

The 'miracle of San Martín' and symptoms of 'alternative development' in Peru

By Hugo Cabieses¹

Since 2007 the Peruvian government, through the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) and more recently the President of the Republic himself, have been presenting the "Miracle of San Martín Model"² as the path to follow in order to achieve drug supply reduction in a targeted area within the country that was previously plagued by coca crops, guerrilla insurgency, lack of State presence and ecological damage.

The model contains four complimentary actions within one strategy: first, the eradication of coca crops in a voluntary and/or compulsory manner; secondly, eradication as a precondition to securing governability and security in the zones in which the strategy is applied; thirdly, coordination of the various activities of state and private entities and international cooperation; fourthly, the promotion of sustainable economic activities.

The strategy intends to demonstrate the success of these actions in order to reproduce them in other areas within the country and abroad as the only intelligent and successful way of reducing poverty, ensuring governability, and generating hope amongst the people and agricultural producers in the zones in which it is applied.

Rómulo Pizarro, executive president of DEVIDA, and his co-workers have succeeded in launching a huge publicity campaign to promote the San Martín model. The model, however, reminds us more of the miracles of his namesake San

Conclusions & Recommendations

- We recommend a three-pillar strategy of Integral Harm Reduction: Concerning production and crops we propose comprehensive sustainable human development- with people and with legal coca- that respects local cultures and knowledge, protects the ecology, manages natural resources, strengthens social and public institutions.
- Promote an efficient credit system- not a money lender, allocate permanent technical help, subsidize prices in order to protect them from the fluctuations of international prices and, above all, to encourage the purchase of these products and others for internal consumption.
- Change the exportation strategy to an internal market strategy, to not make forced or 'voluntary' crop eradication a precondition for development, and to talk with the farmers about alternative crops and economies in areas which are mainly suited to forestry, agro-forestry and ecotourism.
- The government and international cooperation should facilitate and promote national and international private investment in the coca zones through fostering systems of contract agriculture and creating "clusters", or territorial conglomerations that guarantee the competitiveness of different activities which should not be only agricultural, but alternative methods of generating family income to that of coca cultivation destined for cocaine production.

“On the subject of public security and the fight against terrorism, as I said in the beginning these are still insufficient, although in the Huallaga region some success has been achieved through eradication, crop substitution and the San Martín Model.”

(President Alan García, Mensaje, 28 July, 2010)

“This model is recognised by nations as an integral development plan as one of its core components is the theme of alternative crops”

(Rómulo Pizarro, Washington, Inforegión, 4 May, 2010)

“San Martín is very close to becoming the first region to free itself from drug trafficking activity and drug production. Its producers (ex coca farmers) are seeing their cacao being transformed into La Orquíde chocolates, their organic and ecological coffee into Oro Verde roasted coffee (winner of the Grano de Oro prize in 2003), and how their delicious palm hearts compete in quality and price on any market”.

(Rómulo Pizarro, El Comercio, 25 June, 2010)

Martín de Porres, that saint who made dog, rat and cat eat from one plate.

Through a resolution of the 53rd session of the UN’s Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), they managed to get the model onto the international agenda. This reads:

“5. Welcomes the proposal of Peru and Thailand to jointly host an international workshop, to be held in Thailand in November 2010, consisting of visits to various alternative development sites and discussions on best practices and lessons learned in alternative development with practitioners in the field, back to back with an international conference on alternative development among all stakeholders, to be organized in close collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.”³
One central focus of the seminar, to take

place in Bangkok, is the discussion on the suitability and replication of the “San Martín model”.

Whilst recognizing its short-term successes, we maintain that this model is not new, and that it is not replicable, nor will it withstand the test of time. What is more, the model is not ecologically sustainable, and it doesn’t remedy the ‘symptoms of alternative development’.

THE CONTEXT

The region of San Martín is located in Northeastern Peru and is divided into 10 provinces and 77 districts with a total population of 777,694. There are 1,500 farming communities and 66 native communities on its land. Its ecosystem is favourable to agricultural development, making this its largest economic activity, with 61% of the population economically active, but not the most profitable, since 83% of those dedicated to agricultural activity are unskilled labourers whose daily wage is between US\$2 and \$3.

San Martín lacks qualified and technified agricultural producers, but also lacks supporting infrastructure – electric power and well maintained roads -, all of which a result of the centralism that characterised the country for decades.

The region is also characterised by zones at risk from geodynamic phenomena that provoke periodic landslides, strong winds and flooding, due to the intensive deforestation process that is estimated at 40,747 hectares per year. Its natural agro forestry resources have not yet been sufficiently taken advantage of, due to the absence of integral development policies and projects.

