

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

*Advanced
ECOSOC*



TOPICS: Addressing Legality of Narcotic Drugs,
The Effect of the Drug Trade on the Economy

CHAIRS: Chloe Quevedo, Sydney Scott

LAIMUN XXVIII

December 3-4

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LAIMUN XXVIII

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Letter from the Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our entire staff, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Session XXVIII of the Los Angeles Invitational Model United Nations (LAIMUN) conference. LAIMUN XXVIII will take place on Saturday, December 3 and Sunday, December 4 of 2022 at the Mira Costa High School (MCHS) campus.

Our staff, composed of over 100 MCHS students, has been working tirelessly to make your debate experience the best it can be. You will find your dais members to be knowledgeable about the issues being debated and MUN procedure. We pride ourselves in hosting a conference that is educational and engaging, and we hope you take advantage of that as you prepare and debate.

At LAIMUN, we value thorough research and preparation. We ask that delegates write position papers following [these directions](#). The deadline to submit position papers to be considered for Committee and Research Awards is Friday, November 25 at 11:59 PM PT. The deadline to submit to be considered for Committee Awards is Thursday, December 1 at 11:59 PM PT.

We also encourage all delegates to read the [LAIMUN Rules of Procedure](#) for conference-specific information and as a reminder of points and motions that can be made during committee.

Feel free to reach out to our staff with any questions or concerns you may have. Delegates can find their chairs' contact information next to their committee profile and the Secretariat's email addresses on the staff page. Any member of the LAIMUN staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Sincerely,

Allyssa Lessinger and Brady Stephens
Secretaries-General, LAIMUN XXVIII
secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org



Introduction to the USG

Hello Delegates! My name is Ava Reyes and I am the Under-Secretary General of ECOSOC. This is my fourth year in the Mira Costa Model UN program and I am beyond thrilled to welcome you to LAIMUN XXVIII!

I'm so excited to see the various diplomatic strategies of debate and topical discussions concerning the very real and pressing issues we encounter on a global scale. Our chairs intend to hold the delegates to high standards of research, diplomacy, speeches, and solutions.

As you may know, we have a strict no pre-written resolutions policy—resolutions may only be worked on at your chair's discretion. Please verify that your work is authentic to ensure all delegates experience a fair and relatively accurate depiction of a United Nations conference.

The Mira Costa Model UN program has provided me with incredible opportunities and lasting memories; I hope that LAIMUN XXVIII will be a memorable experience for you as well! Mira Costa MUN strives to ensure that delegates gain knowledge, confidence, speaking skills, and most importantly, a new understanding of international relations and the current events around us that affect the way we live today. All LAIMUN XXVIII staff have been hard at work to provide the best experience for everyone in attendance and we wish you the best of luck throughout your preparation!

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to ecosoc@mchsmun.org or any other secretariat member. Looking forward to seeing you in December!

Regards,

Allyssa Lessinger and Brady Stephens
Secretaries-General

Ava Reyes
Under-Secretary General

Introduction to the Dias

Hello delegates!

My name is Chloe Quevedo and I will be your co-chair, along with Sydney, for CND Advanced! I am a senior at Costa and have been a part of the MUN program since freshman year; this school year, I teach our Intro to MUN class to the freshmen. I've participated in several local conferences, as well as travel ones, like NAIMUN and BMUN, and as a freshman, I was invited to NHSMUN at the UN Headquarters in NYC.

Apart from MUN, I am Vice-President of Costa's Asian-American Club, on our Varsity Dance Team and former team captain, and I am trilingual in Italian, French, and English, although I'm trying to learn Portuguese. I am a Student Representative at our MBUSD School Board and work for the Governmental Italian Consulate of Los Angeles as Management Director Legal. I am a brown belt in Japanese Karate and take a couple of cultural classes at El Camino College. I love music and play piano, guitar, bass guitar, and percussion; I've won first place for the PTA Arts Reflections Competition for the region in Music Composition and Dance Choreography four times total!

I am looking forward to hearing your countries' policies and stances on our topics and am expecting a lot of variety in your discourse. I would like to chair an organized debate with attentive delegates and hope that the committee flows properly, while transitioning from differentiating topics and subtopics for the entire conference. We are looking for delegates with evident passion, active engagement, well-researched background, and diplomatic presence.

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Please feel free to always reach out to us at cnd.adv.laimun.xxviii@gmail.com with any questions or concerns. We are anticipating LAIMUN and are looking forward to seeing and hearing from you all soon!

Yours truly,

Chloe Quevedo

Hello Delegates!

My name is Sydney Scott and I will be one of your co-chairs for CND with Chloe. I am a junior at Mira Costa, and my second year in the MUN program at Mira Costa. I initially joined MUN in my freshman year, due to my fear of public speaking. By the end of my freshman year, I truly enjoyed the program and the emphasis on current events and enhancing one's public speaking skills. During my time with the program I have done several local conferences like Edison and Surfcity, and enjoy debating in committees like UNICEF and UNIFEM. Last year I was a legal UNOOSA novice, and can't wait to be one of your chairs this year!

