is the movement from the more traditional illicit drugs such as heroin and cocaine to Amphetamine-Type-Stimulants (ATS) and prescription pharmaceuticals. It also notes the enhanced dynamism of the synthetic producer market, marketing a series of new products such as Ketamine, Mephedrone and Spice to meet the shifting tastes of consumers.

The response advocated by Mr. Costa consists of “placing drug policy at the intersection of health, security, development and justice” (p. 5.) He elaborates on this by outlining four sets of rights related to these areas.

1. The right to health entails, essentially, the universal access to drug treatment and to painkilling medications.

2. The right to development involves addressing poverty, which is understood as a cause and a consequence of production and trafficking.
3. The right to security is a little more problematic than the previous two. Mr. Costa discusses drugs as a source of income for traffickers and terrorists, and the general threat of organized crime to the stability of states and entire regions. Mr. Costa expresses his fear that this instability may lead for calls to “dump the three UN drug conventions”, undoing what he refers to as the progress of the last decade and unleashing a “public health disaster.”
4. The fourth heading is “human rights”, under which reference is made to cruel and humiliating punishments masquerading as drug treatment, and extrajudicial killings of traffickers. “Just because people take drugs, or are behind bars, this doesn’t abolish their right to be a person protected by the law...” (p.5.)

The Foreword then concludes, having shown us the components of the UNODC’s progress over the past decade. In some ways these passages typify the paradox of Mr Costa’s period of office. Much of what is discussed under these four headings is laudable, but beneath the surface of the third - the right to security - lurk the complexities and inconsistencies of his policy positions, and the devil, as always, is in the detail. The point, with apparent effortlessness, links the problem of organized crime (of which few people are unequivocally in favour), the question of “terrorism” and the issue of reforming the drug control treaties. Thus, in a highly polemical passage that lays claim to being an analytical one, Mr. Costa has deftly managed to place the Mexican mafias, Al Qaeda and those who wish to review some aspects of the treaty framework in the same corner. This is implausible as an analysis of the optimal future direction of international drug policy. It also indicates an abiding impatience

with any attempts to reform and reconfigure the three drug control conventions that underpin the UN's response to the question of drugs, a move that many see as a practical and overdue step in the context of 21st century global challenges. It can therefore lead us directly into a consideration of the pros and cons of the Costa Executive Directorship.

The Foreword's programmatic content represents, in many ways, a synopsis of the most positive aspects of Mr. Costa's tenure as Executive Director of the UNODC, which ran from March 2002. He has presided over a period of considerable change in the discourse and certain policy stances of the UNODC; the balance of the agency's analysis is certainly more nuanced and complex, as is demonstrated in the foregoing quotations. His own position has developed over this period, with his public pronouncements becoming gradually more supportive of human rights, system wide coherence and a health-centred orientation rather than a punitive one. While these discourses in the main emerged from the work of his junior staff, supported by NGOs and academics, Mr. Costa has increasingly espoused them with what appears to be a genuine enthusiasm.

The turning point in Costa's directorship arguably came at the 51st CND in 2008. It was there that his discussion paper, "*Making drug control 'fit for purpose': Building on the UNGASS decade*" was published, in which he acknowledged the "unintended consequences" of the drug control system.⁴ It was billed as a contribution to the review of the working of the drug control system that would culminate in the UN Special Assembly on Drugs. While it still clung doggedly to the "containment" narrative that the UNODC deployed during the run up to the Special Session (i.e. the notion that system was successful because it had contained illicit drug use to a reported 5% of the population), it broke important new ground in its frank admission, by a senior UN figure, of a range

of catastrophic side-effects that had been generated by the workings of the regime. These include the creation of a massive illicit market, the system's consumption of vast resources at the expense of other areas of social need, the ongoing geographical displacement of production (the balloon effect), a similar displacement with effect to the substances used, and, finally, the stigmatisation and marginalisation of drug users. Reformers and critics of the regime had been declaiming on these failures for years, yet Costa's acknowledgement, with the political force it carried, had the potential to transform the UNGASS Review from another round of rhetorical mumbling to the genuine, thoroughgoing reappraisal of the 100-year-old system's successes and failures that it claimed itself to be.

In the event, the inclusion of these themes in the official discussion was minimal, and did little more than nudge the drug control juggernaut in the direction of some future encounter with the real world; while the eventual Political Declaration and Plan of Action were largely the familiar, head-in-the-sand fare of annual CND sessions, the circulation of critical elements in the debates on which Costa had opened the door perhaps helped to facilitate the group of 26 countries in making their stand for harm reduction, and the inclusion of stronger language on health and human rights in the final declaration.⁵ "*Making drug control 'fit for purpose'*" had written openly of the need for harm reduction (using the two-word phrase without euphemism), and insisted that the regime needed to embrace it, along with human rights, to set right structures that suffered from a historical unbalance. Of course, the text attempts to make its conception of harm reduction acceptable to the strict ideological stance of the INCB, and its treatment was ambivalent, but the significance of the use of the phrase was considerable. The general lack of vision in the 2009 Political Declaration cannot, therefore, be blamed on Mr Costa, but on the

inability of member states to agree a common language that kept pace with the changes happening around them.

There has been another, darker side to the Costa tenure; often visible, it was perhaps most clearly demonstrated at the face-to-face discussions he held with civil society delegates at his last CND as Executive Director, in 2010. This encounter exemplified all of the worst aspects of his approach; for, while incorporating several themes and elements selected from the reformist discourse, Mr. Costa maintained an unremitting hostility toward all those he included under the term “pro-drug lobby”⁶. These were, in fact, a diverse set of individuals and organisations from across the drug policy reform movement, few if any of whom would have accepted this characterisation of their activities and approaches. His evident distaste for drug policy reform and those advocating it, especially in cases where the international drug control treaties were proposed as less than perfect embodiments of eternal truths, was expressed with a vehemence that was, at times, astonishing in one holding such high diplomatic office. Quick to identify himself as “anti-drug”, Mr. Costa, in common with a number of prominent figures in drug control history, appeared to inhabit a black-and-white universe bereft of complexity, in which those with whom he disagreed must, simply by virtue of the discrepancy of views, be “pro-drug” in their sympathies. It was a curious facet in a man of Costa’s organisational stature and political acumen.

Nonetheless, on balance, and remaining closely within the (presently rather constrained) bounds of political possibility,⁷ Mr. Costa’s period in office has left a legacy that is largely positive. Whether the changes over which he presided make up for the early ‘wasted years’, and will be robust enough to resist the challenges the future may have in store, remains to be seen.

The global picture: Better analysis reveals continuing uncertainty.

For reasons of simplicity and accessibility, this section comprises a synthesis of data presented in the two core chapters of the 2010 *Report*: Transnational Drug Market Analysis and Drug Statistics and Trends. As noted above, it also highlights many of the welcome features of the UNODC’s analysis as introduced in last year’s publication and reveals significant areas of ongoing uncertainty.

