

Hanyang Model United Nations VI

Chair Report



Committee: UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council)

Chairs: Jooyoung Han, Inseo Baek

Agenda: Devising measures to prevent human rights abuses regarding drug trafficking and drug abuse

1. Committee Introduction



The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body belonging to the United Nations created in order to discuss human rights conditions in the United Nations Member States. The major objective of the United Nations Human Rights Council is to promote “universal respect to protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all” and “address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon (International Justice Resource Center).”

In 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council was established by Resolution 60/251 to serve as a subsidiary body to the United Nations General Assembly. Before the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the former Commission on Human Rights, which consisted of 53 States members, operated from 1946 to 2006 (OHCHR.org).

The United Nations Human Rights Council currently consists of 47 Member States. These Member States were elected by the United Nations General Assembly. The Member States of the United Nations Human Rights Council are distributed by respective main, geographic regions: 13 Member States for Africa, 13 Member States for Asia, six Member States for Eastern Europe, eight Member States for South America and the Caribbean Sea, and seven for other areas including Western Europe.

The United Nations Human Rights Council is a forum for the States Members to have a mutual dialogue to issue resolutions. Those drafted resolutions call on the State Members to take an action specifically or uphold certain principles. In addition, the United Nations Human Rights Council has made the mandates of various special procedures. They are independent experts in human rights, reporting and advising on human rights issues. The work of the special procedures encompasses civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (International Justice Resource Center).

The most recent regular session was held from September 11, 2023, to October 13, 2023. It is the 54th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which takes place three times per year. Duration per session can last for three, four, or five weeks depending on its work. If one-third of the Member States of the United Nations Human Rights Council request for the session, a special session can be held at any time. It meets at the United Nations Office located in Geneva, Switzerland (OHCHR.org).

2. Agenda background

A drug is a chemical substance used as a medicine. Depending on its various purposes, the drug can help people cure the disease both physically and mentally. The drug usually falls into three categories: depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens. Depressants cause depression in the brain and relax people. Depressants include barbiturates and heroin. Adversely, stimulants cause stimulation in the brain. Exemplary phenomena shown by the stimulants are increased heart rate and blood pressure, agitation, and dilated pupils. Cocaine and amphetamines are stimulants. Hallucinogens cause feelings of dissociation from oneself. People taking hallucinogens may have distorted sensory perception, delusion, and paranoia. Examples of hallucinogens are ecstasy and LSD.

While most of the drug is made for medical purposes, problems involved in drug use such as drug trafficking or drug abuse can happen. Drug trafficking refers to illegal trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of legally prohibited drugs. Drug trafficking can be easily found in almost every nation in the world with the aid of the development of various transporting methods and scientific technologies, avoiding monitors from social organizations. The reason for drug trafficking being greatly dangerous is that this illicit activity is related to serious forms of crime including firearms, modern slavery, and immigration crime, violating human rights throughout the world (National Crime Agency).

a. Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Europe

Europe fell in danger of drug trafficking as new, harmful drugs appeared in the market. The European Union's agency monitoring drugs and addiction stated that amid violence and corruption, drugs hurt local communities throughout Europe. Drug users are currently exposed to more kinds of drugs of high purity since drug trafficking and abuse have returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

According to the European Union's agency, 22.6 million Europeans over 15 years old have used cannabis in the last year while seizures of cocaine reached a historically high level. Not only that, new synthetic drugs are not well documented, thus, worrying the officials about their potential side-effects on drug takers. In 2022, 41 new drugs were notified by the agency for the first time. Alexis Goosdeel, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction Director warned that "established illicit drugs are now widely accessible and potent new substances continue to emerge, almost everything with psychoactive properties can appear on the drug market."

New popular drugs including ketamine and nitrous oxide, which is also called laughing gas, are on the rise. Their side effects are known as bladder problems, nerve damage, and lung injuries. What's more, while heroin is highly available in the continent, trafficking, and abuse of synthetic opioids are negatively affecting the health of those living in Baltic countries.