Outside of school, I love to spend my time outdoors and around nature. I enjoy going to the beach, and going on different hikes in PV. I love gardening and arranging flowers, and see it as a way to manage stress. During my free time I enjoy volunteering at my local Senior Center. During the summer, I spent time there organizing games, activities, and helping out any way I could.

While I am in school, I am involved with the Shared Closets Club which focuses on donating clothing to individuals in need. I am also involved with the Mental Health Matters Club that focuses on transparency when speaking about mental health, and fundraising money for the organization National Alliance on Mental Illness (N.A.M.I). In school I tend to gravitate towards history based classes, and loved learning European History and Human Geography. I am interested to hear the differing opinions and solutions to the social and economic effects of the trade and distribution of illegal substances.

Feel free to always reach out with any concerns or questions you may have (cnd.adv.laimun.xxviii@gmail.com), and I'm so excited to meet all of you in person!

Sincerely,

Sydney Scott

Committee Description

The issue of regulating illicit substances, and the significant impact that they have on the economy continues to be an issue globally. Because of the extreme social and economic effects that illicit trade can have, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) created a commission to help regulate the illegal drug trade. The commission was first formed in 1946 and implemented within resolution 9(I). It was later extended, and initiated as a more influential commission in 1991, and seen as a part of UNODC. The overall structure and function of the CND were decided through resolution 1999/30. The commission's primary function is to allow countries in the UN to discuss differing regulations on drugs and their effect on their economy. By discussing the effects of the drug trade, CND can create policies and laws that regulate safe drug distribution and trade. By discussing regulations that will be implemented in different regions, the CND also creates drug control treaties. These treaties are made to research and discover possible harmful drugs that are available. Then would then show the public risk from these substances, and the possible need for these substances to provide medically related needs.

This commission also schedules conventions to speak about these specialized drug problems and assists in exploring a global resolution. One of the first conventions was in 1961 called the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. This convention was called to address the expanding issue of narcotic drugs. It aimed to illegalize the trade and distribution of narcotic drugs. This treaty had significant participation within the UN, including 184 countries that agreed to uphold the regulations specified by the convention. This convention was then later

amended in 1972 to include the need to provide treatment for these recovering addicts that suffered after the accessibility to these drugs became more restrictive. Another convention held by CND expanded the regulations of narcotic drugs to include psychotropic substances. This convention was called the Convention on Psychotropic Substances implemented in 1971. The intention was to regulate and control the use of psychoactive substances that could potentially negatively affect the productivity and well-being of society. With the implementation of these conventions that regulated illicit substances, the demand for the illegal trafficking of drugs increased. By implementing the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988, CND hoped to combat this rising problem of drug trafficking. This convention hoped to create international collaboration to enhance the presence of laws that addressed the illegal trade of substances.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs meets annually to adjust current laws on the use and distribution of illicit substances. These laws can be changed due to the medical use of a drug or the adapting world views. Although CND has worked to create regulations and laws against the trafficking and use of illicit substances, the commission still attempts to find new ways of controlling the presence of illicit drugs for the improvement of the global society and economy.

Topic A: Addressing Legality of Narcotic Drugs

I. Background:

Throughout the international community, the banning of the supply of controlled substances for “non-medical or scientific use” is legally accepted. This, however, does not parallel each nation’s commitment and contribution to upholding this law, and there are various interpretations of this law. This topic involves a series of interlinked phenomena and global arguments that Member States and their Governments have yet to settle an agreement upon¹.

One of the most prevalent issues plaguing the international community would be drug/drug-related trafficking and how legal frameworks are properly attacking and controlling this illicit process. In an effort to stifle this global peril, the UN established the three fundamental treaties to manage drug consumption and distribution. The first two, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the Convention on Psychotropic substances of 1971, were especially crucial to determining the way international applicable control measures existed in the accurate positioning that would be able to ensure the availability and verity of narcotic substances for medical/scientific purposes. They also simultaneously established these treaties to further protect every participating Member State in preventing the diversion of narcotic/psychotropic drops

¹“Opioids, Cocaine, Cannabis and Illicit Drugs - Our World in Data.” *Our World in Data*, <https://ourworldindata.org/illicit-drug-use>.

from “diversion into illicit channels”². This string of rules and their general provisions have been commonly-practiced for a few decades, and although not every Member State is in unanimous, full compliance with every one of their provisions, the majority of them strive to uphold them to the highest extent.

Certain nations have voluntarily violated these international treaties, essentially stating their withdrawal from the terms and the entire treaty, alike. These violations are based on the pretenses of legalizing cannabis³. Recreational marijuana use is a frequently discussed debate in relation to narcotic legality, which directly infringes on the 1962 Convention on Narcotics⁴. The preceding treaty in 1988, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, delves even further into the meticulous legal framework circling drug-related crime.

It is clear that these frameworks have been outdated—the last of these treaties dating almost 40 years ago—and drug crime and narcotic substance abuse has not seen an increase, and has yet to see one anytime soon. The global community is desperate for more improved methods of drug control, international awareness, and a more full-proof, secure medical/scientific drug system. Historic recounts of prescription abuse and pharmaceutical scams have been an ongoing issue.