San Martín has been traditionally known as a “colonizable” area, suited to the extraction and providing of food. This notion was at the root of the famous boom of barbasco and wood extraction, and of tobacco, rice, maize, and currently of sugar cane monocrops. 67% of the region’s population is

classified as poor (earning less than US\$2 per day) and the basic basket of goods in the rural area is equivalent to US\$ 44 per month.

It is impossible to ignore the social and security issues that have contributed to the increase in poverty in San Martín. In the nineties the region was emblematic of coca leaf and coca base paste production because of the production along the river Huallaga⁴ and in particular in the province of Tocache. Contrary to all predictions, illegal coca cultivation encouraged by drug trafficking reached 30 thousand planted hectares towards 1990. At that time, when the country was the largest coca leaf producer in the world, up to 55 percent of all coca cultivated in Peru was grown in the Huallaga region alone.

Between the years of 1984 and 1992, along with the guerrilla insurgency activities of the Peruvian Communist party – the Shining Path (PCP-SL) and of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) illegal drug trafficking (TID) developed in the area. This financed the activities of those rebel organisations with cash and protection provided.

All of this contributed to an increase in deforestation, a social crisis and a situation of violence, given the strong participation of terrorist subversion. This last activity greatly added to the regions' problems as it aborted the organisation and mobilisation process of the working class-peasants which had developed between the seventies and the nineties, thus causing a drastic breaking up of the social fabric and cutting short the lives of a generation of young social activists.⁵

THE MIRACLE

According to DEVIDA, the violence and drug trafficking that occurred in this region was responsible for provoking the change of attitude necessary, amongst the population and local authorities, for them to opt

for legality and agree to promote eradication. According to this institution, the "San Martín Model" combined the people's desire for change with the zone's excellent productive potential in agriculture, live stock farming, agro forestry and tourism. Added to which the State made major investments in road, energy, and communication infrastructure and basic social infrastructure that included strengthening public and private institutions and bettering local workers' skills.

The result of this immense joint effort of local authorities, producers associations, State and international cooperation in agreement with DEVIDA, has produced the following results and indicators:⁶

- Poverty in the region was reduced from 68.2 % in 2001 to 33.2 % in 2008 and extreme poverty dropped from 43.0 % to 14.5% percent. This came about thanks, in part, to the fact that 46,606 families committed to developing legal activities that have resulted in 235 thousand hectares of crops such as rice, coffee, cacao, palm oil, maize and cotton, with a gross value of 330 million dollars, figures that are increasing each year.
- Areas of illegal coca crops were reduced to 321 hectares, as much through voluntary reduction actions as through forced eradication. A dramatic reduction in the coca-drug trafficking economy has been achieved: in 1992 it represented 46 % of the gross value of San Martín's production, whilst in 2008 it was only 0.5 %.
- Thanks to the cooperation of the USA through USAID, the revenue of cacao farmers rose from 3 million dollars in 2003 to 20 million in 2008. This figure will continue to rise to reach 35 million in 2011, once the whole sown area comes into production.
- The farmers are organised entrepreneurially in order to achieve better market conditions, which in 2011 will enable sales of

52 million dollars in coffee, cacao and palm oil produced within the framework of the war on drugs in Peru. This achievement counts on the support of international cooperation.

- The sowing of 48,868 hectares of alternative crops to coca has been brought about; 15,506 land ownership titles have been granted; 26 different community groups and producers' cooperatives have been established and strengthened; credit systems aimed at producers' organisations have been established; two palm oil extraction plants have been set up and one palm heart processing centre run by farming businesses; and 1,858 economic and basic social infrastructure projects have been carried out, including the Tocache-Juanjui-Tarapoto highway.
- Five local governments have been strengthened through management skills training courses. A study of economic ecological zonification and a territorial planning strategy have been carried out in the province of Tocache.

LIMITATIONS AND SYMPTOMS

The "Miracle of San Martín" has been endorsed with extensive support from the North American development agency USAID, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) through a debt exchange programme with KfW (German Development Bank). It is a coca crop substitution programme that replaces coca crops with cacao, coffee, palm oil and palm hearts crops destined for exportation. Although it has been promoted fairly successfully since 2002, it does not come without certain significant problems.

The programme reaches very few producers, as the "beneficiaries" represent less than a quarter of the entire region's producers. It's a strategy of mono-production in a zone of biodiversity and therefore brings about severe environmental impact.

