



# WHSMUN 2022



UN Office on Drugs and Crime  
[UNODC]  
Topic: Illegal Drug Trade in Latin  
American Countries

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# Chair Introductions

## Head Chair

Hello everyone! My name is Ally Chung, and I'll be serving as the Head Chair of the UNODC committee for WHSMUN 2022. This is my senior year at Whitney High School and also my sixth year as part of the MUN program. Outside of MUN, I'm currently the co-President for our school's UNICEF Club and various other student organizations. Some of my hobbies include reading mystery novels, bingeing Marvel movies, and taking pictures of my dog! I'm also a major advocate for the youth voice in global affairs, so I'm excited to see what you bring to committee!

## Vice Chair

Hello delegates! My name is Krystal Lin and I'll be your Vice Chair for this committee. I've been involved in MUN for three years, and now I'm a junior. In my free time, I like listening to music, going for walks and painting landscapes. On campus, I am part of Kokoro Kara (Japanese culture club) and Mock Trial team. I am looking forward to seeing you all in January for WHSMUN 2022 and seeing what each of you have in store!

## Legal

Hi delegates! My name is Sarah Durrani and I'm your Legal for this committee. I'm a senior at Whitney High School and this is my fourth and last year of MUN. I'm Vice President of my school's Girl Up organization and Director of Gardening for Ecology and Wildlife Club. In my free time, I like playing video games and cooking for my family. I hope to see you all in committee for this year's conference and I am excited to see what debate will look like!

## **BACKGROUND**

The countries of Latin America have long been plagued by conflict-ridden histories that have thus contributed to a severe wealth disparity. Beginning in the 1930s, a small class of the wealthy came into power and the rest of the population was forced to work for this small elite class. This was the beginning of the wealth gap that eventually forced many citizens into poverty with rapidly diminishing methods of earning a livelihood. As a result, the introduction of cocaine in the 1960s - a drug unbeknownst to much of the world - presented itself as an appealing, although illegal, solution to many. Cocaine began to gain momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, attaining massive popularity in countries across the globe - and Latin American countries powered the world's obsession with the drug by supplying it. Great profits could be obtained from the demand for drugs, and it was not long before Latin America also saw the rise of gangs and their powers as they became the central proponents of the drug trade. Gangs smuggled in not only cocaine but also marijuana and heroin which they then sold to wealthy countries for exorbitant amounts of money. In some Latin American countries such as Peru, only about 10% of the coca grown in Peru was used for traditional purposes such as being chewed as a source of energy, or made into tea or medicines. The remaining 90% was given to drug smugglers, a much more profitable avenue for coca farmers.

Unfortunately, the reality is that the growing drug trade, while being a major source of income, has only contributed to the unstable and violent environments in Latin America. The lucrative nature of the drug trade has spawned an equally massive organized crime, or in other words, gang system that has overran Latin America's justice systems with corruption. Today, the drug trade is worth over \$400 billion USD altogether for those involved and its value is only

growing with over 269 million drug users worldwide. The Covid-19 pandemic only further exacerbated the situation as a shortage of drugs, linked to the pandemic, and skyrocketing unemployment lended themselves to increasing prices and more people willing to work in drug trafficking respectively.

The persistent demand and supply chain of the drug trade in Latin America has proved difficult to put an end to. And being at the root of an increasing number of problems such as gang violence and startlingly high homicide rates in Latin American countries, the growth of the human trafficking trade, and corrupt governments, it is more evident than ever that a solution must be found.

## **UN INVOLVEMENT**

Over the years, the UNODC has established many different programmes in response to illicit drug trading occurring in Latin America, which includes the Santo Domingo Pact/SICA-UNODC Mechanism. The program is an interregional programme, which means its target audience includes both Central America and the Caribbean, aiming to improve policy coordination in regards to drug trafficking and the corresponding organized crime. The objectives of the Santo Domingo Act is to facilitate the regional and national policies relating to illegal drug trafficking in Latin America as well as collect data to analyze the trends of organized crime activity in the two regions. This analysis will be used to ensure the successful implementation of effective anti-organized crime policies.