²Legal Framework.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/legal-framework.html>

³Norman-Eady, Sandra. “Connecticut General Assembly.” *Penalties for Illegal Drug Sale and Possession Crimes*, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/PS98/rpt%5Colr%5Chtm/98-R-1003.htm>.

⁴“Penalties for Drug Law Offences in Europe at a Glance.” *Penalties for Drug Law Offences at a Glance*, https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/content/drug-law-penalties-at-a-glance_en.

Medical providers and professionals have always had difficulty knowing how to deal and tame drug-seeking patients.

Another issue to consider regarding medical-grade narcotic substances is the lack of security used to protect drug labs, stocking warehouses, and the transporting methods used to distribute these narcotic ingredients to and from medical buildings, hospitals, and/or pharmacies. Despite being a reality, larcenies along these medical checkpoints are less promulgated by media outlets, and they continue to pose a pernicious threat on the international community.

Similar discrepancies in legal frameworks have unfortunately left what we consider “legal” narcotics to become traffickable substances, diverting their travel channels to follow an illicit path on the black market. Reported law-breaking medical officials have found ways to abuse their medical licenses to gather narcotic drugs. After gathering any psychotropic substances or drugs available to withhold under their “given” responsibility, these officials have sold the product in bulk, distributed dangerously-excessive amounts of prescription to their patients, and catered to other third parties with these narcotics.

This situation poses a serious threat to the general public and these loopholes must be eliminated through the modernization. As we reach the halfway point in this transformative year, more needs to be accomplished to settle any looming questions surrounding the legality of narcotic drugs so the international community can be protected. of international treaties.

II. UN Involvement:

Established within one of the first ever mandates of the United Nations, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has fulfilled its layout of duties since 1946, and continues to do as

such. After the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 officially terminated its run, the world began to witness the war on drugs escalate and spread into average family livelihoods two decades later. Halfway through the 1980s, the introduction of crack cocaine violently morphed into a dire, addictive conflagration that was just stepping into its incipient stages⁵. In response to this, the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances commenced in 1988 and was set in place under international control⁶. The policies of this convention are constantly being reevaluated for increased safety and revised schedules of psychotropic drugs are specifically referred to under doc. Symbol ST/CND/1Add.2.. When deemed appropriate, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs can modify this Convention's addenda and amend any of the designated lists.⁷

The evolution of drug handling and consumption has brought the looming threat of narcotics to a much more drastic extent, and other UN bodies, like the UN Office on Drugs (UNODC) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) have been putting several acts in motion to mitigate the threat of this crisis⁸. As of recently, the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, adopted in the 62nd session of the CND, was implemented to handle this

⁵ Robison, Jennifer. "Decades of Drug Use: The '80s and '90s." *Gallup.com*, Gallup, 8 Sept. 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/6352/Decades-Drug-Use-80s-90s.aspx>.

⁶"Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/illicit-trafficking.html>.

⁷"Conventions." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/conventions.html>.

⁸"Commissions." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/index.html>

issue first hand⁹. This Declaration promised to strengthen the UN’s efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the actions, deemed capable of countering the world drug problem. This Declaration also vowed to review the arc of its future accomplishments and updated agenda 10 years from its ministerial conception; 2029 will overview their initial policy commitments, with a mid-term check up in 2024, as well. This single body aims to tackle multiple angles to this crisis and plans to do a thorough job of working towards the “elimination of illicit crop cultivation and the production and manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances”, according to the official documented details of the Declaration. This mandate handles both synthetic substances and all newly-developed psychoactive drugs. Money laundering and drug-related crimes are additionally covered by this UN body, as well as actions to improve and facilitate the rehabilitation, recovery treatment, and social reintegration that is necessary at the end of a drug-user/criminal’s cycle.¹⁰

The United Nations has addressed drug trafficking commonly throughout a plethora of committees and missions, as the Member States attempt to keep up with these efforts. In further hopes to assuage the threat of narcotics, the UN developed an independent, quasi-judicial body established by the CND¹¹. This expert organization, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), is the byproduct of the confluence of the Permanent Central Narcotics Board (PCNB)

⁹“The Commission on Narcotic Drugs.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/index.html>.

¹⁰ *Implementation of All International Drug Policy Commitments*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/hlr/19-V1905795_E_ebook.pdf.

¹¹“Global Drug Policy.” *Transform*, <https://transformdrugs.org/drug-policy/global-drug-policy>

and the Drug Supervisory Body (DSB)¹². Both of these commissions were archaically existing under international law; the PCNB was founded by the International Opium Convention of 1925 and the DSB by the 1931 Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs. The INCB has refreshed their mandates and functionality and it consists of 13 members that serve a 5-year, all of which are hand-picked and elected from/by Governments and/or the World Health Organization. It is crucial that Member States simulate the collaborative efforts made by the United Nations in order for this crisis to cease.

