



COLOMBIA: PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WORLD PROBLEM OF DRUGS 1998-2008

The manifestations of the world problem of drugs and its consequences for security, governance and democracy in States today are different from those of 10 years ago, and more serious.

The illegal drugs industry has become one of the principal sources of financing and social control for criminal networks, illegal armed groups and terrorists.

These threats to security, supported by millions of dollars from the illegal drugs industry, attack governments, hamper economic and social development, weaken democratic institutions through corruption, increase violence and criminality, generate violations of human rights, and destroy the environment.

More than 2.2 million ha of tropical forest had been felled in Colombia, to plant coca leaf 1 kg of cocoa paste removes 1.9 L of sulphuric acid, 1.25 L of ammonia, 193.75 m of contaminated water and 625 kg of plant waste, from the soil or the rivers.

The progress achieved by Colombia in the struggle against the world problem of drugs, in terms of the objectives of the international community in the United Nations General Assembly Special Sessions of 1998, evaluated in the context of the 52nd Period of Sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs recently held in Vienna, includes the following:



The Colombian strategy in the struggle against drugs

In everything from the eradication of illegal crops, interdiction, alternative development, through the strengthening of police and judicial co-operation, to the implementation of a national policy to reduce internal consumption, Colombia has fought a comprehensive and balanced battle against one of man's most dangerous enemies.

It is only through simultaneous action addressed to each of the links in the chain of the business that it will be possible to implement an effective strategy against drugs, and therefore Colombia is working in parallel on each of those fronts.

1. Reduction of offer

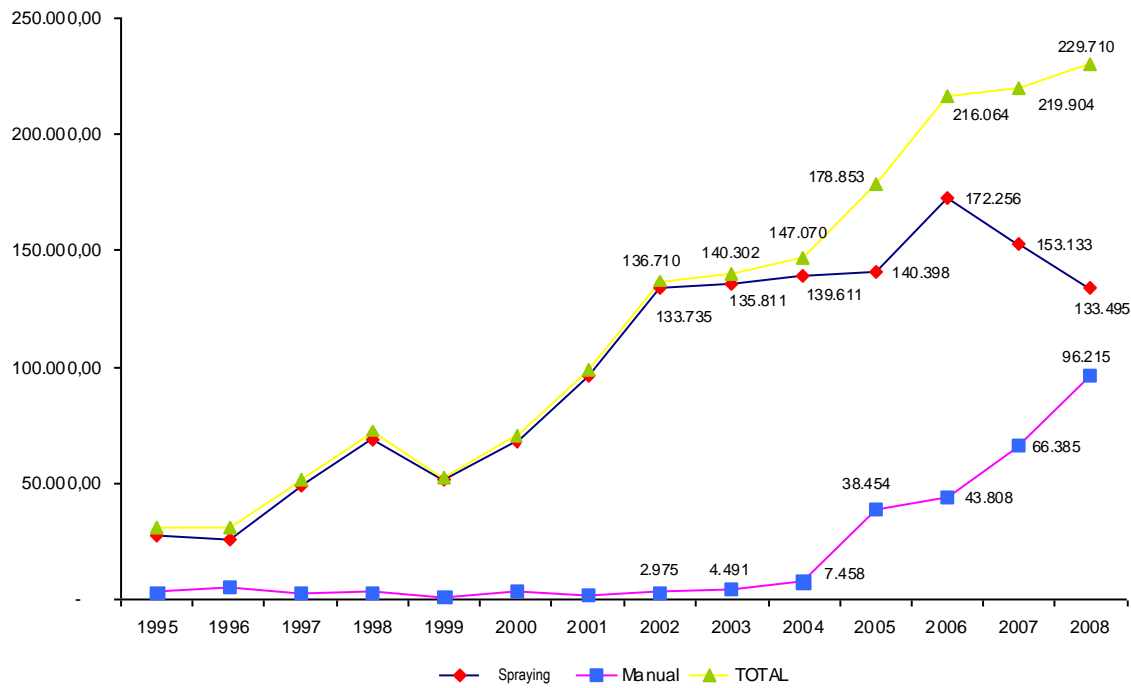
In its struggle against the world problem of drugs Colombia has adopted a comprehensive approach, through which it understands the drugs business as a system composed of interdependent links.

Eradication. Greater resources and efforts are being directed at manual eradication, combined with aerial spraying. The local terrain and the security situation dictate which of the two methods should be used.

- Since 1998, a total of 1,566,679 ha of unlawful crops have been eradicated - a world record. And today, Colombia is eradicating an average of 700 ha every day – an area the size of 1,550 football pitches.



