



I. INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING / NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG STRATEGY

Venezuela has the National Anti-Drug Plan 2002-2007, which was approved by the Council of Ministers on July 11, 2002. The National Commission to Fight Illicit Drug Use (CONACUID) is the central coordinating authority; it operates nationally and regionally. The legal basis for the coordinating authority is Articles 205 and 209 of the Organic Law on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances. CONACUID, as the steering agency for public policy on drugs for the Venezuelan State, is responsible for coordinating and controlling the National Anti-Drug Plan.

CONACUID is chaired by a Minister of State or Special Commissioner and composed of the Vice Ministers of the Interior and Justice, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defense, Education, Health and Social Development, Planning and Development, Labor, and Infrastructure, the National Statistics Institute, and the Attorney General's Office. It coordinates: demand reduction, supply reduction, control measures, alternative development, information and statistics, planning of the National Anti-Drug Plan activities, and coordination of international assistance. CONACUID has its own budget, which rose significantly during the 2001-2002 evaluation period (in 2000, US\$513,038.41; in 2001, US\$749,608.55, and in 2002, US\$881,343.36).

Venezuela reports that it ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against Trafficking in Persons. The country is currently carrying out the internal legal procedure for ratification of the Protocol to the above Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components, and Ammunition, signed on December 15, 2000. With regard to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants, the National Legislative Assembly already has passed legislation approving it, which is awaiting publication in the Official Gazette.

The Venezuelan Drug Observatory (OVD) organizes, compiles, and coordinates automated drug-related statistics and other information. It confirmed that it uses the Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (SIDUC) and the Uniform Statistical System on Control of the Supply Area (CICDAT) to process data on drug use and supply control, respectively. It also uses a variety of informational methods to guide and educate the general population with respect to all aspects of the drug problem.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. RATIFY THE PROTOCOL AGAINST THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURING OF AND TRAFFICKING IN FIREARMS, THEIR PARTS AND COMPONENTS, AND AMMUNITION TO THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME.**

II. DEMAND REDUCTION

Venezuela reports that the National Anti-drug Plan includes a national demand reduction strategy. Budgetary allocations for this area have increased annually since 2000. Moreover, the country has been implementing a national system of prevention programs targeting key population sectors, which does not include indigenous groups. Among CONACUID's stated priorities for 2002, are institution building and decentralization through the creation of new regional offices. This is intended to broaden training coverage and broaden the systematization of information.

Venezuela reported that it has developed university degrees and professional training programs in drug abuse prevention, treatment and research. It highlights advances such as a specialization in Neurotherapy (redirection of brain waves) and an on-line Ibero-American Master's in Drug Addiction, with the support of the Spanish Government Delegation for the National Drug Plan and the Network of Ibero-American Universities with Postgraduate Programs in Drug Dependencies.



Master's and Doctorate degrees are offered in these specialized areas. These programs meet the national demand for professional training and also offer opportunities to professionals from abroad.

In the period from 2000-2002, Venezuela has conducted evaluations of prevention programs in different public and private institutions. Venezuela reports that technical and financial assistance are needed to substantially increase the evaluation of these programs. The country reports that currently it is conducting the National Program for the Supervision of Treatment Centers, through which such centers will be registered and accredited nationwide. To that end, a training program is being conducted for technical teams from all regions in the country, and almost all centers in the capital region have been supervised. Supervision of centers in the interior of the country will begin in 2003, to ensure nationwide coverage.

The "Instrument of Evaluation for Public- and Private-Sector Health Care Facilities for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance Users and Addicts" makes it possible to gauge the quality of care offered; systematically describe the elements of treatment; and evaluate the degree of compliance with the legal regulations in place governing the operation of the facilities. There is also a "Procedural Manual for Supervision of Public- and Private-Sector Health Care Facilities for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance Users and Addicts," to serve as a guide and regulate the conduct of health care facility supervisors.