The programme's strategy prioritises extensive cultivation for large-scale production destined for export in a zone not suited to this type of agriculture due to ecological fragility and soil quality. The programme is not sustainable in the long-term as it depends on international demand and prices of endorsed products (cacao, coffee, palm hearts, sugar cane and palm oil).

What is more, we maintain that this "model", whilst it has helped reduce poverty and coca crops, strengthen local councils and producers associations, improve marketing etc., in the short, medium and long term it also confirms the most common symptoms produced by "alternative development" everywhere it has been implemented:

- The symptom known in Peru as 'obris-mo' (carrying out projects with political motives). This is the act of laying down cement, sand and metal to open health centres, educational facilities, water and drainage systems, sports grounds, municipal buildings, bridges, collection centres, local tracks, bridges and highways, making sure these carry the slogan plaques and flags of the governmental agencies and voluntary sources but subsequently not maintaining them.
- The symptom of "mono-production" that promotes between one and five main products for exportation. These supposedly substitute coca crops such as, in the case of San Martín, coffee, cacao, palm hearts, palm oil and sugar cane for ethanol. Given the quantities needed to meet globalisation, extensive and intensive cultivation of these products will continue to have an impact on the fragile Andean-Amazonian ecological system.
- The 'plantismo' syndrome in which processing plants are installed but end up being white elephants. They supposedly resolve low exportation prices by "adding value", but the plants don't operate due to lack of management.

- The 'demandismo' syndrome characterised by reaching out to international cooperation without government commitment because 'the guilt of drug trafficking' belongs to those on the outside and they must pay for this.⁷
- The quest for dollars or euros syndrome, in which the objective is focused on obtaining money rather than promoting a strategy of sustainable rural development in relevant the areas through a specific State policy on the topic of coca and drugs.
- And finally, the symptom of 'addiction to the failure of prohibitionism', which signifies continuing the same action of the last 36 years – Nixon launched the "war on drugs" in 1974! – without thinking up an alternative to the "prohibitionist" and "supply-side economics" paradigm.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

The "San Martín Model" isn't really a new proposal for 'alternative development'. On an international level it has gone from being an eradication and crop substitution approach (Asia in the seventies) to an eradication and income substitution approach (Bolivia and Peru in the eighties) to become during the nineties, and so far in the XXI century, different competitive approaches that have, for the most part, been a hindrance to the Andean countries achieving common policies.⁸

In Peru in the first half of the nineties alternative development was characterised by actions that did not involve forced eradication with the farmers as designated conversation partners. In Bolivia up until 1998 and in Peru from 1996, the prerequisite actions of agreed and/or forced manual eradication were done without compensation, after which alternative development projects would be implemented.

From the early nineties Colombia applied intensive eradication through aerial spraying as a precondition for alternative

development strategies.⁹ And in Peru, since August 2002, integral development has been employed that includes the gradual, manual and agreed self implemented reduction of coca crops.¹⁰

Unfortunately, two decades later, the evolution of the economic, ecological, social and political-institutional impacts of these 'alternative development' models leave much to be desired with respect to the intended goals such as the decrease of illegal crops, rural integral development in the coca crop zones and the elimination of poverty. The consensus seems to be that we are facing a great failure.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT VS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Furthermore, there exists a controversy with respect to the basic concept of 'rural development'. The discussion is not only an academic one, as the zones to which alternative development is being directed, take away resources from other zones and sectors of governmental focus and international cooperation.

This is the complaint of organisations working with rural development, who argue that the concentration of resources for 'alternative development' takes away attention and funding from other zones with higher poverty levels or better ecological and economic-productive potential.¹¹

On the other hand, although there are significant differences from one country to another,¹² there are two determining phenomena for the three Andean countries: the evolution of the cocaine market and its prices, which determine the total cultivated areas in the three countries; and the restructuring of coca leaf and paste production brought about by the traffickers themselves who adapt easily, quickly and efficiently to interdiction actions and changes in consumption patterns.¹³

ERADICATION AND INEFFICIENT ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The inefficiency and failure of forced eradication and of 'alternative development', as well as the increase of coca and its derivatives, has produced three side effects that have made the problem worse: the 'balloon' effect, or transferring of coca crops from one region and/or country to another;¹⁴ the 'mercury' effect,¹⁵ or dispersion of crops within one or multiple zones; and the 'membrane'¹⁶ or 'fronterization' effect, which is the location of illegal crops in the borders between countries.

