

# Shared responsibility in alternative development: an ethical challenge

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Focusing on the links between ethics and the problem of illicit drugs, Zorro-Sánchez and Kamminga explore the concept of shared responsibility in the context of alternative development. They address the notion of shared responsibility from two perspectives: firstly, as an ethical response to the challenge created by the world drug problem and, secondly, as the commitment that a wide range of national and international actors in different spheres must make as part of their social responsibility, on the basis of the application of ethics-based criteria. The authors then bring together both perspectives and highlight how the exercise of that responsibility should today lead to the forging of partnerships between different actors at various levels. For alternative development to be effective, those actors should undertake specific joint commitments which go beyond the chain of production of the crops that replace illicit crops. They should also address the human development of those who have become involved in illicit crop cultivation and who depend directly or indirectly on the genuine and effective exercise of shared responsibility.*

*Keywords:* alternative development, ethics, human development, shared responsibility, social responsibility.

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## **Introduction**

The aim of the present article is twofold: first, to show that alternative development, as a process designed to provide opportunities to some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups and communities affected by the world drug problem, involves an ethical commitment that entails the social responsibility of all other public and private national and international actors that are or should be present in the territories where illicit crops are grown; and second, to set out several ways of ensuring the exercise of that shared responsibility.

To that end, the article contains three sections: the first sets out the links between social responsibility, as an ethical concept, and alternative development; the second examines the main statements made by international bodies regarding the exercise by social actors of shared responsibility in addressing the illicit drug problem; and the third reaffirms the need for an ethical commitment by such actors in relation to alternative development, on the basis of the shared responsibility expressed, for example, through public-private partnerships that generate genuine commitments by various actors both within and outside the production chain. The article concludes by making a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening the exercise of shared responsibility.

## **Ethics, shared responsibility and alternative development**

### *Social responsibility: an ethical expression of human behaviour*

Ethics, as a guide for human actions, requires that every natural or legal person be accountable to others for any action or failure to act that could affect those other persons positively or negatively. That is the essence of social responsibility—often understood in a superficial manner as engagement in philanthropic activities—which is all the greater the more disadvantageous the situation of the persons affected and the greater the power and authority of the persons or entities that perform or fail to perform the actions concerned. When decisions are taken or actions are carried out by a number of actors, each actor is expected to assume its share of the responsibility, in accordance with its role and the extent of the impact of its involvement. In such cases, it is a question of the joint or shared responsibility of all those actors.

The concept of social responsibility, understood as the commitment of every person to his or her fellow human beings, has deep and long-established roots in Western ethical thinking, which is anchored in the beliefs of the ancient Greek philosophers and in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. However, it was only towards the middle of the nineteenth century that the idea that human beings have a responsibility towards others began to be systematically associated with other concepts which, despite being consistent with that idea, have different bases [1].

Those new approaches to the ethical rules that should guide the behaviour of all human beings towards one another gradually shaped various conceptions of what, in contemporary language, has been termed “social responsibility.” The common denominator of those conceptions is behaviour that seeks not only to contribute to the improved well-being of other human beings but also, in terms of the theory of human development, to provide

them with opportunities for self-improvement. The exercise of that responsibility tends to extend not only to individuals but also to organizations as legal persons. However, far from a consensus having been reached with regard to the nature, necessity, extent and management of social responsibility, a fierce debate on the subject has arisen, such as when attempts are made to apply that concept to capitalist companies whose primary objective is to maximize their profitability. A further element of the debate is the refusal of influential authors to accept that social responsibility goes beyond strict compliance with market laws.<sup>1</sup>

If it is accepted that any human decision involves a degree of freedom; if it is recognized that the market often fails; and if the deplorable situation in which much of humanity lives is considered, it is clear, as shown by Amartya Sen [2, 3] and Martha Nussbaum [4], that the exercise of social responsibility makes it necessary to transcend the above-mentioned laws. Social responsibility, regardless of the manner in which such responsibility is defined, is something that also applies to individuals, non-profit organizations and even States.

It follows that the social responsibility of the various actors stems directly from ethics: an actor is socially responsible to the extent that its values, attitudes and behaviour contribute to its own improvement as well as the improvement of the lives and prospects of those with whom it is connected. To put that concept into practice, following a proposal by the European Commission [5], it is accepted that social responsibility entails (a) preventing, mitigating and reversing any negative impacts of actions, and (b) promoting and maximizing their positive impacts.

