



Background Paper

Committee: UNODC

Topic A: Eliminating opium exportation from the Golden Crescent

Chairs: Jacqueline Gonzalez and Jesus Fuentes

The Golden Crescent is a region of South Asia comprising of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. It is considered to be the focal point for opium production and trafficking. Drugs grown in Afghanistan are trafficked to Iran and Pakistan and then to the rest of the world. These countries have many problems, including economic instability, terrorism, and war. It is believed that these have caused and influenced the growth and expansion of opium exportation from the Golden Crescent. Due to opium production, drug use has increased mainly in these regions and the most common drug of consumption is heroin. As a result, this has led to an expansion in the use of syringes, which has caused an increment of blood borne diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The UNODC committee is searching for a way to eliminate opium exportation from the Golden Crescent and its secondary effects on society. The UNODC is looking for a resolution in which the effects of this problem can be abolished. It is important for the committee to consider that this is a topic which affects every country.

The demand for psychotropic substances and narcotic drugs in the world is a consequence of the growth of its production through clandestine laboratories. The evolution of drug production is facilitated by chemical technology. Most of the time the clandestine laboratories are located in technologically advanced centers, but recently laboratories have been located closer to the areas where the cultivation takes place. In these laboratories, natural drugs, such as opium, are then modified and transformed into drugs like heroin and cocaine. Opium cultivation covers 240,265 hectares in the global agriculture production. About 80 percent of the production of opium originates in the Golden Crescent.

Within the countries that export and produce opium and heroin, Afghanistan is the largest producer in the world. Currently, it is estimated that Afghanistan has 2800 hectares of opium. Based on the UNODC 2014 report, the farm-gate price for cultivating the crop for Afghan farmers stands at \$850 million, compared to \$400 million in 2009 (UNODC 2010). Of course, if trade is valued at \$60 billion a year, then the overwhelming majority of the money remains being created outside the country, since the illegal transportation and processing add value to the product. Due to this problem, countries in Asia and Europe agreed to increase coordinated regional initiatives to abolish the drug trade within

the Golden Crescent under the influence of the United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs. Through this programme, called “Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries”, the UNODC plans to formulate the counternarcotics capacity of states using several programmes that will increase cooperation and information sharing with the countries involved.

The Golden Crescent opium exports are not only causing the increase in the number of consumers of this substance and its derivatives, but also other consequences that are affecting both the countries within the Golden Crescent and external countries. Countries involved in the exportation of opium are suffering terrorism, poverty, and even war which help the expansion of the Golden Crescent production and exportation. Meanwhile, the countries which receive these exports are seeing an increase in the number of blood borne diseases along with the rise of drug consumers around the world.

Taking into account that this is a worldwide issue that is affecting every single country, the UNODC committee is looking for a resolution which helps eliminate opium exports of the Golden Crescent and is also capable of abolishing the problems that these exports are causing. An equitable approach is needed that offers equal weight to counteracting demand for opiates. This is often a part of the international community’s shared responsibility for the world drug problem; heroin-consuming countries have to be compelled to do a lot to produce treatment, care and support for drug users which assists them in ceasing the use of drugs, and as a result, conjointly stop the use of drugs in heroin-consuming countries.

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