III. Topics to Consider:

A. Marijuana

As the world modernizes, recreational drug-using, specifically regarding marijuana, becomes slowly more accepted amongst some more westernized local governments, international treaties are being ignored. This being said, it has been fully acknowledged that these policies have been broken countless times by the profuse amounts of drug criminals, however, this angle of narcotic legality pinpoints a different angle of this law infringement. According to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the recreational use of drugs is prohibited in Article 4¹³. This essentially means that any nation that has the desire to legalize marijuana would have to withdraw from the international treaties¹⁴. This global divide has become more relevant as Canada and Uruguay legalized cannabis in their nations, openly violating the Single Convention.

¹²Lamija.dzical. "INCB." *About*, <https://www.incb.org/incb/en/about.html>

¹³*Single Convention on - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.*
https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1961_en.pdf

¹⁴*Hearings of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*, <http://www.cfdp.ca/ap2596.html>.

The international drug law system is a body that— in order to legalize the legalization of marijuana— must be amended in accordance with Article 47 of the CND. This has only been accomplished once, 50 years ago, and is a meticulous process. The United States has slowly overseen state-wide legalization of this drug, and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) President, Raymond Yans, condemns these actions and has made several public statements addressing the international, legal violations of the nation.

It is also crucial to note that the legality of cannabis also reaches a medical use concern. Some Member States refuse to adopt the drug, even in the case that it could treat all sorts of medical concerns; cannabis can be used for multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, HIV, cancer treatment, and more¹⁵. Other countries consider it illegal for recreational use, while still attempting to decriminalize it. Decriminalization eliminates the criminal penalties for low-level drug sales, drug use and/or possession, and possession of equipment to distribute drugs, like syringes, etc.

B. Decriminalization

The topic of decriminalization versus legalization is a global construct that nations have been mulling over for decades. Upon collecting research conducted by countries that have reduced/abolished criminal penalties for drug possession, statistics return that decriminalization directly led to a decrease of addiction and overdose¹⁶. This solution is modern and is seen as irrational amongst other traditional nations, however, there are profuse benefits in doing so¹⁷. By

¹⁵“Drugs & Supplements.” *AARP*, AARP, 11 Oct. 2022, <https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/>.

¹⁶“Latest on the Decriminalization of Drugs: Pros and Cons.” *Turning Point of Tampa*, 22 Mar. 2021, <https://www.tpoftampa.com/latest-on-the-decriminalization-of-drugs/>.

¹⁷“Drug Decriminalization.” *Drug Policy Alliance*, <https://drugpolicy.org/issues/drug-decriminalization>.

decriminalizing drugs, Member States could reduce the negative stigma associated with drug abuse so drug users are more comfortable seeking treatment, save funds by reducing their prison costs, and relocate law enforcement and their corresponding resources to be implemented in more useful areas of need. A central concern of the issue of narcotic drugs are what types of legal mechanisms can be put in place to limit production, manufacture and prevent the leakage of illicit drugs into illicit channels. Although new laws and actions are being instilled yearly, the world is in need of further proactivity against this threat. These kinds of protocols base off the manufacturing and distribution processes of narcotics, as well as the protection of their prescription process and the dangers of mass/bulk movement of these drugs.

IV. Case Study: International Fraud and Medical Scams

The technologization of international pharmaceutical systems has its benefits and its detrimental flaws. Drug-related crimes run heavily in the same circles as medically prescribed narcotics and substances, and criminals adopt more surreptitious methods as time progresses.

A Liaison Information Report (LIR) warning medical/pharmaceutical providers of a nationwide fraud scheme targeting the United States was issued by the FBI's Office of Private Sector in October of 2020¹⁸. It was reported that criminals were contacting medical providers through any viable means of personal contact information and fraudulently claiming to be representing US government bodies. These criminals posed as a state's Board of Medicine, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), or the US Department of Justice¹⁹. These contacts

¹⁸"FBI: Scammers in Disguise Target Health Care Providers with Threats and Phony Investigations." *JD Supra*, <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/fbi-scammers-in-disguise-target-health-13539/>.

¹⁹"Resources." *Minnesota Board of Nursing*, 12 July 2022, <https://mn.gov/boards/nursing/resources/>.

would consist of messages that followed the lines of a similar threat: “Your medical license has been suspended upon illegal usages on your behalf, a wired payment must be immediately completed if you care to avoid legal action”. These fraudulent threats would also claim that the medical providers were under investigation and were blacklisted/identified as drug traffickers themselves²⁰. This scheme was both long-term and elaborate and the leaders of these criminal groups demanded large, insurmountable sums of money in “bond”, as well as shipments of Hydrocodone, meperidine, fentanyl, codeine, etc.

These criminals convinced their victims to refrain from verifying the truth of the given messages and they provided accurate details about the medical providers’ personal information; they included the providers’ government names, professional licensing numbers and NPIs (National Provider Identifier numbers)²¹. These scams targeted health providers that did not have English as their primary language and they had a high success rate. By regulating drug policy properly and eliminating the growth of drug trafficking and drug-related laundering, the probability of dangerous schemes and crimes will drastically lower.

