MUNE XIV

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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Sensitivity Statement

Dear Delegates,

You are expected to maintain decorum throughout the committee and treat these issues with the seriousness they require. Any appeal to or use of discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated. Undiplomatic behavior towards fellow delegates, including bullying, personal insults, and harassment, will also not be tolerated.

MUNE seeks to maintain a fair and balanced environment that allows delegates to shine and showcase their talents. As such, using pre-writing or similarly deceptive tactics, such as using AI to write working papers in our committee, will not be tolerated by the dais or MUNE as an organization. Plagiarism of any kind is unacceptable at MUNE.

If issues do arise with the conduct of a delegation or individual, feel free to reach out to Ozan at ozan.demiroglu@emory.edu or Nedum at nedum.ebo@emory.edu or to our Under-Secretary-General at angel.sosa@emory.edu

Technology Policy

Generative AI is strictly prohibited from being used to generate documents such as resolutions. These documents must be your work. Technology of any form is only allowed during unmoderated forms of debate.

Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to MUNE XIV! My name is Ozan Demiroglu, and I'm excited to co-chair this committee, especially with such a great co-chair! I grew up in Houston, Texas, where I learned both to appreciate the sophistication of international regulatory structures and to acknowledge the many ways in which they fall short. At Emory, I'm studying Finance, Economics, and Math. In addition to Model UN, I serve as the Vice President of the Sustainable Business Group and Philosophy Club, as well as an active member of the Turkish Student Association.

Last September, I had the opportunity to staff Emory's collegiate Model U.N. conference, MUNE XIII. There, during a crisis simulation about the MLB freeze, I learned all about how creative work can produce engaging and thought-provoking solutions. However, I'm happy to be back on the GA side of the aisle, where I hope to see diligent writing as well as teamwork.

International Drug Policy was created to be an antibody to exploitation, unhealthy drug usage, and the pain that everyone around the world felt. However, today, it is a mere band-aid on an international wound. Although illicit drug usage among eighth-graders fell from 19% to 8% from 1997 to 2023, in 2023 alone, the U.S. lost over 112,000 lives to overdoses. That's more than gun violence and car crashes combined.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was founded in 1997 to combat illicit drug usage, organized crime, terrorism, and corruption. It tackles a plethora of issues in this dark page of humanity and utilizes different approaches, like research and analysis, to support counter-terrorism teams. Their notable campaigns include *Listen First, Blue Heart Campaign,* and *Education for Justice.* These can serve as the frameworks for understanding the history of how UNODC has tackled these issues before, and what can be done now.

I suggest each delegate research their country's current economic standing and history in the UNODC. Compromise and creativity are both highly encouraged. I look forward to meeting all of you and seeing how you decide to address the problems before us. Let's get to bargaining!

Sincerely,

Ozan Demiroglu

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNE XIV! My name is Chukwunedum (Nedum) Ebo, and I am thrilled to be chairing this committee with my good friend Ozan. I was born and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland; however, my family is from Nigeria. I am a rising sophomore at Emory, majoring in Philosophy, Politics, and Law (PPL) as well as Economics and Human Health. In addition to Model UN, I am an Emory student ambassador, a member of KAPi the pre-law fraternity, the LifeSci Health Consulting Club, and the Emory Economics Review. I am also involved in student life as a Sophomore Advisor and a Peer Health Partner.

Before Emory, I had absolutely no Model U.N. experience. However, after finding the MUN table at our club fair and attending a few of the meetings, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this organization. From the first crisis simulation that Ozan and I did together to travel to CHOMUN with an amazing Emory delegation, I have learned how exciting Model U.N. can be. Now in the role of co-chair, I am looking forward to being on the other side of the Model U.N. process and hopefully learning more about what it takes to succeed.