Production trends

Echoing the 2009 headline message, the *World Drug Report 2010* is perhaps unsurprisingly quick to stress early in the document that “there have been a number of encouraging developments in global cocaine and heroin markets recently” (p. 11.) More specifically, the *Report* suggests that the global area under opium poppy cultivation declined to 181,400 hectares in 2009; a 15% reduction from 2008 (23% since 2007.) As in the previous year, this was mainly due to a large decrease in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, which was not offset by increases in Myanmar and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (p. 137.) With this decline in cultivation, global opium production fell from 8,890 metric tons (mt) in 2007 to 7,754 mt. Potential heroin production also declined by 10% since 2008. Afghanistan, however, remains the source of most of the world’s illicit opiates (6,900 mt or 89% of the world total in 2009) with 57% of the nation’s opium poppy area located in “Hilmand” province. (p. 137.) The largest markets for Afghan opiates are the Russian Federation and Western Europe. Early indications provided by the UNODC’s *Afghanistan Opium Winter Rapid Assessment* suggest that the area under opium cultivation in Afghanistan as a whole “could remain basically stable, but yields will likely decline due to a blight” (p. 20). It is also noted that significant quantities of opium continue to be produced in Latin America, notably in Mexico and Colombia. Regarding cocaine, figures showed a reduction in the global area

under coca cultivation with 158,800 ha in 2009 representing a decline of 5% from the previous year or 13% since 2007 and 28% since 2000. This is attributed to a significant decrease in Colombia; a change, it is claimed, achieved mainly due to crop eradication and one not countered by increases in Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia” (p. 16.) Coca cultivation is reported to have increased by 7% and remained predominantly stable (1% increase) in these states respectively. Again, a reduction in global cocaine production accompanied this overall downward trend, with estimates showing a decline from 1,024 mt in 2007 to 865 mt in 2008.

Nonetheless, as the *Report* openly acknowledges, “Recent successes...must be considered in the context of the long-term challenge.” Indeed, since the 1998 UNGASS and agreement among the international community to work towards the “elimination or significant reduction” of illicit production and abuse by 2008, “global potential opium production has increased by 78%.” Over this period, production in Afghanistan more than offset reductions made in South East Asia with 2008 figures an astonishing 150% higher than those ten years earlier. Such increases, however, have not apparently corresponded with an increase in opiate consumption. This led to the conclusion that “large amounts of opium have been stockpiled in recent years.” As such, the *Report* includes the candid but inescapable admission that “even if production were eliminated today, existing stocks could supply users for at least two years” (p. 12.) The increase in global potential cocaine production over the 1998-2008 period “seems to have been more moderate.” The authors of the *Report* admit that there remain “uncertainties” around coca yields and production efficiency. These have the potential to go some way to offset the gains made in reduced areas under cultivation. Nevertheless, they reach the conclusion that “available data are sufficiently robust to state that global cocaine production has declined significantly in recent years (2004-2009)” (p.

12.) In terms of uncertainties surrounding coca, it is also worth noting that, as in previous years, the UN’s figures for cultivation differ significantly from those of the US Government with the 2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report citing a 9.38% increase in cultivation in Bolivia.⁸ This reoccurring issue has been discussed at length in previous IDPC responses and thus is only flagged up here.

Admission of ambiguity is also evident in relation to the production of cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS.) As this year’s publication points out, because of the “decentralization of production, it is difficult to track global trends in either of these markets” (p. 12.) Consequently, as introduced in last year’s *Report*, much discussion of these drug types in particular continues to involve ranges rather than point figures. Where cannabis is concerned, uncertainty is compounded by a lack of information from many cannabis-cultivating countries. This led to the decision not to update the estimates offered in the 2009 *World Drug Report*. Indeed, “given the high level of uncertainty and the remaining lack of information in many cannabis-cultivating countries, a new round of estimations would have offered an arithmetical exercise rather than providing policy-relevant information on the global trend of cannabis production and cultivation” (p.183) This relates to a more general point concerning data collection discussed in Box 1. The 2010 *Report* subsequently suggests that between 13,300 and 66,100 mt of herbal cannabis were produced in 2008, as were 2,200 to 9,900 mt of cannabis resin. The total global area under cannabis cultivation is estimated at 200,000-641,800 ha. While we are informed that “...very little can be said about global cannabis trends...” (p. 25) data reveals Afghanistan and Morocco as the largest international exporters of cannabis. In fact, in 2009 the major new piece of information on cannabis production related to Afghanistan. Here the UNODC and the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics conducted the first joint cannabis survey. This

year's *Report* also offers new information on the issue of indoor cultivation. The UNODC found evidence of such production for commercial purposes in 29 countries (p. 184 & 187) and identified a trend towards the practice, especially in Europe, Australia and North America.

Just as cannabis can be grown almost anywhere, ATS can also be made anywhere the necessary precursor chemicals can be found. As is increasingly the case with cannabis production, ATS manufacturing thus tends to be near main consumer markets and takes place in clandestine laboratories. The *Report* consequently acknowledges that "It is at the moment impossible to know precisely

how much ATS is illicitly manufactured, as independent calculations based on the remote sensing of manufacture cannot be done, as is the case with poppy plants and coca bushes." (p. 203.) As such, manufacture of ATS is presented in the range of 161 to 588 mt in 2008. Although produced in all parts of the world, the highest concentrations were identified to be in East and South East Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South Africa with the number of reported clandestine laboratories increasing by 20% in 2008. That manufacture has become more geographically dispersed was demonstrated in the discovery for the first time of ATS laboratories in Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Iran and Sri Lanka.

Box 1. ARQs: Still gaps in the data*

Although the UNODC utilizes data from a variety of sources (national governments, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Abuse, UNODC field offices, the Inter-American Drug Use Control Commission, INTERPOL etc), the *World Drug Report 2010* is based primarily on data obtained from the Annual Reports Questionnaire (ARQ). Returned by governments to the UNODC over the period March 2009 to March 2010, the ARQ contained data normally referring to the drug situation in 2008. As the key mechanism for data collection, it is clearly vital that the ARQ be completed as fully and as regularly as possible by member states. This is seldom the case; a situation that makes any assessment of the global situation, particularly trend analysis, highly problematic.