Record quantities of cocaine were seized in Europe, with 303 tons caught by European countries in 2021. 75 percent of the total amount was caught in Belgium, Spain, and the Netherlands, with Antwerp and Rotterdam ports, which are the major gateways for cocaine cartels of Latin

America into the European continent. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, in 2021, the amount of cocaine found in Antwerp port increased from 91 tons to 110 tons.

The expanding cocaine market caused an increase in violence and corruption in the European Union as drug traffickers fiercely competed with each other through homicides and intimidation. The federal authorities of Belgium stated that drug trafficking penetrates society quickly owing to the presence of deeply rooted foreign criminal organizations. These criminal organizations employ the profits earned from drugs in order to purchase people, police officers to hide themselves, and murder. Violence relevant to drug trafficking and abuse has become a more serious issue across Europe (June 17, 2023, VOAnews).

b. Drug Trafficking and Abuse in the United States

Public health in the United States is threatened by the abuse of prescribed and non-prescribed opioids. Still, as a cheaper and more accessible alternative to opioids- heroin- appeared, the number of heroin users has grown.

In addition, synthetic opioids including fentanyl have increased the number of deaths caused by drug overdose. Mexico and China are the main exporters, selling much of the illicitly manufactured fentanyl to the United States. Manufactured acetyl fentanyl, another dangerous analog of fentanyl, is also trafficked into the United States from China. Fentanyl is extremely lethal in that it is 40 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more than morphine. In 2016, the top five districts involved in drug trafficking were known to be Western and Southern Texas, Arizona, Southern California, and New Mexico (America Addiction Centers).

c. Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Mexico

In Mexico, illegal opium poppy cultivation has increased a lot. According to the Mexican government, to regulate drug production and trafficking, 21,425 ha of opium poppy fields were removed in 2014 while 14,419 ha were removed in 2013. From 2010 to 2015, the number of heroin seizures adjacent to the border between Mexico and the United States doubled. Furthermore, Mexican drug trafficking organizations supply most of the cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine into the United States across the border. Those Mexican drug organizations are the largest international supplier to America (America Addiction Centers).

d. Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Afghanistan

In 1999 and 2000, Afghanistan was a massive illegal opium-producing country. It established a drug repositioning network with Central Asia, guaranteeing a rising flow of drugs during the last ten years. As Afghanistan's opium poppy cultivation was banned in 2000, opium production declined a bit. Though, its regulation did not last longer than expected. In 2002, only a year after the ban, the

cultivation drastically increased to about 74,000 ha again (November 2002, United Nations – Office on Drugs and Crime).

