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# perspectives

## Guinea-Bissau

New hub for cocaine trafficking

## perspectives

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**Cover:**

Seizure of more than 600 kilos of cocaine in Guinea-Bissau.

Photo: Alessandro Scotti



## Editorial



The emergence of **West Africa** as a hub for trafficking cocaine from South America to Europe is a disturbing trend that UNODC has been monitoring closely. The Office has warned that the illegal drug trade in the region is threatening stability and development. Guinea-Bissau, one of the hardest hit countries, risks becoming a “narco-State”. In response to the situation, UNODC is providing technical assistance to strengthen institutions and the rule of law and is mobilizing additional international support for Guinea-Bissau and the region.

In **South America**, the origin of the world’s supply of cocaine, UNODC is helping thousands of farmers to either switch to alternative crops or supplement their income with agroforestry products. In this issue, *Perspectives* visits Bolivian farmers who are investing in a new, sustainable future by choosing to grow trees, coffee and food products. In an interview, Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative in Bolivia, reflects on the living conditions of farmers and the opportunities presented by alternative development projects. In addition, Ms. Albertin talks about the work that UNODC is doing to fight corruption and human trafficking, two issues that are also discussed in a special feature on Bolivia.

**Human trafficking** is not only a challenge for Bolivia. Rather, it is a transnational problem that requires a global solution, which is why UNODC and other international organizations have launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The private sector, civil society, the media and other social actors also joined forces in an effort to put an end to this crime, which affects millions of men, women and children worldwide. In February, the first-ever global event on the issue took place in Vienna. Participants proposed a number of practical measures to combat human trafficking and forged several partnerships between stakeholders.

For the first time, two **opinion pieces** written by UNODC experts are published in *Perspectives*. Claudia Sayago, anti-corruption mentor in Bolivia, highlights the importance of local ownership in preventing and stopping this crime. Ajit Joy, expert on crime prevention in Indonesia, shares his views on illegal logging.

In this issue, we showcase two examples of **methamphetamine** use. Yaba, taken in tablet form, is popular in East Asia, while crystal methamphetamine, known as “tik” in South Africa, is the latest drug of choice among the youth of Cape Town.

Norha Restrepo  
Editor



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# Guinea-Bissau: A new hub for cocaine trafficking

Police officers in Guinea-Bissau prepare for a drug seizure.

By Raggie Johansen

Historically, cocaine has largely been the drug of the Americas — produced and trafficked from the South; consumed in the North, as well as in the South, to a lesser extent. However, with Europe's increasing demand for cocaine, the picture is changing. West Africa, a region plagued by poverty and instability, is becoming a hub for cocaine trafficked from South America to Europe.

In fact, there is a danger of history repeating itself. In the nineteenth century, Europe's hunger for slaves devastated West Africa. Today, its appetite for cocaine could do the same. The former Gold Coast is turning into the Coke Coast. The problem is so severe that it is threatening to bring about the collapse of some West African States where weak and corrupt Governments are vulnerable to the corrosive influence of drug money.

"The security implications for countries like Guinea-Bissau go to the very core of the State's ability to maintain its sovereignty and integrity," says UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa. "There is a growing risk of some West African States being captured by foreign and local criminal networks colluding with senior officials, or even collapsing. While the situation is most acute in Guinea-Bissau today, it could also develop somewhere else in the region tomorrow unless resolute steps are taken quickly."

Countries like Guinea-Bissau are off most people's radar screens. They are poor, weak, and yet not so unstable as to attract international attention. This makes them a perfect cover for criminal groups. As a result, in the past few years, the amount of cocaine moving from South America via West Africa to Europe has risen dramatically. In some cases, the value of the cocaine trafficked through the country may be greater than the entire national income.

## Quantifying the problem

Although it is difficult to establish just how much cocaine is being trafficked, at least 33 tons of cocaine were seized on route to Europe between 2005 and 2007. Prior to this, Africa as a continent rarely seized 1 ton. Moreover, most of these 33 tons was intercepted in just 23 large seizures, many of which were accidental and partial. This indicates the existence of a much larger underlying flow.

Based on an analysis of seizures in Europe where the origin was known, it is estimated that some 27 per cent (or some 40 tons) of the cocaine consumed annually in Europe is presently transiting West Africa. This amount is worth about US\$ 1.8 billion at the wholesale level; more at street level.

The estimated budget for law enforcement in the region is worth less than some of the largest seizures of the past two years. Given current resource limitations, it is difficult to see how local police can compete with organizations collectively making hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

