



Money laundering erases the money trail of crime.

It disguises illegal profits so that it is impossible to trace the illicit funds to their source.

Drug traffickers bring in huge profits every year. But most of this illegally gained cash gets 'laundered', and law enforcement authorities are only able to track down and recover a very small part. Shutting down the power of dirty drug money means stripping the dealers and kingpins of their ill-gotten wealth. In other words, putting a halt to money laundering.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) wants to increase the pressure on money launderers. UNODC's Legal Advisory Programme, in partnership with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, launched the initiative, 'Mock Trial on Money Laundering', which, in the words of one of its architects, is "designed to make the threat of conviction and confiscation felt".

The objective is to equip criminal justice professionals with the know-how and working tools necessary to crack complex money laundering cases. Front-line investigators, prosecutors and judges are tasked with acting out their respective roles during a simulation trial based on real life events. Guided from A to Z by proven practitioners, the mock trial allows them to measure their case management and courtroom skills against international best practices.

"This is as close to on-the-job training as it gets", said a seasoned judge, recapping the pilot event in Quito, Ecuador.

The response has been overwhelming, and practically every jurisdiction in Latin America wants to be a part of this how-to mentoring. As one Ecuadorian prosecutor phrased it, "You've got us thinking like the enemy – the bad guys no longer have the edge on us".



Over 70 participants have already benefited from the first two mock trials, both in Ecuador. A third is scheduled for El Salvador and three more are planned for 2003.

