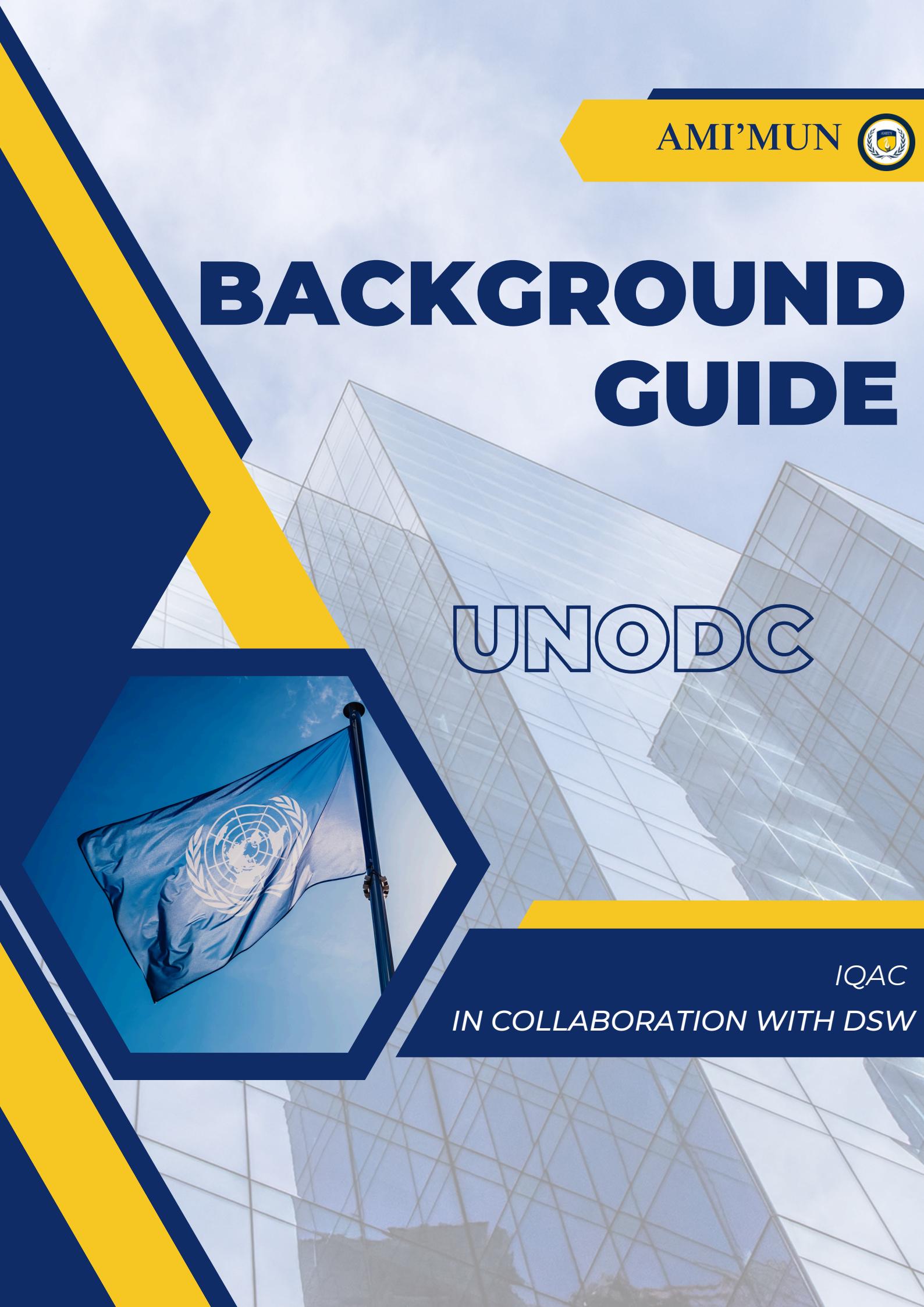




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# BACKGROUND GUIDE



UNODC

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*IN COLLABORATION WITH DSW*

# **Letter from the Executive Board**

Greetings Delegates

We feel privileged and honoured to welcome you all to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime at Amity University Mumbai Model United Nations - 2024. We are looking forward to working with each other and all of you to provide you with a very special experience of a constructive debate. We believe in the fact that a conference like this allows you to understand the world and your place in it, better than ever before. We also hope that by the end of the conference, you will have a better understanding of the procedures, rules and objectives and that you will be willing to participate in more such MUNs.