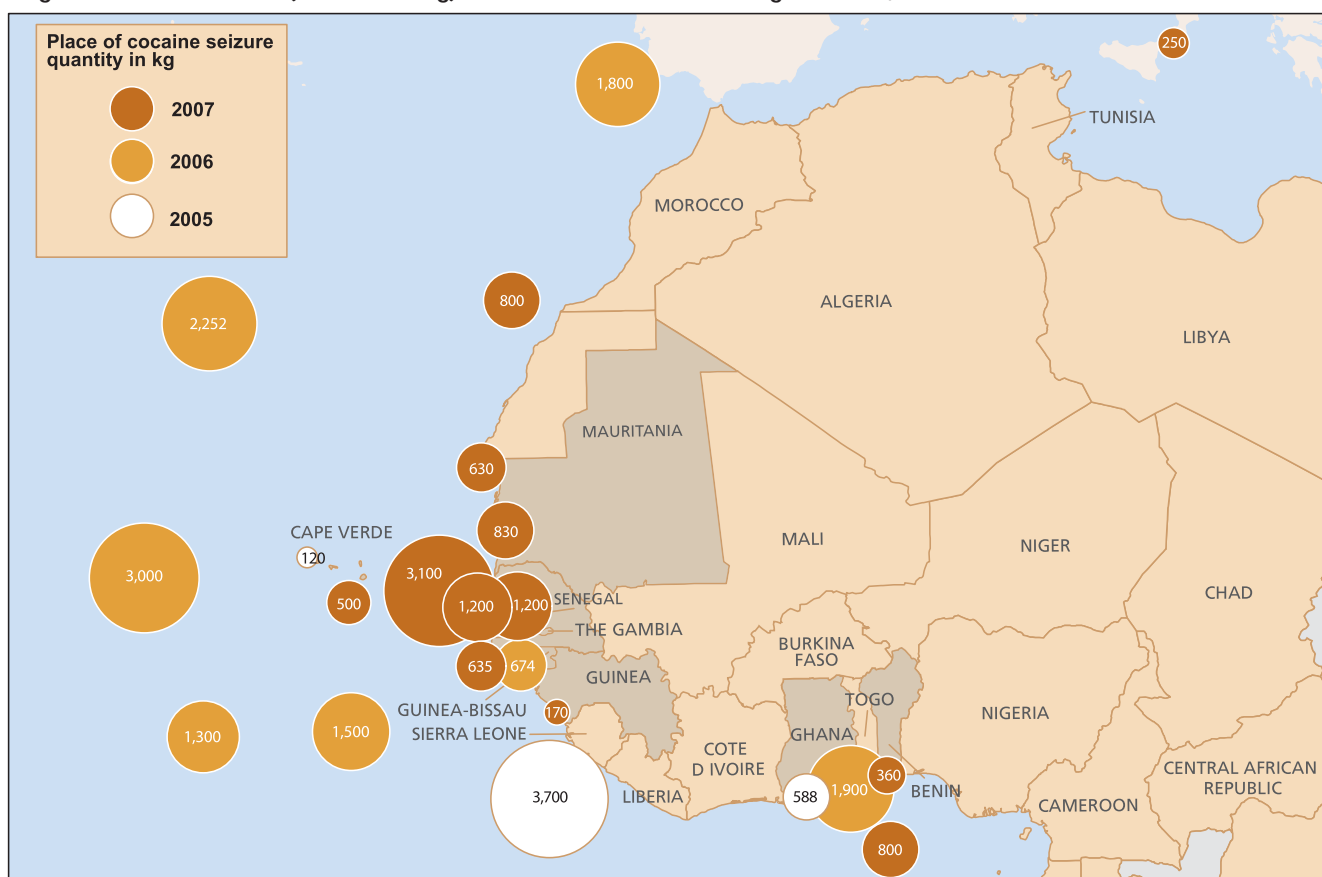
## The influence of drug money

In a region already affected by poverty and pandemics, drug money is perverting fragile economies and rotting societies. The United Nations Security Council said last year: "Drug trafficking threatens to subvert the nascent democratization process of Guinea-Bissau, entrench organized crime and undermine respect for the rule of law."

Using threats and bribes, drug traffickers are infiltrating state structures and operating with impunity. This is deepening fear and mistrust among and between senior officials and the public. Additionally, there are signs of growing drug addiction, particularly among young people who often also work with the traffickers.

With their low-risk and high-return business, drug traffickers can afford to buy and use satellite phones, to move around in fast boats and expensive cars, to transfer money and information discreetly and to buy pro-

Large individual seizures (above 100 kg) linked to cocaine trafficking in Africa, 2005-2007



Source: UNODC

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.





In a planned operation, police officers intercepted a car carrying more than 600 kilos of cocaine.



The seized drugs were then weighed.

tection. And should they be caught and imprisoned, they can easily buy their way out of jail.

## Police and prisons

The mismatched police, who have low salaries that are seldom paid, lack phones, computers, and often even electricity. They have almost no ships to patrol a rugged coastline, and little fuel for their few police cars. Moreover, many police officers can neither shoot a gun nor swim; the latter, a real problem in a country with a long coastline and many islands.

“The police have been and are still in a precarious situation,” says Sandra Valle, UNODC Senior Interregional Adviser who has spent some months working in Guinea-Bissau. “When they arrest someone, they have to take the prisoner by taxi to the police stations since they don’t have cars. And a few months ago they received six sets of handcuffs from the UK.”

Furthermore, were the police to capture a drug trafficker against all odds, there is doubt that a State like Guinea-Bissau would have the capacity to conduct a trial as it lacks necessary infrastructure and trained personnel. And if this drug trafficker were to be convicted and sentenced, he or she might be unable to actually serve the sentence as the country has no functioning prison.

Valle explains that a house with open doors and no security can pass for a prison in Guinea-Bissau. During one of her visits to the country, she saw a few inmates lying on the floor. They were completing sentences for minor crimes, and it seemed that they were there of

their own free will because they had shelter and received basic meals from neighbours.