There are several other instances similar to this case study, and drug criminals are willing to jump through elaborate hoops simply to be in possession of money-launderable narcotics and substances. As nations struggle to find a legal middle ground to protect their citizens and their governments from the vast results of drug-related crime, corruption, economic devastation, terrorism, and a multitude of other threats will continue to haunt the international community.

²⁰“Westlaw Today.” *Westlaw Today*, <https://today.westlaw.com/>.

²¹“Health Professionals.” *CMS*, <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/resource-center/hcps-and-researchers>.

This debate on legality makes this crisis much more grueling to control, and if international policies are unable to perform their duties of safety and justifiable regulation then this mercurial debacle will have yet to see a remedy.

V. Guided Questions:

1. How can countries keep their narcotic drug laws updated and functional as trafficking and consumption trends morph as time progresses?
2. How can the United Nations ensure that international drug policy is being upheld to its highest potential?
3. Are there any possibilities to prevent drug users from abusing medical/dental narcotic-holding privileges?
4. What can Member States do to use non-legal, creative approaches to resolve this drug crisis?
5. After preventative measures against drug trafficking have failed to do their job, what can be done to stop the process while it's already in motion?

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Topic B: The Effect of the Drug Trade on the Economy

I. Background:

The impact of the illegal drug trade goes deeper than just affecting the citizens— it destabilizes the economy of an entire country. An increase in the production of these illegal substances has resulted in a significant increase in drug use globally. Since 2009, those who use illegal substances have increased by 30%²². It is estimated that 35 million people suffer from drug abuse disorders today. However, proponents of the legalization of illicit substances make the argument that it could be substantial growth for the economy.

Arguably the most dangerous of the illicit substances trade is opium. We continue to see an upward projection in the number of deaths per year to opium. Over the last decade, we have seen a staggering 71% increase in the number of people who suffer from disorders due to opium. We see this prominently in our economy, the decreased productivity of society, elevated premature deaths, and increased payments for drug abuse treatments. Due to the lack of productivity in the workplace, there has been a loss of an estimated \$120 billion²³. Despite suffering from drug addiction, 70% of these people hold some type of job. This affects their everyday work and causes them to be more prone to accidents in the workplace, while

²²“UNODC World Drug Report 2020: Global Drug Use Rising; While Covid-19 Has Far Reaching Impact on Global Drug Markets.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2020/June/media-advisory---global-launch-of-the-2020-world-drug-report.html>.

²³How Illicit Drug Use Affects Business and the Economy.” *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/ondcp/ondcp-fact-sheets/how-illicit-drug-use-affects-business-and-the-economy>.

decreasing their productivity. It is reported that 16% of those who experience accidents at work, reportedly have alcohol in their system²⁴. Many attempt to justify their actions saying alcohol is a high-functioning drug when compared to illegal substances. In reality, it is unhealthy and unproductive. It is also estimated that 11 billion dollars are lost due to healthcare costs that come with drug addictions. As a society, we annually spend \$740 billion on rehabilitation and health care for these addictions. There is also an additional cost and loss of money due to criminal justice /investigative expenses. These costs are related to processing the offender, support staff costs, judicial salaries, and other courtroom expenses.

More recently we have seen a change in the effects of drugs on the economy after COVID-19. When new guidelines and regulations across borders were established, it impeded the normal flow of these illegal drugs. With a stay at home order and an increased amount of police presence, the illegal drug trade decreased globally. A class of illegal drugs that became hard to get during the pandemic border regulations are called “precursor chemicals”²⁵. These chemicals are those used in manufactured drugs like heroin or methamphetamine. This resulted in short-term shortages of these substances. With a hindered ability to obtain “precursor chemicals”, there has been a switch to increased use of fentanyl. This is a more dangerous drug that has resulted in more overdosing. Hence the illegal drug trade has become more dangerous

²⁴“Addiction in the Workplace.” *Addiction Center*, 9 Aug. 2022, <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/workplace/>.

²⁵Mann, Brian. “Pandemic Disrupts Illegal Drug Trade, Upending Both Product and Profits.” *Houston Public Media*, 25 May 2020, <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/npr/2020/05/25/860944234/pandemic-disrupts-illegal-drug-trade-upending-bot h-product-and-profits/>.

and lethal. COVID has also affected the number of drug trade workers, and their ability to transport their products to consumers. There are fewer workers on these opium/drug farms because most of the farms have migrant employees. With COVID restrictions in place, having a large workforce is nearly impossible. Along with a shortage of workers, the drug trade is experiencing issues with shipping and transportation. The drug trade used to send most of their substances either on land or in the air. These were found to be the easiest way to move and distribute illegal substances discreetly. Due to the strict laws that are being put in place, air and land travel is more patrolled, and this has caused issues with distributing and shipping illegal products. The drug trade has quickly adapted to this change and changed to primary sea travel. Although this requires more effort, it allows for their trade to continue growing. During COVID's time of uncertainty and anxiety, it was found that there was an increase in the use of illegal substances among civilians. This can also be correlated with the increased levels of depression and anxiety seen as a result of the pandemic. It is shown that 13% of Americans used drugs or started to use drugs during the pandemic to help calm their emotions²⁶. Along with the increased drug abuse, there have been 99,000 more overdoses than before the pandemic²⁷. This is due to the lacing of synthetic drugs with lethal amounts of fentanyl.