From 1995 on, Peru has driven projects in the coca crop zones with the objectives of reducing rural poverty, promoting sustainable development, containing migration from mountains to forest, protecting the Andean-Amazonian environment, and diminishing illegal coca crops. But this effort has proved inefficient in as far as the desired objectives are concerned¹⁷ as it is obvious that rural poverty has not been reduced, that sustainable development remains unresolved, migration to the forests continues, as does the slash and burning of forests for coca and "alternative development" products, and that illegal coca crops have been dispersed, turning them into a "moving target". But it is also true that these objectives were too ambitious given that such minimal national and international resources were supposed to resolve such a complex problem.

The inefficiency of alternative development has various technical, social and political causes that we summarise as follows:

- The projects were based on the principle of eradicating coca crops without an understanding of the socio-cultural and economical-ecological complexities this crop carries. There was no prior identification of products and activities concordant with the availability and potential of soils and with the knowledge and cultures of the

populations of each zone. The selected productive options were not compatible, in several cases, with the agro-ecological high forest zones that, generally speaking, are not suitable for exportation agriculture.

- A significant proportion of the agricultural products promoted were not aimed at building local and regional markets but instead at exportation, the prices of which were fluctuating and had a tendency to decline, except between 2006 and 2009.
- There were failures in the choice of technological-productive packet for the farming family, whose main resource is family labour. Some of the alternative economical activities did not obtain the desired returns, which caused the producers to go back to coca cultivation. Although some products were as profitable as coca in the short term – rice, kidney beans, palm hearts, cacao, sesame and barbasco for example, they did not have secure and sustainable markets. The farmers underestimated costs and overestimated returns and this resulted in them developing activities that were not ultimately profitable. They did not manage to boost sustainable agro-silvopastoral activities sustainable for the farming family, whose available labour force covers various ecological areas throughout the year. Lastly, there was no access to favourable rural credit since the existing lending systems were newly emerging and focused on collateralized loans for urban-commercial ventures with mid-level revenue. This lack of access to credit affected the competitiveness of its products.

DEFICIENCIES AND LESSONS

The experiment driven in Peru has various strategic deficiencies, with the exception of the San Martín model: lack of prior economic-ecological zonification studies; lack of participation of the peasant families and local authorities in decisions for the programme; lack of building local markets in zones unsuited to exportation agriculture

and mono-production; and lack of economic and ecological sustainability of the plans, programmes and projects.

Because of this, coca crops in Peru have shown an erratic behaviour that can be seen in the following facts:

- Between 1975 and 1990 Peru's coca crops grew from 30,000 to 150,000 cultivated hectares. The consequence was major social instability, human rights violations, insurgency and guerrilla activity linked to illegal drug trafficking.
- Between 1991 and 1994, a period of decriminalisation of cocalers (coca farmers) and control of the insurgency and guerrilla activity, coca crop growth was halted at around 130,000 hectares.
- Between 1995 and 1997 a dramatic decrease in the price of coca and its derivatives was recorded, as it was for cultivated areas, which dropped to 51,000 hectares. This period saw the relative success of 'alternative development': military control of insurgency and guerrilla activity and State control of the incipient cocalers' movement.
- From 1998 an increase in prices was once again reported and coca leaf crops also increased to 65,000 hectares. This figure is currently maintained.¹⁸ The result was the relative failure of 'alternative development', major mobilisations amongst the cocalers, particularly from 1999 on, and a sort of "embolsamiento" or "pocketing"¹⁹ of the insurgency and guerrilla activity linked to drug trafficking.

Some important lessons can be learned from the experiences of these years:

- 'Alternative development' is not a unique model but one that should be applied in a particular way to each zone.²⁰ It is not compatible with forced eradication or crop spraying. The reduction of crops should be a consequence of development and not a prerequisite for it.

- Voluntary participation of existent producer organisations should be promoted. This means using their requests as a starting point and gearing their productive proposals towards the market, developing business skills on the basis of contract sowing and adopting participatory methodologies in order to do this, with gender perspective and respecting the differences and value of the native cultures.

- Because of the agro-ecological conditions of the coca crop zones, in general not suited to extensive agricultural production, it is preferable not to prioritise traditional exportation crops (like coffee and cacao) or mono-crops (of rice or maize), but instead the building of local markets, productive diversification inspired by ancestral organisation of ecological areas and sustainable management of the Andean-Amazonian biodiversity, drawing up marketing agreements between regional businesses and town councils in the High-Andean and/or coastal regions.

- Rather than blindly or indirectly donating and subsidizing, the State and international cooperation should facilitate and promote national and international private investment in the coca zones through fostering systems of contract agriculture and creating "clusters", or territorial conglomerations that guarantee the competitiveness of different activities which should not be only agricultural, but alternative methods of generating family income to that of illegal coca production.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES?