The debate regarding the extent of the responsibility of social actors has spread to the geopolitical sphere. Since the middle of the twentieth century, authors and leaders have highlighted the need for such responsibility to extend to people who, while residing outside the jurisdiction of a particular State, sometimes find themselves in dire circumstances that cannot resolve themselves or be resolved by the States of which they are a part. Instead, these can be resolved with the cooperation of other States that are equipped with sufficient resources, or by private actors of such States. Therefore, shared responsibility tends to be accepted as extending beyond national borders to address situations that ultimately affect human groups irrespective of their geographical location or their connection with a particular State, which, for example, would be the case with regard to persons addicted to substance use.

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<sup>1</sup>Among whom the most explicit on the subject of social responsibility is probably Milton Friedman [6].

That stance has not been unanimous, for theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it is contested by authors from both individualistic and different perspectives. For example, Milton Friedman believes that, from an individualistic perspective, each person is responsible for resolving his or her own problems within the framework of a State, whose responsibility is limited to protecting the life, physical safety and property of its inhabitants. On the other hand, John Rawls argues in his Theory of Justice [7] that that theory should apply at the national level but not the international level, at which the value of solidarity should apply. In practice, shared responsibility has been called into question either because some States have tried to use cooperation as a means of interfering in the domestic affairs of other States, or because some aid recipients have a tendency to transfer personal responsibility to aid workers; both behaviours are contrary to the ethical values that should guide the exercise of social responsibility at the international level.

In his work on justice [3], Sen, critiquing Rawls, argues that support for the improvement of the conditions of the human development of the inhabitants of the various States is not simply a matter of solidarity that places different societies on unequal levels. It is instead a matter of justice that places all human beings on the same level by virtue of their inherent dignity, and that requires the commitment of societies and the Governments of States that consider themselves developed. In those terms, they are jointly responsible, together with other national, international and transnational actors, for providing opportunities to facilitate capacity-building among the population of countries with fewer resources. In today's global world, there is truth in Edgar Morin's view that the community of destiny of humankind in the face of common matters of life and death requires a policy of humanity to which humankind should subscribe in the future [8, p. 47]. Accordingly, shared responsibility at the international level is an inevitable corollary of the ethics-based concept of social responsibility.

### *Social responsibility in the context of alternative development*

Like all human activities, the process that has become known as “combating illicit drug supply”<sup>2</sup> has ethical implications that are, in the context in question, particularly significant. That process is not only destroying the lives of

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<sup>2</sup>The phrase should be reformulated to reflect the shift from a destructive position, such as the one that has previously prevailed, to a constructive position, according to which the objective is not to combat drugs per se but, rather, to provide persons who have, for one reason or another, voluntarily or involuntarily, become involved in the trafficking or consumption of narcotic substances with tools that offer them opportunities to break that cycle and prevent it from becoming a source of individual alienation and social unrest. For that reason, references in the present article that looks toward the future will not use the phrases “combating drugs” or “combating illicit crops”, but rather to the quest for a world free of drug addiction or simply to alternative development, as appropriate.

many individuals, but is also jeopardizing the future of certain communities and even, in some cases, seriously obstructing the development of societies. This raises the question of the extent to which the teleological purpose of achieving elimination of the scourge of addictive drugs from society justifies the use of certain highly repressive measures. One example is crop spraying, which has adverse effects on health, the environment and the licit economy of farming communities,<sup>3</sup> and the brunt of which is often borne by highly disadvantaged sectors of society.

The shared responsibility for decisions taken and actions carried out to address the world drug problem is particularly relevant given the multitude of actors involved. They include international actors such as the United Nations and, in particular, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND); transnational actors including certain non-governmental organizations; national actors including States affected by the production and consumption of illicit drugs and, within those States, the specific agencies responsible for managing and implementing the counter-narcotics strategy; the governors of regions within those States; the local authorities of the areas affected by the production and consumption of illicit drugs; the growers and distributors of the inputs needed to produce those drugs; the producers and consumers of the drugs; and, of course, the communities affected by those activities.

