

Sunshine Project Blasts the UN Drug Program's Self-Serving "Green" Propaganda



“UNDCP’s environmental message is like the cigarette industry passing out public health suggestions”

Seattle and Hamburg, 20 July – The United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) should be censured for its lobbying tactics, says the Sunshine Project, an international nonprofit working on biological weapons issues.

The Vienna-based UN agency, while often less aggressive than the USA in drug crop eradication, has nevertheless taken the lead in trying to implement the US project to use biological weapons against illicit coca in Colombia.

In an effort to counter outrage in the Andes over the plan, UNDCP is spreading unsubstantiated stories in the press suggesting that the biological agents, dubbed “Agent Green” by the Sunshine Project, are environmentally safe. The UN group is using the media to attack the policy of the Governments of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, all of which have expressly rejected use of the US *Fusarium oxysporum* weapons agent.

According to Susana Pimiento, a Colombian attorney with the Project, *“The false environmental message of these drug warriors is outrageously self-serving. Cocaine production is environmentally damaging enough. UNDCP’s proposals will make a bad problem worse. UNDCP is not an environmental organization. It advocates the massive aerial spraying of broad spectrum herbicides like RoundUp Ultra in some of the world’s most biodiverse areas.”*

In the first half of this year alone, chemical spraying programs in Colombia, in which UNDCP plays a role, blasted an estimated 439,445 liters of glyphosate into Colombia’s Amazon and Andean regions, provoking outrage from indigenous people and rural inhabitants.

Says the Sunshine Project’s Edward Hammond *“You could expect this kind of arrogance out of the Americans; but UNDCP pushing its environmental advice on Amazonian governments is like the cigarette industry passing out public health suggestions.”*

UNDCP spilled details of its still secret and unapproved plan to the Environment News Service (ENS), a US news wire, which published them on July 19th. ENS reports that, contrary to the declarations of Colombian Environment Minister Juan Mayr, UNDCP told it that *Fusarium* will be tested in Colombia. ENS goes on, quoting UNDCP as promoting *Fusarium* by comparing it favorably to cocaine production saying *“for each hectare of coca grown and processed into cocaine, growers and traffickers, with no respect for the environment, generate and dump an estimated two tons of ... waste into Colombia’s soils, streams and rivers.”*

UNDCP is putting an environment spin on Agent Green despite the fact that Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru have unequivocally rejected the *Fusarium*:

- In Quito on Tuesday, July 18th, Ecuadorean Environment Minister Rodolfo Rendon issued a written statement saying that *Fusarium oxysporum* “has not been authorized and will not be authorized for use on Ecuadorean territory to eliminate coca plantations, because such activity could have negative effects on human health and the environment. This is a decision that has been taken and there is no room for changes.”
- On last Friday, July 14th, Colombian Environment Minister Juan Mayr told the Associated Press “We will not accept the introduction of any foreign element, which is what they have offered us under the name *Fusarium oxysporum*. We have told them to forget it.”
- On March 24th, by presidential decree 0004-2000-AG, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori updated that country’s ban on aerial fumigation of coca to specifically forbid the use of biological agents like *Fusarium oxysporum*.

According to Pimiento, “If UNDCP was serious about the environment, it would be advocating a rethink of using fumigation at all, instead of pushing a dangerous biological supplement to destructive chemical strategies.”

Says Hammond “UNDCP is out of touch with reality. It has crossed the line of acceptable behavior by a UN agency and is engaging in public theatrics to undermine the policy of governments. UNDCP’s behavior in this matter should be reviewed by its governing bodies. Donor governments should be alert to this abuse of UNDCP’s position.”

For further information, please contact Edward Hammond or Susana Pimiento at the Sunshine Project in Seattle at 206-633-3718 or via e-mail at ehammond@sunshine-project.de and spimiento@sunshine-project.de.