ILLICIT CULTIVATION SESSION. PRESENTATION FROM RICARDO SOBERON

I have been following the implementation of the eradication of illicit crops in the Andean region for 40 years, which is done under the Supply Reduction approach. On two occasions I held the position of person responsible for Peru's Drug policies, which allows me to attempt an evaluation of the effects of said public policy stemming from international treaties.

I follow the annual dynamics of illicit coca crops, through UNODC Reports and National Observatories. Approximately, 300,000 hectares of coca are managed by 400,000 peasants subordinated to criminal organizations, raw material that is finally converted into 2,500 tons of cocaine. On October 14, the representative of DEVIDA, Peru, told the WHO Commission on Drugs and Dependency that an eventual declassification of coca would be a “perverse incentive” that would increase crops. That is false and shows an absolute ignorance of the political economy of drugs, as well as the very content of the request made by Bolivia: in recent years, coca-cocaine show stability on both sides of the chain, despite such dissimilar policies of the producing countries.

I observe with concern that neither national States nor international cooperation address the structural problems of widespread rural poverty in the Andes, the limitations of small family agriculture in the face of monoculture agribusinesses such as coffee, cocoa, palm or soy. Nor does it analyze the profits of organized crime, as well as the artificial surcharges generated by illegality, which make Alternative Development an economic utopia or a very fragile and short-lived reality. If the global patterns of the Coca-cocaine economy are not changed, that is, the widespread global demand, the situation cannot be reversed.

Every year, countries like Peru meet their annual goal of eradicating 25,000 hectares of coca, through arbitrary, non-consultable and poorly verifiable actions, which are usually accompanied by a lack of transparency in management and frequent violations of human rights. of the producers' families. These fail to reverse the situation of peasant producers subordinated to drug trafficking, now associated with illegal gold mining and illegal logging. These are the subject of

permanent stigmatization, criminalization and various forms of State violence. Drug trafficking responds to eradication in various ways: it increases the productivity and yields of coca, reduces final prices, mixes the final product with substances to increase the volume, so that the eradicated figures are immediately replaced. Every year, the eradicated settlers move to new production areas, further into the Amazon, becoming great destroyers of the forest and biodiversity: currently, Peru has 19 coca-growing basins, when in the past there were essentially two. Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate the sustainability of said policy.