The present article does not seek to address the fundamental question of the conflict between the ultimate purpose of combating drugs and the injustice of certain actions that affect some of the most disadvantaged groups in society, a question currently being studied in other spheres.<sup>4</sup> Rather, it seeks to draw attention to the responsibility that all actors bear in relation to the decisions they take within the context of drug control policies and the need for them to assume that responsibility in an effective and coordinated manner. In other words, it is important that all actors recognize that they are jointly responsible for such decisions and, depending on individual roles, for the consequences of those decisions, guided by ethics-based criteria (i.e., criteria that lead to a better society).

One of the tools that has been used to tackle the increased production and distribution of illegal drugs at its source is the strategy of alternative development, which, according to the United Nations, is “a process to

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<sup>3</sup>See, for example, the 2015 report of the World Health Organization, published on 19 March 2015 by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, regarding the harmful effects of glyphosate [9], which is used to fumigate coca crops in countries including Colombia.

<sup>4</sup>Various public and private bodies, such as the Organization of American States and the Global Commission on Drug Policy, are examining this issue and questioning the appropriateness and effectiveness of the policies that have been guiding the fight against illicit drugs.

prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures” [10]. From an ethical perspective, its purpose cannot simply be to eradicate or replace the production of drugs, but must be to promote the human development of the affected population. That means not only providing that population with the opportunity and the capacity to obtain the resources it needs in order to enjoy a decent standard of living under conditions of freedom, but also restoring a culture of lawfulness from which it has often found itself excluded for reasons beyond its control. This focus is included, for example, among the main objectives of the Forest Warden Families Programme in Colombia. Consequently, alternative development programmes cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of their short-term effectiveness in combating drugs, but must also be evaluated in terms of the extent of their contribution to resolving a human problem that would be unfair to tackle by force alone. In that regard, the tendency to measure the impact of alternative development programmes using human development indicators is perfectly justified [11, p. 111].

In producing countries, most of the above-mentioned crops are grown by small-scale farmers for whom they often represent the only means of making a living in their region of origin. That is why the alternative development strategy goes beyond the simple substitution of certain plants for others: the most important element is to provide those farmers with decent livelihoods that do not involve the cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs.

Accordingly, it must be recognized that the farmers concerned are the weakest link in the drug production and distribution chain. Owing to their circumstances of particular vulnerability, they can abandon such cultivation only if there are programmes in place that allow them to substitute the cultivation of the crops in question with other income-generating activities in a sustainable manner. That fact was once again reiterated at the second High-level International Conference on Alternative Development, held in Bangkok as part of the preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, with the participation of high-level authorities. At the Conference, it was noted that farmers who engage in illicit crop cultivation or drug trafficking frequently do so because of poverty and the need to meet their basic needs. It is often the lack of opportunities to earn a legal and sustainable income that forces them to cultivate illicit drugs [12]. However, it is important to highlight that poverty is not the only motivation of the farmers involved [13, p. 42].

At the Conference in Thailand, the Executive Director of UNODC, Yury Fedotov, delivered a video message that reaffirmed the immense potential of alternative development and how it can dramatically improve the lives

of people. The Deputy Executive Director of UNODC stressed that the Sustainable Development Goals are an ideal platform for alternative development to be effective in areas including poverty reduction, sustainable agriculture, the protection of the environment and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive communities. Lastly, the need was highlighted for the strategy to become an adequately funded and sustainably implemented pillar of international counter-narcotics policy that would encompass not only the highest political levels but also individuals in the community.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that, unlike other components of what has hitherto been known as the “fight against drugs”, including the fumigation of illicit crops, alternative development does not give rise to objections of an ethical nature; on the contrary, there is consensus that it is one of the few strategies which, under certain economic, technical and management conditions, do not harm efforts to create a world in which narcotic drugs are not a burden on individual and social development.

Given that drug use remains one of the most pressing concerns at the global level, there is no doubt that all of the social actors directly or indirectly involved in the search for solutions to the production, distribution and consumption of drugs at the various levels—transnational, international, national and local—must acknowledge and decisively assume their responsibility in relation to the alternative development strategy. In addition, it must be stressed that the issue of small-scale farmers who become involved in illicit crop cultivation out of necessity or as a result of the almost overwhelming pressure placed on them by drug traffickers or illegal armed groups is first and foremost a human problem whose solution requires the actors at all levels, from the local to the global, to assume that responsibility.

