

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Republic of Guatemala
Wyoming High School**

The multifaceted nature of the drug trade makes it difficult to differentiate between illicit and appropriate exchanges, as well as between the symptoms and root causes of the exchange. The Republic of Guatemala has had decades of first hand experience with the illegal drug trade, especially as a transit country between South America and the lucrative United States markets. The international community's most recent approach, the war on drugs, is falling behind the times, and only creating more violence with few benefits, but individual states do not have sufficient resources to combat the problem on their own. The organized crime groups that develop many of the drug trade related issues are ruthless, profit-driven organizations that expand their ranks by offering an escape from the instability and poverty that face many citizens in regions most brutally gripped by the illegal drug trade. The key components of stopping the drug trade are minimizing the immediate violence accompanying the trade, developing substitutionary means of earning a living for would-be drug traffickers, improving prosecution and penitentiary systems to bring traffickers to justice, and finally, expanding the availability of drugs for medical purposes to decrease the current disparity in drug availability.

For too long, the international community has been trying to eliminate all illicit drug production, but that is simply not possible. Instead of a drug free world, the Republic of Guatemala sees a more violent world, where the drug market is driven into a murky underworld, instead of being publicly accessible for the benefit of all people. Previously, the Republic of Guatemala focused on deterring illegal, drug-related activities with lengthy prison sentences and the threat of capital punishment. Instead of scaring the traffickers away, it has only succeeded in making prisons operate at two hundred and eighty percent of their capacity, while fifty-four percent of their inmates await trial or sentencing. The Republic of Guatemala, like many countries directly affected by the illegal drug trade, lacks the resources and personnel to adequately prosecute and house so many inmates. Accordingly, President Molina has embarked on a campaign to urge high-profile global debates to reconsider the international community's approach to drug trafficking, perhaps even to the extent of legalizing many currently illicit drugs.

Regardless of the specific details of any plan, the Republic of Guatemala is firm in its conviction that a restructuring is needed in the way that the international community fights the illegal drug trade and that any potential for success that efforts may have will only come from extensive collaborations among member states and other relevant bodies. The rampant violence, which President Molina suggests would be cut in half if all drugs were legalized, is the most pressing concern for the government and people of the Republic of Guatemala, followed closely by the implementation of sustainable alternative careers. In Guatemala alone, cocaine transit is a seven billion dollar industry, and traffickers have seized roughly thirty-thousand acres of land, meaning any economic alternatives will need to come with strong international support to help the underfunded and inexperienced police and military forces of the countries along prime drug routes. In addition to providing economic alternatives to drug trafficking, the legalization of more drugs, especially precursors, would be an effective means of reducing the negative impact that the illegal drug trade currently has, as well as giving a wider market greater access to the medical powers of many currently restricted drugs such as marijuana and morphine. Accompanying judicial reforms, economic revitalization, relaxing of drug restrictions, any long-term solution must also take action to foster future stability through community-policing and anti-corruption efforts to prevent such a breakdown in the bureaucratic process that many states presently face. The Republic of Guatemala is eager to see stability return to their region, and cautions against the passage of resolutions which will only restrict and complicate matters, further increasing violence and delaying any healing efforts.