There are alternatives to illegal coca production whilst maintaining the necessary amount for traditional consumption and its beneficial commercialization, rejecting the existing satanization of this plant, and making the farmers a part of the solution. But for these alternatives to work, calls for a radical change of the assumptions and diagnosis with which they have been working up until now.

The first assumption is based on a simple (not to say stupid) formula: coca=cocaine=dollars=exportation. Supporters of this formula claim that it is necessary to find an exportation product as profitable as coca and its derivatives in order for the coca farmers return to legal cultivation. According to the second assumption, drug trafficking is a problem of national security, which means the “war on drugs” approach must be applied. The third is that the problem is one of supply and therefore crops must be eradicated and sprayed. The fourth is that eradication/spraying of crops will increase the street value of cocaine, worsen the quality and increase citizen security.

These assumptions are based on a misdiagnosis; that farmers who cultivate coca are mono-producers and “drug-farmers” whose only goal is to increase their income in the shortest possible time. This is not true. The farmers cultivate various products and develop various economic activities, coca being only one of these. The problem is that the macro-economic and agricultural sector policies have been drawn up behind the peasant farmers’ backs and without taking into account the characteristics of the Amazon. They ignore the agricultural productive capacity of the high and low forests, an area suited to forestry and not agriculture or livestock farming unless they wish to destroy the ecology and the environment.

Destroying the environment and ecology is what coca farming does when linked to illegal drug trafficking, but coffee, cacao, palm oil, sugar cane, soy, rice or maize crops produce the same or worse anti-ecological effects. The devastation that has occurred is not only due to coca but also to the type of agricultural exploitation for exportation or intensive livestock farming that literally “flattens” the forest, once the slash and burn process has been performed.

What needs to be done is quite the opposite from what been done up until now with the help of USAID and the UNODC. The horse

should be put before the cart. That is to say that true rural development should be promoted and not this false ‘alternative development’ that is neither of the two things. And most importantly, the concept of production for exportation should be eliminated and the ‘internal market’ concept embraced. The small-scale successes achieved up until now have not withstood the test of time, nor have they proved ecologically sustainable.

Agricultural production for exportation in the high Andean forest is a pipe dream and the farmers need to be told this in clear terms, going back to square one. Our main exportable wealth is the biodiversity of these zones, ecotourism, integral and sustainable forest management, not slash and burn for exportation products, carbon capture and the funds available for this purpose. To continue what USAID and UNODC have been promoting over the last 20 years means that as well as keeping us “addicted to failure”, we are promoting ecological change and a plan for the destruction of Amazonian agriculture as a replacement for coca leaf farming. This is a zone suited to forestry and limited livestock farming for local and regional markets, not for exportation in the current situation of globalisation.

WHAT ABOUT THE SAN MARTÍN MODEL?

The “San Martín model”, unlike Plan Colombia, is not a police-military model, it does not prioritise forced manual eradication of coca, although it does not reject it, it does not promote spraying of crops – in Peru these actions are prohibited although some say they have proof that they happen – and it is not part of an anti-subversion strategy. In any case the San Martín model is no better than Plan Colombia. Despite their differences both models sing the same tune: that of the “war on drugs”, which is based on extreme prohibitionism and failed ‘overtismo’ (‘supply-side economics’ or policy based on supply).

The best way the government could help farmers of cacao and other products they promote would be to secure an efficient credit system- not a money lender, allocate permanent technical help, subsidize prices in order to protect them from the fluctuations of international prices and, above all, to encourage the purchase of these products and others for internal consumption.

In order for the coca farmer not to return to this crop it is necessary to change the exportation strategy to an internal market strategy, to not make forced or 'voluntary' crop eradication a precondition for development, and to talk with the farmers about alternative crops and economies in areas which are mainly suited to forestry, agro-forestry and ecotourism.

NO TO THE 'WAR ON DRUGS'

The main difficulty in promoting a 'crop substitution' strategy is the 'war on drugs' itself as it encourages the eradication or decrease of coca crops and provokes the 'balloon' (transfer), 'mercury' (dispersion) and 'membrane' ('fronterization') effects mentioned earlier. Added to this, stands a biased, anti-rural, anti-peasant and anti-indigenous government policy which destroys traditional food crops and primary forests, spews out CO₂, increases global warming and causes social chaos and endemic violence.