As a Baltimore native, in recent years, I have learned more about the opioid crisis to understand one of my city's most devastating issues. Just this summer, two major overdose incidents took place in an area in Downtown Baltimore called Penn North that hospitalized twenty-seven people, killing one. In this committee, we will focus on tackling the international implications of drug trafficking and what we can do as a global community to mitigate this issue. However, at the core of this issue are communities like Penn North around the world, which are repeatedly the victims of this brutal crisis.

In this same vein, I encourage each nation to take the moment to home in on the ways that the drug trafficking crisis affects them personally. Understand what communities, people groups, and areas have been hit hard by drugs in different ways. As the UNODC, our power mainly pertains to international cooperation and problem-solving, but we must not forget that we owe it to every one of our citizens to fix this issue. I can't wait for us to get started and am really excited to hear all of your brilliant ideas. Let's change the world!

Sincerely,

Chukwunedum Ebo

Important Definitions

Illicit Drug

- A substance whose production, sale, or use is prohibited by law (e.g., Heroin, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, or abused prescription drugs).

Drug Trafficking

- The global illicit trade involves the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of substances subject to drug prohibition laws (Often linked to organized crime networks).

Alternative Development

- A strategy aimed at reducing the cultivation of illicit drug crops by providing farmers with viable legal and sustainable livelihood options (e.g., Helping Opium farmers transition to coffee or cocoa production).

Harm Reduction

- Policies, programs, and practices aimed at minimizing the health, social, and legal impacts associated with drug use– without necessarily requiring the user to stop (e.g., Needle Exchange Programs, Opioid Substitution Therapy).

Organized Crime

- Structured groups of individuals engaged in significant criminal activity, often transnational in nature, such as trafficking, smuggling, or money laundering.

Human Trafficking

- The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by means of threat, force, or coercion, for exploitation.

Transnational Crime

- Crimes that are planned, executed, or have effects across national borders.

Money Laundering

- The process of making illegally-gained proceeds (e.g, from drug trafficking) appear legal by passing them through a complex sequence of banking transfers or commercial transactions.

UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention)

- A key treaty adopted in 2000 that provides a comprehensive framework for international cooperation to combat organized crime.

UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

- Adopted in 2003, it is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, covering prevention, criminalization, international cooperation, and asset recovery.

Supply Reduction

- Efforts to curb the production and trafficking of illicit drugs (e.g., Crop Eradication, interdiction of drug shipments).

Demand Reduction

- Policies and Programs aimed at decreasing the desire and consumption of illicit drugs (e.g., Education Campaigns, Treatment Services).

UNODC: Coordinating Global Justice and Drug Policy

In 1997, the United Nations synthesized two programs, the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, to form a new body: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, the UNODC was created in response to the growing recognition that international problems like drug trafficking, corruption, drug-inspired terrorism, and organized crime were increasing. The agency was created to serve as a robust and holistic guide for international legal frameworks, addressing global threats, and promoting justice reform.

The UNODC's foundation is built on a broader history of international drug control efforts, like the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. However, these organizations struggled to deal with the problem effectively, and by the 1990s, the interconnection of drugs, terrorism, and human trafficking had gotten so bad that the UN decided it was time to step in and seek a centralized body with coordinated responses for the problem. The UNODC also promoted legal frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003). Both of these remain as instrumental parts of international law today.

The day-to-day operations of the UNODC consist primarily of technical assistance, data collection, research, and normative work. The Global Programme against Money Laundering, for example, helps states to identify and disrupt financial networks tied to criminal syndicates. The counter-terrorism branch supports legislative reform and international cooperation. In regions struggling with human trafficking, like certain pockets of Southeast Asia, Central America, and sub-Saharan Africa, the UNODC works with both governments and civil society to both protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. However, UNODC continues to face constraints due to its reliance on voluntary funding and the political sensitivity of crime and sovereignty-related issues. Yet, the organization is still a vital hub for global cooperation on topics such as criminal justice, illicit drug control, and security governance.