²⁶ "Substance Use during the Pandemic." *Monitor on Psychology*, American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/03/substance-use-pandemic>.

²⁷ *Substance Use Has Risen during COVID-19 Pandemic*, <https://www.rpc.senate.gov/policy-papers/substance-use-has-risen-during-covid-19-pandemic#:~:text=The%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic%20led,30%25%20from%20the%20year%20before>.

This is not the first time that societal pressures have increased drug abuse. The abuse of drugs, especially opium was extremely prominent in World War 2. In anticipation of medical needs, the US bought a large amount of opium. It was said once these drugs entered the US they were hard to track and regulate. Along with opium, amphetamines were used by both the Allied and Axis powers. These supranational organizations used amphetamines as a stimulant and a performance-enhancing drug for pilots. Many of these pilots would have to function on little amounts of sleep, and with the use of amphetamines, they were able to work longer. Although both the Allied and the Axis powers used these substances, the German forces were the first to use these substances to enhance their performance. They saw this substance as confidence boosting, and associated the drug with being superhuman. The idea of being a super soldier would incentive these people to maintain their dedication to their homeland. Eventually, as amphetamines proved to be effective, their production increased rapidly. 833,000 pills were being pressed daily by the Germans, they even made them into chocolates and distributed these to their soldiers²⁸. With easy access to such an addictive substance, many people started to suffer from addiction. Soon after the war, new information proved the substance was dangerous. The impact it had on the soldiers was extremely detrimental. There were no programs to help their addictions, and they were forced to acquire help themselves. In early 1940, the use of the drugs quickly declined as they were proven to be chemically addictive to the human brain. However, during this time of war, it was said that 35 million tablets were distributed among the German

²⁸ Andreas, Peter. "How Methamphetamine Became Part of Nazi Military Strategy." *Time*, Time, 7 Jan. 2020, <https://time.com/5752114/nazi-military-drugs/>.

army in 3 months. The amount of money and time dedicated to the production of these substances was large. Although after the war we saw a decline in the use of drugs globally we saw an increase again in 1970. The drug trade continues to have a prominent place in our economy today.

The production and distribution of drugs can produce more jobs globally, and this can especially be seen in countries with low employment rates. For example, the legalization of marijuana is estimated to produce 1.6 million jobs over the time of legalization and in the next 3 years. The economic and profit potential were extremely high for the US government which collected \$128.8 billion in tax revenue²⁹. Although the legalization of marijuana has not significantly changed the annual \$320 billion made in revenue from the illicit drug trade.

This idea of legalizing a substance to enhance economic growth was previously done in 1933 when America was in the midst of the Great Depression. The production and distribution of alcohol was a major economic gain for the US when dealing with tremendous economic despair. The 21st amendment was passed in 1933 and reopened the laws prohibiting the alcohol industry resulting in the flow of alcohol back into the US. This allowed for old businesses to reopen that targeted the use of alcohol and social activities, which overall improved the economy. By taxing substances like alcohol, the economy was able to see significant growth and recovery of \$11 billion in tax revenue.³⁰ The idea of legalizing drugs supports a stronger economy with incentives

²⁹ Krane, Kris. "Cannabis Legalization Is Key to Economic Recovery, Much like Ending Alcohol Prohibition Helped Us out of the Great Depression." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 12 Oct. 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kriskrane/2020/05/26/cannabis-legalization-is-key-to-economic-recovery-much-like-ending-alcohol-prohibition-helped-us-out-of-the-great-depression/?sh=5519a8753241>.

³⁰ Greenspan, Jesse. "How the Misery of the Great Depression Helped Vanquish Prohibition." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2 Jan. 2019,

for both federal and state powers. Although these drugs were legalized and are still regulated, the abuse of these substances still affects the productivity of society. It begs the question whether the negative impacts of an unproductive society outweigh the potential economic benefits that come with legalizing dangerous substances.

II. UN involvement:

The UN has put in place several regulations and resolutions in an attempt to reduce the negative effects of the drug trade on the global economy. There have been three major international conferences that targeted the illegal trade of drugs in an attempt to regulate the drug trade for society's safety. One of these major conventions was the Single Convention on Narcotics which occurred in 1961. This convention targeted the distribution, manufacture, and import/export of illegal substances. This convention was one of the first international treaties that focused on ending the flow of illegal substances across borders. The other reason for this convention was to deter drug offenders and those involved with the drug trade from their line of work. The hope was that international cooperation would be potentially threatening to the drug trade, causing an irregular flow of illegal substances. The effect would be to reduce the amount of drugs crossing borders. Although the idea of international cooperation is strong, it had very little effect on the drug trade, and drug use increased again.

