

## **Introduction to Committee**

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the main groups within the United Nations, being its main deliberative body. Established in 1945, the General Assembly is headquartered in New York City and comprises every member state, each of which has an equal vote within the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has several key roles within the United Nations, including but not limited to the appointment of the Secretary-General, the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, and approving the UN budget. They meet regularly between September and December, and whenever necessary throughout the year to discuss specific issues through a dedicated agenda to hopefully adopt resolutions. Issues that are brought before the General Assembly have a wide range, including concerns about sustainable development to global security.

## **History/Past-Action by the UN**

So far the United Nations has taken two main steps in dealing with the global drug problem, forming the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the three international drug conferences.

The UNODC is the primary UN agency dealing with drug-related issues and has created several programs to help inform the world and train people in proper treatment and healthcare. The UNODC started publishing the World Drug Report in 1997 and it has since been a very useful resource in analyzing and overviewing the global drug situation to develop up-to-date policies and see modern trends. They also initiated the Treatnet Program to allow easier access to treatment for drug use disorders and focus on training healthcare experts to improve treatment services. They also lead the global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting, and Trends (SMART) Program which focuses on sharing information internationally and analytical support.

Then there are the three-drug conferences, all of which occurred in the past 63 years, which detail the framework for international cooperation in solving drug problems. The first conference, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) aimed to establish effective control over production and distribution (to ensure that drugs were being used for scientific and medical purposes only and not for illegal marketing) while promoting cooperation among member states and continuing encouraging scientific and medical usage of narcotics. Key provisions covered in the first conference were as follows:

- Narcotics were classified 1 through 4 based on their potential medical usefulness and their likeliness to be abused, 1 has a high potential for abuse and low potential for medical application, while 4 has a lower potential for abuse and greater medical applications
- All member states were required to establish a system for controlling the drug flow in their countries, as well as making licensing and record-keeping mandatory to make tracking drug movement easier
- Limits were placed on how many raw materials that could be used for drugs were allowed to be produced such that excess supply wouldn't exist to be used illegally
- Member states became obligated to cooperate in controlling the international trade of narcotics, meaning that member states were obligated to assist in extracting criminals that fled over their borders
- Access to narcotics for science and medicine was protected

The conference was significant because it created the first framework for international cooperation on the issue and was able to set up a standard approach to drug control. Although it was clearly not a perfect resolution it was intended to be amended as new research and data came in.

The second conference, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), was very similar to the original conference but with a greater focus on psychotropic substances (as the name would suggest) because they had begun showing up around the world. They also wanted to reinforce information-sharing policies as well as creating a system for assistance in extracting lawbreakers between countries. Key provisions of the second conference that didn't simply restate those of the first conference were:

- Psychotropic substances were placed on the same scale that was created in the first convention
- Acknowledges the cultural and religious use of some psychotropic substances and provides for special considerations/exemptions for these specific practices
- Specifically addresses controlling cannabis derivatives and prepares to contain psychoactive cannabinoids, extending the scope beyond the substances discussed in the first convention
- Emphasizes controlling the entire production process by introducing control on precursor chemicals needed for the illicit manufacture of psychotropic substances
- Continued support for the key provisions of the first convention

The significance of the second conference was the expansion of the list of drugs covered by UN policy and the recognition of the cultural and religious use of certain drugs.

The third conference, the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), started focusing on activities tied to drug trafficking, production, distribution, and money laundering, as well as instituting regulations for precursor chemicals (materials used in drug production) to stop drugs at the source. Key provisions of the third conference were:

- Introduces criminal offenses for production, distribution, and money laundering and requires laws among member states to apply penalties for offenders
- Makes member states obligated to adopt practices for seizing and confiscating proceeds from drug trafficking offenses, including assets gained by money laundering
- Encourages the creation of joint investigation teams, groups of law enforcement from separate countries to enhance coordination and information sharing
- Allows for controlled deliveries, in which law enforcement can permit illicit drug activities for supervising and identifying involved individuals
- Requires member states to keep records of everything involving precursor chemicals and must be provided to the International Narcotics Control Board

The third conference was made significant by creating specific penalties and criminal offenses for drug trafficking, creating joint investigation teams to strongly promote international cooperation, providing measures against money laundering and demonstrating a need to target financial activities by criminals, as well as attempting to balance law enforcement with human rights

### **Latest Developments**

Several countries around the world, including several European countries and the US, have transitioned to legalizing cannabis for recreational and medicinal purposes. Although governments do have quite a few reasons for avoiding the legalization such as uncertainty about its long-term effects, concerns about workplace productivity, and concerns for public safety and the safety of children, it does have several benefits worth mentioning: there is easier access to cannabis for medical needs, easier regulation of the production and distribution of cannabis under legal means, a reduced burden on the justice system, and tax revenue for the government. As it stands, the UN does not control or suggest whether or not cannabis should be legalized or not but rather calls for regulation in the case of legalization.

Key figures from the 2023 World Drug Report:

- 296 million people use drugs, up 23% over the past 10 years
- 39.5 million people with drug use disorders, up 45% over the past 10 years
- 2304 tons of pure cocaine, up 16% from the previous year
- 7800 tons of opium, down 3% from the previous year
- Synthetic drugs are becoming more dominant, with new production methods and distribution with not yet controlled precursors (substances used in manufacturing drugs)
- Legalization of drugs and medical uses can be very dangerous if commercial interests are pursued over regulations

### **Problems a Resolution Should Address**

A resolution should establish focus on what aspect of drugs your country would want to focus on, prevention, regulations, research, and provide specific actions on what you want to happen with what you choose to focus on as well as addressing punishments.

Questions to think about during your research:

- How significant is the presence of drug trafficking in your country?
- What drugs are legalized in your country?
- Does your country advocate for legalization?
- How many of your citizens abuse drugs?
- Does your country need assistance in dealing with drug trafficking?
- How severely does your country punish drug activities?

## Bibliography

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