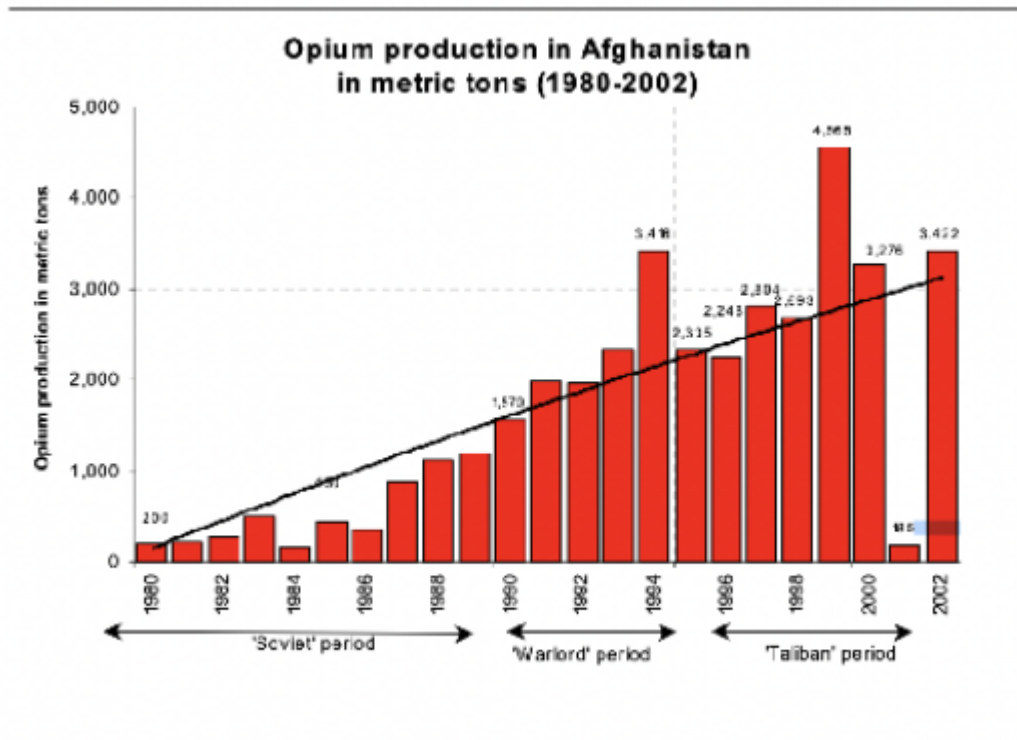


Figure 1. UNODC, *Global Illicit Drug Trends 2022 and UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2002*.

Once the Taliban took power in August 2022, it seemed to launch a crackdown on narcotics. Fast forward to April, the Taliban issued a decree, completely banning the production and sales of illegal drugs. However, the way that the decree was enforced turned out improper. Unsuccessfully, drug trafficking in Afghanistan began to boom under the Taliban’s rule.

The United Nations revealed that Afghanistan still accounted for approximately 85 percent of the world’s opium production in 2020. Drug trafficking was the largest economic sector in Afghanistan. This provided over half a million people with full-time employment. In Afghan drug trafficking, poppy production was awfully prosperous.

Soon after the Taliban started to strictly put sanctions on drug trafficking, the Afghan economy spiraled. Rural Afghans, who once maintained their livelihoods through poppy production, underwent hardship in the extreme economic and humanitarian crisis.

Then, methamphetamine appeared in Afghanistan. This industry has been recently highlighted. The satellite imagery showed the cultivation expanded to more than 11,886 cubic meters of ephedra located in southwestern Afghanistan. In this response, the Taliban tried to ban ephedra in December, though it was already late. The ephedrine and meth producers earned profits through such illegal drug trafficking (August 24, 2022, Atlantic Council).

e. Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Japan

Drug abuse among the young has recently risen in Japan. The number of arrests for cannabis possession reached record-high levels in the past two years. Most of the arrests were under 30 years old. Not only possessing cannabis but some were also arrested for its sales. Three 20-year-old students from Asahi University in Gifu Prefecture who sold marijuana were alleged. Eventually, they were decriminalized, but Japan tried to maintain its strict laws against drug abuse (September 29, 2023, the Japan Times).

