



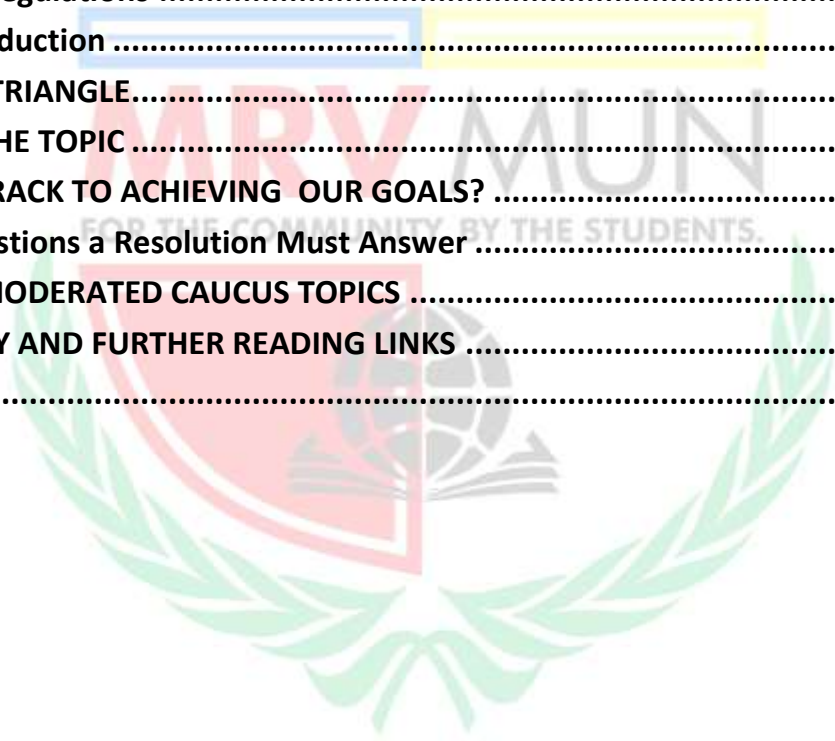
**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE ON
DRUGS AND
CRIME**

AGENDA

***ASSESSING THE LEGALITY ON CANNABIS
PRODUCTS, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
THE PRODUCTION OF OPIATES IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA***

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

We look forward to interacting with you, in The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The UNODC works to assist member states in addressing global issues related to drugs, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism through research, policy support, and capacity building. Keeping this ambitious goal in mind, we wish you all the best, as you strive to take up this daunting challenge.

We encourage you to prepare thoroughly, venture outside the box, and garner immense knowledge of the topic. Refrain from restricting yourself to just the study guide, and find what few others would know.

Make sure to remember that you are representing a portfolio and not yourself! Be confident and present *their* stance on the agenda, even if your perspective has major differences.

Once again, we would like to wish you all the very best, and we hope that you await this fruitful experience as much as we do!

See you there,

Ayush Ghosh,
Chairperson

Niaan Dand,
Vice-chair

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

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 today's challenging times, our work is needed more than ever. by 2030, with the UNDP having to play a major role in ensuring that the same is achieved.

Their efforts center on protecting people and our planet from criminal exploitation through inclusive, sustainable, human rights-based approaches. 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.



The Office is committed to supporting Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core. The

2030 Agenda clearly recognizes that the rule of law and fair, effective and humane justice systems, as well as health-oriented responses to drug use, are both enablers for and part of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

The agenda of "**Assessing the Legality on Cannabis Products, with Special Emphasis on the Production of Opiates in Southeast Asia**" explores the evolving global landscape of drug policies and their socio-economic implications. With cannabis legalization gaining traction for medical and recreational purposes in several countries, the discussion revolves around aligning national policies with international drug control treaties. Simultaneously, the production of opiates in Southeast Asia, particularly in the "Golden Triangle," remains a critical challenge due to its links to organized crime, public health crises, and economic dependency in rural communities.

Cannabis Regulations

Since the adoption of the United Nations' Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, cannabis and cannabis resin had been listed in Schedule IV, the most tightly restricted category, reserved for drugs that are "particularly liable to abuse and to produce ill effects" and whose "liability is not offset by substantial therapeutic advantages."

Its initial placement in this category was not based on science, and no international scientific assessment had been undertaken until 2018, when the World Health Organization initiated it, leading to the scheduling recommendation.