History and Structure of the UNODC

To reiterate, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established in 1997, after the merger of two preexisting programs: The United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, to reflect a united front against

the ever-mixing arenas of crime, corruption, terrorism, and trafficking. While it is headquartered in Vienna, the UNODC operates through a vast global network of field offices, all of which work directly with national governments and local institutions to develop strategies catered to each specific region.

The primary governing body of the UNODC is the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), established in 1946. It is the central policy-making body of the United Nations in drug-related matters. The CND meets annually in Vienna and is composed of 53 member states elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The member states are selected with a quota system in order to ensure balanced geographical representation. The CND is responsible for looking at global drug control policy, forming resolutions, and enforcing the implementation of the three main international drug control treaties. The UNODC reports to and collaborates with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), which is another ESOSOC subsidiary body.

The UNODC is managed by an Executive Director appointed by the UN Secretary-General and supported by a Director-General/Executive Director dual title within the UN Secretariat. Underneath this structure, there is a large web of divisions, including the Division for Treaty Affairs, the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs. All of these divisions coordinate a wide array of projects. These include anti-human trafficking initiatives, prison reform programs, and anti-corruption legislation development. All of these projects are implemented in partnership with national governments, regional organizations, and NGOS.

The key legal documents that make up the background of UNODC include the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003)**.** UNODC operates through informal and formal negotiations. Diplomacy is frequently handled behind closed doors, especially when dealing with politically sensitive issues like drug decriminalization, prison conditions, or government corruption. These processes generally allow states to share data and best practices confidentially, although some critics have said that powerful donor countries can influence agenda-setting in ways that prioritize their own strategic interests. The topic of closed-door negotiations may be a valid topic of debate for you.

The UNODC holds multiple global forums, which convene every five years and help set priorities for global justice policy. These events have produced consensus documents on youth crime.

Topic 1: Legal Aspects of the Illicit Drug Trade

Subtopic A: Corruption in Legal Enforcement Systems

One of the most persistent legal challenges to combating the illicit drug trade is corruption within the institutions tasked with enforcing the law. Police Officers, Customs Officials, and in some cases, even Executives have been convicted of aiding drug traffickers. This not only strengthens existing cartels to an institutional level, but it also hinders investigations, as law enforcement cannot receive the support they need.

The United Nations has long recognized this issue, leading to the adoption of the UN Convention against Corruption in 2003, which explicitly ties corruption to organized crime and drug trafficking. However, the usefulness of this convention is debatable, as some corruption is unfortunately deeply embedded in some countries' governments. This makes it difficult to address the problem, as it is important to consider both anti-drug policies and national sovereignty.

Because corruption enables traffickers to evade punishment, it creates a vicious cycle where the illicit trade grows stronger precisely because of weak or compromised legal systems. This historical pattern demonstrates why anti-corruption measures cannot be separated from anti-drug policies. Without addressing systemic bribery and institutional decay, treaties and enforcement strategies are effectively useless. The struggle against corruption is therefore not just a political issue but a core legal battle, necessitating a delicate balance between meaningful prevention measures, significant change where it is needed, and national sovereignty.

Example One: Colombia

In Colombia**,** corruption became almost inseparable from the drug trade during the late 20th century. The Medellin and Cali cartels amassed such vast wealth that they could effectively buy influence at every level of society. A notorious example was the Ernesto Samper scandal in 1994**,** when the newly elected president was accused of having received millions in campaign financing from the Cali Cartel. Although Samper denied direct involvement, the controversy eroded public trust in Colombia's institutions and highlighted how deeply cartel money had penetrated politics. Judges and police officers were routinely bribed or threatened into

compliance, while extradition treaties with the United States were fiercely contested because traffickers knew they could manipulate the domestic legal system. Such a climate of corruption made it very difficult for true preventative measures to take place in Colombia.