It is therefore necessary to begin by rejecting a war on drugs based on the concept of national security imposed by the government of the USA, and on the fundamentalist prohibitionism present in the international conventions of the UN, subscribed to and written into the national legislations of these nations. Both the war and prohibitionism are based on a "supply-side economics" or "ofertista" concept, which sees the problem of drugs as something external, coming from "outside" and not as part of "the internal".

The control of supply strategy attempts to push street prices of drugs ever higher in order to affect the purse strings of consumers and thus decrease consumption. It also attempts to lower the quality or purity of street drugs in order to affect consumers' health thus inhibiting their consumption levels. It maintains that less availability of drugs improves citizen safety as there are consequently less small-scale vendors and other *dealers*.

This concept is based on prohibition of consumption, persecution of consumers and small-scale vendors, eradication of crops as a precondition for promoting alternative development and applying police and military activity in cities, regions and entire countries in order to seize drugs, arrest "drug traffickers" and combat "narco-terrorism".

WORKING TOWARDS INTEGRAL HARM REDUCTION

The failure of "supply-side economics", prohibitionism and the policies that accompany this strategy has been internationally recognised by even the most important advocates amongst the drug control authorities who defend and apply them, starting with UNODC. But a debate focused on the topic of prohibition vs legalization, or war vs liberalization would be very limited. Instead of this we recommend a three-pillar strategy of Integral Harm Reduction:

- Concerning production and crops we propose comprehensive sustainable human development- with people and with legal coca- that respects local cultures and knowledge, protects the ecology, manages natural resources, strengthens social and public institutions- the State being one of these- and develops economic activities- not *commodities* or bio-combustibles- aimed at local and regional markets, not exportation.

- Concerning drug consumption we propose the decriminalization of soft drugs, like cannabis; the de-satanization of plants with medicinal and/or “mind altering” properties, such as coca; the controlled administration of hard drugs- cocaine and heroin mainly - in authorised hospitals and pharmacies. The use of substitution therapies must be encouraged- methadone, oral cocaine, etc. The so-called “therapeutic communities” especially those that use and abuse religion, must be controlled through powerful preventative and informative media campaigns by the State and within civil society. The language used in the campaigns to deter consumption should be carefully monitored to avoid the use of expressions that condemn the coca leaf or that insinuate that the coca farmer is a ‘drug farmer’ or a ‘stupid tool used by the traffickers’, or “for every 10 leaves 9 go to illegal drug trafficking” or that the people involved in the cocaine trade or cocaine chewers are ‘malnourished addicts’ and that to consume cocaine is an ‘indigenous habit’. It should also avoid campaigns that suggest that those of us who defend alternative strategies are ‘in conspiracy with the drug traffickers’.

- Concerning illegal drug trafficking, we propose applying operative intelligence for the locating and seizing of drug lords, companies, money laundering bankers and employers; strong sanctions – that are able to be verified and monitored – for police, military, judges and political authorities involved in drug trafficking crimes as well as for the “thieves” of children, young backpackers and couriers to get them involved in the “business”. In this way the real targets would be hit and not consumers and small time vendors, emptying the prisons of young offenders.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

I will now quote the words of my friend Dante Deza, a peasant farmer from the valley of Alto Inambari in the forest of

Puno who, ten years ago, shared with me his frustration with ‘alternative development’ in a workshop organised by the AIDIA-GTZ²¹ project: *“For us alternative development signifies when we ask for salt to make dried meat and they give us detergent which we don’t know how wash clothes with, we ask for seeds and credit to produce crops and they produce cement and stones to inaugurate buildings, we want technical help and agricultural and livestock farming training and they give us participative workshops to get information out of us, we ask for information about the international funds and they say they cant give it because it’s secret”*. This frustration is that of many farmers from the coca cultivation areas, which is why they protest.²²

For a significant though minority sector of the farmers of Peru’s high tropical forests - 50 thousand coca farmers out of 350 thousand farmers -, coca is an *intermediary plant* to prevent them being forgotten by the market, the State and by the country. But what is more, it is a plant used in order to be included and respected as citizens. Why insist that the coca farmers are a problem? Why not support their proposal to be a major part of the solution? This message, almost a demand, features in all of the acts signed by ministries and civil servants of the past governments – Fujimori, Paniagua, Toledo and García – and the farmers’ representatives and local authorities of various coca farming areas.

The subject of coca is complex and problematic. So much so that for the last 25 years efforts to eradicate coca have been operating whilst coca crops have moved, spread out and located to countries’ borders. But what is more, as we have seen in the INEI/ DEVIDA survey carried out in 2003, there are more coca consumers (coqueros) than we thought, four million people of which 2 million are regular users. At the same time the National Coca Enterprise (ENACO) only takes 30 percent of the total for legal consumption. Which means it is not realis-

tic to continue promoting the idea that the solution to the problem of coca crops is to eradicate them as a precondition for an uncertain and generally unsuccessful 'alternative development'.