The next major convention was the Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971. After the previous convention, the discussion of regulating drugs for medical prescriptions and

<https://www.history.com/news/great-depression-economy-prohibition#:~:text=The%20repeal%20of%20Prohibition%20didn't%20total%20revenue%2C%20in%201934.>

purposes began. This is when the convention of 1971 was tasked to create more clarity on the difference in the regulation of illegal substances vs those used for medical use. This convention compared the positive and therapeutic benefits of a drug vs the abuse potential of the drug. They examined the use of amphetamines and psychedelic types of substances. The use of these drugs at the time was increasing, and they were freely available. Not only was this unregulated trade of drugs dangerous, the government saw it as an immoral economic gain. Overall these conventions attempt to limit the number of illegal substances that could be used for medical purposes. They found that the therapeutic value of these drugs was overwhelmingly negative as compared to the benefits. The international cooperation opinion was to eradicate them.

The last major convention that occurred was the United Nations Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988. This was an international attempt to bridge the ideas of the two previous conventions. This convention would prioritize more specialized forces that targeted the trade of Narcotics and other illegal substances. This convention also created international offenses and created guidelines and other legislation to reduce the harmful consequences of illegal substances. After the creation and considerations of these three conferences/conventions, the UN created 2 specialized commissions that would target the regulation of these substances. The first was the International Narcotics control board³¹. This board works to regulate the interaction of the drug trade and the government and works to supply appropriate drugs for medical uses. The second specialized commission was the Commission on

³¹ “Commissions.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/index.html>.

Narcotic Drugs (CND). This board, a group of 53 individuals, focuses on law-making and policies that connect with the trade of illegal drugs and substances. They make the last decision in the World Health organization and determine the economic and social consequences of legislation. Along with these two boards the UN has created several policies and resolutions that target the economic influence that the drug trade has. One of these resolutions is resolution 64/3. This resolution targets affordable drug abuse prevention to limit the number of people that are addicted to these illegal substances. This resolution is focused on the correct medical treatment and rehabilitation for those that have become addicted to illegal substances. Another resolution that targets the manufacture and economic outcome of the trade of illegal substances was resolution 64/2. This resolution addresses the social and economic consequences that result from the illegal manufacturing of these substances. They address these issues by creating long-term drug policies and programs to identify and limit illicit crop cultivation, and the production of these drugs from these crops. Despite the regulations put in place to limit production, the actual demand and use of drugs have not decreased. To promote a stable economy the UN must find ways to promote the eradication of all illegal substances in the community, as well as regulations about the production and distribution of these substances.

III. Topics to consider:

A. Narcotics:

The use of Narcotics has been around for centuries. The drug originated from poppy seeds. The extraction of these poppies often required a massive amount of physical labor. The majority of the poppy farms are located in Southeast Asia, with the largest manufacturers in

Burma, Iran, and Afghanistan. The majority of the Opium that contributes to this worldwide drug trade is not this opium. Most of the narcotics that are seen in the US are fentanyl which is usually created and extracted from China, and heroin which originates from areas in Mexico. Most of the opium and narcotics that we see are unregulated and therefore unpredictable. This means that the risk of overdosing is now higher. As the overall use of these drugs continues to increase over time, we see a dramatic increase in overdoses due to these unregulated substances. In 2020 it was reported that 68,630 people died from overdosing on opium in America. This is a 6% increase from the year previous. There have previously been acts and reforms to stop the production of opium. The US passed the Poppy Opium control act in 1942 which completely banned the production and distribution of opium³². This act was an attempt to limit the number of people affected by the addictive substance. Before the law was passed, all farmers were allowed to collect their last harvest, but many farmers after 1943 did not stop production. The overall law that was passed attempted to eliminate all production of these substances, but instead just incentivized those harvesting the substances to do it discreetly. Today to stop the flow of opium into the borders, there are taxes and additional costs that are in place to deter the trade of opium. Regardless, we still see \$1.7 billion of revenue from international exports. The domestic market still gains economically by \$43 million in 2021, and the farmers are making \$425 million in revenue³³.

³²“UNODC - Bulletin on Narcotics - 1950 Issue 3 - 002.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1950-01-01_3_page003.html.

³³ “Afghanistan Opium Survey 2021 - Cultivation and Production - Afghanistan.” *ReliefWeb*, 22 Mar. 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-opium-survey-2021-cultivation-and-production>.