That acknowledgement of responsibility further requires, as a corollary, that all individuals and organizations involved in making decisions that are liable to have an impact on the development processes of the regions affected by illicit cultivation coordinate their efforts in supporting that development. Therefore, the concept of shared social responsibility or shared responsibility, as referred to above, comes to the fore as a prerequisite for the success of alternative development programmes. In other words, all of those individuals and organizations are jointly responsible, within their respective areas of competence, to the individuals whose future largely depends on those programmes.

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<sup>5</sup>In that regard, it should be noted that at a meeting held in Vienna in March 2016, prior to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Germany and Thailand, together with UNODC, emphasized that where alternative development programmes are created in collaboration with beneficiary communities, meet their needs and are implemented within the framework of broader strategies for development and strengthened State presence, they tend to deliver results that are sustainable over time and have a positive impact on social cohesion, the promotion of lawfulness and integration with national territories and economies [14].

Accordingly, those who fail to acknowledge and assume, to the extent possible, their responsibilities in that area, which is so important for a large proportion of the world's population, are behaving in an ethically reprehensible way.

### **International statements on shared responsibility in the context of alternative development at the global level**

The concept of shared responsibility has evolved in parallel with international efforts to control illicit drugs since the end of the nineteenth century [15, pp. 1-4]. At its core, the world drug problem has increasingly been seen as a problem of global governance; a true challenge that cannot be solved by individual States. However, until the mid-1990s, the principle of shared responsibility was based at least partly on a division of the world, currently perceived as decontextualized, into producing and consuming countries [15, pp. 1-4], in which the greater part of the burden of responsibility often fell on the producing countries, which were seen as “to blame” for the increase in illicit drugs globally.

For the reasons set out in the first section of the present article, alternative development programmes are a potentially vital tool for tackling the problem in those countries. In practice, however, such programmes continue to be implemented in a limited number of countries, generally the traditional producers of illegal drugs,<sup>6</sup> and the lack of resources allocated to the programmes severely limits their potential. In that regard, it is worrying, to say the very least, that while large sums are spent on destroying illicit crops using methods such as fumigation, which sometimes also destroy the future of entire communities, restrictions are placed on contributions to processes that, like alternative development, can pave the way for the individual and social development of the inhabitants of the regions affected by illicit cultivation. Suffice it to note, for example, that as shown by the *World Drug Report 2015*, overall disbursements of alternative development funds from States members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) accounted for just 0.1 per cent of global development assistance [11, p. 118].<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Those countries are Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Morocco, Myanmar, Peru, the Philippines and Thailand (according to United Nations reports published between 2011 and 2013).

<sup>7</sup>An additional example, which relates to Colombia, shows that of the State's total expenditure on the six strategies, as referred to in its report of 2012, to address the problem of illicit drugs [17, p. 12], the strategy of reducing supply through various forms of interdiction accounted for 64.2 per cent, followed by legal and institutional strengthening (25.7 per cent), while alternative development accounted for barely 5.5 per cent. The latter percentage reflects a decrease in the historical average, which had been 7.1 per cent from 2003 to 2008. Moreover, the total sum of investments in alternative development made by Colombia and through international cooperation from 2003 to 2009 not only fluctuated widely but also represented an average of just 2.3 per cent of the annual investment budget (figures provided by the Social Action initiative of the Government of Colombia, quoted by Zorro-Sánchez [1]).



The necessity, urgency and complexity of the goal of countering the world drug problem, as well as the importance of the alternative development strategy as part of that goal, require the commitment of multiple actors that are dedicated to the strategy at different levels and, consequently, must work together to achieve that goal. It should be recalled that the challenge posed by the strategy relates not only to its effectiveness in limiting the supply of illicit drugs but also to its effectiveness in creating opportunities in a sustainable manner and building capacities in communities that have in many cases been perennially excluded from human development processes.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition by both States and the United Nations of the importance of the concept of shared responsibility, which has gradually become one of the fundamental features of statements regarding international cooperation in various fields, including alternative development as one of the core strategies to address the world drug problem.

In the context of the United Nations in particular, States have increasingly used the concept of a common and shared responsibility to tackle the world drug problem. In March 2011, at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, a round table was organized that was devoted to the “revitalization of the principle of common and shared responsibility as the centrepiece of international cooperation to confront the challenges posed by the world drug problem...” [16]. Participants emphasized the need for countries to share experiences and good practices so as to embody the principle of shared responsibility [18, para. 36].