The removal of cannabis and cannabis resin from that Schedule entered into force in 2021, after a vote on 2 December 2020 by the UN Commission on narcotic drugs. Since 2021, cannabis and cannabis resin remain listed in

Schedule I of the Single Convention, alongside extracts and tinctures of cannabis.

Medicinal cannabis is widely accepted and regulated in many countries, such as Canada, Germany, and Australia, where it is prescribed for conditions like chronic pain and epilepsy. Recreational cannabis is legalized in nations like Canada, Uruguay, and parts of the United States, though these policies often clash with international treaties, such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961). Despite legalization trends, concerns remain about public health, regulatory loopholes, and the potential for misuse or illegal trafficking.

Opiate Production

In 2023, the resulting estimate of potential dry opium production in Myanmar was 1,080 (760- 1,720) metric tons, the highest since 2001 (1,100 tons of opium were estimated that year). This represents a substantial increase of 36% compared with the 2022 estimate.

There are a variety of drivers behind illicit crop cultivation and drug production. Opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia is closely linked to poverty, lack of government services, challenging macroeconomic environments, instability, and insecurity.¹ Against the background of continued disruptions to social, political, and economic stability following the military takeover in early 2021, Myanmar's economy faced a series of external and domestic shocks in 2021 and 2022. Worsening stability and security since then have coincided with greater levels of poppy cultivation and opium production. Lao PDR's economy is also experiencing declining economic growth, high levels of public debt relative to GDP, and extremely high inflation. Such conditions could contribute to an environment that makes poppy cultivation attractive to rural communities.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

The Golden Triangle is a large, mountainous region of approximately 200,000 km² (77,000 sq mi) in northeastern Myanmar, northwestern Thailand and northern Laos, centered on the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong rivers. The name "Golden Triangle" was coined by Marshall Green, a U.S. State Department official, in 1971 in a press conference on the opium trade. Today, the Thai side of the river confluence, Sop Ruak, has become a tourist attraction, with the House of Opium Museum, a Hall of Opium, and a Golden Triangle Park.



The Golden Triangle has been one of the largest opium-producing areas of the world since the 1950s. Most of the world's heroin came from the Golden Triangle until the early 21st century when opium production in Afghanistan increased. Myanmar was the world's second-largest source of opium after Afghanistan up to 2022, producing some 25% of the world's opium, forming part of the Golden Triangle. While opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar had declined year-on-year since 2015, cultivation area increased by 33% totalling 40,100 ha (99,000 acres) alongside an 88% increase in yield potential to 790 t (780 long tons; 870 short tons) in 2022 according to latest data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Myanmar Opium Survey 2022. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has also warned that opium production in Myanmar may rise again if the economic crunch brought on by COVID-19 and the country's 2021 Myanmar coup d'état persists, with significant public health and security consequences for much of Asia.

How it is being stopped

UNODC has a long-term partnership with the Thai government and other stakeholders to combat drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle and, from the military base at Doi Chang Mub overlooking Myanmar, joint patrols are conducted on a regular basis to counter trafficking. It has been confirmed from the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that though the opium poppy farming has decreased since 2014, the region has now become one of the world's leading areas for the production of synthetic drugs and particularly methamphetamines including the popular YABA tablets, a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine, highly addictive pills, which are the latest craze especially amongst the youth.

HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

Historically, the global community has regulated substances such as cannabis and opiates through the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), which categorized both as controlled substances. Despite its extensive use for medicinal, recreational, and industrial purposes, cannabis has been subjected to international prohibition under this framework for an extended period. Opiates, particularly opium, have faced similar regulations, with Southeast Asia being a significant hub for opium poppy cultivation, notably in the Golden Triangle region, which encompasses parts of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.

Throughout much of the 20th century, Southeast Asia emerged as a principal producer of opium, presenting considerable challenges in the global effort to combat drug trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), established in 1997, has collaborated extensively with governments in this region to address the illicit production and distribution of opiates. Initiatives have included alternative development programs, interdiction efforts, and regional partnerships aimed at curtailing opium cultivation. In Myanmar, for instance, the UNODC has facilitated programs that assist farmers in shifting from opium production to alternative sources of income, while also enhancing law enforcement measures against drug trafficking.