## What can be done?

In order to help countries in the region cope with this situation, it is clear that their legal structures need to be strengthened to better administer justice, build integrity and uphold the rule of law. International support is needed to help West African Governments establish justice and security as one of the cornerstones of the region’s development.

“In a country like Guinea-Bissau, a few basics, like a financial intelligence unit, anti-corruption agency, modern prison, and better trained and paid judges could have a major impact,” Costa says. In fact, UNODC has established a continuous presence in the country, which will be reinforced by the forthcoming arrival of a UNODC International Anti-Narcotics Adviser.

The UNODC Deputy Representative in Dakar, Amado Philip de Andrés, emphasizes the key role of the Senior Interregional Adviser in advancing the security sector reform agenda with the authorities in Guinea-Bissau during her stay in the country.

“Thanks to the assistance provided, Guinea-Bissau has ratified the United Nations Conventions against Corruption and against Transnational Organized Crime (and its two Protocols against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants),” de Andrés says. “The text of these legal international instruments can be very useful for the country while awaiting complete legislative reform.”



Finally, the police destroyed the cocaine.

Moreover, UNODC is currently preparing the establishment of an elite police unit comprised of key staff from the different law enforcement agencies. This structure is expected to serve as a role model for similar units in other areas.

*Luciana Viegas, Associate Expert in the UNODC Advocacy Section, and Carolina Azevedo, Communications Assistant in the UNODC Regional Office for Brazil and the South Cone, contributed to this article.*



## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Police agents and criminal experts from three Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa and six countries in South America are gathered in Brasilia, Brazil, for a training programme to counter organized crime. Officials from Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay form a group of 32 invitees who train with more than 300 Brazilians at the country's Federal Police Academy. The initiative is a partnership between UNODC and the Brazilian Federal Police Department, and it allows police officers from cocaine origin and transit countries to work together to identify solutions. The training will last nearly five months and will increase South-South cooperation to counter organized crime — including the trafficking route of cocaine from the Andean Region to Europe, often via West Africa.

"We can only combat organized crime with international cooperation, and being there together for training is just the beginning," says UNODC Senior Interregional adviser Sandra Valle, who helped kick-start the initiative. The Director of the Brazilian Federal Police, Luiz Fernando Correa, adds: "This is not a simple gesture of kindness, this programme is the result of a real, increasing necessity to act in a joint, coordinated manner."



Training participants



# Harvesting a bright future

By Norha Restrepo

Different types of trees grow in the communal nursery.



It's 6.00 a.m. in La Asunta, a small town several hours of winding roads away from the capital. Coca is the main crop in this area, which explains why the streets are already covered in green by sunrise. The inhabitants of La Asunta take advantage of the beautiful day to dry coca leaves in the sun.

The warmth of the Yungas, which lie at an altitude of between 1,500 and 2,500 metres, is ideal for cultivating coffee, citrus trees, sugar cane and coca. For economic and practical reasons, the people of the Yungas have preferred coca.

Hortensia Colque de Carrillo, town councillor in La Asunta, explains that bananas, corn and other crops weigh more, which makes them more difficult to transport, and are worth less than coca. Moreover, "coca is not as labour intensive."

However, since it is problematic to only grow coca, the local federations of coca growers support the Government's plan to put a cap on how much coca can be planted. The plan, which is voluntary, aims to reduce the excess area under cultivation and promote the holistic development of local communities. With regard to the response of La Asunta producers, Ms. Colque de Carrillo says there are "growers who are very aware and others that are ambitious."

According to Abraham Poma, coordinator of three neighbourhood assemblies in La Asunta, it will be difficult to change the way in which growers think, but "there is a willingness to grow less coca". To do so, growers will need guarantees. Several alternative development projects have failed, Mr. Poma says, because farmers were not supported "from the start of the process all the way to the moment of exporting the product."

Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative in Bolivia, agrees: "What we have realized over the last 15 years or so is that it's not possible to promote only one



A Bolivian farmer dries coca leaves in the sun.

link in the chain of production, but that we must keep in mind all aspects: the production, the processing and the commercialization." Products can be sold for export or for the national market.

In line with this approach, UNODC supports the "Jatun Sach'a" ("big tree" in Quechua) alternative development project that is implemented in the tropics of Cochabamba and the Yungas of La Paz, where La Asunta is located. UNODC experts work with groups active in the forestry and agricultural sectors towards the sustainable management, preservation and use of natural resources.

## The environment

Isolated geographically and lacking in infrastructure, La Asunta needs support to move forward. When it rains, it's difficult to reach the town and, at times, there is no



### BOLIVIA

Adult literacy: 87 per cent

Life expectancy: 64.7 years

Per capita GDP: US\$ 2,819  
(2005 estimate)

Population: 9.2 million

Official language: Spanish

Head of State: President Evo Morales

Sources: UNDP Human Development Report 2007;  
CIA World Factbook

electricity. Water is scarce and not safe for drinking. Despite knowing that trees generate water, farmers cut and burn them to cultivate coca. Plantations can be seen everywhere.

“Many people have understood that coca impoverishes the soil,” says Fredy Pichasara, Jatun Sach’a project coordinator in La Asunta. After a few years, the land is no longer fertile. Farmers realize they need to grow other products if they want to continue living in the area. That is why pieces of land are being recovered and species of trees introduced (huasicucho, mara and cedar).

