

# The UN Guidelines on Alternative Development: the way ahead

Martin Jelsma

Transnational Institute

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# Overview

- The protracted struggle over AD discourse
- Inconvenient truths
  - Market logic
  - Licit & traditional uses
  - Participation & farmers involvement
  - Cannabis
- UN guidelines?
- The way ahead

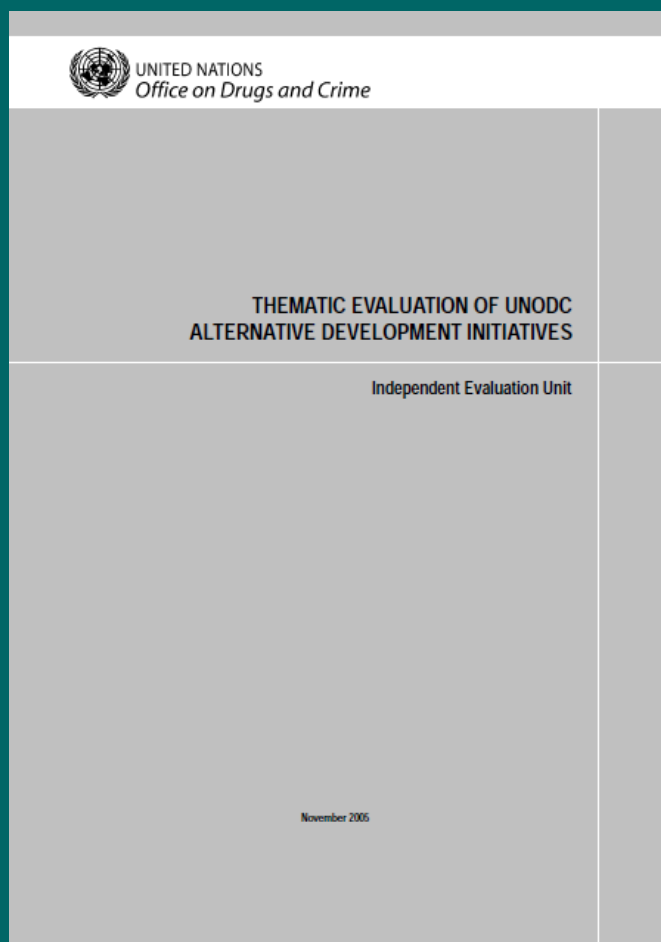
# Alternative Development & Eradication

- Troubled history: SCOPE, UNGASS and the 2008 target
- 1998 Action Plan on “Eradication and Alternative Development”: *“In areas where alternative development programmes have not yet created viable alternative income opportunities, the application of forced eradication might endanger the success of alternative development programmes.”*
- Escalation: Plan Colombia - Afghanistan

# AD discourse response

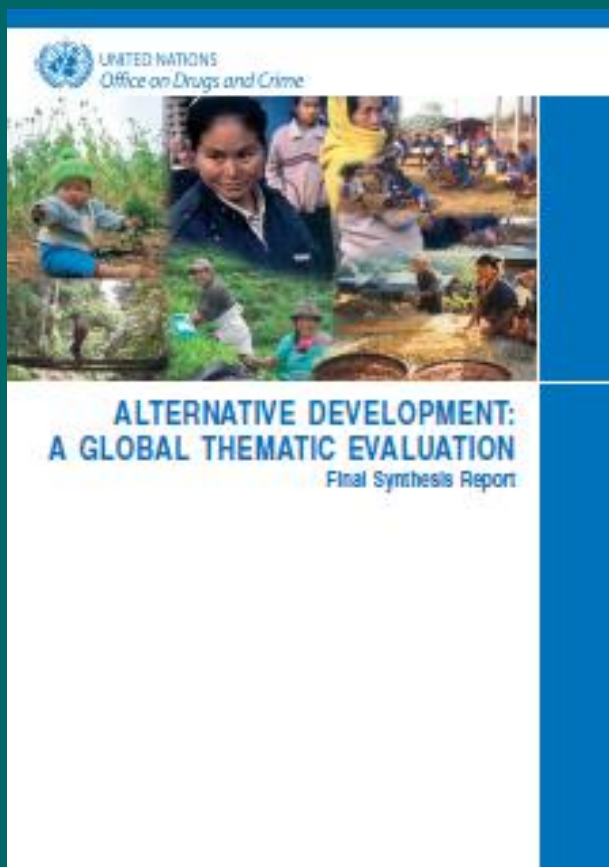
- January 2002: Feldafing I
- CND resolution 45/14: thematic evaluation
- Worldbank on Afghanistan (2004): *“an eradication-led strategy could face severe problems with implementation, poverty impacts, and political damage. ... there is a moral, political and economic case for having alternative livelihoods programs in place before commencing eradication.”*

