



The UNODC Coca Cultivation Study for Bolivia Shows Minimal Increase in Coca Crop: Sharply Contrasts with U.S. Statistics.

Ten initial observations:

- 1) The study cites a 1% increase in Bolivia's coca cultivation from 2008-2009, from 30,500 hectares to 30,900 hectares. From 2007-2008, the UN reported an increase of approximately six percent.
- 2) Bolivia remains in third (and last) place for coca cultivation with 19% of the worldwide total crop.
- 3) These findings suggest that cooperative coca reduction (racionalización), which allows farmers a small amount of coca destined for legal use in order to provide subsistence income, takes time, but is showing some positive results in the Chapare region, for the several consecutive years.
- 4) La Asunta, flagged in recent years as the region undergoing most rapid expansion of coca cultivation, seems to have slowed its growth. The report recognized that cooperative reduction is "effective" and seems to have impeded replanting.
- 5) The UNODC highlights that Bolivian officials reported no violence or conflict related to coca reduction efforts in 2009.
- 6) The Bolivian government reduced more coca in 2009 than the previous year.
- 7) Coca prices went down and varied little between the authorized and unauthorized markets. (In the La Paz Yungas, the authorized market price per kilogram was only \$0.10 lower than the unauthorized market and in the Chapare there was only a \$0.70 difference). This helps refute the frequent accusations that higher profits from illicit sales provide significant incentive for producers to incur additional risks by selling to illegal markets.
- 8) The report critiques erosion and other environmental damage caused by coca production, but highlights that this is primarily a problem in areas where farmers exclusively plant coca. This suggests that some permitted coca combined with other crops such as the "cato" authorized in cooperative coca reduction is a more environmentally sound policy.
- 9) There is significant agricultural diversification in the core area of the Chapare region (excluding national parks), where cooperative reduction has been implemented since late 2004. For example, bananas occupy the largest area of crop plantation in the Chapare (in hectares), followed by citrus fruit, palm hearts and then coca (pg. 47). The report attributes this phenomenon to sustained, integrated development efforts. Yet, it is also important to note that the subsistence income provided by the small parcel of permitted coca also helped permit farmers to take risks with other crops.

- 10) The report also highlights that the majority of integrated development in the Yungas region occurs in Caranavi and Alto Beni, although those regions historically produced comparatively little coca. La Asunta and the Southwest Yungas in fact require greater development assistance.

U.S. and UN figures vary significantly

The one percent increase reported by UNODC for 2009 contrasts sharply with the 2010 U.S. International Narcotics Control Strategy report, which cited a 9.38 percent increase from 32,000 to 35,000 hectares for 2009, which they inexplicably rounded up to ten percent. [\[1\]](#)

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Chief David Johnson further misrepresented U.S. estimates in the INCSR press briefing on March 1, 2010, stating that “Peru had a modest increase and Bolivia has a continuing trend of a step up per year in the neighborhood of 10 to 15 percent that’s taken place over the course of the last several years.” In fact, since the election of Morales in 2005, U.S. statistics have **never** reflected an increase in Bolivian coca cultivation that reached ten percent, and for most years increases in cultivation in Peru have been significantly higher.

Net Cultivation (Hectares)										
	2009		2008		2007		2006		2005	
	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR
Bolivia	30,900	35,000	30,500	32,000	28,900	29,500	27,500	25,800	25,400	26,500
Peru	59,900	TBD	56,100	41,000	53,700	36,000	51,400	42,000	48,200	34,000
Colombia	68,000	TBD	81,000	119,000	99,000	167,000	78,000	157,200	86,000	144,000
Percent Change – Net Cultivation										
	2008-2009		2007-2008		2006-2007		2005-2006			
	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR	UNODC	INCSR		
Bolivia	1.31	9.38	5.54	8.47	5.09	14.34	8.27	-2.64		
Peru	6.77	n/a	4.47	13.89	4.47	-14.29	6.64	23.53		
Colombia	-16.05	n/a	-18.18	-28.74	26.92	6.23	-9.30	9.17		

Further Observations:

- The EU, the UN and the Bolivian Government crop monitoring programs recently cross-referenced census data, GPS registries from cooperative coca reduction and eradication efforts, land tenure records and aerial photography to permit more precise cultivation estimates. However, the U.S. didn’t want to contribute their data to these combined efforts.
- In 2006 the U.S. decided to employ aerial photographic techniques like the UNODC because the satellite data failed to provide sufficient information. Logically, this technological change would suggest that the UNODC and INCSR statistics should be less contradictory.
- Although the UNODC coca cultivation studies provide detailed information on the studies’ methodology and technical procedures, the INCSR includes no such information.

- In the past eight International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports (INCSR), the U.S. rarely listed Colombian coca cultivation data for the previous year, and almost always included Bolivian statistics.
- It is also interesting to note that since 2006 the U.S. used UNODC figures for coca cultivation. This trend continued until the expulsion of U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia in September 2008. Since that time, U.S. estimates vary significantly from UNODC reporting.
- Since 2005, the UNODC report shows on average approximately 14,000 hectares more coca cultivation in Peru than the INCSR figures.
- The Bolivian figures are similarly skewed. Every year since 2005 except 2006, the U.S. figures reported at least 1,000 hectares more coca cultivation in Bolivia than the UNODC findings.
- In 2009, the margin is the widest ever, with a difference of 4,100 hectares (UNODC: 30,900 ha, INCSR: 35,000 ha).
- Overall, these trends reflect a continuing U.S. government tendency to minimize Peruvian coca cultivation and over emphasize Bolivian coca crops.