In March 2012, the same topic was selected as the theme of a round table, with a view to highlighting the need to further improve understanding of the principle, its implications and the modalities for its application and operation, as well as the way in which States should use it in their international cooperation programmes to address the world drug problem [19, pp. 37 and 38]. At that session, participants highlighted that an operational definition of the principle of common and shared responsibility was lacking, as was a definition of the extent of each country’s responsibilities and commitments in the fight against illicit drugs, and concluded that the concept of common and shared responsibility required further clarification [19, p. 38].

At the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in March 2013, a resolution dedicated to the issue of strengthening shared responsibility was drafted by Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Thailand [20]. The resolution not only highlighted the fact that shared responsibility should guide the individual and joint actions of all States, but also advocated “firm political will, on the basis of equal responsibilities and with international cooperation and coordination between all relevant actors at all levels” [20]). As highlighted in the annual report of the International Narcotics Control

Board for 2012, the principle of shared responsibility can be seen as a joint undertaking involving various actors, including government institutions, the private sector, local communities and individuals [15, p. 1].

Lastly, the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016 addressed the issue of shared responsibility and established it as one of the key features of the fight against drugs. Promoting shared responsibility between governments and society is an essential task in tackling the structural causes of the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs, thereby countering violence and social damage [21].

### *Constraints on support for alternative development at the international level*

While the rhetoric surrounding shared responsibility seems to be used primarily within the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other international forums, there are a number of constraints when it comes to applying the principle in local, national and international practice.

The first constraint, inherent to international legislation, lies in the fact that shared responsibility is restricted by respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the principle of non-intervention in their domestic affairs. International treaties and resolutions generally refer to their non-mandatory nature and instead merely seek to guide international commitments and conduct. However, they do not have sufficient power to impose rules and regulations.

The second constraint is that calls to support alternative development tend to take the form of general recommendations and fail to provide specific guidelines on how to support the strategy. Despite efforts to rally support for the relevant programmes and the existence, since 2013, of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development [22], it is ultimately for States to decide whether and how to support other countries in the implementation of such programmes.

The third constraint is that there are relatively few countries that support alternative development. Although 18 countries have an alternative development strategy or an action plan,<sup>8</sup> support is often limited to a much smaller group of donor countries that have traditionally provided assistance for such cooperation. In Colombia, for example, support for alternative

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<sup>8</sup>Those countries are: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, China, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (as reported by the United Nations between 2011 and 2013).

development has come mainly from the United States of America, the European Union, and a few European States, including Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Sweden [23, pp. 266-271].

Partly as a result of the above, a fourth constraint is the absence of an international coalition or movement for alternative development. Unlike other global governance challenges such as arms trafficking, the proliferation of minefields in areas of armed conflict and the “responsibility to protect” the civilian population from crimes against humanity, there is no identifiable global commitment to alternative development. There are some events related to fair trade and symposiums among professionals, experts and academics in national and international settings,<sup>9</sup> but there are no structural commitments involving third countries, transnational companies or international consumers, which are essential actors in the successful marketing of products resulting from alternative development processes.

Lastly, a fifth constraint is that there is very little connectivity between alternative development projects and international markets. Previous research conducted by Kamminga at the University of Valencia [23, pp. 387 and 388] sought to gather evidence regarding the international marketing channels for alternative development products in three regions of Colombia. Any such evidence could be considered indications of the embracing of the principle of shared responsibility. However, apart from a very limited number of projects receiving international support, the research revealed that very few products of alternative development projects were reaching international markets (*ibid.*, pp. 387 and 388).

In corroboration of those findings, the *World Drug Report 2015* showed that preferential trade agreements aimed at supporting producing countries did not provide any direct support to alternative development projects [11, p. 117]. In addition, in its discussion of some examples of good practices in the exercise of shared responsibility, the International Narcotics Control Board refers only to “... many examples of concerted and collaborative efforts ... in programmes to develop alternative livelihoods”, but does not explain precisely what those efforts entail [15, para. 33].<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Annex II of the *World Drug Report 2015* contains a list of selected international events related to alternative development that have taken place since 2001.