Number of People Detained for Drug-Related Offenses in Japan

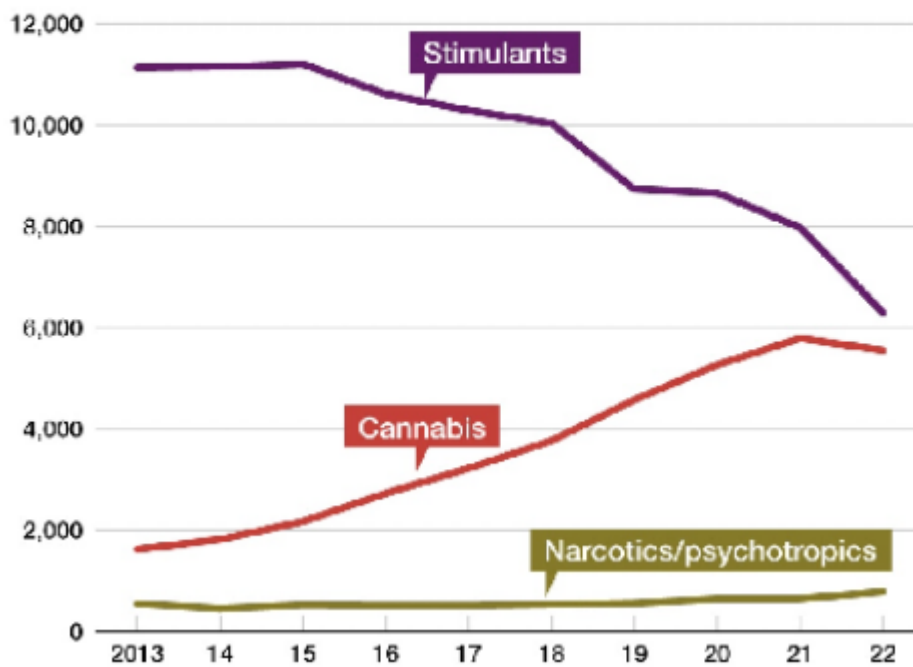


Figure 2. Nippon.com. based on data from the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare.

From the graph, while the number of stimulant takers decreased from 2015, the number of cannabis takers has grown constantly since 2013. Until 2013, the number of cannabis takers remained under 2,000. However, in 2021 only eight years from 2013, its number has almost tripled. Even though in 2022, owing to stricter regulation on drugs, the line seems to decline a bit, it is still a high number compared to the past. At last, the number of narcotics and psychotropics is also on the uptick slowly. Plus, it is worthy to know that 52.1 percent of the arrestees were under the age of 20 while a total of 85.1 percent of them had the first experience of taking cannabis before 30 years of age (August 25, 2023, Nippon.com).

3. Previous Actions

a. International Day Against Drug Abuse and Trafficking

On June 26, 2023, there was the commemoration of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. This commemoration was held by the Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), collaborating with the Iran Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). A lot of public figures such as the Minister of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Governors of Tehran, officials and experts from national institutions, national sports figures, and athletes, media and press, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Ambassadors and members of the international communities, and the representatives of the United Nations agencies participated in this celebration.

Mr. Momeni, the Secretary General of the Drug Control Headquarters made his opening statement, emphasizing efforts on drug control and seizures. At the same time, he illustrated how Iran has reinforced the decrease in drug supply such as narcotics, and provided people taking drugs with treatment and rehabilitation.

Mr. Alexander Fedulov, Iran's Country Representative referred to constant cooperation with the governments and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime via the fifth Country Partnership Program from 2023 to 2026, which was recently signed in Vienna. Furthermore, he emphasized the significance that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has in providing strong partnerships with the nations while showing Iran's successful cooperation with national counterparts and interventions (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

b. Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

United Nations Economic and Social Council established the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to enact policies relevant to drugs. Through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Member States analyze the global situation regarding drug usage, pursue the decisions made during the twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly, and take action following the measures established. Also, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs supervises the implementation of three international conventions on the regulation of drugs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

c. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Since the establishment of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was established, there have been numerous endeavors. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime undertakes projects to prevent, treat, and rehabilitate addictive drugs. What's more, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime accelerates progress in programs to fight against the illicit drug markets formed all over the world by monitoring illegal crops used for making drugs and strengthening governments' abilities to disturb and engage in drug trafficking.

In order to implement these tasks, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime studies and makes analyses on drug traffic as well as drug production and consumption. These studied works are provided to respective nations differently according to their national contexts to produce the most

optimal results. Furthermore, the organization tries to legally help countries implement the United Nations conventions and treaties regarding drugs.

The World Drug Report is published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime every year. The content of the reports is the data and trends about drug production, consumption, and traffic throughout the world. They are not only open to anyone to look for relevant information, but they are used as a reference guide for enacting the global policies of the Member States based on what they found (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

4. Possible Actions and Solutions

As the severity and danger involved in drug trafficking and abuse have come to the fore for a few decades, there have been numerous efforts to prevent human rights abuses regarding such issues. However, when it comes to solving one huge, global issue, the durability to continue following the laws or carrying out policies is the most important factor.

a. Education

The drug is a highly addictive substance. As drugs are exposed to anyone in modern days, it is important to recognize the danger of drugs and people should determine themselves not to abuse drugs for their better lives. Also, people have to notice that because of drug use nearby, like someone's parents or friends, one might easily access drug usage. Therefore, from childhood early education to be aware of the harm of drugs is necessary.