Besides bringing environmental benefits, forestry is a good investment, even though farmers must wait

More and more families are joining the agroforestry project that has already supported more than 1,300 families in the region. Salvador Ramos, father of three, represents one of the beneficiary families. Chewing coca, he proudly shows us — machete in hand — the small plants of huasicucho, mara and cedar growing in the communal nursery. In total, 15 families have come together as a cooperative to produce rice, corn, coffee, wood and coca. At first, Mr. Ramos did not believe the project would give results, but he quickly changed his mind. “I can see how the plants grow,” he said, “and this is money.” He adds that “growing coca is not always good, so, for the sake of the children, we must think of the future.”

“ Growing coca is not always good.  
For the sake of the children, we must think of the future.”

Salvador Ramos, beneficiary of agroforestry

decades before they can sell the wood. Harvests could earn farmers 240,000 bolivianos over 20 years, explains Mr. Pichasara and, farmers “will have all the money at once.” Coca, however, is harvested in stages. The product is “quite profitable” but farmers do not harvest an entire hectare at once. The 5,000 bolivianos they earn per week are spent on food, clothing and not much else. “Week after week, it is the same thing, this is the process, the chain,” Mr. Pichasara adds.

Planting different crops means that the land is put to better use, increasing the value of the plots. Moreover, more food products (like rice, beans and citrus fruits) are harvested for family consumption. “The communities are quite isolated and do not have access to the market,” says Pichasara. “The closest town is almost two hours away and here we can’t find products to buy.”

Besides coca, there are hardly any other products for sale on the streets and in the shops of La Asunta.

Salvador Ramos (left) and his family have given agroforestry a chance and are happy with the results.







Inocencio Manami (right) harvests coffee, trees and other products with his nephew and daughter. UNODC supports them through its alternative development project.

“Growers mainly plant coca and don’t worry about food,” says Ms. Colque de Carrillo. Practically all products consumed in La Asunta come from other towns. Jatun Sach’a experts train and guide farmers who want to change this situation.

## Coffee

Coffee is the main crop promoted by Jatun Sach’a. A farmer, Inocencio Manami Doria, speaks of the excellent results achieved with this product.

Mr. Manami grows several hectares of organic coffee with the help of his 18-year-old daughter Candelaria and his 15-year-old nephew Robert. The coffee they produce is their livelihood and source of motivation. “Coffee clothes and feeds us,” Mr. Manami says.

In 2007, he entered a coffee tasting competition, where his coffee came sixteenth, an excellent result given the high score it got. The coffee was tested for colour, aroma, consistency and flavour. “I’m really very satisfied and happy,” said Mr. Manami, who describes the coffee harvest as “exciting.” Above all, he appreciates the variety and different colours of coffee. Moreover, his high-quality coffee is sold internationally, guaranteeing him an income and encouraging him to grow even more.

As a member of a federation of farmers in a largely coca-growing area, Mr. Manami encourages his colleagues to start planting coffee. After seeing his

results, others are warming to the idea. They have realized that “growing coffee can be a way to make money.”

Mr. Manami is interested in reaching the market through an organization of producers, an initiative that both Jatun Sach’a and the municipality of La Asunta would like to see prosper. If everything goes well, in two or three years this and other cooperatives will be completely autonomous and give locals more development opportunities.

*For more information, please visit [www.jatunsacha.bo](http://www.jatunsacha.bo).*

Mr. Manami’s coffee is rated highly by experts.



## INTERVIEW

# Cristina Albertin: “We must understand the reality in which farmers live”

Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative in Bolivia, already knew the country well before taking up her post at the beginning of 2007. Ms. Albertin, a German agronomist, had lived in La Paz from 1991 to 1994, an experience which left a lasting impression on her. In this interview, Ms. Albertin discusses the current situation in Bolivia and what the future holds for UNODC.

*What was your first encounter with Bolivia like?*

I began my United Nations career here with the World Food Programme (WFP). I thoroughly enjoyed that first stay in Bolivia because my work with WFP gave me a chance to get to know the countryside. I was working for a dairy project and spent a lot of time travelling to the different regions, so I got to know what life is really like for the farmers. And it was that experience that convinced me to stay in the United Nations system.

Cristina Albertin visits a coffee plantation in Los Yungas.



*How has the farmers' situation changed since you saw it back then?*

Farmers were pretty disadvantaged then. There were no social services available, there was no assistance with productive activities, and the women did not tend to take part in training courses. They lived hard, complex lives, in considerable poverty. I did not have anything to do with the coca issue at that time. If you go today to the coca-growing areas in Los Yungas, say, you encounter a very similar situation. It is rather shocking to find that there is no water or electricity supply, communications are very poor and the Government does not provide any advisory services for farmers.

*How is the coca issue dealt with in the context of the alternative development model?*

It is important to reach out to the people—not a difficult task in view of their acute needs. Demands are high. We have always put the emphasis on the overall development of a community and income generation for farmers. One must not come in with a confrontational attitude. It is clear to see that coca-growing persists because it provides income, and obviously farmers cannot be deprived of income without being given something in addition or to replace it. We must understand the reality in which farmers live.