<sup>10</sup>However, there has been some recent progress that demonstrates that the exercise of shared responsibility in that area is perfectly feasible. There are three examples: firstly, partnerships promoted by a well-known Swedish furniture chain with organizations in Thailand to promote alternative products [14]; secondly, the participation of six alternative development organizations in the Macrorrueda 60 business fair in Colombia, which demonstrated that it was possible to establish a constructive dialogue at various levels between the public and private sectors, both national and international [24]; and thirdly, collaboration between an Austrian chocolate maker and the Montebravo producers’ association in Chocó department, Colombia [25].

Considered together, the constraints lead to two initial conclusions. Firstly, there appears to be a significant gap between the international level, where emphasis has systematically been placed, at different times and in different bodies, on shared responsibility, and the local and national levels, where alternative development programmes are implemented and where that shared responsibility appears to be very limited in size and scope. Secondly, the constraints in question also show that it is not enough to work towards shared responsibility solely at the State level. The solution to the drug problem as a global challenge must include a wide range of non-State actors at the local, national and international levels.

### **Towards the exercise of shared responsibility in alternative development processes**

In the light of the above, it is not surprising that the *World Drug Report 2015* concluded that there was a disconnect between international rhetoric and financial support for alternative development [11, p. 118], nor is it surprising that the report revealed that disbursements of alternative development resources from States members of OECD had declined by 71 per cent since 2009 [11, p. 118].

The reasons for that decline may be partly related to the financial crisis or to the possibility that some countries do not record such resources separately but, rather, include them within broader categories of development assistance. However, it is clear that there is a real gap between rhetoric and international support which, irrespective of its exact size, extends in general to all areas of development cooperation<sup>11</sup> and validates concerns regarding the commitment of various actors to assuming their shared responsibility with respect to alternative development. In order to bridge that gap, a new approach is required to ensure that shared responsibility in the area of alternative development is more than just empty rhetoric. It should rather be an active network, which drives the actions of multiple local, regional, national, international and global public and private actors that understand the current realities of their respective areas of activity and are willing to take on the challenges that those realities pose.

There is no doubt that producing States should continue to play a key role in alternative development projects, whether that role takes the form of funding programmes, providing technical assistance or facilitating the processes required for the success of those projects (such as the recognition of land rights or access to markets). However, other countries and bodies must

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<sup>11</sup>As evidenced, for example, by the successive reports produced by the United Nations Development Programme on the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

also assume their role in exercising the shared responsibility that rests with them. Nevertheless, the support of those countries and bodies seems to be gradually decreasing, a trend that is liable to force countries in which alternative development projects are being conducted to supplement the resources allocated to those projects with their own funds [11, p. 86]. To date, only a small number of other countries, including Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States, have played a significant role in bilateral programmes to support alternative development (*ibid.*, p. 85).

As it is unlikely that, for example, all 53 member States of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will suddenly start to provide direct support to alternative development projects in other States, it should be asked what they and other countries could do at the bilateral or multilateral level to give definite form to the exercise of their responsibility. In that regard, it is entirely feasible for them to take a dual approach involving the promotion of action in support of alternative development taken by the companies most closely linked to their economic processes, and assistance in creating an environment that facilitates the opening up of their markets to alternative development products. However, that often depends on their willingness to negotiate trade agreements at the multilateral level. In any case, those States could also play a direct role as buyers of goods produced through alternative development processes, or as promoters of the production or marketing of those goods by companies or non-governmental organizations based in their territories.

In that respect, it should be noted that non-governmental organizations have been called on not only to become involved in the marketing of alternative development products but also, *inter alia*, to help raise awareness about the relevance of the projects concerned, a task that only a few such organizations have undertaken to date. It should be highlighted, for example, that while various local, national and international non-governmental organizations are committed to promoting organic or fair trade products, their efforts do not extend to alternative development products. There are only a few exceptions, in the form of high-quality products generated by a handful of projects around the world, such as the organic coffee produced by the Ecolsierra network (Red Ecolsierra) in Santa Marta, Colombia, or the fair trade products of the Mae Fah Luang Foundation in Thailand.