Another initiative by the UNODC is the Network of Central American Anti-Organized Crime and Drug Prosecution Units (OCN), which was established in order to strengthen the investigating and prosecuting powers of Central American countries in higher transnational drug trafficking cases, which boosts inter-regional judicial power. The OCN is made up of prosecuting

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officials working in specialized organized crime and narcotic units from international countries that decided to participate in this program.

Regarding the Regional Centre of Excellence on Maritime Security in Panama, the objective is to assist governments to build up national and regional capacity in dealing with threats and risks stemming from illicit trafficking, drug abuse, organized crime and related violence as well as to strengthen the rule of law. Centres of excellence will also support governments in developing effective programmes by identifying areas of opportunity and areas needing immediate attention by sharing information for research. The Centre of Excellence in Panama City will help diagnose threats in maritime security and serve as a resource of expertise, training, data collection and analysis. It will provide strategic direction and training in search techniques, security, maritime interdiction, human trafficking and the handling of hazardous and toxic cargo.

Additionally, UNODC and the National Institute of Statistics of Mexico (INEGI) have established a Regional Centre of Excellence on Government, Public Security, Victimization and Justice statistics in Mexico. The objective is to facilitate the strengthening of statistics and analytical capacities in the above mentioned areas. The Centre of Excellence will develop and provide planning and information gathering tools, develop studies and publications, offer training, and develop databases and methodologies. The centre will also promote the exchange of standardized information between countries and the identification of good practices in the field of crime statistics.

## **BLOC POSITIONS**

***Western Bloc:*** Drug trafficking is a threat to the western bloc. The United States of America and their partner governments in particular have been initiating anti-drug efforts to stop the production and trafficking of popular illicit drugs, such as cocaine, marijuana, opiates and methamphetamine since Latin American crime organizations are now a major cause to the escalation in drug trafficking-related crimes and violence in recent years, which has cause the drug issue to arrive at the forefront of western bloc concerns. The western bloc has established opportunities and initiatives for foreign assistance and anti drug assistance programs in Latin America. Despite these programs, the illegal drug trading market in Latin America remains a huge obstacle.

***African Bloc:*** African criminal groups are becoming increasingly involved with the illegal drug traffickers in Latin America. Africa has also become a trafficking nexus for exports from Latin America because traditional trafficking routes have been seized and closed due to counternarcotics pressure. Although the African Bloc is in support of the prevention of the trafficking of illicit drugs in Latin American countries, their primary focus is on curbing production, trafficking and usage of illegal drugs in their own countries.

***Eastern Bloc:*** Counties in the Eastern Bloc have started to cooperate together to form initiatives to stop illegal drug trafficking through the formation of several pacts and programmes, especially countries in Central Asia, such as Afghanistan, but the prevention of illegal drug trade occurring in Latin American countries is not high on their list of priorities.

***Latin American Bloc:*** Governments are fragile and easily corrupt with power in the hands of major drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). Many of the governments in the Latin American and Caribbean bloc are powerless in stopping the drug trade, or the corrupt government has already formed an agreement with criminal organizations dealing with illegal drugs. However, most of the countries in Central America have recently established special anti-narcotic and/or organized crime units (OC units) within the police and the prosecuting authorities to combat the growing number of illegal drug organizations. Although it appears that Latin American organized crime groups dominate trafficking of drugs to the overseas market, domestic markets are often in the hands of traffickers of other nationalities.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What prior policies of each bloc can be altered to change the course of illicit drug trading?
2. What can be predicted about the future timeline of illicit drug trading?
3. What blocs should be prioritized for this topic of discussion?
4. How can drugs be used legally? Would these policies need to be altered?
5. What are your country's current and historical roles in the war on drugs in Latin America?
6. What are the economic advantages and disadvantages of your country in addressing this issue?



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