In the process of collecting data for this year's *Report*, the UNODC sent out the questionnaire to 192 countries, as well as 15 territories. It received 110 replies to its questionnaire on Drug Abuse (Part II) and 114 replies to its questionnaire on Illicit Supply of Drugs (Part III.); figures that were broadly similar to last year. The best coverage was from countries in Europe where 84% of countries filled in Part II and 93% filled in Part III. In Asia 67% of countries filled in Part II and Part III and in the Americas 57% of countries filled in Part II and Part III. In the case of Africa, 30% of countries submitted Part II and Part III and in the Oceania region, only 14% of countries submitted Part II and Part III. As is the norm, the quality of information provided on illicit drug supply was significantly better than data provided on drug use related information, with the UNODC's analysis of responses revealing that 88% of Part III of the ARQ were "substantially" completed (more than 50% of the questions answered.) That said, patchy data ensures that understanding of the supply side is still far from comprehensive. This figure, nonetheless, compares favourably with just 48% of the Part II responses reaching the same standard. As the IDPC has mentioned before, this is one of the consequences of the historical dominance of a drug control policy directed at the suppression of supply. The paucity of demand side data captured by the ARQ's accordingly poses significant challenges to generating global and/or country level consumption and consumer figures and validates the use of ranges

within the *Report*. Data gaps, however, continue to throw into doubt the claim that the international drug control system has succeeded in containing the spread of annual illicit drug use to around 5% of the world population aged 15-64. A more complete data set may reveal the global prevalence figure to be higher. Indeed, within the context of wide ranges for a variety of illicit drugs to be found in other parts of the *Report*, the figure looks ever more optimistic.

While engagement with the ARQ process by Member States is variable, a reality that in many states reflects a lack of capacity to capture the data necessary for “satisfactory” completion of the questionnaire, it is encouraging that twice in recent years (2009 and 2010) the CND has agreed resolutions incorporating the aim of improving the monitoring, collection, reporting and analysis of data.** In 2009 this included the creation of an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to review “the current data collection tools and collection, collation, analysis and reporting processes.” To this end the group has been working on a revised ARQ and this will be considered at the 2011 CND.***

*All figures are taken from the Methodology chapter of the *2010 World Drug Report*. This can be found at <http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR2010/WDR2010methodology.pdf>

** See Resolution 52/12, Improving the collection, reporting and analysis of data to monitor the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and Resolution 53/2, Preventing the use of illicit drugs within Member States and strengthening international cooperation on policies of drug abuse prevention. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/V09/825/56/PDF/V0982556.pdf?OpenElement> and http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND-Uploads/CND-53-RelatedFiles/E2010_28eV1052082.pdf

*** See <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/expert-group-on-data-collection-sept-2010.html>

Trends in trafficking and seizures

We are informed that global cocaine seizures have “stabilized over the last few years” with declines in North America and Europe matched by increases in South and Central America. Such changing patterns are thought to be the result of the efforts of both Colombian authorities to take control of territory and Mexican law enforcement efforts. Both activities have had the effect of increasing trafficking within Latin American transit states. Notably, overall trafficking in West Africa appears to have declined in 2008 and 2009; a reversal of rapid increases since 2004. Estimates of the value of the global cocaine market are put at between US\$80 billion and US\$100 billion. Still the world’s largest for cocaine, the US market is estimated to be worth US\$37 billion with an expanding European market worth approximately US\$34 billion.

The estimated annual value of the global opiate market is US\$65 billion, with the most lucrative of illicit opiates, heroin, commanding an estimated value of US\$55 billion. Opiate seizures, both opium and heroin, have continued to increase over the past year with the largest seizures still reported from countries neighbouring Afghanistan, notably the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Most of the heroin from Afghanistan makes its way to the world’s largest heroin market in Western Europe (where about half the market is contained in the UK, Italy and France) overland via the so-called ‘Balkan route.’ This flows through the Islamic Republic of Iran (or Pakistan to Iran), Turkey and countries of South-East Europe. Afghan heroin arrives in the second largest market, the Russian Federation, via Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

After a three-fold increase in the early years of this decade, ATS seizures have remained stable since 2006. There have been increases in seizures of amphetamine, an eight-fold increase between 2000 and 2008, in the Near and Middle East. While seizures of amphetamine in these regions and South West Asia represented two thirds of the global total in 2008, the majority of methamphetamine seizures were attributable to countries in East and South East Asia. North America accounted for most of the remaining seizures of methamphetamine, with “for the first time – more than one half of the global ‘ecstasy’

seizures” (p. 207.) In contrast to ATS, cannabis herb seizures increased by around 23% over the 2006-2008 period, especially in South America. This represented levels last seen in 2004. Resin seizures increased even more dramatically (+62%) again exceeding the previous peak in 2004. Increases in seizures were reported from the Near and Middle East region, as well as from Africa and Europe. Of note was the fact that in June 2008, Afghan authorities in Kandahar province reported a single seizure of 236.8 mt of resin; the largest on record

Box 2. The treatment gap

Relative to earlier publications, the *2010 World Drug Report* devotes considerable and welcome attention to “understanding the extent and nature of drug use” including, as we noted in the main text, problem drug use. However, a comparison of the number of people requiring assistance to address drug problems with the number of people who are in treatment also reveals the “magnitude of the unmet need for treatment.” As the *Report* notes, “Notwithstanding the gap in reporting and coverage of services, Member States reported that between 42% (in South America) and 5% (in Africa) of problem drug users were treated in the previous year. It can be estimated that globally, between 12% and 30% of problem drug users had received treatment in the past year.” In a more meaningful statistical form, this translates to between 11 and 33.5 million problem drug users having an unmet need for treatment interventions (p. 127.) The UNODC is therefore absolutely right to draw attention to the fact that the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action called upon Member States to ensure that access to drug treatment is “affordable, culturally appropriate and based on scientific evidence, and that drug dependence care services are included in health care systems.” It is also worth recalling that despite splits within the High Level Segment on the issue of harm reduction, the Declaration among other things called for the need to develop a comprehensive treatment system including opioid agonist and antagonist maintenance.

Trends in consumption

Globally, the UNODC estimates that between 155 and 250 million people (3.5% - 5.7% of the population aged 15-64) used illicit substances at least once in 2008. Despite acknowledgement of the international community's agreement to work towards the elimination or significant reduction of drug use, this is a point that the authors present as a success in terms of containing illicit use to 5% of the world's adult population. Admittedly, however, as was the case last year, the UNODC's previously dominant containment narrative figures only fleetingly in the 2010 Report (p. 31.)⁹ It is worth noting that the *Report* also stresses that the misuse of prescription drugs is a growing health problem in a number of developed and developing countries (p. 13.). Although data are given for the scale of this trend at some national and subnational levels (p. 132 & p. 156), no estimated global figure is offered. In terms of illicit drugs, cannabis continues to have the largest number of users. This translates to 129 - 190 million people or 2.9% to 4.3% of the world population aged 15-64 used cannabis at least once in 2008. In line with the UNODC's more sensitive reading of data, compared to last year's figures, the lower bound of this estimate decreased and the range widened because of increased uncertainty due to the exclusion of some countries' estimates that were more than ten years old (p. 194.) Nevertheless, there were deemed to be no signs of a large reduction in cannabis use at the global level (p. 32). The highest prevalence is to be found in Oceania (9.3% to 14.8%), followed by the Americas (6.3% to 6.6%). While this is the case, use in Oceania is in decline, with the *Report* also noting that there appears to be a "long-term decline in some of its highest value markets, including North America and West Europe" (p. 26.) In North America, we are told, "there are an estimated 29.5 million people who used cannabis at least once in 2008." This represented a decrease from the 31.2 million estimated in 2007. As a reflection of the UNODC's continuing commitment

to transparency, this is explained by the "availability of new data for Canada, which in 2008 showed a considerably lower number of cannabis users compared to their previous 2004 survey estimates (194.) Increasing use, however, is reported in South America, though prevalence rates there remain lower than in North America. Furthermore, "Although there is a lack of scientifically valid quantitative data on cannabis use for both Africa and Asia, national experts in both continents perceive an increasing trend" (p. 26 & 198, 201).