# Evaluation UNODC - 2005



*“Ideally, the mechanisms to ensure sustainable economic and social development would have been in place long before coercive eradication measures were initiated.”*

# Evaluation CND (2005)



*“AD requires an appropriate policy-legal framework, one that allows illicit-crop growers to be treated first as candidates for development rather than as criminals.”*

*“Make elimination of illicit crops conditional on improvements in the lives and livelihoods of households. Do not make it a prerequisite for development assistance.”*

*“Eradicate illicit crops only when viable alternatives exist”*



- “Development in a Drugs Environment”  
2006 Berlin: GTZ/EC/FAO consultation
- “Mainstreaming Alternative Development”:
  - embedding the objective of illicit drug crop elimination in national and regional development programmes
  - involve international financial institutions

# UNGASS review 2008/2009

- EU Position (2006): *“forced eradication ... should only be pursued when ground conditions ensure that small-scale farmers have had access to alternative livelihoods for a sufficient time period.”*
- Political declaration & Action Plan (2009):  
*“Ensure, when considering taking eradication measures, that small-farmer households have adopted viable and sustainable livelihoods so that the measures may be properly sequenced in a sustainable fashion and appropriately coordinated”*



# Discourse development

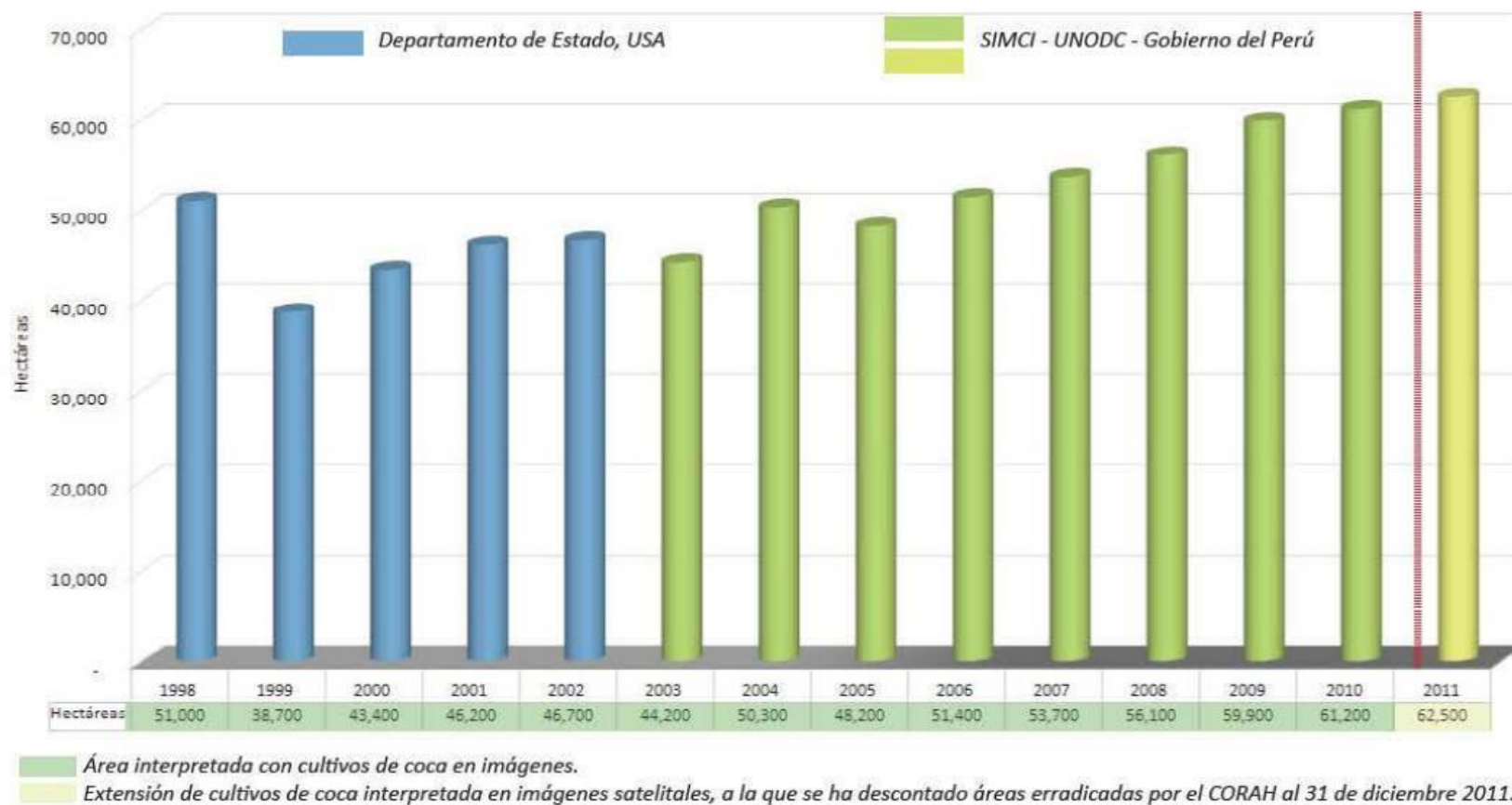
- Crop substitution ■
- Alternative Development
- Development-oriented drug control / policy
- Alternative Livelihoods
- Development in a drugs environment
- “Alternative Development” stays