Example Two: Afghanistan

Afghanistan presents another vivid case where corruption has enabled the drug trade to flourish. As the world's leading producer of opium, the country has long seen collusion between local officials and traffickers. Reports from the 2000s revealed that both local police commanders and provincial governments allowed opium cultivation to occur in exchange for bribes and favors. In fact, international aid specifically intended to fund counter-narcotics initiatives would be diverted to corrupt networks, making both aid and prevention useless. This drug money was not just used to create a narcotic empire, but also to fund groups like the Taliban, creating a difficult mix of drugs, corruption, and conflict. This destabilized Afghanistan, leading to a prolonged mix of war and insecurity.

Current Issues

Today, corruption continues to be one of the most pressing obstacles in the global fight against the illicit drug trade. Even as international frameworks, like the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003), have matured, traffickers still exploit weak governance to protect their operations. Pending investigations in Mexico reveal corruption up to federal military units, and in West Africa, corruption in customs agencies allows cocaine to pass through undetected. Such cases demonstrate that corruption continues to be one of the biggest problems in the legal fight against trafficking today.

Subtopic B: Legal Inconsistencies and Sovereignty Conflicts

A second major obstacle comes from the inconsistent and often conflicting legal approaches that different nations have taken toward drug control. When the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was signed in 1961, its goal was to harmonize laws by limiting the production, trade, and possession of narcotics for medical and scientific purposes. However, when put into practice, there has been little to no unity in how countries interpret and enforce drug obligations. There is a wide range of drug policies, ranging from complete decriminalization to even death penalties. When there is no consistency on these issues, it becomes difficult to address them unilaterally.

However, conversely, when there is forced uniformity on these issues, it erodes autonomy. This is a balance that should be addressed.

Cartels and Narcotic agencies know about these inconsistencies and are galvanizing them to take advantage of them. Some organizations move operations to countries with weaker enforcement or higher corruption, where they have a better chance of reaping higher profits. Another example of how inconsistent frameworks affect policy is seen in extradition battles. Many traffickers resist passively or even actively (through killings, terrorism, etc) the possibility of their respective government signing an extradition treaty with a country with harsher punitive measures. These battles can take a few years, exhausting enforcers, and reducing effectiveness.

The consequences of these legal divisions are far-reaching. History shows that every attempt at global coordination, whether through the 1961 Single Convention, the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, or later UN resolutions, has been weakened by states prioritizing their sovereignty and national preferences over collective action. This leaves the international system fragmented, with traffickers slipping through cracks created not by a lack of treaties, but by a lack of legal uniformity. Until nations reconcile these differences, the global fight against drugs will remain undermined by the very diversity of legal systems.

Example One: Portugal

Portugal decided to decriminalize drug possession (but not sale) in 2001, choosing to treat drug use as a public health issue, emphasizing rehabilitation and harm reduction over punishment. While the goals of the program were admired by many, some European states criticized it, claiming it breached existing drug agreements. While the law did lead to tangible benefits like a reduction of overdose deaths or even HIV infections, the controversy it sparked in the international arena highlighted the difficulties of coordinating international law properly when states interpret the same treaties in different ways. The question of whether decriminalization is compatible with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) continues to be pressing today.

Example Two: Singapore

Singapore, much to the contrary of Portugal, enforces some of the harshest drug laws in the world. This includes mandatory death penalties for trafficking, even if it is for relatively small

amounts of narcotics. This uncompromising legal framework has created considerable difficulty legally, as many Western states refuse to extradite to Singapore, as they are opposed to capital punishment. Such disputes can delay proceedings, give way to jurisdictional gaps, and even lead to international conflicts. Thus, the stark contrast between a zero-tolerance and a fully decriminalized policy can lead to increased trafficking, as the slowdown, inefficiency, and loopholes that arise as a result are exploited by traffickers routinely.

Current Issues

Today, legal inconsistencies remain a major stumbling block in international drug control. With several European and North American nations trying to legalize marijuana, and this directly conflicting with the obligations of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, enforcers have the difficult task of determining how to navigate the entanglement of policies previously mentioned. It is imperative that there is a fix to these difficulties, as the divergences have caused diplomatic friction at UN forums, cross-border disputes, and sovereignty debates.

