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MAY 22 2018

The Future of Coca Industrialization in Colombia: A Pathway to Development and Peace

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For millennia, coca has been a cultural touchstone, a manifestation of sovereignty, a core nutritional staple, and an essential medicine in the indigenous Andes. As a part of the decades long U.S.-backed counter-narcotics campaign in Colombia, though, forced eradication of the coca plant—a tactic criticized for attendant violence and gross human rights violations—has disproportionately harmed rural and urban poor communities while failing to bring peace.

How can Colombia honor coca’s history while identifying a peaceful, inclusive pathway forward? How can coca-growing communities be included in their own development plans? Is there a legal framework for developing enterprises in Colombia based on coca?

We’ll tackle these questions at the launch of *Coca Industrialization: A Path to Innovation, Development, and Peace in Colombia*, the eighth in a series of publications by the Open Society Foundations documenting positive examples of drug policy reform around the world.

Report author Dora Lucila Troyano Sanchez, with the National Narcotics Fund (FNE), was granted the very first permit to legally purchase, transport, and stock raw coca leaves for their transformation into licit goods such as fertilizers and nutritional ingredients to be used in scientific research. The report explores the promise that the coca leaf holds as an agricultural product for lawful uses as well

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as the challenges and opportunities that have influenced industrialization. It then sets out the parameters for a system that could significantly expand coca industrialization—in a manner designed to make the most of its many potential social, political, and economic benefits.

A reception will follow the panel discussion.

Speakers

- Dora Lucila Troyano Sanchez, an instructor and researcher with the National Training Service (SENA) in Cauca, Colombia, has worked for nearly 20 years with coca farmers, researching and promoting the coca leaf as an agricultural product that can contribute to the economic development of coca-growing communities.
- David Restrepo works on drug policy reform and product innovation in Colombia and Peru, with a focus on the coca leaf.
- Paul Gootenberg, SUNY distinguished professor of history and sociology, and chair of the history department at Stony Brook University, is the author of *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug*.
- Maria Clara Torres is a PhD candidate in the history department at Stony Brook University; her research focuses on coca in Colombia from the early 1950s to the 2000s.
- Lucy Sherriff (moderator) is a freelance multimedia journalist based in Bogotá; she works for the BBC, the *Atlantic*, CNN, *Time*, and Al Jazeera, among other outlets, focusing on social and environmental justice.

Learn More:

Health, Rights & Justice, Latin America & the Caribbean, Drug Policy Reform, Harm Reduction, Rule of Law

Date: May 22, 2018

Time: 5:45–7:00 p.m.

Location: [Open Society Foundations–New York](#)

Speakers: [Paul Gootenberg](#), David Restrepo, Dora Lucila Troyano Sanchez, [Lucy Sherriff](#), and Maria Clara Torres

Sponsored by: [Global Drug Policy Program](#)

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Marielle Franco Has Not Been Silenced

Marc Krupanski

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Moving Walls 24

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