Venezuela reports that it conducted a survey of middle school students in November 2001 to measure use of psychoactive substances in the Caracas metropolitan area; data from this survey are already available. Moreover, in 2002, it plans to conduct research on the prevalence of drug use in people arrested by the police in Maracaibo City. Partial epidemiological data on psychoactive substance use are also available from various sources, including diagnostic research on specific populations and regions, and there is regular reporting of cases handled by treatment centers with nationwide coverage that are registered with CONACUID. Venezuela reports that deaths related to drug use in 2000, by type of drug were: alcohol 146; tobacco 5; hallucinogens 1; opiates 2, and other drugs 9. With respect to morbidity, actions have been undertaken with the Directorate of Social Information and Statistics of the Ministry of Health to resume record keeping.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. EXTEND COVERAGE OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS TO KEY POPULATIONS INCLUDING INDIGENOUS GROUPS.**
- 2. RESUME RECORD KEEPING ON MORBIDITY ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG USE.**
- 3. CONDUCT A NATIONWIDE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY.**

III. SUPPLY REDUCTION

A. Drug Production and Alternative Development

Venezuela reports that illicit cultivation is concentrated in two areas along the border with Colombia, Sierra de Perija and la Fría, where 39 has. of poppy, 47 has. of coca plants, and 2 has. of marijuana were eradicated in 2001. No other areas of illicit cultivation have been identified. The country had contemplated, for the year 2002, undertake a joint preventive alternative development operation in the Sierra de Perija, with the support and experience of Colombia in these types of projects. During the period of evaluation 2001-2002, no indoor cultivation was detected.



Venezuela reports that since these cultivated areas are highly concentrated, it is not a priority in the country to trace them. However, it has begun to seek technical advisory assistance for monitoring systems from the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

The country reported that it destroyed two small illicit laboratories devoted to manufacturing cocaine and heroin alkaloids in 2000 and two more in 2001.

B. Supply Reduction and Control of Pharmaceutical Products and Chemical Substances

The country reported that the institutions responsible for controlling and preventing the diversion of pharmaceutical products are CONACUID and the Ministry of Health and Social Development. For controlled chemical substances, they are CONACUID, the Ministry of Production and Trade, the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Technical Body for Scientific, Criminal, and Criminological Research, the National Guard, and Customs.

Venezuela has mechanisms to evaluate the efficacy of the activities of national entities responsible for controlling and preventing the diversion of pharmaceuticals and controlled chemical substances. Venezuela is in the process of updating legislation in this area.

Venezuela has a mechanism for controlling and regulating the use and distribution of pharmaceuticals and controlled chemical substances. It reports that it has laws for imposing criminal, civil, and administrative sanctions against the diversion of pharmaceuticals and controlled chemical substances. The country reported on pre-export notifications for controlled chemical substances made in 2001 and 2002. Also during 2000 and 2001, no criminal, civil, or administrative sanctions were imposed, and the respective proceedings are still in process. In 2002, two convictions were handed down for the offense of diversion of chemical substances.

Venezuela did not report significant diversion of pharmaceutical products or controlled chemical substances in the evaluation period 2001-2002. It also reports that legal mechanisms for the registration, control and evaluation of pharmaceuticals and controlled chemical substances and for the registration of such companies are consistent with the recommendations of international entities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. UPDATE THE EXISTING REGULATIONS ON THE CONTROL AND DIVERSION OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS AND CONTROLLED CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE.**

IV. CONTROL MEASURES

A. Illicit Drug Trafficking

Venezuela reports that reliable information on the number of seizures was not available for the year 2000; beginning in 2001, all government security entities were computerized, making it possible to maintain reliable and complete information on drug seizures carried out in the national territory. In 2001, the number and quantity of the most important seizures is as follows: heroin, cocaine hydrochloride, crack, basuco, leaf cannabis.



Type of drug	Number of seizures			Quantity seized		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1. Opium	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
2. Poppy plants	N.A.	1	0	11 has.	39 has.	0
3. Poppy seeds	N.A.	0	0	50 kg.	0	0
4. Morphine	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
5. Heroin	N.A.	83	77	195,580 kg.	228,430 kg.	412,920 kg.
6. Other opiates	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
7. Coca leaf	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
8. Coca paste	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
9. Cocaine base	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
10. Cocaine hydrochloride	N.A.	1,267	879	14,305.860 tons	13,391.550 tons	14,418.440 kg.
11. Crack cocaine	N.A.	476	487	291.872 kg.	409.390 kg.	90,230 kg.
12. Basuco (residues or impurities)	N.A.	389	196	465.462 kg.	384.740 kg.	242,272 kg.
13. Cannabis plants	N.A.	0	0	26	0	0
14. Leaf cannabis (grass)	N.A.	891	584	14,999.630 tons	14,431.800 tons	15,611.180 kg.
15. Cannabis resin (hashish)	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
16. Hashish oil (liquid cannabis)	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
17. Cannabis seed	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
18. Amphetamine / methamphetamine	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
19. MDMA (Ecstasy)	N.A.	1	1	7,985 pills.	2 pills.	11,420 pills.
20. Other amphetamine-type stimulants	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0
21. Others (specify) Coca plant	N.A.	1	0	0	13 has.	0