Questions to Consider

1. How can corruption be fought meaningfully if higher-level executives are prone to corruption?
2. Is the UN useful if it cannot overstep on issues they are tasked with helping?
3. Is it ethical for an international organization with a permanent security council to have a say in the policies of other countries?
4. Is it ethical to cooperate or allow broad coordination within the UN if a country is not aiding in the fight against corruption?
5. What is the role of the UN in terms of mandated policy writing?

Topic 2: Economic Aspects of the Illicit Drug Trade

Like most pressing issues, the economics of drug trafficking play a significant role in the overarching story. The illicit drug trade generates hundreds of billions of dollars annually, making it an attractive opportunity for criminals around the globe. There are a variety of issues and subtopics related to the economics issue, which make it a very complicated and nuanced topic to address in today's society.

Cost of Enforcement vs. Revenue from Production

Historically, the debate over the cost of drug enforcement vs. the revenue potential has been contentious to say the least. For the majority of the history of the drug trade, there has been a lag in enforcement efforts due to the nature of drug trafficking. Whenever drug traffickers proliferate and sell massive amounts of illegal substances, the authorities respond afterward and almost always to little effect. A key example of this is during the United States' War on Drugs in the 1970s, when Richard Nixon established drugs as "public enemy number one" and began spending millions of dollars annually towards criminalization and enforcement efforts. Despite this, since the 1970s, drug production and use have only increased, with cartels and other extralegal organizations continuing to make massive profits in an illegal market. Therefore, the question has been asked: Is the trillions of dollars spent since the beginning of the War on Drugs worth it?

Due to the illegal nature of drug production, it is hard to measure the yearly scale of illicit trade perfectly. However, it is estimated to be hundreds of billions of dollars, and it continues to grow year after year. Its profitability largely stems from the strong demand and felonious implications of use. Many people want these drugs, and because they are illegal, they are willing to go to great lengths to acquire them. This includes marijuana, which is still largely criminalized across the globe, harder drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, which have decimated impoverished communities everywhere, and opioids, which are used in pain management and are extremely addictive.

Given this information, it may seem ridiculous to contemplate the legality of drugs. However, it is important to remember that there is some precedent for such a drastic change. Alcohol, now an ever-present facet of society, was once illegal in the United States and other regions of the world. Even today, it continues to do so much damage across the world;

nonetheless, it is still commonplace. Many states within the U.S. have tried out this theory by legalizing softer drugs such as marijuana, and have witnessed several benefits. Firstly, this can generate tax revenue, as these goods are often heavily taxed, partially as a deterrent but also to generate revenue for the government. Additionally, this change can contribute to a more regulated and less dangerous market. In many illicit markets, violence is often used as a coercion method, and given that the transactions are already illegal, this violence is rarely reported or properly dealt with. Although legalizing parts of the drug trade may be widely unpopular, some version of this should be considered by delegates, as it may have a variety of benefits when thought about diligently. Finally, the most obvious benefit is the reduction in the cost of enforcement. Less public money needs to be spent on trying to prevent the use of marijuana, including legal processes, imprisonment, and police resources.

Effect on Rural Communities

The drug trade and related abuse have particularly impacted rural communities across the world. Global drug production actually initiated in many of these rural areas, due to cheap and available labor. For drugs such as opium poppy and coca, the agricultural systems were in place for mass production for medicinal use. This was true in parts of Afghanistan, the Andes, and Southeast Asia, regions that had booming agriculture throughout the twentieth century.