# Inconvenient truths

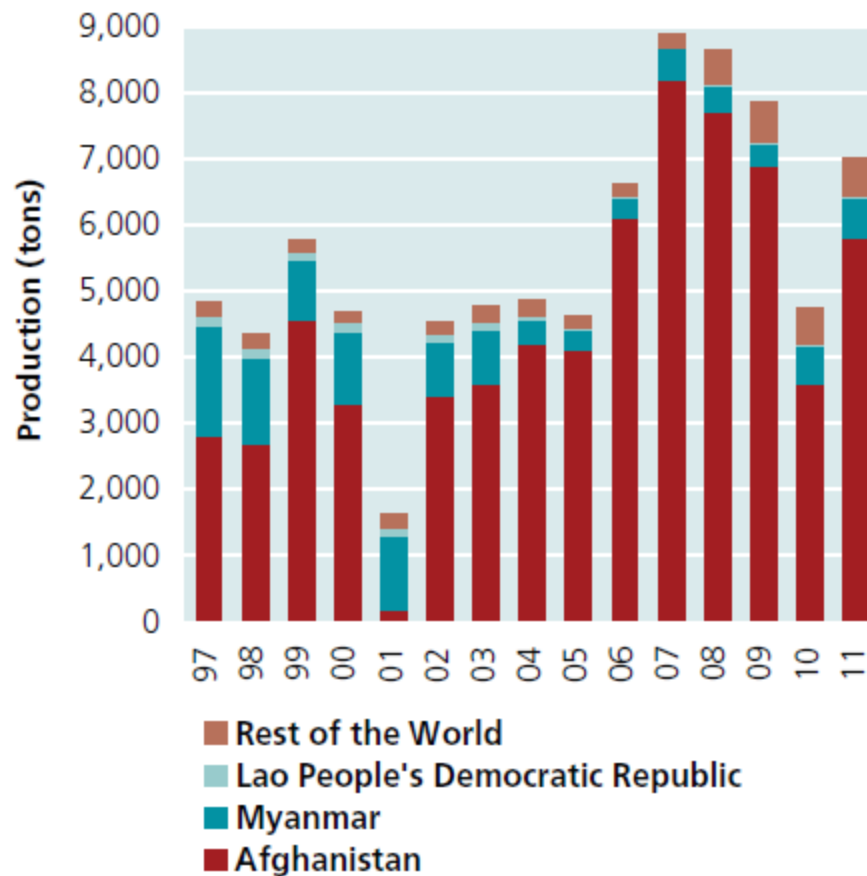
- Market logic
- UN system incoherence
- Farmers involvement
- Cannabis