Venezuela reports that with regard to illicit drug trafficking, 3,957 people were arrested in 2000 and in 2001, 3,612 and 2,795 people were arrested and prosecuted respectively. In the year 2002, 2,540 people were arrested for illicit drug trafficking, while 2,117 were prosecuted. With regard to illicit possession of drugs, in 2000, 1,472 people were arrested and in 2001, 5,296 and 4,056 people were arrested and prosecuted respectively. In the year 2002, 3,092 and 3,464 people were arrested and prosecuted for illicit possession of drugs respectively. These are partial data. In 2001 the coverage of information regarding these offenses was extended from 12 to 22 of the 24 states in the country.

The authorities responsible for controlling illicit drug trafficking promote operational information exchange and collaboration through an interagency committee, joint forces and operations, joint training, and interagency information and communications systems/networks. There is a formal mechanism in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these means. In the international arena, information is exchanged on the criminal history of persons, migratory movements of persons, bank transactions and movements of the accounts of natural and artificial persons, the establishment and operations of companies, characteristics of aircraft, ships, and vehicles, and any other type of relevant information.



Venezuela reports that it did not make any extradition requests for illicit drug trafficking, nor did it receive any, in the period 2000-2001. Since 2001 one request is pending in the Supreme Court. A response is still pending.

The country indicated that in 2002 it made one judicial cooperation request regarding illicit drug trafficking it received, based on international agreements, with a response not granting the request. In 2000, Venezuela received 20 requests for judicial cooperation regarding illicit drug trafficking acceding to 2 of them. In 2001, the country received 21 requests for judicial cooperation regarding illicit drug trafficking, acceding to 2 of them.

Venezuela reported that it has laws and regulations that criminalize acts of corruption in accordance with the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, except as regards Article VIII of the Convention.

B. Firearms and Ammunition

Venezuela reported that the Weapons Office of the National Armed Forces (DARFA) has the legal competence to regulate and control the manufacture, importation, exportation, control, inspection, trade, possession, and use of firearms, ammunition, and explosives. The "Disarmament Law" took effect; it was published in Official Gazette No. 37.509 of August 20, 2002. In order to comply with that law, DARFA may require collaboration from public safety organs and state and municipal police forces.

Venezuela has laws and regulations that criminalize the illicit trafficking of firearms and ammunition. In 2000 and 2001 no offenses related to the importation of firearms and ammunition were detected; therefore, there were no arrests, and hence no persons were charged or convicted. The country indicated that the importation, exportation, and transit of firearms and ammunition are controlled and supervised through enforcement of the Customs Charter. Furthermore, the importation, exportation, and transit of weapons and ammunition are prohibited, except when performed by the national government.

Venezuela requires importing or transit countries to issue the necessary licenses or authorizations, prior to authorizing embarkation of shipments of firearms or ammunition. It reported that in 2000, 2001, and 2002, it did not refuse shipments of firearms or ammunition. Venezuela also requires that the necessary import licenses or authorizations be issued, prior to authorizing entry of a shipment of firearms or ammunition into the country. In the period 2000-2002, it did not deny entry to such shipments.

DARFA maintains a national computerized database to record information on the importation and exportation of firearms and ammunition. It does not cover data on firearms in transit, and the information is kept for ten years.

Venezuela reported that two national entities are responsible for the exchange of information and for collaboration with similar agencies in other countries on preventing the diversion of firearms and ammunition: the Weapons Office of the National Armed Forces (DARFA) and the National Security Office of the National Guard. They have an interagency communication system/network. The country did not send to or receive from other countries requests for information on shipments of firearms and ammunition in the period 2000-2002.

C. Money Laundering

Venezuela criminalizes money laundering as a crime only when it is related to illicit drug trafficking and related offenses. The country reports that on September 6, 2001, the National Assembly began consideration of the Bill against Organized Crime-Organic Law broadening the range of predicate offenses.



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The Bill also establishes administrative controls to prevent money laundering for the following: banks, currency exchanges, the stock exchange, insurance, and border exchange operators. In the year 2000, 3 people were arrested and tried for money laundering, none were convicted. In the year 2001, 1 person was arrested, 410 tried, and 1 convicted. In 2002, 7 people were arrested, 6 people tried, and 1 convicted.

There are regulations requiring financial institutions and others responsible to report suspicious or unusual transactions. The following are also mandatory for those institutions: reporting large transactions, client registry, verification of client identity, transaction registry, preservation of records, existence of an enforcement official and independent audits, and know-your-client and know-your-employee policies.