Nowadays, however, the illicit drug trade has changed and many of these areas around the world rely on drug production for a sizeable portion of their revenues. The market for illegal drugs is far more profitable than that of legal drugs. Therefore, these agriculturally based communities often are faced with little choice but to turn to illicit crops to make money. Dealing in illegal markets, however, can be extremely dangerous as such communities receive little protection from law enforcement, and are often estranged from others. Drug cartels take advantage of the instability in these regions, providing minimal compensation to the farmers and coercing them with violence, putting civilians in dangerous situations. An instance of this took place in Afghanistan, which at its peak produced up to 90% of the world's opium. Many of its rural provinces suffered from droughts and poor infrastructure, and therefore had few other tangible options than to produce opium. Additionally, opium brought in far more money for them compared to other crops, once again providing the farmers incentive to produce illegal drugs. In 2022, the Taliban banned opium production, leading to a 95% drop in production between 2023-2024. Nonetheless, this wrecked these rural provinces as the costs of production, ie,

violence and instability, remained local while the vast majority of the revenue flowed out of Afghanistan.

To combat such impacts on rural communities, global governments have offered crop substitutions and cash transfers, two methods of encouraging farmers to turn away from illegal drug production and resort to legal crops. Crop substitutions are when governments encourage and often pay farmers to switch to legal crops, advising them on what crops they could plant to make money. Cash transfers are when governments either pay directly for illicit crops and burn them or pay the farmers to destroy them themselves. These methods are often criticized due to the lack of trust between the authorities and many of these communities, developed through decades of neglect. The committee should consider the challenges that these rural farms may face and also creative solutions to the problems that they are tasked with. How can you motivate farmers to stick to legal production if it will be far less profitable for them? And long-term, how can these regions be made more stable so they are not forced to resort to such methods?

Healthcare Economics

As long as drugs continue to be sold and used, a massive burden will continue to be placed on healthcare systems. Between harm reduction measures, overdose/illness treatments, and deaths, there is a widespread range of health matters that need to be paid for, and often with public money. Directly following the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in fentanyl lacing in drugs prompted a rise in drug-related deaths. In 2021, we saw a new high globally with nearly 500,000 people losing their lives, and 28 million healthy years of life lost due to disability and premature death. This, paired with a prior increase in the United States' substance abuse treatment spending to almost $15 billion in 2017 and an ensuing rise, shows just how devastating this issue is to medical services around the globe. Many healthcare networks have still not recovered following the pandemic, meaning that the incomprehensible amounts of money spent every year could lead to regions that simply will not be able to cope with the amount of suffering that drug abuse is continuing to cause.

In terms of healthcare, the benefit of harm-reduction policies is often debated, as enforcement efforts have often proved to be ineffective when combating this issue. Harm-reduction focuses less on the crime of drug abuse but rather on equipping communities with the necessary tools to help themselves when drug-related issues arise. A key instance of this took place in Portugal, where in 2001, drug possession was decriminalized, and they in turn

reallocated funds to treatment and harm-reduction. Since then, the European nation has witnessed a decrease of 40% to 15% in drug-related incarcerations and an overall decrease in deaths as well. An example of a harm-reduction method is the use of Naloxone. Also known as NARCAN, Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that reverses the effect of opioids in the brain and restores breathing. In response to the rise in fentanyl overdoses, it has been largely distributed in areas where overdoses are common, allowing people to treat themselves and others on the spot, rather than waiting for medical services to assist them. Policies like these are often criticized for "leading to" more overdoses, as they do not focus on the crime at hand. However, the data does not necessarily show that.

Despite its critics, an increase in harm reduction policies and a strict clampdown on fentanyl lacing has led to decreases in overdose deaths in the United States, Canada, and other countries. Fentanyl was the largest cause of the rise in overdoses in 2021, so therefore the proliferation of NARCAN and several information campaigns on the dangers of laced drugs have appeared to work in saving lives. In the US, overdose deaths fell 27% in 2024, and synthetic opioid deaths (drugs laced with fentanyl) fell 37%, reaching the lowest metrics in five years. However, this has only been observed in a few countries, and the question of whether these positive changes are happening globally is yet to be answered. Lesser developed countries that have not received equitable access to harm-reduction tactics and have overall healthcare systems have not seen significant decreases in overdose deaths. In the current state of affairs, there has been progress; however, it can be argued that those who need the most help are being left out to dry.