In schools, a science teacher or school nurse can make special classes for their students to teach how the drug acts in people's bodies and why this is dangerous based on scientifically proven facts. Otherwise, schools can invite professional teachers in the relevant field. If such a condition is not satisfied due to schools' matters, using audio and visual materials is another way to help students recognize the reason to refrain from drug abuse to protect their own human rights.

b. Online and offline campaigns

As the same principle is used in education in schools, adults also need to be aware of the risk of taking too much drugs. It is critical to raise such awareness by promoting both online and offline campaigns to increase accessibility to pertainable information.

Promoting public advertisements through Social Network Services or news articles that a number of people access every day is one of the best ways to upload campaigns to take warnings about drug trafficking and abuse. However, social media might rather negatively affect young people as incorrect information or advertisements related to illegal drugs can be spread out quickly and easily. Adversely, people from organizations can make offline campaigns. They can advertise the need to form a specific treaty or law to prevent drug trafficking and abuse.

c. Providing health care services

While some people enjoy drugs simply for fun, there are others who try drugs to get free from feeling extreme depression in reality. Nations and organizations need to provide people with health care not to begin taking drugs because of mental diseases. Moreover, for drug addicts, drug rehabilitation is vital. People can receive medically adequate treatments to be free from drug addiction from adjacent hospitals or health care centers.

d. Strengthening regulation on drug trades

With the development of transportation methods, trade across borders throughout the world is highly available. Therefore, there is a need for governments to effectively secure trade materials if drug trafficking happens. By employing drug-detecting animals like dogs or X-rays to look for illegally imported and exported drugs, drug trafficking would be able to be highly reduced.

5. Defining of Key Words

- a. Narcotics: Narcotics today refers to opium, opium derivatives, and their semi-synthetic substitutes. Narcotics are comprised of illegal drugs like heroin and pharmaceutical drugs such as OxyContin, Vicodin, codeine, morphine, methadone, and fentanyl. For medical and general use, narcotics act as depressants, reducing one's tension, anxiety, and aggression. Serious withdrawals include chills alternating with flushing and excessive sweating, drug craving, increase in heart rate and blood pressure, irritability, loss of appetite, nausea, restlessness, severe depression, tremors, and vomiting (April 2020, Department of Justice/Drug Enforcement Administration – Drug Fact Sheet).
- b. Drug rehabilitation: Drug rehabilitation is where people can be offered treatment to be free from drug addiction. According to the drug that the patients have taken, different kinds of treatments are adopted respectively (UK Addiction Treatment Centre).
- c. Poppy production: Poppy is an informal term for *Papaver somniferum*. It is the main source used to manufacture opium. Poppy was one of the world's oldest medicinal plants. Nonetheless, today, the poppy is thought as a basic ingredient for the common drug, opium (January 7, 2022, Nature).
- d. Heroin: Heroin is produced from opium poppy. Its usage is illegally banned in many countries including the United States of America. To use heroin, people smoke, snort, or inject into their veins. The biggest problem with taking heroin is that heroin gets to the brain so quickly that it is very easy to be addicted. Only taking it once or twice can make anyone addicted to the drug. (March 17, 2022, WebMD)

6. Key Questions

- a. The legality of drugs is distinct according to the nations and types of the drug. Hence, there can be a conflict between the country where the drug is strictly regulated and where the drug is readily accessible with loose control. Should there be a certain standard made by the global organization to easily control drugs as problems involved in drug trafficking and abuse are not confined to a few countries?

- b. While drug trafficking and abuse, severe criminals occur violating human rights. To sternly control drugs, some nations such as Vietnam and China are enforcing capital punishment. However, capital punishment is another issue, which seems to violate human rights. What is an optimal punishment to make people refrain from drug trafficking and abuse while protecting their human rights?

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