Conclusions

Clearly, many challenges remain in the effort to control illicit Bolivian coca production. These issues include reduction of coca in national parks, where farmers have little access to markets for alternative crops; the spread of micro-cocaine trafficking; increasing drug related violence; and funding shortfalls for interdiction efforts. Room for improvement also remains in terms of opportunities for alternative livelihoods and Yungas farmers' adherence to cooperative reduction, but statistics show potential. The coca cultivation survey suggests that the Bolivian model to limit production is beginning to show results, even in the Yungas region.

Faced with contradictory U.S. and UN statistics, the U.S. should re-evaluate its coca cultivation estimates and methods. Ironically, U.S. government contributes to the funding for UNODC reports. This begs the question, pertinent to drug policymakers and taxpayers alike, why pay for a separate, inconsistent report at a time of domestic economic crisis.

Other points from the UNODC Coca Cultivation Study for Bolivia:

(AIN translation)

- This year's UNODC study claims Bolivia produced 30,900 hectares of coca in 2009, a mere 1% increase in comparison to 2008's estimated 30,600 hectares.[i]
- Coca cultivation in Bolivia represents 19% of the global total, far below the estimated levels for the early to mid-90s when Bolivian coca cultivation reached nearly a quarter of worldwide totals.[ii]

- Although 2009 was the fourth consecutive year that the UNODC recorded a coca cultivation increase, the slight 1% rise in coca cultivation [for 2009] reflects the lowest increase in the previous four years.[iii]
- Coca cultivation in the La Paz Yungas also increased only 1%, and 2% in the tropics of Cochabamba (Chapare region). [iv]
- The social [control] agreement [2]in the Chapare seems to be working, however in the Yungas and Chapare zones, greater eradication and support for development is still needed, without abandoning the efforts toward alternative lifestyles.[v]
- 68% of the total coca cultivation in 2009 was harvested in the La Paz Yungas.[vi]
- 21% of the coca cultivated in the Chapare region was in the national parks, Isiboro Sécure y Carrasco.[vii]
- However, the amount of coca cultivation in the parks has largely remained stable.[viii]
- The total value of coca leaf sales was equivalent to 2% of the GDP for 2009 (\$13.0 billion) or 19% of the GDP agricultural sector (\$1.90 billion).[ix]
- Market forces seem to have made the coca leaf a less lucrative product. In 2009, earnings from coca cultivation dropped 10% from the previous year (to \$265 million from \$293 million).[x]
- In 2009, the farm-gate prices of dried coca leaf decreased by 22% in comparison to 2008.[xi]
- The price of cocaine base paste and cocaine chlorohidrate remained stable.[xii]
- The quantity of cocaine paste base confiscated in 2009 remained at relatively high levels, at 21,970 kilograms (a 2% increase from 2008).[xiii]

[1] According to My School House: **REMEMBER: IF THE DIGIT IS 5 OR MORE, ALWAYS ROUND UP. IF THE DIGIT IS 4 OR LESS, ALWAYS ROUND DOWN.** <http://www.myschoolhouse.com/courses/O/1/16.asp>

[2] Social control refers to both the active participation of coca farmers' unions in the cooperative coca reduction process, and an EU-funded government agency which Works both in the Chapare and Yungas to identify community development priority with residents in order to generate income to help compensate coca reduction.

[i] "El estudio de este año revela que existen 30,900 ha de cultivo de hoja de coca en Bolivia, un incremento de 1% comparado con el resultado del año pasado, en el que se reportó 30,600 ha."

[ii] "El cultivo de hoja de coca en Bolivia alcanza a 19% del total global en el 2008, muy por debajo de los niveles estimados a principios y a mediados de los años noventa cuando Bolivia tenía cerca de un cuarto del total global. "

[iii] "El ligero incremento del cultivo de hoja de coca en Bolivia (1%) representa la tasa de crecimiento más baja de los últimos cuatro periodos."

[iv] “El cultivo de hoja de coca en los Yungas llegó a 20,900 ha, un incremento del 1% y en el Trópico de Cochabamba a 9,700 ha, (+2%).”

[v] “El acuerdo social en el Trópico de Cochabamba (Chapare) parece estar funcionando, sin embargo, en las zonas de Yungas y Chapare, se requiere mayor erradicación y un mayor apoyo para el desarrollo, sin descuidar la generación de medios de vida alternativos.”

[vi] “En los Yungas de La Paz, se encuentra el 68% del total cultivado en el 2009.”

[vii] “En el Trópico de Cochabamba, se encontraron un total de 2,057 ha de cultivo de hoja de coca en dos parques nacionales, (Isiboro Sécore y Carrasco) representando el 21% de cultivo de hoja de coca en esta región.”

[viii] “El cultivo de hoja de coca también se ha mantenido estable en los parques nacionales.”

[ix] El valor total es equivalente al 2% del PIB del país para 2009 (US\$ 13.0 billones) o 19% del PIB del sector agrícola en 2009 (US\$ 1.90 billones)”

[x] “Las fuerzas del mercado parecen haber hecho de la coca un negocio menos lucrativo. En el 2009, los ingresos por el cultivo de hoja de coca fueron 10% que el año anterior (\$293 a \$265 millones).”

[xi] “ Los precios en pie de finca de hoja de coca seca decrecieron en 22 % respecto al 2008.”

[xii] “Por otra parte, los precios de pasta base de cocaína y clorhidrato de cocaína se mantuvieron estables.”

[xiii] “Sin embargo, la cantidad de cocaína base incautada se mantuvo en niveles relativamente altos a 21,970 kg. (2% incremento respecto a 2008).”