*Regarding the fight against corruption, what is UNODC doing in Bolivia?*

We have assigned a mentor to the Office of the Deputy Minister for Transparency to work directly with officials to see how the United Nations Convention against Corruption can be implemented. So far, the Office of the Deputy Minister has been best known for investigating corruption cases, but it has now expanded its activities to put more emphasis on corruption prevention and transparency in government administration. Here in Bolivia everyone says that Governments have been corrupt, but there has been little involvement of civil society in this area.





Thousands of young Bolivian students march against drugs in La Paz. Drug abuse prevention is a priority for the UNODC Country Office in Bolivia, which also promotes sustainable alternatives to planting coca bush.

“Corruption needs to be met head-on because a lot of people think nothing can be done about it.”

*How can corruption be combated?*

By really beaver away at it. Corruption needs to be met head-on because a lot of people think nothing can be done about it. They are not seeing corruption cases being pursued and sentences passed on people who have embezzled substantial amounts of public investment. I think that the Deputy Ministry is doing a good job but there is still a long way to go in the fight against corruption.

*Another issue of concern is trafficking in human beings. What is the situation at the moment?*

Having made trafficking in human beings a criminal offence is a major achievement. It is hard to assess the scale of the problem because the numbers are not high and the figures only reflect reported cases and those before the courts. Here what is talked about a lot, and may be related to trafficking in human beings, is the

commercial and sexual exploitation of children, because there is a custom, especially in rural areas, of entrusting children to relatives or godparents so that they can live in the cities and attend school there. This practice can turn into a covert form of trafficking in human beings.

*How do you see the work of UNODC in Bolivia developing in the future?*

This is an important time for Bolivia because the Government wants to see a country with more equity and social cohesion, and less discrimination against the indigenous people. I see that I have a lot of scope to carry out numerous activities in Bolivia to address drugs, organized crime, corruption and criminal justice. This makes the work very interesting, of course.

*For more information, please visit [www.unodc.org/bolivia](http://www.unodc.org/bolivia)*

# Citizens and public officials take action to stop corruption

By Claudia Sayago

Like many South Americans, Bolivians believe corrupt practices are widespread in their country. Some think corruption is rampant because it simplifies their lives (paying bribes gets things done), while others see it simply as a way to conduct business with the State.

A 2005 survey promoted by the coalition Red Anticorrupción Bolivia estimated that petty corruption related to the use of public services represents a cost of 905 million bolivianos (US\$ 122 million) each year. On average, 168 bolivianos (\$23) are paid in bribes per administrative procedure and almost 13 per cent of requests for public services are met only after a bribe has been paid.

Breaking the vicious circle requires, among other things, engaging those who are in a position to change the situation. With this in mind, UNODC has organized a series of workshops for public officials, during which international and local experts trained civil servants about the principles set out in the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the obligations the Government of Bolivia has as a party to the Convention. At the training sessions, practitioners also discussed how best to implement the Convention, for example by establishing and strengthening workable mechanisms to prevent and sanction corruption, foster judicial cooperation and recover stolen assets.

Civil servants, police officers and prosecutors participating in the workshops had different views on the topic. Some argued that current laws are sufficient and do not need to be reformed. Others said that laws exist on paper but are not enforced. A third group thought that the existing legislation should be improved.



While everyone agreed that corruption in public administration should be tackled, participants were less clear about the solution. The Convention against Corruption provides guidance but, ultimately, States parties are responsible for implementing its provisions. The Government of Bolivia is already working on it.

With regards to the roots of corruption, workshop participants repeatedly and forcefully voiced the view that corruption will continue as long as public officials are underpaid and that corruption cannot be stopped by decree. Irrespective of which anti-corruption strategy is chosen, local ownership is essential for bringing about change. That is why a wide segment of Bolivian society is involved in the implementation of its national strategy. With assistance provided through the UNODC anti-corruption

mentor programme, a strategy to fight corruption is under way. Working groups have been set up to review and amend legislation and training sessions for public officials have been organized.

The task is daunting, the best strategy a matter of opinion and the funding not always available. However, Bolivians throughout the country agree that corruption must be stopped. Bolivia is already on the right path and is now receiving international support to achieve results. The merit, though, is and will be mostly of the citizens who have decided to tackle corruption and improve prospects for their country.

*Claudia Sayago is a UNODC anti-corruption mentor based in La Paz.*





# Human traffickers target minors



Human trafficking does not discriminate between countries, whether rich or poor, large or small. It takes place in every corner of the world. Although it especially affects women and girls, men and boys are also victimized.

Cases of human trafficking have surfaced in Bolivia, demonstrating that this country is not immune from the phenomenon. Studies carried out by different institutions indicate that Bolivia is a country of origin, transit and destination, but also that it is difficult to quantify the problem.

While many women and girls are forced to work as prostitutes, men and boys are usually made to work in mines, factories and fields. These trends are confirmed by Betty Pinto, in charge of the national programme for the human rights of migrants and women of the Office of the Ombudsman of Bolivia.

Since statistics show that more girls and women migrate and disappear than boys and men, Ms. Pinto considers human trafficking to be “a deeply gendered issue.” Although both sexes are negatively affected, trafficking mainly affects females “because of how we conceive women’s bodies,” which are devalued and perceived as objects, mere merchandise.

A few years ago, Ms. Pinto and her colleagues came across human trafficking “without even knowing it” during an investigation into prostitution, when they realized that “many girls and adolescents, some of whom were undoubtedly minors,” were being exploited. At least 30 per cent of them had been lured by employment agencies.