The ATS group rank as the second most commonly used drugs in the world, although discerning detailed patterns of use is complex due to regionally, and often nation, specific trends relating to different varieties of ATS. Further, estimations of prevalence are made harder by the fact that little more than half of the UN member states consistently provide information on ATS consumption to the UNODC. Trend analysis is also problematic because, where states do provide information, intervals differ. For example, surveys on prevalence of ATS use only occurs annually in two countries and on average takes place every 3-5 years. With this in mind, the UNODC estimates that between 13.7 million and 52.9 million people used ATS at least once in the preceding year. These figures produce a corresponding annual prevalence range of 0.3% to 1.2% of the population aged 15-64. Again, it is interesting to note that the width of this range has widened since last year. This reflected a higher number of estimated users in and the new availability of data on ATS in Caribbean countries as well as increased levels of uncertainty for estimates for Asia (p. 214.) Indeed, although the use of ecstasy seems to be levelling off or declining in Europe, use is increasing in Asia. As with cannabis use, the *Report* observes that there are no indications of large reductions at the global level for this drug type.

Uncertainty surrounding cocaine consumption means that use rates are also presented as ranges. Accordingly there are an estimated

15 – 19.3 million annual cocaine users (annual prevalence of 0.3% to 0.4%) in the world. North America (2%), Oceania (1.4% to 1.7%) and West Europe (1.5%) are the regions with the highest prevalence rates. The US remains the largest cocaine market with close to 40% of the global cocaine using population. The *Report* stresses, however, that the demand for cocaine in the US has been in long-term decline. In 1982 an estimated 10.5 million people had used cocaine in the previous year. By 2008, the figure was 5.3 million. In contrast, “In the last decade...the number of cocaine users in Europe doubled from 2.1 million in 1998 to 4.1 million in the EU-EFTA countries in 2008 (p. 16.) More specifically, the largest national cocaine market in Europe is the UK, followed by Spain, Italy, Germany and France; although recent data suggests that rapid growth of cocaine market is levelling off in some of the bigger national markets such as Italy, Spain and Germany (p. 18.)

The UNODC estimates that in 2008 between 12.8 and 21.9 million people globally used opiates over the past 12 months, with the prevalence ranging between 0.3% and 0.5% of the world’s population aged 15-64. In this case, the range of the estimated prevalence did not change from 2007, but the range of the lower bound of the estimated number of annual users decreased. This reflected increased uncertainty in South Asia and Africa, but also a possible decrease in the total number of users observed, particularly in Europe. Indeed, in terms of highlighting the extent of missing data upon drug use ranges, it is edifying to note the width of the range presented for Africa. It is estimated that there are 68,000 to 2.9 million users within that region. Overall, as noted above, “Despite significant growth in the production of opiates in recent years, global consumption remains relatively stable” (p. 152.) Heroin remains the most widely consumed illicit opiate. European data suggest that heroin use in the region is decreasing, although its associated harm (based upon primary heroin users entering treatment, increasing numbers

of drug-induced deaths and prevalence of HIV among injecting drug users) is growing (pp. 155-6.) In North America, the highest prevalence of heroin use was in the US.

As in recent Reports, the authors are again careful to make an important distinction between the total number of people using drugs, last year prevalence and what they define as “problem drug users”; “those who inject drugs and/or are considered dependent” and face “serious social and health consequences as a result.” (p. 12.) Consequently, it is estimated that there were between 16 and 38 million “problem drug users” in the world in 2008 (10% -15% of all people who used drugs that year.) The broad range reflects the uncertainties of the data globally, but using data from the UNODC/UNAIDS reference group it is estimated that in 2008 there were 15.9 million injecting drug users worldwide. In terms of different drug types, opiates, as indicated by treatment demand, have been identified as the main problem drugs over the past 10 years in Europe, Asia and North America (particularly synthetic opioids in the latter.) Cannabis is revealed as the dominant drug for treatment in Africa. Interestingly, it appears as if referrals from the criminal justice system have not affected the number of individuals entering treatment for cannabis related problems in Australia. It is uncertain, however, whether a similar situation exists in Europe. Cocaine is the main problem drug in the Americas, although as with prevalence patterns, this is declining in North America. Mindful of the decentralized and malleable nature of the ATS market, it is perhaps no surprise to discover that “ATS problem drug use represents the only class of drug use in the past decade that has increased significantly in every region of the world” (p. 103.) As discussed in Box 2, an analysis of such data also reveals what can be termed a significant treatment gap.

Within the context of estimated drug use, problematic or otherwise, it is important to stress that, in global terms, figures must be

regarded as highly speculative due to the incomplete nature of the data from many parts of the world with potentially large drug using populations (see Box 1). For instance, it is particularly salient to note that, with the exception of figures for opiate use in China, there is no drug use prevalence data from either that country or India; states that between them represent approximately 37% of the world's population. That said, in relation to cocaine for instance, based on what is known about production, trafficking patterns and the countries themselves (derived from seizures, arrests, treatment and qualitative information) it is likely that there is widespread use in both countries. Consequently, as the *Report* notes, "Taking just these two countries out of the picture can have a dramatic effect on global use estimates (p. 67)