**ERADICATION OF ILLICIT CROPS
1995 – 2008**



Source: Narcotics Agency DNE, Observatory for drugs in Colombia

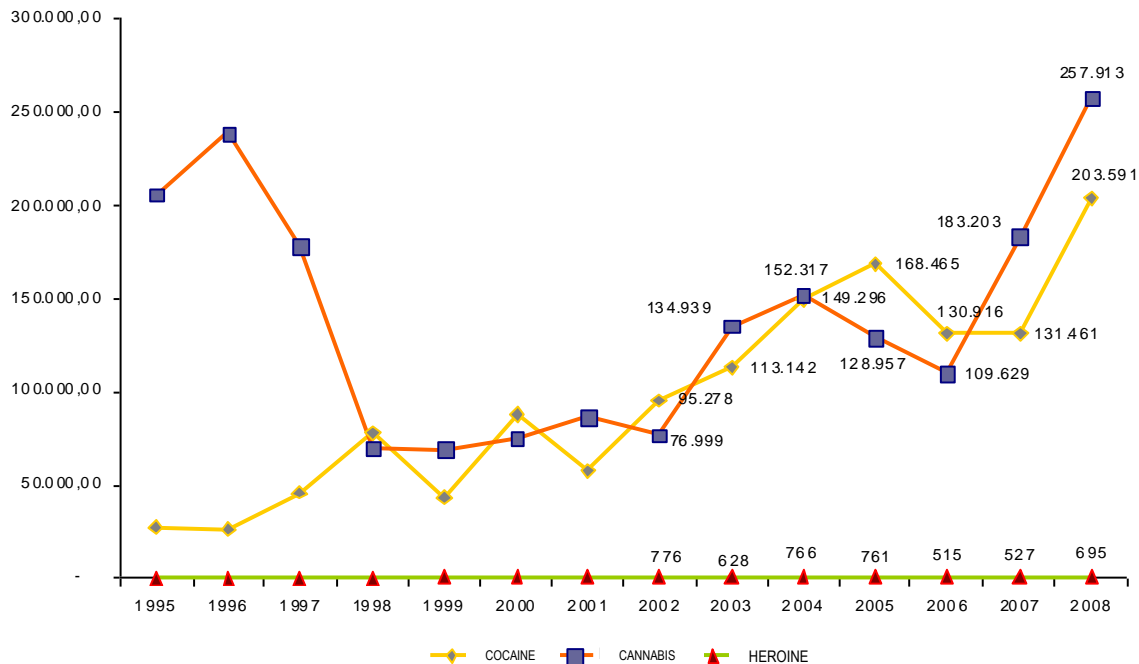


ERADICATION OF ILLEGAL CROPS APRIL 2009 (HECTARES)

CROPS	SPRAYING	MANUAL	TOTAL
COCAINE	32.589,40	11.915,05	44.504,45
POPPY		37,23	37,23
CANNABIS		23,25	23,25
TOTAL	32.589,40	11.975,53	44.564,93

Source: Narcotics Agency DNE, Observatory for drugs in Colombia

ILLICIT DRUG SEIZURE IN COLOMBIA
1995 - 2008



Source: Narcotics Agency DNE, Observatory for drugs in Colombia



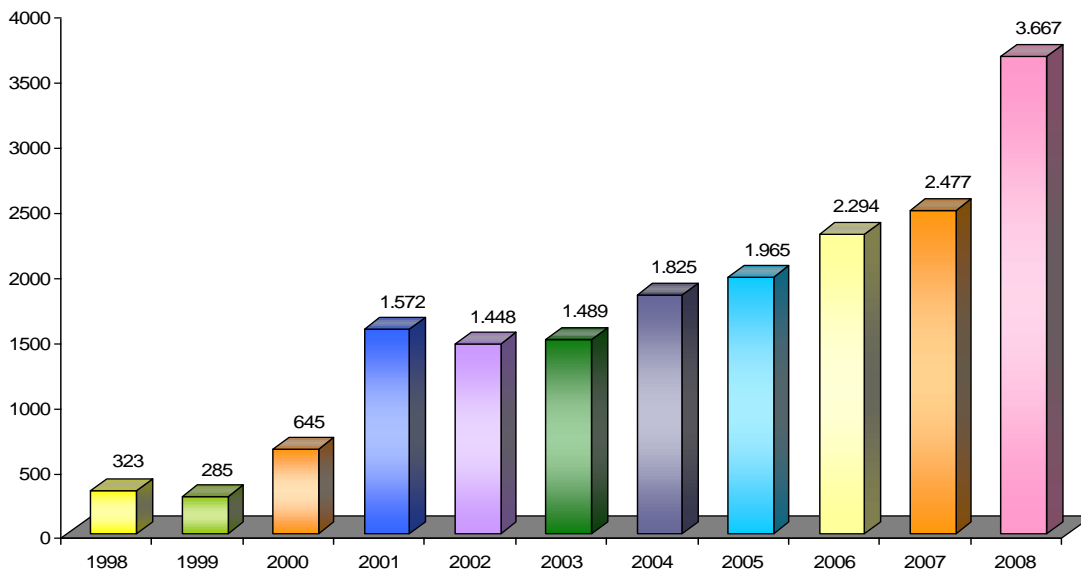
Interdiction. Interdiction operations are conducted daily by land, sea and air and on the rivers of Colombia. The objective is to make it as difficult as possible to transport drugs from the growing areas to frontiers and ports. At the same time, the intention is to ensure that the chemical precursors essential to the processing of coca leaf do not reach the manufacturing facilities, and that there is control over the unlawful traffic in weapons, ammunition and explosives destined for the illegal armed groups and the armed drug trafficking organisations.