In the words of Antonio Brack Egg, current Minister for the Environment: *"Coca holds a place of honour for the Andean and Amazonian societies. To chew the leaf gives the body proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Because of this the solution to the serious problem currently brought about by cocaine consumption- one of the 14 alkaloids of the coca plant- can not be found in the eradication of its traditional uses."*²³

And as Azucena Veramendi, coca farmer and ex- mayoress of Cuyaco in the Monzón valley said at the start of 2004 during the second conference of the National Confederation of Coca Producers of Peru (CONPACCP) that took place in Lima: *"For us alternative development means that they plant the projects on a table, cultivate them on a blackboard, harvest them on a computer and then sell them in television adverts"*.

It is necessary to talk with all of those who wish to be respected and included. Agreement and discussion are not synonyms of weakness but of humanity and intelligence.

NOTES

1. Economist, graduate of the Universidad del Pacífico (Lima), associate of the Centre for Research on Drugs and Human Rights (CIDDH), associate researcher at Transnational Institute (TNI) Amsterdam, secretary of Sustainable Rural Development (DRIS), coordinator of the Programme DRIS/ZAMANU in Cusco and Madre de Dios, researcher for the Peruvian Forum on International Relations (FOPRI), consultant for rural Andean-Amazonian development and technical consultant for agricultural producers in coca farming areas in Peru.

2. See "The Miracle of San Martin" at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t48FLerqZw> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zellHBM0Xm0&feature=related>

3. Resolution 53/6 "Promoting best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrity of

alternative development programmes and the proposal to organise an international workshop and conference on alternative development", Viena E/2010/28; E/CN.7/2010/18, The event in Bangkok was postponed to be rescheduled in 2011, because of a lack of interest to participate by high ranking officials.

4. San Martín is divided by the River Huallaga into: Bajo Huallaga, Huallaga Central and Alto Huallaga.

5. According to the report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 800 victims were reported in San Martin, but the true figure is estimated at three times as many.

6. See: Pizarro Pizarro, Rómulo; *El Modelo San Martín: Aportes para una Estrategia de Desarrollo Rural*; DEVIDA, Lima, 23 June 2010 and "*El narcotráfico en el Perú: Situación Actual y Prospectiva*", Lima, DEVIDA, 5 Agosto 2010. The statistics vary slightly from one report to another.

7. The efforts of Rómulo Pizarro, Executive President of DEVIDA, must however be acknowledged. He reached agreements with the National Treasury through the so called Rapid Impact Plans (PIR) that involved various ministries and government agencies. This is how, when faced with severe decrease in support from the USA for "alternative development" – 126.6 million dollars in 2006 to 59.3 million dollars in 2009 –, Pizarro managed to obtain pledges in 2007 from 5 executor entities with 6 projects to a value of 4 million dollars, rising in 2010 to 38 executants* with 52 projects of 34.4 million dollars, although at the start of this year the then Minister of Economy and Finance, Mercedes Aráoz, tried, bizarrely, to cancel this effort.

8. See the chronological frameworks suggested by Ignacio Mederiz and Jean Pierre Male in "*Alternative Development in the Andes: A Practical Guide*" (Estudis S.A.; Barcelona, July 1997). The outline of approaches is by Graham Farrell and Peter O'Brien in "*Strategies to reduce the supply of illegal drugs*" (in: *Debate Agrario Nro. 22*; CEPES; Lima, October 1995), to which I have added the last "approach" in my document: "A Discussion on drugs and alternative development, crisis and increase of coca in Peru and more questions" (CAE-2002, Universidad del Pacífico; Lima, November 2002).

9. Spraying has been prohibited in Bolivia since Law 1008 was passed in 1988. In Peru, in March 2000 a Supreme Decree was enacted that banned the use of pesticides in the eradication of coca crops.

10. It was applied as a pilot project in Aguaytía, part of Alto Huallaga and Apurímac-Ene as a result of the 2000 and 2003 strikes and marches. See an account and results by Hugo Cabieses and others in *Hablan los Diablos, Amazonia, coca y el narcotráfico en Peru: escritos urgentes* (Abya Yala, TNI and MLAL; Quito, 2005).