# Coca cultivation Peru 1998-2011

Figura. 1. Extensión del cultivo de coca, 1998 - 2011.



**Fig. 12.** Global potential opium production, 1997-2011 (Tons)



Source: UNODC.

# UN system incoherence

- Controversy 1961 Single Convention: banning traditional use
- Control of plants & derivatives: 1961 and 1971 treaty inconsistencies
- *“explore the potential for an increase of licit uses in order to decrease the share of cultivation currently destined for the illicit market” (ICAD 2011 - deleted)*

# Farmers participation?

- “Nothing about us without us”?
- Decriminalisation of subsistence farming?
- Human Rights of farmers?
- Farmers fora: Andean region, Barcelona, Valencia, Morocco, Southeast Asia

# Cannabis cultivation & AD





# ICAD: guiding principles



**Development First**  
**A More Humane and Promising Approach to Reducing Cultivation of Crops for Illicit Markets**

By Coletta A. Youngers and John M. Walsh<sup>1</sup>

In March 2009, U.S. Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, described the opium poppy eradication effort in Afghanistan as “the most wasteful and ineffective program that I have seen in 40 years.” At a June 2009 conference of the G-8 countries, Holbrooke elaborated:

“The poppy farmer is not our enemy, the Taliban are, and to destroy the crops is not an effective policy. And the U.S. has wasted hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars on this program and that is going to end. We are not going to support crop eradication.”

For many observers, Holbrooke was simply stating the obvious – poppy or coca crop eradication without viable economic alternatives already in place for the affected farmers is a recipe for replanting. But his declarations marked a departure from the long-standing U.S. policy in support of aggressive forced crop eradication as a central element of international drug control.

above left: Afro-Colombian women harvesting rice in Mapa, Cauca Department, Colombia, 2009.  
above right: Workers, seen through coca leaves, line up before eradicating coca plants in Tumaco, Nariño Department, Colombia, 2010.

1 Coletta A. Youngers is a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), an Associate at the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) and an independent consultant. John M. Walsh is WOLA's Senior Associate for the Andean and Drug Policy.

**WOLA** WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA March 2010

## Rethinking the Approach of Alternative Development

Principles and Standards of Development in a Drugs Environment





# UN guiding principles?

- *“Reaffirming that the world drug problem must be addressed in accordance with the provisions of the Single Convention” etc.*
- *“measures to eradicate illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and cooperation to increase the effectiveness of those efforts”*
- *“ensure the proper and coordinated sequencing of development interventions”*

# UN guiding principles?

- *“Alternative development programmes in the areas where crops are cultivated for illicit drug production and manufacture should be undertaken with a clear understanding of the overall objectives, as appropriate, of eliminating or significantly and measurably reducing the supply of drugs while promoting comprehensive development and social inclusion, alleviating poverty and strengthening social development, the rule of law, security and stability at the country and regional levels, taking into account the promotion and protection of human rights.”*

# The way ahead

- Context of development & human rights, MDGs
- Challenge the UN Vienna drug control monopoly, relate to New York & Geneva
- Connect with related debates about land rights, land grabs, FAO guidelines
- Harm Reduction for the production side
- Involve farmers in the discussion
- Connect with broader drug policy debate
- Ask the inconvenient questions

# Next steps

- “UN” guidelines, ECOSOC & GA
- OAS process: opening the debate
- CND mid-term review 2014
- UN system-wide coherence?
- Towards UNGASS 2016...
- Meanwhile: best practices on the ground...