The same is true of national and multinational companies. Although the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development emphasize the crucial role of the private sector and the creation of public-private partnerships aimed at making alternative development successful and sustainable [22], the actual number of companies committed to providing that support through the purchase of raw materials or finished products is very low. Public-private partnerships have been established in some drug-producing

regions, such as the partnership promoted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Colombia with Starbucks and several national companies [26, p. 33], and the partnership promoted by UNODC in Colombia and Peru between the Austrian chocolate maker Zotter and associations of local producers [25]. Often, however, those partnerships are not directly related to alternative development projects, or remain limited in scope and duration.

### *Public-private partnerships as a means of exercising shared responsibility<sup>12</sup>*

The proper exercise of shared responsibility requires levels of coordination between the parties that enable the smooth implementation of their activities. While that coordination may be formal or informal, in most cases only formal coordination (established clearly in agreements that may have various modalities) offers a degree of security sufficient to satisfactorily link the responsibility of the different actors. Those agreements should go beyond the implementation of short-term actions that establish the specific commitments of the parties in relation to a particular project or infrastructure [27] [28, p. 4]. They should rather take the form of partnerships, which often give rise to broad-based coalitions that comprise not only public entities but also community leaders, national or international entrepreneurs, private consultants, academics and non-governmental organizations [29, p. 12].

Public-private partnerships strengthen the capacity of actors to make a positive impact on the society in which they operate. For example, Devlin and Mogueillansky [30, p. 66] argue that in many cases, the information that is available to private companies regarding the market, even if incomplete, enables them to identify opportunities and obstacles in order to successfully establish strategies aimed at improving the economic conditions of certain groups—for example, those who seek economic activities that are alternatives to illicit crop cultivation. In contrast, government entities approach the issue with a long-term goal, strategic guidelines and various kinds of resources in relation to the actions concerned. When both sectors work together, their potential to identify and overcome constraints is thereby increased. One such example is the promotion of economic growth and the transformation of the living conditions of the population connected to alternative development programmes.

In the specialized literature, there is broad recognition of the classification by the World Bank of the roles that the public sector could play in

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<sup>12</sup>Lucía Torres Alvarado, a master's student at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Development Studies (CIDER) of the University of the Andes in Bogota contributed to the present analysis through her literature review.

creating an enabling environment for corporate social responsibility: mandating, facilitating, partnering and endorsing. Fox, Ward and Howard [31] explain the respective roles as follows:

- **Mandating:** establishing minimum standards for business performance through legislation
- **Facilitating:** offering private-sector companies different types of incentives in order to engage them in the issue
- **Partnering:** acting as a partner of the private sector and civil society and harnessing the complementary skills of each
- **Endorsing:** recognizing the good practices of organizations and supporting socially responsible initiatives through the example set by those organizations

Those roles are not incompatible and it is possible that, in relation to a specific issue, a combination of them may be reflected in various actions.

For its part, General Assembly resolution 66/288, entitled “The future we want”, highlights the potential role that the private sector can play as a partner in addressing complex issues directly related to sustainable development, such as those which arise in alternative development processes and consequently require the involvement of various social actors. In that regard, it should be noted that in countries such as Colombia, where those processes are of paramount importance, the foundations of the National Development Plan 2014-2018 provide that in order to achieve the established goals, the Government will work hand in hand with the business sector and local governments to develop public strategies and public-private partnerships [32, p. 63].<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary globalization has made both local and regional development processes and the relationships between the actors who work together to promote them increasingly complex. From that perspective, efforts to contribute to development become increasingly difficult and ineffective if they depend on the actions of a single actor, regardless of the form that those actions take. For that reason, the exercise of social responsibility increasingly requires the seeking of partnerships with other relevant actors.

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<sup>13</sup>Although management problems largely thwarted the business capitalization initiative launched in the 1990s in the context of the alternative development strategy of the Government of Colombia of the time, the initiative’s conception in fact represented an attempted partnership between the public sector, private enterprise and illicit crop growers, and the experience it provided could be drawn upon in the future. The business capitalization initiative, implemented through the Agricultural Production and Marketing Business Incubator, sought to capitalize alternative development projects and enterprises through the establishment of public limited companies that would bring together rural farming organizations and private-sector enterprises interested in the proposed programmes [33, p. 9].

The scope of that responsibility may be very broad if, for example, it binds all the actors involved in a value chain—in this case, the value chains of alternatives to illicit crop cultivation—from the input stage to the final marketing of the products concerned. Authors such as Scott (2014) suggest that it is appropriate to build matrices that make it possible to identify the actors involved in each case, define their responsibilities within the chain and establish partnerships as a means of fostering the exercise of those responsibilities.