Concurrently, as global perspectives on cannabis have evolved, particularly over the past twenty years, the discourse surrounding its legality has become more pronounced. Numerous countries, including several in North America and Europe, have taken steps to decriminalize or legalize cannabis, primarily for medical and recreational purposes. This shift has introduced

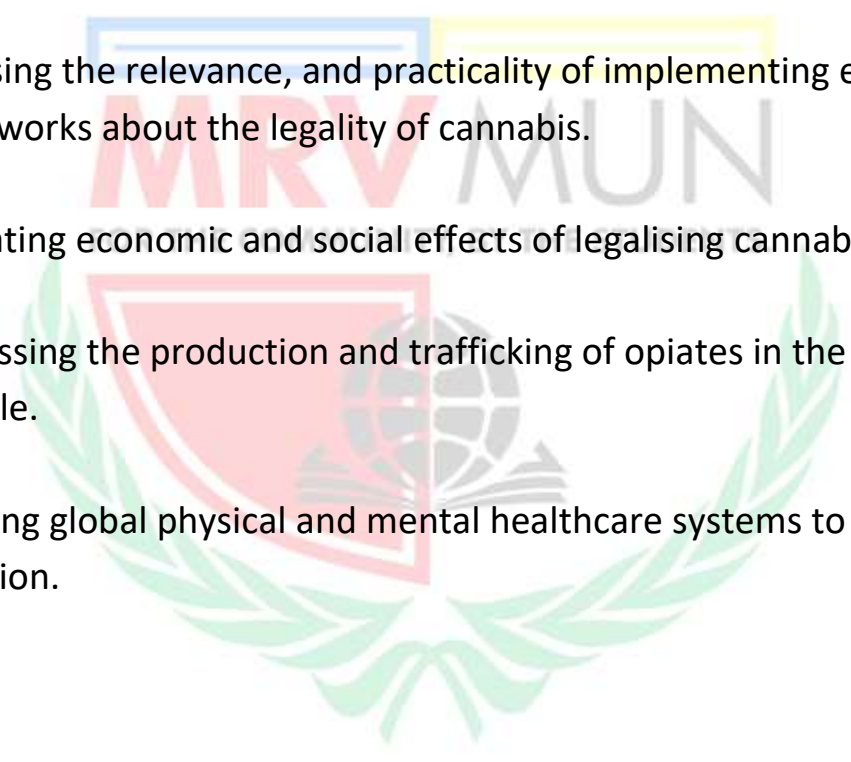
complex challenges for international drug control, as the current legal framework established by the 1961 Convention does not readily accommodate the movement toward legalization.

The UNODC has sought to navigate this evolving landscape, striving to maintain international consensus on drug control while acknowledging the realities of changing domestic policies. The organization has frequently underscored the necessity of adhering to international conventions while also recognizing emerging trends.

QARMA - Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. What are some effective international and regional strategies to reduce the cultivation and trafficking of opiates, particularly in the context of Southeast Asia?
2. What are the primary challenges in regulating and combating opiate production in Southeast Asia?
3. What role does Southeast Asia play in the global illicit opiate trade, and how is the UNODC supporting countries in the region to reduce opium production?
4. How does the production of opiates in Southeast Asia affect neighboring regions, and what international cooperation is needed to address the problem?
5. What are the potential benefits and risks of legalizing cannabis from both a public health and economic perspective?

SUGGESTED MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS

1. Assessing the relevance, and practicality of implementing existing frameworks about the legality of cannabis.
 2. Evaluating economic and social effects of legalising cannabis.
 3. Addressing the production and trafficking of opiates in the Golden Triangle.
 4. Boosting global physical and mental healthcare systems to tackle drug addiction.
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PRO TIPS

1. Go beyond the study guide while researching about the agenda, and ensure that you are thorough with your portfolios' stance about the same, and various sub-topics thoroughly.
2. Ensure that all sources of information you use in your speeches are reliable, and accepted in MUNs. The executive board and/or other delegates may ask for a source, with regard to a piece of information that you provide. Some reliable sources include UN affiliated websites, BBC, The World Bank. (Don't limit yourself to just these!)
3. Read relevant resolutions, such as Agenda 21, and The Paris Agreement. They can be extremely informative, and would be of great help during the conference.
4. Be prepared with at least 2 GSL's, and 4 moderated caucus speeches.

FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE STUDENTS.