Colombia has achieved the highest number of seizures of cocaine in South America, representing 29% of all cocaine seized around the world

In the last 10 years the Colombian authorities have seized a total of 1389 tonnes of cocaine hydrochloride, and 7.4 tonnes of heroin. These operations have denied the traffickers income estimated at more than \$35,000,000,000.

In the same period, 17,990 manufacturing facilities for the production and processing of natural-origin drugs have been destroyed.

PROCESSING FACILITIES DESTROYED IN COLOMBIA 1998-2008



Source: Narcotics Agency DNE, Observatory for drugs in Colombia



Control and seizure of precursors. Between 1988 and 2008, Colombia has seized a total of 30,590 tonnes of solid substances and 82,231 cubic metres of liquid substances. Colombian law provides for criminal and administrative penalties for the diversion of controlled chemical substances

Alternative development. This is a fundamental component in the policy for the struggle against unlawful crops and drug trafficking in Colombia. The purpose of this component is to offer productive alternatives to the people who live in rural areas, at the bottom end of the chain of unlawful drug production. Colombia has given priority to eradication, to be followed by the implementation of alternative development projects.

The presidential programme for illegal crops (PCI) works on prevention and eradication of illegal crops through three programmes:

1. Mobile Eradication Groups. This is based on the formation of groups which, under the protection of the forces of law and order, travel to areas where illegal crops are being grown, for forcible manual and mechanical eradication. The objective is to control the movement of coca leaf to areas of the peasant economy, or nature parks or reserves. In March 2009, there are 140 Mobile Eradication Groups working in eight provinces of Colombia.

2. Forest Ranger Families Programme. This programme supports peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities living in ecosystems of strategic social or environmental importance, which are threatened or affected by unlawful crops, and wish to eradicate them in order to adopt legal productive alternatives. At March 2009, there were 98,365 Forest Ranger Families, including current contracts and families who have already completed their contracts.

3. The Productive Project Programme. The main objective here is to set up self-sustaining and profitable production productive projects, offering legal and stable alternatives for employment and income, and improving the food security of peasant-farmers and communities through the sustainable use of natural resources. At March 2009, 308 such projects have been developed.

Asset-laundering and the extinction of ownership. Colombia has a solid infrastructure to combat the laundering of assets derived from drug trafficking or the illegal trade in precursors, and for the detection, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime. This is an effective tool to combat drug-trafficking and the financing of terrorism.



Action against asset-laundering



Law 1121/2006. This defines the crime of the financing of terrorism and the administration of resources related to terrorist activities, as an independent crime, and as the source of the laundering of assets.

Law 793/2002. This law sets the rules for the extinction of ownership of assets and products of assets which are derived directly and indirectly from some illegal activity.

Strengthening of institutions. In Colombia:

- Special units and courts have been created and strengthened to investigate drug trafficking and asset-laundering;
- The programme for witnesses, victims and those taking part in criminal proceedings has been strengthened;
- The National narcotics Council has strengthened the implementation and supervision of a National narcotics policy; and
- Special mechanisms have been implemented, such as supervised deliveries, undercover agents and passive surveillance.

II. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Colombia understands international co-operation in the framework of common and shared responsibility, as compliance with commitments and obligations acquired by States in the struggle against the world problem of drugs; the coordination of plans and action between neighbouring countries and at regional level; financial and technical cooperation which is consistent with national needs, priorities and politics; the prompt exchange of operating and judicial information; and effective action against asset-laundering and the financing of terrorism.