Hallucogenic/Psychedelics:

The idea of hallucinogens has been around for centuries and began through the combustion of certain natural substances. The idea of natural and synthetic substances merged when a scientist created new synthetic substances that would later be illegal. Hallucigenics were first made in the 1930s synthetically. The peak of the use of these drugs began in the 1960s and 1970s when hallucinogenic drugs became common drugs for “Hippies”. Hallucogenic can be compared to Narcotics due to the change in cognitive function and perception, and just like hallucinogens, there are natural and synthetic drugs that are considered to be a narcotic. As science continued to examine these drugs, evidence began to appear that they affect cognitive functioning. More recent ideas on the medical use of these drugs have been investigated. For patients struggling with extreme pain and sadness, the use of these substances has the potential for them to enjoy memories, and be relieved from pain. Again, the concern over the loss of productivity is used against the legalization of hallucinogens. After COVID-19 there was an extreme increase in mental health disorders. Due to these changes in society, there was a loss of productivity of \$1 trillion. The US already uses \$300 billion a year on medicines for mental health and most remain ineffective³⁴. Many hoped that hallucinogens improve mental health in these people and reduce governmental costs for medications used for mental disorders. Most of the medications used for mental health are costly, and with the implementation of hallucinogens, it has been proven that the overall cost of these drugs would decrease. Although the use of these

³⁴*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. https://www.unodc.org/pdf/technical_series_1998-01-01_1.pdf

drugs can be perceived this way, a loss of productivity may be hard to combat with cognitive impairing substances. By providing these substances to those suffering from mental health challenges, they risk building a dependency on the drug. This has the potential to exacerbate the drug crisis we are experiencing today.

Economic Influence of the Legalization of Drugs:

The idea of the legalization of many of these drugs does have the potential to enhance an economy, but also has the potential to create instability and put citizens in danger. The benefit that the economy experiences with legalizing drugs is the tax revenue made from the regulation and distribution of substances. This does have the potential to raise the number of addicts we currently see today by 25%, and a reduction in the amount of money that dangerous and powerful people hold. Many say this will reduce crime, and enhance public health and safety. However with the legalization of drugs a community could become less safe due to abuse and cognitive effects with more access to dangerous substances. This could affect the productivity of the workforce and in turn, harm the economy. We have seen drugs become illegal when potential threats arise from the distribution of the drugs. We have seen this with the production of Opium. Competing nations have used the opium trade to destabilize their rival countries by flooding their markets. This in turn handicaps their labor force with addictions.

We have also seen positive effects from the legalization of substances such as marijuana and alcohol. During the Great Depression, the legalization of alcohol promoted business growth. This causes a decrease in jobs and a sense of community. With the legalization of alcohol, more jobs could be created causing a more stable economy during an unstable time. When marijuana

was legalized it created possible revenue for those in the government. By regulating this drug, the production provides legal jobs that contribute back to the economy. Although we can see both negative and positive effects from the legalization of drugs, we see more economic prosperity, but more harmful effects on civilians.

IV. Case study: The Influence of Illegal Drug Trade in Mexico

Countries that have economic despair or lack resources tend to resort to forms of illegal trade to enhance their economy. This is especially true in Mexico with the growing and powerful drug trade. The trade of illegal substances impacts the economy by bringing more money into the country as well as the number of jobs. The drug trade in Mexico began in the middle of the 1900s. Around the 1960s smugglers of opium and other narcotics became increasingly more popular. During the 1970s new substances were beginning to be traded. This launched the first drug cartel in Mexico called The Federation. This cartel was known for its distribution and trade to the US. Soon new cartels began to open. This caused the rivalry between the powers. The result was the Mexican drug war in the 1990s. This rivalry and war caused an increase in violence, that we still see today with an estimated 10,000 homicides a year. The influence of the drug trade only continued to grow in Mexico causing the trade to take over parts of the Mexican economy. This growth has caused the Mexican economy to be reliant on the drug trade. It is estimated that \$45 billion is contributed to the Mexican economy from the trade of illegal substances. The influence and trade of these substances have resulted in the growth of the economy by 80%. Not only does the sale of these substances produce profit for a country's economy, but also for citizens who work in the trade. The drug trade takes a large group of

workers starting with production, delivery, security, and more. The need for mass amounts of employees allows many to be employed in an economy that previously had few jobs. The problem with these jobs is that they were unstable, and often dangerous to citizens that held these jobs. It was increasingly known that with the influence of this trade, there would be an increase in violence. We have seen the most dramatic change with 300,000 homicides since 2006³⁵. As time goes on, the technology these cartels use, and the violence they use get harsher. Mexico has attempted several times to reduce the presence of the violent drug trade, but little movement has been made. After the elections in 2006-2012, President Calderon was elected and began the war against the cartels. This war still is in place today. To combat the drug trade he sent 10,000 military personnel to places where corrupt police forces are known. The hope was this would reduce the number of ways the cartel can get around the police force. Although this did slow down the cartels, the cartels slowly broke off into smaller factions. Many criticize this approach saying the Mexican government is too unstable to pursue military strategies. During this time the violence did increase, with 120,000 homicides in President Calderon's term³⁶. Alternatively, he captured and killed 25 major drug traders. The influence of the drug cartel in Mexico still is very prominent. We can see economic benefits from the trade of these substances, but it's overall created an unstable and very dangerous environment for its citizens.

V. Guiding Questions:

³⁵“Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels>.

³⁶“Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels>.

1. What are the benefits and consequences to legalizing substances?
2. How do you effectively regulate the production of medical drugs and illegal recreational drugs?
3. Does the drug trade positively or negatively affect the global economy?
4. What are the negative effects of the drug trade for the community?
5. What regulations should be in place to balance the rights of the citizens, and the safety of the citizens?

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