The country reported that in 2000, 950 suspicious transactions were reported, but no investigation was carried out. In 2001, 409 suspicious transactions were reported, of which 240 were investigated and in each case a trial was started and in each of them a conviction resulted. In 2002, there were 15 suspicious transactions reported and in each of these cases an investigation was begun. Administrative sanctions were imposed in that period on financial entities and others responsible for failure to report suspicious transactions and failure to comply with money laundering control measures.

Financial documents and records can be obtained in money laundering cases in Venezuela. The country reported that in 2000 there were 53 cases of money laundering, in all cases bank registries and documents were requested. In all cases the requested information was obtained. In 2001 there were 236 cases, in all these cases bank documents were obtained.

Venezuela reported that in 2000, 2001, and 2002 no property was forfeited in money laundering cases, because the corresponding judicial proceedings had not concluded definitively. The Ministry of Finance's Goods and Services Office is responsible for the management and/or disposition of assets seized and forfeited for illicit drug trafficking and money laundering offenses.

Venezuela has a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) that conducts analysis and reports findings, regulates, and sanctions. The FIU is part of the organizational structure of the Superintendency of Banks and Other Financial Institutions, which is under the authority of the Ministry of Finance. It shares information with other State agencies and its foreign counterparts.

The FIU is part of the Egmont Group and has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Colombia, Panama, and Spain.

The country reported that the FIU investigated, in 2000, 1,837 financial reports and in none of these cases were trials started. In 2001, there were 3,104 investigations, resulting in 240 trials and 1 conviction. In 2002, there were 250 investigations.

Venezuela reported that it did not make requests for extradition in money laundering cases to other States in 2000 and 2001. It indicated that it received and granted one request for extradition in that period. It did not make any requests to freeze assets in money laundering cases from 2000 to March 2002, but did receive one such request from another country in 2001.

In the period 2000-2002, Venezuela made five requests to other countries to lift bank secrecy, one of which was granted. It received 36 requests to lift bank secrecy in money laundering cases in that period, but did not indicate the number it granted.

Judges, prosecutors, and administrative officials were trained in 2000, 2001, and 2002 to enforce laws and regulations to control and suppress money laundering.



RECOMMENDATION:

1. **ESTABLISH LAWS CRIMINALIZING THE OFFENSE SET FORTH IN ARTICLE VIII OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION.**

V. CONCLUSIONS

Venezuela approved its National Anti-Drug Plan 2002-2007 on July 11, 2002. CONACUID has its own budget, which has increased during the evaluation period. The national demand reduction strategy contains short-term priorities such as institution-building and decentralization to broaden coverage of training and make systematization of information more widespread.

The development of university degrees and professional training in drug dependencies meets the demand in the country and also creates opportunities at the international level.

In spite of the concentration of areas under illicit cultivation, the country had contemplated, for the year 2002, undertake a joint preventive alternative development operation in the Sierra de Perija, with the support and experience of Colombia in these types of projects..

The country has mechanisms for the control and regulation of pharmaceuticals and controlled chemical substances; which needs updating. Due to the computerization of government security entities, reliable information is available on drug seizures. In 2001 information on persons arrested, prosecuted, and convicted for illicit drug trafficking and possession was extended to cover 22 out of the country's 24 states.

Venezuelan law and regulations criminalize corruption and money laundering only when it is linked to illicit drug trafficking and related offenses. However, it is developing legislation to broaden the list of predicate offenses.

In general, Venezuela presents a strong front in confronting the drug problem, even as it makes efforts to overcome its weaknesses.

The substantial progress observed in addressing the drug problem reflects a high degree of commitment to the MEM process.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **RATIFY THE PROTOCOL AGAINST THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURING OF AND TRAFFICKING IN FIREARMS, THEIR PARTS AND COMPONENTS, AND AMMUNITION TO THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME.**
2. **EXTEND COVERAGE OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS TO KEY POPULATIONS INCLUDING INDIGENOUS GROUPS.**
3. **RESUME RECORD KEEPING ON MORBIDITY ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG USE.**
4. **CONDUCT A NATIONWIDE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY.**
5. **UPDATE THE EXISTING REGULATIONS ON THE CONTROL AND DIVERSION OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS AND CONTROLLED CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE.**
6. **ESTABLISH LAWS CRIMINALIZING THE OFFENSE SET FORTH IN ARTICLE VIII OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION.**