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# Development Dimensions of Drug Policy: Innovative Approaches

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HIV, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT



### Towards sustainable livelihoods

Drug cultivation in many areas is driven by lack of secure land rights and lack of access to arable land, among other factors.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, having secure land rights and access to arable land facilitates access to credit and income and, in turn, the capacity to transition to other crops and to earn a sustainable livelihood.<sup>9</sup> Women in many crop-cultivating areas can obtain legal land titles only through husbands or male relatives.<sup>10</sup> As a result, women are disproportionately disadvantaged in gaining access to land and, in turn, securing credit and earning income.

The UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document encourages the development of viable economic alternatives, particularly for communities affected by or at risk of illicit cultivation of drug crops. It recommends that States consider development-oriented interventions, 'ensuring that both men and women benefit equally from them, including through job opportunities, improved infrastructure and basic public services and, as appropriate, access and legal titles to land for farmers and local communities.'<sup>11</sup> The SDGs also promote access to land tenure as key to meeting targets to eliminate poverty and achieve gender equality.<sup>12</sup> Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls includes a specific commitment to '[u]ndertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property'.<sup>13</sup>

### Women and land tenure in Bolivia

Bolivia continues to make progress in addressing the gender gap in land tenure as part of its efforts to ensure sustainable livelihoods for subsistence farmers in areas that previously had been targeted for crop eradication.

The country's innovative 'coca yes, cocaine no' policy formalized a cooperative cultivation programme initiated in 2004. The programme has been in place since 2006. It permits registered farmers in certain established areas to grow coca over a limited amount of land, a *cato* equal to 1,600–2,500 square meters, for the legal market as a means to ensure subsistence income. Bolivian law permits 22,000 hectares of coca to be legally cultivated in these 'traditional growing zones' to be sold in legally authorized markets.<sup>14</sup>

In 2008, with funding from the European Union, Bolivia designed and implemented a 'community coca control' programme that engages coca-growing communities to monitor and restrict coca planting, and pursue integrated rural development. Coca grown in excess of the authorized amount is subject to eradication. The programme features land titling for coca-growing families and a registry of the *cato*, the legally authorized coca plot. It also includes biometric registration of authorized growers and a sophisticated database to monitor transport and sales and identify diversion to the illicit market.

8. See N. Affeld, *The Nexus between Drug Crop Cultivation and Access to Land: Insights from Case Studies from Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Myanmar and Peru* (Berlin: German Agency for International Cooperation, 2014); K. Grimmelmann, J. Espinoza, J. Arnold and N. Arning, 'The Land-Drugs Nexus: How Illicit Drug Crop Cultivation Is Related to Access to Land', *UNODC Bulletin on Narcotics*, vol. 51, no. 17 (2018), pp. 75–104; see also J. C. Muñoz-Mora, S. Tobón and J. W. d'Anjou, 'The Role of Land Property Rights in the War on Illicit Crops: Evidence from Colombia', *World Development*, vol. 103 (2018), pp. 268–283.

9. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2015* (2015), p. 116.

10. Affeld, *supra* note 7.

11. UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document, *supra* note 1, para 7(j).

12. Goal 1, indicator 1.4.2; Goal 5, indicator 5.A.

13. Goal 5, Target 5.A.

14. Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ley No. 906 de 2017 (Ley General de la Coca), art. 16(v).



The 'integrated development with coca' policy in Bolivia does not condition development assistance on prior eradication of coca. Instead, by recognizing coca cultivation as a legitimate source of income, the government has helped stabilize household incomes and placed farmers in a better position to assume the risk of substituting illicit crops with alternative crops or livestock.<sup>15</sup>

The programme has also played an important role in empowering women coca growers. As of mid-2016, 48 percent of land titles in Trópico de Cochabamba, the department where most coca is legally cultivated, were held by women. This represented the highest percentage of land titled to women in the country.<sup>16</sup> As of 2018, women held title to 35 percent of catos, providing a source of stable income and access to credit.<sup>17</sup> Since 2016, the National Fund for Integrated Development has trained hundreds of women coca farmers to produce a variety of crops, including honey, bananas and pineapple.<sup>18</sup> Evidence shows that women coca growers are successfully diversifying their income. For example, one woman said that her fish pond generated twice the income of a cato and that she was considering abandoning coca cultivation altogether.<sup>19</sup>



Coca farmers, Coroico, Nor Yungas Province, Bolivia.

Photo: Emilie Reynaud.

15. T. Grisaffi, L. Farthing and K. Ledebur, 'Integrated Development with Coca in the Plurinational State of Bolivia: Shifting the Focus from Eradication to Poverty Alleviation', *UNODC Bulletin on Narcotics*, vol. 51, no. 17 (2017), pp. 131–157.

16. M. E. Rojas Valverde, *Estudio: Análisis de género; Plan de Acción de Género Gap II 2016–2020* (2017), p. 68.

17. Syscoca Cato Database files, 7 November 2018 (on file with UNDP).

18. Fonadin, *Informe de actividades* (May 2017).

19. T. Grisaffi and K. Ledebur, 'Citizenship or Repression? Coca, Eradication and Development in the Andes', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2016), pp. 1–19.



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