The essence of debate and diplomacy is to understand information; we have designed this background guide as a stepping stone. The Background Guide is a major resource for you but should not provide a hindrance to your external research. The Background Guide will help you get familiar with the agenda and its background; However for the committee to progress fruitfully, as a delegate, you must carry forward external research. The Background Guide will provide you with very basic and guiding insights. Do not base all of your research from this guide. For your external research and background research on your country, you can gain valuable advice by contacting members of the Secretariat or one of us. This Background guide will also aid in understanding the steps to take to do your external research effectively.

We urge all members of the committee to take the time to read the background guide and use it as a starting point for their preparation. We urge every delegate to come to the conference with an open mind, ready to meet and work with new people, and actively participate in the committee, debate and discuss problems, their solutions and help form a thorough, effective resolution.

All of us look forward to having an amazing experience with each of you.

Live long and prosper.

Kabeer Bajaj - Chairperson

Reva Shekdar - Vice Chairperson

Esha Khan - Moderator

# **Introduction of the committee**

For two decades, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been helping make the world safer from drugs, organised crime, corruption and terrorism. We are committed to achieving health, security and justice for all by tackling these threats and promoting peace and sustainable well-being as deterrents to them.

Because the scale of these problems is often too great for states to confront alone, UNODC offers practical assistance and encourages transnational approaches to action. This is done in all regions of the world through our global programmes and network of field offices.

UNODC provides technical assistance, research and normative support to Member States to help them develop and implement comprehensive, evidence-based solutions to the complex and interconnected threats that they face at the national, regional and global levels. In the challenging times we face today, the work of the office is needed more than ever.

Headquartered in Vienna with a network of over 130 offices around the world, UNODC advances justice, health and security to build resilient societies and improve everyday life for individuals, families and communities around the globe.

## **Mandate**

UNODC is mandated to support the Member States in facing threats and impact of drugs and crime. A number of conventions, treaties, and international instruments guide their work such as;

- The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)
- The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)
- Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
- The Compendium of UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.

## Agenda

The emergence of new synthetic opioids and a record supply and demand of other drugs has compounded the impacts of the world drug problem, leading to a rise in drug use disorders and environmental harms, according to the World Drug Report 2024 launched by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) today.

“Drug production, trafficking, and use continue to exacerbate instability and inequality, while causing untold harm to people’s health, safety and well-being,” said Ghada Waly, Executive Director of UNODC. “We need to provide evidence-based treatment and support to all people affected by drug use, while targeting the illicit drug market and investing much more in prevention.”

The number of people who use drugs has risen to 292 million in 2022, a 20 per cent increase over 10 years. Cannabis remains the most widely used drug worldwide (228 million users), followed by opioids (60 million users), amphetamines (30 million users), cocaine (23 million users), and ecstasy (20 million users).

Nitazenes – a group of synthetic opioids which can be even more potent than fentanyl – have recently emerged in several high-income countries, resulting in an increase in overdose deaths.

Though an estimated 64 million people worldwide suffer from drug use disorders, only one in 11 is in treatment. Women receive less access to treatment than men, with only one in 18 women with drug use disorders in treatment versus one in seven men.

In 2022, an estimated 7 million people were in formal contact with the police (arrests, cautions, warnings) for drug offences, with about two-thirds of this total due to drug use or possession for use. In addition, 2.7 million people were prosecuted for drug offences and over 1.6 million were convicted globally in 2022, though there are significant differences across regions regarding the criminal justice response to drug offences.