Employment agencies attract candidates through advertisements offering cleaning, cooking and other kinds of jobs. It is common for such agencies to have biblical names, such as Eden and The House of God, to give the impression of innocence. “Young aspiring workers go to those places, bite the bait and are suddenly thrown into prostitution,” Ms. Pinto explains.

Agencies also distribute flyers around schools. “They find boys and girls that have skipped class, hand them a leaflet and then take them away, just like that, school uniforms and all,” Pinto says.

Some young Bolivian boys and girls who are victims of human trafficking stay in the country while others cross the border. UNODC warns that the tradition of sending minors from rural areas to the city could be risky. Relatives and friends who say they will take care of the kids and educate them might actually be exploiting them, either commercially or sexually. In the case of minors who leave the country either forcefully or under false pretenses, the Office of the Ombudsman informs that adolescent males tend to go north while adolescent females tend to go south. Many cross the border illegally and then disappear.

Given Bolivia’s vulnerability to human trafficking, several mechanisms have been established to prevent this crime, protect the victims and prosecute traffickers. The State has, for example, adopted a law against human trafficking and established specialized police and judicial units. Through technical assistance programmes, UNODC and other international organizations support this effort to guarantee the rights of minors and adults.

## METHAMPHETAMINE

# Yaba, the “crazy medicine” of East Asia

By Luciana Viegas

Yaba, or “crazy medicine” in Thai, is a tablet form of methamphetamine and a very powerful stimulant. Introduced to East Asia during World War II to enhance soldiers’ performance, methamphetamine has become increasingly popular in East Asia for recreational use, particularly among young people. Yaba is now the main form of methamphetamine abused in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, as well as in Myanmar and Viet Nam, where it is typically manufactured.

Yaba tablets, which normally contain methamphetamine (approximately 30 per cent) and caffeine, are usually crushed and then smoked, stimulating the central nervous system. Users experience an intense burst of energy, followed by increased activity, a loss of appetite and a general sense of well-being. Once the effects wear off, users “crash” into prolonged periods of sleep and depression.

Like with other forms of methamphetamine, long-term abuse of yaba can induce strong dependence. Over time, users develop tolerance and require increasing amounts of the drug to feel the same effects. Excessive doses can result in convulsions, seizures and death from respiratory failure, stroke or heart failure. The drug can trigger aggressive and violent behaviour; psychiatric disorders have also been associated with its use.

Traditionally used by workers such as truck drivers, yaba became part of youth culture in East Asia about 10

years ago. Having spread from Thailand into Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, it is estimated that yaba is now used by millions of people throughout the region. Recently, the drug has spread towards the Indian subcontinent: in 2007, a record 1.2 million yaba tablets were confiscated in Bangladesh, where there is a very large potential market.

The development and spread of yaba in the region has been opportunistic. As Jeremy Douglas, UNODC Programme Expert, explains, “it is a drug that is cheap to manufacture and cheap to purchase. You introduce it somewhere and develop a market fairly quickly because it is cheap and highly addictive.” One tablet costs between as little as US\$ 1 in Cambodia and US\$ 5 in Thailand, which indicates how cheap and easy it is to produce for people who have the necessary precursor materials. “You can have labs hidden anywhere producing 10,000 tablets per hour,” Douglas adds.

Unlike geographically confined, crop-based drugs, such as opium in Afghanistan, synthetic drugs like yaba can be produced anywhere in the world where there are weaknesses in law enforcement and in precursor chemical regulations. The highly mobile and clandestine nature of production also makes it difficult to monitor and assess the situation systematically. “At the moment, the information is quite fragmented,” Douglas says. “In some parts of the world, we know it is there—we just don’t know how widespread it is.”





# Crystal meth epidemic in Cape Town

By Raggie Johansen

Photo: Ioulia Kondratovitch

In Cape Town, South Africa, crystal methamphetamine use has exploded. Known locally as "tik," the drug was virtually unknown as recently as 2003. Now, it is the city's main drug of abuse, even when alcohol is included. Tik is usually smoked, using a straw in a light bulb. Grant Jardine, Director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, explains the increase in tik use and what impact this drug has on users.

## *By how much has tik use increased?*

There is absolutely no doubt that the increase in the use of tik has been an epidemic. Six years ago, less than 1 per cent of our clients used it. Currently, more than half of our clients have tik as their primary drug of abuse. It's been an incredibly rapid increase over a very short period of time.

## *Why are so many more people taking tik?*

There are a number of reasons. Some are generational: just as every generation has new music and dress sense and so on, it also likes new drugs. It used to be mandrax (methaqualone) and tik is used in a similar way. It is cheap, widely available, easy to make, the precursors are also available, the recipe is on the Internet, so there are lots of small operations making tik.

## *What impact does tik have on users?*

The impact of the drug depends on its interaction with the person using it. You generally see adolescents using tik, and adolescence is a time of great change, insecurity and lack of confidence. That's exactly what this drug compensates for—it gives users a sense of confidence and euphoria.

## *How addictive is it?*

We rate it highly addictive, more addictive than alco-

hol, dagga (cannabis) and mandrax. But in terms of treatment, we have quite a good success rate compared to heroin, for example. This is for two main reasons. First, with tik, the period from onset of use to seeking treatment is generally shorter than for other drugs. Second, there is a high incidence of psychotic episodes among tik users, which motivates them to seek treatment early because they get scared.