Market impacts

The significant attention given to transnational market analysis within this year's *Report* ensures that beyond complementing information within the familiar drug statistics and trends chapters, the UNODC was also able to examine the affects of the three main markets discussed. Consequently, in the course of providing a detailed analysis of the global heroin, cocaine and ATS markets, the authors offer an overview of global impacts, and on occasions the localized impacts of specific illicit drug flows. As such, in relation to heroin, the *Report* states "Whether one looks at the damages to health of communities, the rise in criminal activity, the loss of economic productivity, the impact on global security or the more insidious corruption of government institutions, it is fair to say that illicit opiates leave very few nations untouched" (p. 47.) The *Report* goes on to discuss health implications, principally HIV/AIDS, and effects on global security. Within this context, it notes that in Afghanistan "a conservative estimate placed the figure" generated by the Taliban through the taxation of the opium trade at US\$125 million per year (p. 48.) Furthermore, in noting that "Transnational crime generates money

and power" the authors stress that while this "power is not sufficient to threaten the stability of developed states" in Afghanistan and other vulnerable nations "money that the trade brings to bear on these countries' political systems and societies poses a threat to their development." "Some countries", we are told in somewhat florid terms, "may be at risk of 'drug dependence.'" (p. 48) Similarly, discussion of the cocaine market emphasizes not only the health problems associated with cocaine use, but also that trafficking "constitutes a security threat" financing a number of organized crime and insurgencies in a number of countries, including the FARC in Colombia and the Shining Path in Peru." It is also noted how the cocaine trade is linked to corruption in both production centres, and neighbouring states, in the Andes and transit nations in West Africa. (p. 70.) This issue is discussed in more detail below. A linkage to criminal groups is also a theme touched upon during discussion of the global ATS market. That the production of ATS is not limited to certain geographic locations and can be synthesized via a variety of methods and materials makes this drug type particularly attractive to criminal organizations all over the world. These too are issues that we will return to below.

The displacement conundrum

As the preceding discussion suggests, and mindful of the large areas of uncertainty, the UNODC's analysis reveals significant regional and sectoral fluctuations in the state of the global market and a variegated picture of "success" for drug control policy when viewed in a holistic sense. This is particularly the case where policy responses have appeared to relocate facets of the market from one location to another. Indeed, the issue of displacement is a core theme running throughout much of this year's *Report*. "Many illicit drug markets have reached global dimensions and require control strategies on a comparable

scale,” reads the summary on its back cover. Moreover, as discussed above, Mr. Costa also draws attention to the phenomena in his Foreword. In addition to implicit evidence of the process to be gleaned from the various data sets presented within the main body of the text, the authors explicitly draw attention to the inescapable fact that what are regarded as policy successes in some areas are frequently countered by increases in consumption, production and trafficking elsewhere. For example, in relation to cocaine we are informed that “At the global level these changes essentially amounted to geographical shifts and displacements in supply and demand.” As a whole, the market has not been eliminated or significantly reduced over the last decade.” (p. 32 & p. 94.) At a local level, when discussing the restructuring of the ATS market within the United States, the *Report* notes that domestic precursor controls implemented in 2005 shifted drug manufacture across the border into Mexico (p. 23 & 107) and the production of precursors to parts of Latin America. Other similar admissions pepper the document.

It is important to note, however, that rather than merely highlighting the conundrum of displacement as has been the case in previous reports, this year the authors venture into the realm of policy recommendation. In line with the overall tenor of the document, this approach is linked directly to the goals set at the High Level Segment and follows the logic that all types of displacement are less likely to take place if drug control policies are implemented by all member states in a uniform, coordinated and integrated fashion. Consequently, having affirmed the idea that the “mere sum of uncoordinated national and sectoral efforts, *even successful ones*, cannot result in a global success” (emphasis added) the *Report* goes on to stress that “To achieve the 2019 objectives, the international community needs to interweave drug supply and demand reduction interventions and integrate national efforts in the framework of renewed international strategies on the scale

of drug markets” (p. 11.) It will be recalled that the need for such an approach was acknowledged by Member States in the 2009 Political Declaration. Article 31 notes “the importance of promoting, in order to enhance the effectiveness of drug control measures, an integrated approach in drug policies.” As the *World Drug Report* notes, this is also echoed in the new Plan of Action. Here, under the title “Addressing supply and demand reduction together” article 27 stresses that “interlinkage” between efforts to reduce both drug supply and demand are “often not taken into account.”

The *Report* thus performs a useful and appropriate role in linking the available data reflecting displacement patterns within the global market to the political commitments agreed by member states last year. It is also right to acknowledge that not all states are equally resourced to “resist, and counter the impact of, powerful transnational trafficking flows on their own” (p. 11.)

The UNODC is arguably on shaky ground, however, in its position on the impact of an integrated approach upon the future dynamics of the global heroin and cocaine markets in particular. The authors set the scene by pointing out that, in contrast to both cannabis and ATS, the heroin and cocaine markets are “both sourced from relatively concentrated production areas” with “most of their components” being “directly or indirectly linked.” They continue by stating that “The resulting transnational drug economies they form, from production to trafficking and consumption, can thus be addressed as a whole and be affected by shocks and ripple effects.” While these are reasonable and in the main empirically supportable statements, the *Report* comes to what must be regarded as a conceptually uncertain and massively optimistic conclusion: “With the benefit of experience, success against these two markets appears to be within reach and would result in the removal of a large chunk of the world drug problem and many of its associated ills.” (p. 35) Given that

the combined efforts against these commodity markets over many decades has failed to produce one example of sustained interruption of supply to an established consumer market, the report's definition of 'within reach' seems a little broad. Cocaine and heroin undoubtedly account for a large proportion of what the UNODC itself admits is the somewhat vague phenomenon known as the "world drug problem." (p. 31.) Yet, do past successes really indicate that the international community is capable of eliminating these significant global markets? Further, as is also posited, are they "good candidates for a global solution within a reasonable time-frame"? (p.35) This is in stark contrast to the UNODC's current position on cannabis (See Box 3.) Such a perspective, and the use of what must surely be seen as quixotic language concerning the resolution of problems associated with the heroin and cocaine markets, sits uncomfortably with the more nuanced analysis within the

main body of the *Report*. Indeed, in the face of charges that our viewpoint is representative of a defeatist outlook,¹⁰ it should be noted that as understanding of the complexities of drug markets has increased, such binary language (of 'success' or 'defeat') has generally fallen out of use. In much drug policy literature it has been replaced by references to policies resulting in a reduction of the scale of the market, or drug related harms, better management of drug related problems, or even "containment"; still a problematic term, but one reflecting an appreciation that even discrete aspects of the world drug problem are unlikely to ever be "solved." This is reminiscent of the vocabulary used by a former Executive Director. As head of what was then the UN Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention between 1997 and 2002, Mr. Pino Arlacchi frequently argued that the world drug problem was on the verge of being solved.

Box 3. Cannabis - creeping realism?