The Report includes special chapters on the impact of the opium ban in Afghanistan; synthetic drugs and gender; the impacts of cannabis legalisation and the psychedelic “renaissance”; the right to health in relation to drug use; and how drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle is linked with other illicit activities and their impacts (Patnode, 2024)

# Case Studies

## **A. Drug Trafficking in relation to Socio-Economic Situations:**

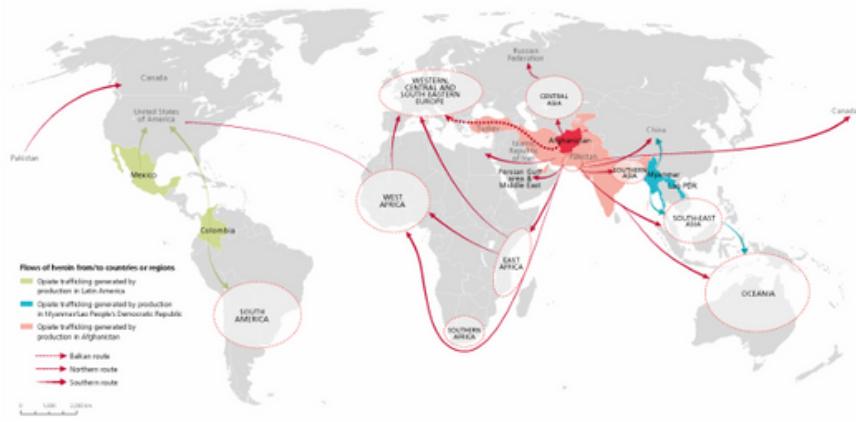
Mumbai, India: The city's rapid urbanization has led to a proliferation of slums, exemplified by areas such as Dharavi. This provides a fertile ground for drug cartels to infiltrate and exploit the vulnerable populations (Kaushal & Mahajan, 2021).

Drug trafficking exacerbates the already dire socio-economic conditions of these slums. It fuels crime, violence, and gang warfare, as evidenced by the turf wars between rival drug gangs in areas like Nagpada. The illicit drug economy diverts resources away from legitimate businesses and public services, hindering economic growth. Moreover, drug addiction among slum dwellers leads to a loss of productivity, health issues, and broken families (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011).

The socio-economic impacts extend beyond the individual and the community. The prevalence of drug-related crime, such as theft and robbery, increases public expenditure on law enforcement and healthcare, diverting resources from other essential public services. The city's reputation as a hub for drug trafficking can also deter foreign investment and tourism (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 1998)

## **B. Global Drug Production and Trafficking Networks:**

Drug trafficking- the global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws is estimated to be a \$32 billion industry. Drug trafficking flows have global dimensions linking regions and continents, sometimes with dramatic consequences for the countries they affect. The global drug trafficking market is constantly evolving, undermining economic and social development and contributing to crime, instability, insecurity and the spread of HIV (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011).



Rapid, unregulated expansion of the global pharmaceutical and chemical sectors has been a fundamental driver behind what has become, over the last 10 years, but particularly in the last two years, a global explosion in illicit synthetic drug production, trafficking and use. A mass proliferation of chemists and firms producing and vending synthetic substances and their many precursors has helped propel an unprecedented propensity for licit industrial production channels and supply chains being diverted into illicit economic activity. One consequence of all this is the realisation that synthetic drugs have become the future of drug trafficking.

One of the most notable trends in illicit synthetic drug markets has been the rapid expansion of online platforms, particularly on the dark web. These anonymous marketplaces provide a convenient and relatively secure environment for the sale and distribution of illicit substances, allowing vendors and buyers to operate with a degree of anonymity. Cryptocurrencies, some boasting of their untraceable digital footprint, have facilitated transactions, enabling actors to evade basic anti-money laundering requirements and law enforcement efforts. Moreover, the globalisation of supply chains has enabled the widespread dissemination of synthetic drugs across borders.

Production hubs in countries with lax regulations and enforcement mechanisms serve as primary sources of supply for a diverse array of substances to markets around the world. The decentralisation of production and distribution networks complicates efforts to disrupt these illicit activities (Global Synthetic Drug Market: The Present and Future, 2024).

The proliferation of NPS is a major concern. These synthetic compounds are often chemically modified versions of existing drugs, developed to mimic their effects while evading legal restrictions because of their chemical composition. Through its Early Warning Advisory on NPS, and in partnership with voluntary reporting by member states, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified over 1200 NPS from 141 different countries. The rapid pace of innovation in this domain challenges regulatory frameworks, as authorities struggle to keep pace with the emergence of these new synthetic substances, their potential health risks and their potential contribution to wider illicit drug market dynamics.