Extradition. In the last 10 years, Colombia has delivered 942 individuals in extradition.

Judicial assistance. In compliance with the mandate of the policy declaration of 1998, Colombia has between 1998 and 2008 ratified 10 bilateral and multilateral instrument for judicial co-operation and assistance.

Colombia as leader in South-South Co-operation. Colombia has one of the most complete infrastructures anywhere for the struggle against the world problem of drugs. Among its leading features are:

- Increased professionalisation of the forces of law and order for their operational tasks
- Appropriate legal and institutional structure
- Comprehensive national drugs policy
- Strategy for international co-operation.

Colombia's experience is of enormous value to countries which are facing the problem of the illegal drugs industry in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

III. REDUCTION OF DEMAND

An integral and consistent anti-drugs policy. In response to this problem, Colombia has for the first time implemented a specific policy to reduce the consumption of drugs. It proposes innovative and measurable interventions which match realities.



The policy revolves around four themes:

1. Prevention

This seeks to prevent people starting to use or abuse drugs at any time of life

2. Mitigation

This seeks to prevent those who have started to use drugs from becoming dependent or problem users.

3. Overcoming risks and damage associated with consumption

Includes treatment, rehabilitation and social inclusion of those suffering from disorders due to dependence or showing a pattern of problem use.

4. Capacity for response

Seeks to develop social and institutional support to achieve these objectives

The Colombian Government is preparing a set of initiatives designed to regulate state action in attending to the problem of consumption.

These initiatives approach the problem from the standpoint of public health, and create a new instance which, while not penalising consumption in traditional terms of punishment, does not liberalise consumption either, and even less does it legalise production and distribution of illegal drugs. This initiative is designed to achieve the following:

- Provision of treatment as necessary in the context of mandatory health programmes (POS);
- Elimination of the allowance for personal doses, in observance of the terms of the Constitution;
- Creation of treatment tribunals.

IV. SYSTEMS OF MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

For Colombia, it is essential to have a reliable, integral and balanced system of measurement of the achievements recorded in the struggle against the world problem of drugs.



BALANCE

- Systems of international evaluation have traditionally focused on the measurement of areas used for illegal crops;
- Although the area of unlawful crops is an important indicator it does not reflect efforts and achievements of countries in other stages of the chain;
- The monitoring and evaluation of the commitments of countries needs to be improved in the areas of reduction of demand and action against other links in the chain.

INTEGRAL APPROACH

A consensus needs to be reached for multilateral systems of integral evaluation which should incorporate all links in the chain with quantifiable, homogeneous and universally applicable indicators. This would make it possible to identify trends so that states will be able to draw up, adjust, update and evaluate public policy in the struggle against drugs.

RELIABILITY

The methods used at present have technical limitations which make it impossible to compare results. Evaluation systems should be supported by a reliable method, with baselines defined, so that results can be compared.

More must be spent on research, development and the use of methods and technological tools which are more accurate and reliable.

International co-operation must be used to strengthen the capacity of national agencies responsible for the struggle against drugs, so that they will be able to conduct scientific analyses and studies.

V. COLOMBIA: THE STORY OF A TRANSFORMATION

Colombia has undergone a genuine transformation in the last in recent years. Progress in security, control of territory, institutional presence of the state and social and economic development have made it possible not only for the drugs policy to succeed, but also to offer protection and improvements in the living standards of the population as a whole.

The Democratic Security policy has made an enormous contribution to the achievement of objectives in the struggle against a illegal drugs. Colombia's experience shows that a policy with an integral and balanced approach, which incorporates coordinated action, is a decisive factor for success in the struggle against the world problem of drugs.



Colombia has dismantled the great drug *cartels*, who engaged in the production and traffic of illegal drugs, and had ties with transnational organised crime, illegal firearms-trafficking and terrorism.

In 2002, there were 1,645 acts of terrorism; in 2008, there were 347.

In its pursuit of the Democratic Security policy, Colombia has succeeded in demobilising a large number of members of illegal armed groups, and it has weakened all levels of FARC, the principal illegal armed group which is also one of the most important drug trafficking organisations in the world.

Between 2002 and March 2009, there have been 19,332 individual demobilisations, and 31,670 collective demobilisations.

This is a fundamental achievement, since one of the factors which keeps people away from crime is the recognition that the presence of the state is permanent, and that the illegal armed groups which control the illegal drugs business locally, are no longer a threat.

This progress and these achievements presented by Colombia are a demonstration of its constant and determined commitment to comply with objectives proposed by the international community for an effective attack on the world problem of drugs and related crimes.