In course of analyzing the *2006 World Drug Report*, the IDPC reflected upon the prominence given to cannabis within the publication and wondered if the drug was going to be the focus of a "new crusade" for the UNODC. Then, among other things, the *Report* stated that the harmful consequences of cannabis were no longer that different from those of other plant based drugs such as heroin and cocaine and argued that the drug merited renewed attention from the international community. As discussed at the time, such statements were made within the context of increasing numbers of states downgrading the enforcement attention given to the drug. (See The 2006 World Drug Report: Winning The War On Drugs?, available at: http://idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/IDPC_BP_02_WorldDrugReport2006_EN.pdf) Since then this position has been repeated in UNODC publications as well as statements by the Executive Director. Therefore, it is noteworthy to see that, although certainly not renouncing the need for cannabis control policies, four years on the UNODC seems to have adopted a more pragmatic approach towards the drug. While some attention is focused on discussions concerning the application of an integrated approach towards the heroin and cocaine markets, the *Report* moves away from any attempts to conflate the harmfulness of and hence policy responses towards cannabis with those of other organic psychotropics and accepts that the drug is an altogether different proposition in terms of the structure of the global market, and the effects of the drug itself. We are informed that "Cannabis production and consumption are found everywhere" and crucially that "there is no longer a clear consensus among national authorities on how to tackle the issue." As a result, the UNODC continues, "Under these conditions, a significant reduction of the aggregate cannabis problem at the global level by 2019 would more likely be a matter of coincidence than the result of internationally concerted action." (p. 33)

In addition to problems surrounding terminology, it is also apposite to raise more fundamental questions concerning the understanding of past policy successes. These are, after all, central to the future elimination of displacement via an integrated approach. For example, what actually constitutes success on the supply side of the drug problem? Are the only metrics for success to be measured in a reduction in tonnage and acreage? As the IDPC and others have noted elsewhere in relation to both opium and coca, crop eradication generates many damaging side effects. It is a costly approach that impacts particularly “negatively on poor and marginalized farmers.” Moreover, forced eradication can actually stimulate production and feed the cycles of poverty, violence and forced migration seen in drug producing regions. An apparently ‘successful’ eradication can also create perverse incentives to further stimulate production, compromising long-term sustainability with short-term gains.” Mindful of the increasing use of spraying within the Andean region revealed in the *Report* (p. 163) it should be noted how aerial fumigation campaigns have led to the poisoning and/or displacement of farmers as well as widespread environmental pollution.¹¹ Such unintended consequences of course chime with themes contained with Mr. Costa’s “*Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’: Building on the UNGASS decade.*”

Questions also exist on the demand side. Here, for instance, despite the varied and well-documented negative side effects of what is a predominantly punitive approach,¹² the decline of cocaine use within the United States is held up as an example of effective policy, the assumption being that if other countries pursue a similar approach then demand for the drug would be reduced at a global scale. Research tells us, however, that causality between levels of consumption and drug policy is difficult to prove. In some instances, it has been shown that policy has no impact upon levels of drug use prevalence.¹³

Longitudinal data shows that cocaine use has certainly been in decline in the US for sometime. This played a role in leading some analysts to conclude in 2006 that, with the exception of some amphetamine type stimulants, the country no longer faced an explosive epidemic “but rather ‘endemic’ drug use.”¹⁴ Reasons for this shift still remain unclear. It is reasonable to conclude, as does the UNODC, that, inter alia, prevention and treatment may have had a role to play (p. 93.)¹⁵ Evidence from the US suggests, “...participation in treatment programs is associated with declines in reported drug use.”¹⁶ The effectiveness of prevention programs is less clear-cut, however. Indeed, as the *Report* itself notes, not all prevention is effective, with simplistic interventions sometimes resulting in higher levels of use (p. 93.) Some uncertainty also surrounds the *Report*’s assessment of the impact of recent supply side activities upon cocaine use within the United States. Readers are informed that “The decline has been particularly pronounced since 2006, likely due to pressure on supply related to law enforcement interventions in Colombia and Mexico” (p. 17 & 74.) There is no evidence supplied to causally link declines in consumption with law enforcement operations in source and transit countries and, on the contrary, the primary indicator that would indicate such a link, a rise in consumer prices, is not evident. Moreover, there is no mention of the negative consequences (such as market violence) associated with such activities, particularly in Mexico. We are told later in the *Report*, “The fight against the drug cartels is a legitimate and necessary undertaking.” Nonetheless, the authors include the caveat that such action “may not automatically reduce the cocaine market” and that history “has shown that break-ups of big cocaine cartels may lead to the emergence of a larger number of smaller groups. Increased competition can produce lower prices, which could even encourage higher use levels.” (p. 93) In general terms, evidence suggests that successful source and transit country control

efforts, in relation to both cocaine and opium, are rare and seldom have a sustained impact upon drug consumption within the US.¹⁷ More specifically, mindful of the long-term decline in use within the US, it is certainly difficult to attribute firmly recent changes in the cocaine market to anti-drug endeavours south of the border. Many variables are clearly at work. As David Boyum and Peter Reuter have noted

...drug use is heavily influenced by forces other than drug policy, not least changing attitudes about drug use and by volatile swings in the fashionability of specific drugs. This inevitably complicates efforts to assess the effect of different policy actions; good policies that face headwinds in attitudes and fashions appear ineffective, while bad policies that enjoy tailwinds look successful.¹⁸

To be sure, while the decline in cocaine use is held up as a positive trend, so the use of other drugs within the US have remained at constant and relatively high levels or have even increased. For instance, after a period of stabilization, recent years have seen a slight increase in cannabis use. Perhaps more worryingly, there has also been an increasing trend in the use of prescription and over the counter drugs, including oxycodone and hydrocodone among teenagers, with signs of a possible resurgence of ecstasy use among tenth grade students (p. 156 & p.225.) Although discussion within the *Report* is framed predominantly in terms of geographic displacement, experience has demonstrated that declines in use brought about by what is likely to be a range of factors can be offset by the emergence of new patterns of use.¹⁹ Paradoxically this is precisely the dynamic to which Mr. Costa refers in his Foreword. As noted earlier, the Executive Director draws attention to the fact that drug users are not averse to changing from one psychotropic substance to another and that, as well as moving into the more flexible and the harder

to track ATS market, manufactures are quick to engage with new products and exploit new markets. Within the context of the Report's enthusiasm to focus on an integrated approach towards the cocaine and heroin markets, he comes to the somewhat contradictory conclusion that, "We will not solve the world drugs problem if addiction simply shifts" from these drugs "to other addictive substances."

Transit countries: Between the rocks and the hard place

"In the past decade, the United Nations has come to recognize the relationship between political instability and organized crime, particularly drug trafficking." (p. 231.) So begins the section of the *Report* concentrating on the impact of drug trafficking on transit countries, and quotes UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to the effect that, "Drug trafficking is...a rising threat to international peace and security in Africa." The text seeks to elaborate on this opening by explaining how these connections function: how, precisely, does trafficking threaten stability? It goes on to outline two main ways. The first derives from the involvement of insurgents and guerrilla armies raising funds through the imposition of a "tax" on shipments moving through territories they control, and even engaging actively in the management of production and transit activities. The second occurs where trafficking groups grow sufficiently powerful to take on the state through violent conflict, corruption, or some combination of the two—that being the usual formula. Other forms of organized crime can, to varying extents, destabilize states, but none is so corrosive as the drug traffic, because, "the drug markets are simply worth more money than those of other contraband goods, and since they are illicit, drugs remain unambiguously the domain of organized criminals" (p. 231.) The *Report* goes on to acknowledge differences between various drugs in this respect: because as discussed above ATS and cannabis can be produced close to the consumer, there is no need

for extended trafficking lines across national and regional borders. The most powerful flows with the most impact (addiction, violence, corruption) originate in producer countries in the poor South and are destined for consumers in the rich North; they consist primarily of heroin and cocaine. Most of the cases used to illustrate the chapter's argument are drawn from along the global cocaine trafficking routes from its Andean zones of production.