### **C. Designer Drugs:**

Designer drugs are synthetic compounds developed to mimic the physiologic effects of other abused drugs. Many designer drugs are chemically similar to other abused drugs but are modified to avoid being classified as illegal. Moreover, they are often altered in ways that render them undetectable by conventional drug screening tests. Most designer drugs try to imitate opiates or cocaine, ecstasy, and other stimulants.

Unfortunately, it is also possible to overdose on designer drugs. The unpredictable pharmacology of these synthetic drugs puts users at risk of dangerous side effects, including overdose and death. One of the greatest challenges associated with detecting designer drugs is the fact that they are developed in secret. Therefore, the ingredients, chemical structure, and potency of the drugs are largely unknown. The US Drug Enforcement Administration recognizes 7 different types of designer drugs: cannabinoids, phenethylamines, phencyclidines (or arylcyclohexylamines), tryptamines, piperazines, pipradrols, and N-ring systems. Most laboratories using liquid chromatography–tandem mass spectrometry (liquid chromatography–tandem mass spectrometry) for definitive drug testing are targeting well-known drugs and are not configured to detect or quantify these synthetically modified drugs.

These designer drugs can be detected in urine using newer analytical methods such as time of flight (time of flight) or Orbitrap mass spectrometry. These technologies require more sophisticated equipment and are more labour intensive than definitive methods such as liquid chromatography–tandem mass spectrometry. Currently, the reimbursement for the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code applied to drug screening is only \$60. This reimbursement was established for the historic immunoassay screens and the older ToxiLab thin-layer chromatography method. The newer technologies identify over 1000 possible drugs, including designer drugs, but it is a labour-intensive approach to drug testing.<sup>3</sup> The current reimbursement is too low to be financially viable for a commercial or hospital laboratory seeking to use more advanced technologies to detect drugs.

“There is a need to create a CPT code that pertains to use of the newer technologies for toxicological analysis so laboratories that wish to include designer drugs in their drug testing panels can be reasonably reimbursed.”- Amadeo J. Pesce, PhD. For some users, these drugs are appealing simply because their legal status is a little unclear. Chemists have worked hard to develop drugs that don’t contain the hallmarks and attributes that drug enforcement communities look for. So that means some drug users can get high with these substances without facing arrest or some other form of consequence.

This is particularly appealing, according to sources quoted by The Post Game, to amateur athletes. These young people could be removed from sports teams if they fail a drug test, but since some drug tests may not pick up synthetic drugs, this use can go undetected.

A second class of users takes designer drugs as part of a multi-drug, pro-drug lifestyle. According to research highlighted in New York Magazine, these drug users scour the Internet for new drugs to try, and they document their experiences to inform others. They may feel that they are connoisseurs of drugs with enhanced palettes and a boosted sense of what a drug should and should not do. They may take pride in their ability to seek out and try a new drug before anyone else has done so.

To this class of users, designer drugs are appealing simply because they confer status. Unlike other drugs that anyone might take and enjoy, these drugs are unusual and unique, available to only a select few (Pesce & Krock, 2023).

## **Committee Expectations**

As delegates representing nations there are several standard practices you are expected to understand and follow

- A. Being well researched on the threat of narcotics and emerging fears in pharmaceutical drugs.
- B. Understanding the role of the UNODC in combating, for one, the world drug problem as well as the duties the office has taken in the past to combat organised crime.
- C. Collaborate with other nations to develop effective strategies for preventing radicalization, countering terrorism, and promoting international security.
- D. Consider the perspectives and interests of different countries, balancing national security concerns with broader global objectives.

## Questions to Answer

- What metrics can be used to assess the effectiveness of supply reduction efforts for emerging drug threats?
- How can development aid be used to support supply reduction efforts?
- What legal and policy reforms are needed to effectively combat these threats?
- How can the long-term consequences of supply reduction measures be anticipated and mitigated?
- What are the challenges and limitations of applying traditional supply reduction methods to new drugs?
- How can international partnerships be strengthened to identify and dismantle global supply chains to prevent the diversion of licit production activities to illicit economic activities?

Remember, this background guide provides **a starting point** for your research and preparation. It is crucial to delve deeper into specific aspects, policies, and regional contexts relevant to extremist factions to enhance your understanding and develop comprehensive solutions during the Model United Nations conference.

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