## *What about the physical effects of tik?*

If you tell an adolescent that if you smoke, you might die of cancer in 20 years, it is basically meaningless. Speaking of short-term effects is more persuasive. The greatest tragedy of all drugs, but particularly tik, is not the physical effect, because normally the body recovers readily and easily as people are resilient at that age. For me, the greatest tragedy is the effect it has on psychological and emotional development. Drug use sets people back for the rest of their lives, takes away potential they can never get back. It's a most insidious thing, a most subtle thing, because it's not obvious. You can't take a photograph of it or put it on the front page of a newspaper.

*To learn more about methamphetamines, please visit the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section's publications page, available at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/publications.html>.*



# Human trafficking under scrutiny

By Amanda Di Lorenzo

The Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking brought together around 1,400 delegates representing Governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and the media to discuss ways of countering a crime that shames us all.

The Vienna Forum followed the launch of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) in 2007. The Forum, which took place in February, was the first-ever global event on the issue.

UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa, the Foreign Minister of Austria Ursula Plassnik, the First Lady of Egypt Suzanne Mubarak, actress and activist Emma Thompson, and musician and activist Ricky Martin addressed participants at its inaugural session.

"The opening of the world markets has facilitated the movement of people, goods, capital and services—commerce has benefited, and so has illicit activity, including the trade of human beings," said Mr. Costa. "We have an obligation to fight a crime that has no place in the twenty-first century."

Human trafficking is one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide. Like many other forms



## WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

### FACTS

Trafficking involves the forcible movement of persons from one location to another for the purposes of exploitation and for commercial gains. Victims are recruited and transferred either against their will or through deception.

Forms of exploitation include but are not limited to sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, servitude and for the removal of organs. These crimes affect men, women and children.

While Western Europe, North America, West Asia and Oceania are predominantly destination regions, the

Commonwealth of Independent States is mainly an origin region. Africa, Asia, Central and South Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean are both.

- Every year some **2.7 million people** are trafficked worldwide.
- Human trafficking reaps yearly profits of up to an estimated **US\$32 billion**.
- **80 per cent** of victims are women and children.



of crime, it takes advantage of people's vulnerability in situations of poverty, conflict, humanitarian disaster and crisis.

Mr. Costa noted that the phenomenon is so widespread in the global economy that we are all complicit in it. "The blood, sweat and tears of trafficking victims are on the hands of consumers all over the world. This is a crime that shames us all."

Given the alarming dimensions of the problem and its transnational character, Ms. Plassnik urged to build "global consensus in fighting and eventually defeating this crime."

Rallying support and political will behind UN.GIFT, the Vienna Forum aimed to raise awareness on all forms of trafficking, to facilitate cooperation and forge new partnerships. Moreover, it set the stage for increased efforts and innovative ways of combating trafficking.

## Raising awareness

Not enough is known about human trafficking. In order to put and end to this crime, it is critical to have a better understanding of its nature and more information on the profiles of traffickers and victims.

To this end, the Forum focused on the push and pull factors that make individuals vulnerable to trafficking, as well as the impact that trafficking has on individuals and their communities.

"What we are dealing with here is a global phenomenon, a pervasive cancer, which undermines the safety and security of all nations," said Ms. Mubarak. "It is a form of modern-day slavery, a global health risk and one of the gravest sources of human rights abuses of our times."

Policymakers and celebrities stood side by side, calling for greater recognition of the scale and prevalence of the problem, and for coordinated action to fight it. "Human trafficking is a violation of human rights; it has no place in our world and I beg you to act now," said Ricky Martin.

Side events and special exhibits accompanied the Forum, depicting the extreme suffering experienced by victims of trafficking in its different forms.

## Building partnerships

UN.GIFT is based on a simple premise: human trafficking is a crime of such magnitude that it cannot be dealt with successfully by any Government alone. It requires a global response.

State and non-state actors present at the Forum forged alliances.

The Women Leaders' Council, launched at the Vienna Forum, brought together political and business figures, campaigners and entertainers who aim to bring about positive change. "We must fight this abuse of power and break the ignorance and apathy around us," said Eva Biaudet, Council member and Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Representatives from Microsoft, Manpower, GAP and other companies acknowledged the role that the private sector can play by examining supply chains and labour practices.

Emphasizing the importance of national legislation, parliamentarians from around the world vowed to do their part and follow more closely what Governments are doing to combat trafficking.

## A call to action

Meaningful action must now follow. The Forum highlighted some common themes.

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, is the main legal tool available to combat human trafficking. Although 118 States have ratified the international treaty, a large number have yet to do so. In many countries, translating the Protocol into reality

Boy embroiders saris at a workshop in Mumbai, India. Impoverished children frequently work 20 hour days in harsh conditions for meager pays, which are often withheld by employers.

Photo: Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department.



remains problematic because the necessary laws are not in place or are not properly enforced. Technical know-how and capacity is also lacking. Member States must set up mechanisms to protect vulnerable people, prosecute criminals and ultimately prevent trafficking.

The clandestine nature of trafficking makes gathering critical information a challenge. To better design targeted responses and policies, more research is needed to fill the knowledge gap. State and non-State actors should also strengthen cooperation and share information.

