

Forum: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Issue: Means to regulate the production of illicit marijuana.

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Introduction:

Marijuana, often known as cannabis, is a psychotropic substance of which the legalisation and regulation have been extensively discussed around the world. It is derived from the Cannabis plant and can be ingested in a variety of ways, including smoking, vaping, and consuming edibles. Marijuana use has both recreational and therapeutic uses, with supporters arguing for its potential benefits in treating certain medical illnesses and detractors voicing worries about its potential hazards and ramifications. As the question of marijuana legislation remains a popular topic worldwide, it is critical that the UNODC committee analyse all the effects of this substance.

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **Illicit Marijuana Production:** Refers to the unlawful cultivation, manufacturing, or distribution of marijuana, in violation of national or international laws and regulations.
2. **Marijuana:** A psychoactive drug derived from the Cannabis plant, containing cannabinoids that induce mind-altering effects when consumed. Marijuana is used for recreational, medicinal, and religious purposes.
3. **Regulation:** The establishment and enforcement of rules, laws, and policies to govern the production, distribution, and use of a substance or activity, in this case, illicit marijuana production.

Background Information

A complex combination of historical, sociocultural, and economic reasons has resulted in the difficulty of regulating the manufacturing of illicit marijuana. Marijuana, has been utilised for medical, spiritual, and recreational purposes throughout human history. However, the classification of marijuana as a prohibited substance and its illegality in many nations has resulted in the drug's clandestine manufacture and trafficking.

History of the Regulation of Illicit Marijuana

Marijuana regulation may be traced back to the early twentieth century, when various countries, including the United States, began to place limitations on cannabis usage and cultivation. The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 in the United States was a watershed moment that led to the criminalization of marijuana. Following international initiatives, such as the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs,

marijuana was classed as a Schedule I prohibited narcotic, subject to rigorous regulations and criminal penalties.

Throughout the decades, marijuana laws and policies have undergone significant changes. Some countries and states have experimented with decriminalization or legalization for medical or recreational use, citing potential benefits such as revenue generation, reduced burden on law enforcement, and addressing social justice issues related to drug enforcement. However, these developments have also led to challenges, particularly in the context of international drug control treaties that still classify marijuana as illegal.

Impact of Marijuana

The consequences of illegal marijuana manufacturing are far-reaching and diverse. The link between illegal marijuana cultivation and organised crime is one of the key issues. The lucrative illicit marijuana trade is frequently exploited by drug trafficking organisations and criminal syndicates, resulting in bloodshed, corruption, and instability in impacted areas. In certain nations, the illicit marijuana market competes with legitimate ones, creating a complex regulatory and law enforcement landscape.

Another critical aspect of the issue is public health. The unregulated nature of illicit marijuana production means that consumers may be exposed to products of unknown quality and potency. Contaminated marijuana products, including those laced with harmful substances, pose severe risks to public health and safety. Additionally, the lack of proper labelling and dosage information can lead to accidental overdoses and adverse reactions.

Current Situation

The current scenario in terms of illicit marijuana cultivation differs by region. Some countries have implemented more relaxed marijuana legislation, either for medicinal or recreational purposes, resulting in an increase in legal marijuana marketplaces. Illegal production, on the other hand, remains an issue, particularly in places where criminal organisations use legal loopholes and lax law enforcement to engage in illicit marijuana growing and trafficking.

Geographical Impact of Marijuana

Illicit marijuana manufacturing is a major challenge in Latin America, notably in nations such as Mexico and Colombia. Criminal organisations, especially drug cartels, have expanded their operations to cultivate and smuggle marijuana, reaping enormous profits from the illicit trade. These organisations exploit enormous swathes of inaccessible and distant land, frequently indulging in deforestation and environmental degradation to build covert plantations.

The issue in North America is complicated because of differences between federal and state legislation in the United States. While some states have legalised

marijuana for medicinal and recreational purposes, the federal government still classifies it as a Schedule I-banned narcotic. This duality complicates the enforcement of marijuana rules since legal marijuana can contaminate the illicit market, driving more unlawful production and trafficking.

In regions like Southeast Asia, the illicit cultivation and production of marijuana continue to pose significant problems. Remote areas in countries like Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar serve as hubs for marijuana cultivation, and these illicit operations often intersect with other illegal activities, such as human trafficking and arms smuggling.

Effect of Technology on Marijuana Trade

The rise of technology and the internet has also aided the illegal marijuana trade. The emergence of the dark web and online marketplaces has transformed the drug trade, including the selling and distribution of illegal marijuana. These anonymous internet platforms enable buyers and sellers to conduct transactions secretly while accepting bitcoins as payment. As a result, the old physical borders that used to limit the illegal drug market have been broken down. Because of the ease of access and global reach of online marketplaces, the illegal marijuana trade has expanded across borders, making it more difficult for law authorities to detect and intercept these transactions.

Social media platforms have become tools for promoting illicit marijuana products, bypassing traditional advertising restrictions. Criminal organizations and dealers use social media to reach potential customers, often employing coded language and symbols to discreetly market their products. This digital marketing strategy makes it challenging for law enforcement to monitor and track illegal activities on these platforms.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States of America: While some states have legalised marijuana for medicinal and recreational purposes, marijuana remains classified as a Schedule I restricted substance at the federal level. The United States supports a balanced approach that respects the rights of states while addressing concerns about unlawful production and interstate trafficking.

Mexico: It faces considerable hurdles in battling criminal gangs involved in the cultivation and transportation of illicit marijuana. Mexico is concerned about the consequences of drug-related violence and is seeking foreign assistance to address the underlying causes of drug demand and supply.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): The UNODC is critical in aiding member countries in combating illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking. It promotes evidence-based drug legislation, harm reduction strategies, and international cooperation to combat the illicit marijuana trade.

Drug Trafficking Organisations: Criminal organisations involved in the manufacture of illegal marijuana have a vested interest in keeping the status quo. They use flaws in legal systems and boundaries to avoid detection by law enforcement.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations has been actively involved in addressing illicit drug production and trafficking, including marijuana. Relevant UN resolutions and treaties include:

- **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)**
 - This treaty forms the backbone of international drug control efforts, including measures to regulate marijuana production and trafficking.
- **UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Drugs (UNGASS)**
 - UNGASS meetings have provided a platform for member states to discuss drug policies, including those related to marijuana regulation.
- **World Drug Reports**
 - Published by UNODC annually, these reports provide comprehensive data and analysis on global drug trends, including marijuana cultivation and consumption.

Possible Solutions and Conclusion

- Encourage member nations to collaborate in exchanging information, intelligence, and best practices to combat illegal marijuana cultivation and trafficking across borders.
- Adoption of alternative livelihoods: Invest in long-term development and alternative livelihood projects in areas where illegal marijuana cultivation is popular, offering economic opportunities for local residents.
- Persuade governments to implement evidence-based drug policies that take into account the possible benefits and hazards of marijuana regulation while addressing public health concerns.
- Capacity building and technical aid: Provide countries with technical help in improving law enforcement capabilities, forensic laboratories, and border control to combat illicit marijuana cultivation and trafficking.
- Campaigns for education: Support public awareness efforts aimed at adolescents and disadvantaged communities to highlight the dangers of marijuana use and to promote responsible drug usage.

In Conclusion, regulating the manufacturing of illicit marijuana necessitates a collaborative and multifaceted strategy. The international community can successfully reduce the issues posed by illegal marijuana production and create a safer environment for all through international cooperation, evidence-based regulations, and addressing the core causes of unlawful growing.

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