In a short discussion of transnational heroin flows, the authors mention that opium poppy has been cultivated historically in different regions from those in which it is presently concentrated, and notes that the current locus of cultivation (primarily in Afghanistan and Myanmar) results from the requirement for large areas of land outside government control, and a large labour force to work the poppy fields. It observes that, "the best deterrent for state interference with this process is a rebel army" (p.232), and that in situations where conflict has not been present, poppy cultivation and therefore heroin production has been effectively suppressed (in countries such as China, Turkey, Iran, and so on). The analysis of the role of drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan notes that heroin production is "strongly associated" with the insurgency, but is nuanced differently from various earlier interventions made by the *Office*, and particularly those of Mr. Costa. In claiming that, as noted earlier, forces aligned to the Taliban received "an estimated \$125 million per year", the *Report* states that while "the drug trade provides some funds for the conflict, more significant is the cover the conflict provides for the drug trade. "Those who profit most...are professional criminals and...corrupt officials" (p.232.) In a Press Release from late 2004, just prior to the elections which confirmed Hamid Karzai as President, and entitled "UN Warns about nexus of drugs, crime and terror," Costa had claimed that, "It has become more and more difficult to distinguish clearly between terrorist groups and organized crime units, since their tactics increasingly overlap. The world is seeing the birth of a new hybrid of 'organized

crime – terrorist organizations'..."²⁰ This period saw continuous reference to the threat of "narco-terrorism," a blurring term that reaches its apotheosis in Costa's quote. The DEA defines narco-terrorism as "an organized group that is complicit in the activities of drug trafficking in order to further, or fund, premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants..."²¹ Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy has observed that, "...the DEA definition lumps together terrorism itself with its alleged financial means, instead of characterising the specific motivations and goals of particular terrorist groups. According to such a definition there would be as many types of terrorism as there would be different ways of financing them."²² While of considerable political utility insofar as it combines the two major post-cold war US foreign policy interests—drugs and terrorism—such a terminology merely obfuscates the problems it purports to address, and the more sober analysis found in this section of the current *Report* is welcome.

The first two pages of the chapter are, in fact, engaged with the problem of production zones rather than transit zones per se, and we are midway through the second page before it is acknowledged that "(c)onflict zones are not the only places where transnational organised crime can pose a threat to the state..." In countries where conflict and ungoverned spaces are absent, organized crime is more likely to be engaged in trafficking goods across the territory. Democracies with effective rule of law are not the preferred ground for such operations; indeed, the *Report* states pithily that, "The ideal case for drug traffickers is an authoritarian state where the authority is in their pocket." In these circumstances, violence is unnecessary and corruption oils the wheels of business. Where violence is deployed, the *Report* points out that judges and prosecutors are often targets, as well as journalists who seek to expose major criminal operations. It goes on to recognise that attempts to stop trafficking can "temporarily exacerbate this violence," and that this can "fuel public demands that enforcement be suspended, but *this difficult period must be weathered,*"

(emphasis added). This blithe injunction might be regarded as controversial in a country such as Mexico, where some 28,000 have died in the recent drug wars.²³

The *Report* points out that organized crime does not want war with the state as it is obviously not good for business; violence may also provoke reactions from the state that themselves pose threats to the long term stability of democracy. “A clear sign that crime has become a national security threat comes when exceptional legal and security measures are taken, including calling on the military to help re-establish the government’s authority” (p. 233.) There is acknowledgement that, while such measures may be popular, they can represent the inception of a “roll-back of democratic values.” Despite this important recognition of a familiar theme in a new guise—namely, that the state’s response to drug problems can be as bad or worse than what it sets out to address—the *Report* fails to engage with the appearance of equivalent trends within the international community’s own attempts to combat trafficking. The 2009 move by the coalition forces in Afghanistan to kill or capture traffickers with links to the insurgency caused consternation amongst many observers. A US Senate Foreign Relations Committee report published in August 2009 broke the news of this policy when it quoted the US military to the effect that, “Our long-term approach is to identify the regional drug figures and corrupt government officials and persuade them to choose legitimacy or remove them from the battlefield.”²⁴ Prior to the Committee’s report, when it became evident that this tactic was under consideration, a high-level rift had developed within NATO, with Germany in particular standing wholly against such “illegitimate orders.”²⁵ The rather chilling euphemism of “removal from the battlefield” was openly acknowledged by the US as meaning that such individuals could be captured or killed at any time, and some 50 such individuals were said to be on the target list, alongside several hundred figures belonging to the insurgency. While the Pentagon insisted that such measures fell within the terms of the

mission mandate, it provides another note of caution that should supplement that made in the World Drug Report’s analysis: namely, that anti-democratic and legally grey interventions can be authorized not only in those countries considered democratically precarious, but in the international community’s own policies.

The displacements that occur in both production zones and trafficking routes point us back once again to the “unintended consequences” of the drug control system described in Mr. Costa’s “*Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’*” paper. Both the violence and corruption that comes with large scale trafficking, as well as the anti-democratic measures associated with the excessive securitization of state responses, may be seen in the example of Mexico. Its current pre-eminence as the key transit route for Andean cocaine bound for consumers in US cities has been assumed over the last 10 to 15 years; prior to that, the Caribbean route to Florida was the preferred option for the Colombian trafficking groups who then controlled the trade. Intensive, protracted and apparently successful law enforcement interventions in the Caribbean region eventually rendered it uneconomical, with the resultant restructuring of the trade bearing all the marks of the classical displacement conundrum discussed above.