Labour market stakeholders, including employers' organizations, trade unions and businesses, have a role to play in ensuring decent work opportunities and environments. Practical tools can be developed to ensure that working conditions are in line with international human rights standards.

The root causes of human trafficking must be confronted, too, with more attention paid to reducing demand in destination countries.

"It is too easy to blind ourselves to the suffering of fellow human beings, so long as our own comfort and security are not threatened," said Mr. Costa. "This is a

global problem that requires a global solution. UN.GIFT is one such solution." He described the Vienna Forum as a "tipping point" in the global battle against human trafficking.

At the closing session, Renuka Chowdhury, Minister of Women and Child Development of India, stressed the need to move "from talk to action." She said, "We are leaving this Forum with innovative ways to influence our respective nations and Governments."

Practical measures proposed at the Vienna Forum include the implementation of self-certification by businesses to take off the shelves products made under exploitative conditions; the development of technology to identify, monitor and disrupt human trafficking routes; the tracking and blocking of credit card payments for human trafficking transactions made over the Internet; and the development of codes of conduct to curb sex tourism.

*For more information on UN.GIFT and human trafficking, please visit [www.ungift.org](http://www.ungift.org) and <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>.*

## Journey against sex trafficking

Composed of seven graffiti-covered containers, the "Journey" exhibition portrays the harrowing experience of women sold in the sex trade. It is inspired by the true story of a young Moldovan woman, Elena, who left her country in search of a better life but ended up being deceived and coerced into selling her body. Elena exemplifies the plight of millions.

Oscar-winning actress and activist Emma Thompson is the driving force behind the art installation. She decided to tell the young woman's story because she "felt very inspired by Elena and felt that her survival somehow contained the seeds of a rebirth." Together they found a creative way of engaging people. "Nobody wants to be depressed by another story about what's going on the world," Thompson said. Rather, people want to have the "opportunity to do something useful, and that's what we've got to work on."

The containers map the victim's journey, each marking a different stage in the trafficking process. The journey starts with a container titled 'Hope', which reflects the aspirations of young women as they leave their home. Containers 'Uniform', 'Bedroom' and 'Customer' offer disturbing insight into the daily ordeals of women trapped in the sex industry. The experience is all the more realistic as visitors are exposed to the sights, sounds and smells associated with sex work.

Photo here and on p. 20 taken from Emma Thompson's installation the "Journey".







Crimes like illegal logging and the trafficking in forest products, wildlife and biological resources are a major global problem, especially in developing countries. The World Bank and the United Nations estimate that illegal logging on public land alone causes annual asset and revenue losses of over US\$10 billion, while approximately \$5 billion are lost in the form of evaded taxes and royalties on legal logging.

By Ajit Joy

The social and environmental impact of such crimes is also alarming. Roughly 1 billion poor people are dependent on forests for their livelihoods. Illegal activities increase the vulnerability of these people while also reducing forest cover, adversely affecting biodiversity and natural habitats.

The corrosive effects of illegal logging are far-reaching. Widespread corruption provides opportunities for money-laundering, weakens the rule of law, undermines policies, distorts trade and disrupts legitimate economic activities.

Indonesia, gifted with the third largest tropical forest after those of Brazil and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is grappling with these problems. Due to ineffective management and weak law enforcement, an estimated 2 million hectares are lost annually to illegal deforestation. The annual turnover associated with all logging is estimated at \$6.6 billion; only \$1.5 billion accounts for legal activities.

This calls for serious responses. In March 2008, the Government of Indonesia and UNODC jointly

sponsored an international expert meeting in Jakarta to discuss the economic, social and environmental impacts of trafficking in forest products and ways to prevent them.

States have enacted legislation to protect and manage forests. Most have forest guards, police and sometimes specialized units, like the Special Response Police Forest Task Force of Indonesia, to enforce these laws.

However, implementation is weak, especially in developing countries with valuable forest assets, due to lack of resources, awareness, training, coordination between agencies and, often, the connivance of law enforcement officers.

Illegal trade relies on a network of corrupt officials that operates along the timber trafficking routes. From forests to ports, in receiving and transit countries, Government officials are corrupted.

Even when arrests and charges are made, convictions are rare due to weaknesses in the judicial processes. Punishments are light and assets are rarely confiscated or forfeited. This has made forest crimes

a low-risk, high-gain proposition.

Attracted by the profits, organized crime groups dealing in drugs, arms or human trafficking have become involved, further complicating matters. Gaps in the legal and law enforcement response must be addressed.

Logs cut illegally in one country end up as finished products in another. States cannot tackle this alone. Law enforcement and judicial authorities across countries must cooperate.

A comprehensive multisectoral approach is crucial, requiring greater involvement by representatives of civil society and the industrial sector. As a consumer and a generator of demand, industry must encourage compliance with laws that aim to protect forests and adopt codes of conduct that reject the use of illegal forest products for profit.

*Ajit Joy is a UNODC expert on crime prevention based in Jakarta.*





# GLOBAL SPORTFUND

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## Sport— a universal language

The Global Sport Fund (GSF) promotes sports and healthy lifestyles among young people around the world. The GSF, an initiative sponsored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Qatar Olympic Committee, encourages young people to develop their potential and to keep away from using drugs.



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