Money Laundering

The scale of the drug trafficking industry requires an equally large money laundering system. It is hard to quote the exact amount of money this industry generates; however, the UNODC estimates the illegal drug trade produces hundreds of billions of dollars every year. There are three key steps that traffickers take to withhold their profits from the authorities. First is placement, directly moving the money into a new location, separating it from its illegal source. This can be done through the creation of shell companies or the illicit actions of financial institutions, among other methods. Second, traffickers must layer the money, masking the paper trail and disguising its origins. This is often achieved through genuine businesses, hence where the term 'money laundering' originates. In the 1920s, American organized crime groups used

laundromats as fake businesses to guise the source of their money. Finally, they must reintegrate this money into the financial systems for use. Purchases of luxury items, real estate, and businesses are some of the most obvious forms of such laundering. These operations are usually extremely complex and are increasingly challenging to combat, with the rise in blockchain security measures and cryptocurrencies, which are extremely difficult to trace to their source.

According to the Financial Action Task Force, an intergovernmental agency that focuses on financial crimes, money laundering has directly funded and led to some of the largest drug epidemics across the globe. This includes the rampant presence of fentanyl that has ravaged North America, the tramadol issue in parts of Africa, and other crises across the globe. Additionally, in an increasingly global drug trafficking network, it is extremely difficult for authorities to coordinate anti-money laundering systems, as criminals take advantage of countries with less strict laws to launder their proceeds. This is exactly what happened in the Danske Bank Scandal, which began in 2007. In 2007, Danske Bank, one of the largest Nordic financial institutions at the time, acquired Sampo Bank, a small Estonian company. Through this acquisition, Danske Bank failed to do its due diligence and had weak anti-money laundering measures to ensure no illicit funds were being cycled through its bank. They, in turn, accepted shell companies from the British Virgin Islands, Cyprus, Panama, and the United Kingdom as clients, which were really just fake companies masking the funds of drug traffickers around the globe. Danske Bank made millions off of these wealthy clients; however, they ignored notices from employees that claimed their anti-money laundering systems were not strong enough. When this information all came out, Danske Bank was fined, and many of their top officials were prosecuted; however, the drug traffickers made off with their billions. Such large-scale examples are far too common in the world of money laundering and show the potential danger when these people are left unchecked. Money laundering directly finances much of the world's drug crime, so as nations seek to improve their anti-money laundering efforts, the profitability of the drug trade can decrease, by in turn hopefully saving the lives of millions.

Questions to Consider

1. How can we as a body find an adequate balance between enforcement and legalization, given how enforcement measures have not stemmed the continued growth of drug production and use?
2. What are the economic and social benefits of partial or full legalization of certain drugs? How can these measures lessen the burden on governments and healthcare systems?
3. How can we more adequately meet the needs of rural regions that feel a lot of trust in the authorities?
4. In what ways might we be able to incentivize farmers to turn away from profitable yet illicit crops?
5. What policies should be adopted to reduce healthcare costs, and to what extent should we explore harm reduction methods globally?
6. Why have some countries (e.g., the U.S., Canada, and Portugal) seen reductions in drug-related deaths, while others, particularly in the Global South, have not? How can this gap be addressed?
7. What can we do to disrupt the money laundering networks that finance much of the drug trade?
8. What does collaboration look like in terms of combating international money laundering and the international drug trade?
9. How can we use history to best equip us to tackle this rising threat?

Closing Statement

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Thank you all for coming to MUNE XIV and participating in the UNODC Committee. Much has been discussed in this background guide, and we hope that you look forward to competing in October.

If you have any questions regarding anything mentioned in the background guide, please reach out to Ozan at ozan.demiroglu@emory.edu or Nedum at nedum.ebo@emory.edu. Once again, we look forward to seeing you in committee and hearing your ideas and lively debate.

Sincerely,

Ozan Demiroglu and Chukwunedum (Nedum) Ebo

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