In a discussion of Mexico’s present role, the *Report* is also strangely reticent in its characterisation of US implication in the country’s violent impasse, stating that, “Mexico’s killers are armed largely by weapons trafficked from the North...” (p. 232.) Louis Klarevas of New York University has advocated the extradition of US citizens to Mexico to face charges of supplying firearms for profit—authorities estimate that 250-300 illegal weapons cross the border each day from the US, with its notoriously lax regime of gun controls.²⁶ It composes a traffic responsible for immense harm, and yet draws a fraction of the attention that the *Report* assigns to the drugs going in the opposite direction (to be precise, there is one mention, quoted above, and the US is not even mentioned by name.) It is clear that in ways

such as these, the effects of geopolitical power condition the analysis of the UNODC, despite its claims to stand above the political fray and speak in the name of humanity. Overall, then, while the chapter on transit countries provides a useful overview of cocaine routes and certain of their pernicious impacts upon the nations they touch, it fails to really get to grips with the ‘unintended consequences’ detailed in Mr Costa’s paper produced two years earlier. The vast majority of aid to Mexico, allocated by the US in support of the Mexican state’s war with the “drug cartels”, has gone toward the army and other militarized security measures, while human rights abuses carried out by the Mexican armed forces have led Human Rights Watch to speak of a culture of impunity: “While engaging in law enforcement activities, Mexico’s armed forces have committed serious human rights violations, including killings, torture, rapes, and arbitrary detentions. Mexico routinely allows the military to investigate itself through a military justice system that leads to impunity for army abuses.”²⁷ These grave concerns return us to the problems arising from the Foreword, in which support for human rights, development and health are in danger of being limited to rhetorical flourishes, as long as diplomatic and geopolitical considerations prevent the UNODC from condemning actions that contradict these principles. It is a paradox which the international drug control regime, even if (as Mr. Costa insists) it was motivated at its inception by the noble objective of protecting health and humanity, has failed to resolve during its hundred years of history to date.

Conclusions

There is much to be commended in the *World Drug Report 2010*. The publication represents a welcome continuation of the improved methodology and transparency of approach begun last year. Indeed, the ongoing use of ranges and the admission that changes in trends often only reflect a change in the data sets (either inclusion of new or exclusion of old and/or

unreliable data) generates a more textured, and in policy terms in many ways a more challenging, global picture. Again, however, these strengths are at times undermined by the more subjective, at times conceptually confused and politicized aspects of the document. Any maturation of the drug control system must surely be matched by increasing coherence within the UNODC’s flagship publication. While this is the case, the IDPC remains supportive of the UNODC’s work in continually refining its data analysis and wholeheartedly echoes calls from the *Office* for the development and improvement of national and regional monitoring systems looking at drug cultivation and for nation states to improve shortfalls on demand side data. In this vein, we await the conclusions of the Expert group on data collection with interest, and call on Member States to engage fully with the new ARQ process; a process undertaken at the behest of Member States themselves. It should be noted, however, that support for improved data capture must also be matched by ongoing financial support for the *Office* in fulfilling all its mandated data collection and analysis responsibilities. This includes the production of the *World Drug Report* and the presentation of the data therein. It should not go unmentioned that this year’s publication was the first in many years not to benefit from dedicated funding from the Swedish government. Although this may not have affected the ability of the *Office* to produce what is in the main a high quality document, it seems likely that reliance upon the already limited general purpose funding could compromise future analytic capacity. This dilemma might be best overcome by the creation of a group of member states willing to contribute annually to a dedicated budget stream. Yet, as with so much within the purview of the UNODC, the future direction of the *Report*, both in terms of production and approach, is undoubtedly reliant upon the outlook of the new Executive Director. It is consequently the hope of the IDPC that Mr Fedotov move beyond the use of the Foreword to politicize the *Report*, to continue to develop its areas of strength and, in so doing, secure funding for what remains a valuable resource.

Endnotes

- 1 IDPC (2008) *The 2008 World Drug Report :A Response from the International Drug Policy Consortium* http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/IDPC_ResponseWorldDrugReport_Sept08_EN.pdf
- 2 Transnational Institute (2010) *Do we really want a Russian UN Drug Czar?* http://www.ungassondrugs.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=65
- 3 See “New UN drugs and crime chief to focus on public health and rights-based approach, UNIS 13 September 2010 (UNIS/INF/386) <http://www.idpc.net/alerts/unodc-chief-focuses-on-public-health-and-human-rights>
- 4 Antonio Maria Costa (2008) *Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’: Building on the UNGASS decade* Conference Room Paper 17, 51st CND, 2008, United Nations, Vienna <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/session/ungass-crps.html>
- 5 IDPC (2009) *The 2009 Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its High Level Segment- A Report of Proceedings* <http://www.idpc.net/publications/idpc-proceedings-document-on-2009-cnd-high-level-segment>
- 6 IDPC (2010) *Proceedings Document of the 53rd CND* <http://www.idpc.net/publications/idpc-report-2010-cnd-proceedings-document>
- 7 See for example Francisco E.Thoumi (2010) *The international drug control regime’s straitjacket: Are there any policy options?* <http://www.springerlink.com/content/8n62775383w51p22/>
- 8 For a brief discussion see observations made by the Andean Information network <http://ain-bolivia.org/2010/06/the-unodc-coca-cultivation-study-for-bolivia-shows-minimal-increase-in-coca-crop-sharply-contracts-with-u-s-statistics-2/>
- 9 For a discussion see *The 2008 World Drug Report: A Response From the International Drug Policy Consortium*. http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/IDPC_ResponseWorldDrugReport_Sept08_EN.pdf
- 10 Indeed, the UNODC draws attention to the fact that Member States agreed that illicit drug supply and demand should be “eliminated or significantly reduced” by 2019; a “decision made in a context of renewed criticism from some parts of civil society against the international drug control system and its perceived inefficacy” (p. 32)
- 11 *IDPC Drug Policy Guide*, Edition 1, March 2010, pp.95-102 <http://www.idpc.net/publications/idpc-drug-policy-guide-version-1>
- 12 See for example, Eva Bertram, Morris Blachman, Kenneth Sharpe and Peter Andreas, *Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial*, University of California Press, 1996.
- 13 Craig Reinerman, Peter Cohen and Hendrien L. Kaal, “The Limited Relevance of Drug Policy: Cannabis in Amsterdam and in San Francisco,” *American Journal of Public Health*, May 2004, Vol. 94, No. 5., pp. 836-842
- 14 J Caulkins and P Reuter, *Reorienting US Drug Policy, Issues in Science and Technology, Fall 2006*, <http://www.issues.org/23.1/caulkins.html>
- 15 Also see *IDPC Drug Policy Guide*, Edition 1, March 2010, pp.57-73. <http://www.idpc.net/publications/idpc-drug-policy-guide-version-1>
- 16 David Boyum and Peter Reuter, *An Analytic Assessment of US Drug Policy*, The AIE Press, 2005, p. 83.
- 17 David Boyum and Peter Reuter, *An Analytic Assessment of US Drug Policy*, The AIE Press, 2005, pp. 72-76
- 18 David Boyum and Peter Reuter, *An Analytic Assessment of US Drug Policy*, The AIE Press, 2005, p. 93. In relation to this point, the *Report* itself notes how crack cocaine “became a stigmatized drug in the second half of the 1980s” and that “powder cocaine also became less fashionable.” (p. 72).
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