11. See an in depth discussion on this topic in Hugo Cabieses and Eduardo Musso; *Alternative development and rural development: Debates on limits and possibilities* (IICA-Centro Regional Andino, Lima, August 1999).
12. See a comparative table in my article "Ruralization of alternative development in Peru: debates, typologies and reconsiderations" (Proceedings from the international seminar *New Rurality in Latin America*, Bogotá, 22-24 August 2000; Universidad Javeriana; Bogota, 2001). Likewise, Francisco Thoumi gives a comparative analysis of the effects of 'drug trafficking' and drugs policies in the Andean countries in his book *The drugs empire: drug trafficking, economy and society in the Andes* (IEPRI-Universidad Nacional de Colombia and Planeta Editores; Bogota, September 2002).
13. Mederiz & Male, 1997, pg. 38.
14. As happened when coca crops were "transferred" from Peru to Colombia between 1993 and 1997. According to "official" statistics, in 1992 coca farming in the three Andean countries covered a total of 211.700 hectares, and in 2001 this figure was 223.700 hectares, despite the eradication and spraying of more than 455.000 hectares during this time.
15. It was Ricardo Soberón who began to describe the phenomenon in this way at the start of the year 2000. This effect came into evidence in Peru between 1996 and 2000, when forced coca crop eradication was reinstated, and also in Bolivia between 1997 and 2001 with the implementation of "Plan Dignidad", both these situations saw the appearance of new crops in various valleys where they had not previously been recorded.
16. Eduardo Musso coined this phrase at the beginning of 2001 when he began to record coca crops along the river Putumayo at the border with Colombia, the river Yavarí at the border with Brazil and along the rivers Inambari and Tambopata at the border with Bolivia. A similar phenomenon happened in South-East Asia between Laos and Thailand in the eighties, and in the borders between Colombia and Venezuela, and Colombia and Ecuador between 1992 and 1999.
17. Except in the case of San Martín and only in the short term.
18. Together with Ricardo Soberón, Róger Rumrill, Eduardo Musso, Ibán de Rementarúa and others, we questioned whether official coca crop statistics under the Fujimori regime were "political", not technical and the result of "virtual successes" necessary for the North American authorities (Cabieses, 2000). In April 2002 we made statements on this subject and as I worked at DEVIDA, they forced me to "amend them", but not the statistics supplied: 60.000 hectares of crops in 2001 compared to the 34.100 "official" crops (See "El Comercio" 8 and 10 April 2002).
19. There is a debate about the guerilla activity of the Peruvian Communist Party "the Shining Path" – divided into three groups – has it *reemerged* or are they *leftovers* with no political prospects, hit men working for the drug trade. My observation is that there are two groups here, different and conflicting, who carry out intermittent actions in the Valley of the River Apurímac-Ene (VRAE) and in two targeted zones of Alto Huallaga, that there is no proof they are working with the ringleaders in prison in Lima and elsewhere. They are most definitely "pocketed" ("embolsados") for now.
20. In my opinion it is impossible to apply a "pattern" of rural development that is extremely diverse and spread out, in high forest regions. I suggested a "typology" of coca farming areas- traditional, old, and new-defined by its coordination with coca crop farming and the socio-demographic history of each area. But even with this approach, development intervention must be adapted to each area, the proposals placed within the framework of a National Strategy, discussed and approved by the Government, Parliament and Society. I have described this in the book *Concepts, typologies and strategies for alternative development in Peru* (edited with Udo Theilen, AIDIA/GTZ, Lima, February 1999) and in the article "Peru: coca crops, virtual success and donation market" (DRIS; Lima, 2000).
21. Consultancy and Research Pilot Project for Integral Andean-Amazonian development (AIDIA) by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), that operated between June 1996 and August 1999, designing policies and strategies of alternative development. I was national coordinator of this project until its completion. See Cabieses & Theilen, 1999.
22. During 2002 there were six farmers' strikes (Quillabamba, Tingo María, Monzón, Aguaytía and twice in Apurímac-Ene) and two protest marches (Monzón to Huanuco and Apurímac-Ene to Ayacucho). Thousands of people from the coca farming areas mobilized for two basic reasons: against forced eradication of their coca crops and against the failure of 'alternative development', proposing a different strategy. With these same approaches and others, such as the reappraisal and industrialization of the coca leaf, registration of coca farmers and the need to promote a gradual and agreed coca crop reduction, ensued further farmers' strikes and protest marches to Lima over the course of the following years. This has been described in the book "*Hablan los Diablos*" (Cabieses, 2005).
23. See: *Ecología: Enciclopedia Temática del Perú Tomo VI*; "El Comercio", Lima, 2004.