### *The international context as an enabling environment for the exercise of shared responsibility*

Although the world drug problem is frequently discussed in bilateral or multilateral forums, the alternative development strategy is seldom part of those discussions. Beyond the sharing of good practices and lessons learned, which almost always are of a technical nature and relate to specific projects, there is little discussion of what international actors do and could do to support alternative development as part of their shared responsibility.

For example, in many of the resolutions, declarations and action plans of the United Nations, reference is made to international financial institutions and regional development banks as important actors in supporting or financing alternative development. However, it appears that bodies such as the World Bank are not structurally committed to alternative development. This is a missed opportunity as the World Bank is an institution that, like the Inter-American Development Bank, could help alternative development to transcend the relatively small-scale projects that struggle to make an impact despite the size and reach of the illicit economy and of legal competing industries. In addition, with a view to strengthening producer associations, those bodies could provide resources for production and marketing infrastructure that could improve productivity, quality and, as a result, market potential. An example would be the funds required for the often lengthy and expensive processes of certifying organic or fair trade products.

However, international support should go beyond financial and technical assistance for alternative development. Given the importance of international markets, international actors, which are often an extension of States, can create an international trading scheme in which the products concerned can be promoted successfully. Regardless of whether recent attempts to promote a global brand for alternative development products are feasible or desirable [23, pp. 300 and 301], it is clear that the vast majority of those products fail to reach profitable markets at the national, international or global level.

Although at first sight the trend towards free trade agreements, such as those concluded between the European Union and Latin American countries, would appear to foster the creation of an enabling environment for



alternative development products, the poor conditions in which many of those projects are carried out tend to confound that expectation. Many alternative development projects are producing low volumes of relatively expensive, low-quality, non-uniform products at irregular intervals. That means that they struggle to compete on national and world markets, not only with illicit alternatives, but also with the legal competition.

Given the adverse conditions in many regions in which alternative development projects are being implemented [11, pp. 90-93], it is necessary to lend those projects ongoing support in terms of both production and marketing. In addition, preferential trade agreements are needed in order to carve out a space for them on international markets in a more structural way. Previous trade agreements such as the Andean Trade Preference Act and its successor, the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act, as well as the Generalized Scheme of Preferences of the European Union, have facilitated free access to agricultural products but have not specifically sought to promote alternative development projects [11, pp. 116 and 117].

To date, neither free trade nor preferential trade has succeeded in strengthening the marketing of alternative development products. In that regard, if the international community is to take the principle of shared responsibility for supporting alternative development seriously, a debate should be initiated in which bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and others that have a direct or indirect influence on the regulation of international trading schemes also participate, with a view to identifying the best mechanisms to support alternative development products at the international level. If preferential treatment were impossible,<sup>14</sup> an improvement in the standards for the production and marketing of alternative products would be even more necessary. From the perspective of that group of bodies, it should not be forgotten that alternative development is also a source of growth—potential or real—of the trade flows and economic activity both of the countries that produce the goods concerned and of those that buy them.

The process of incorporating alternative development more fully into the international trading scheme can be regarded as part of the process of positioning it within the broader sphere of the development efforts of every

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<sup>14</sup>As also explained in the *World Drug Report 2015*, to which Kamminga contributed as researcher and writer, preferential treatment may be difficult to establish. For example, the Generalised Scheme of Preferences of the European Union was changed in 2005 after a WTO legal case that was started in 2002. WTO ruled that tariff advantages under the Special Arrangements to Combat Drug Production and Trafficking were inconsistent with article I.1 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, on general most-favoured-nation treatment. This meant that the European Union could not grant preferential treatment to illicit drug-producing countries, unless it granted the same treatment to other Generalised Scheme of Preferences beneficiaries with similar “development, financial and trade needs” [34].

country. The best way to achieve that objective seems to be to place it within the context of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals. In that respect, a study has been undertaken to explore how the issue could fit the logic of the Goals [35]; [11, p. 116], but more research is needed to explore how that could be achieved. It should be highlighted that the necessary incorporation of support for alternative development programmes within broader national development strategies may further complicate the exercise of the shared responsibility that the various social actors must assume in relation to such programmes as their specific roles and responsibilities related to alternative development may become more obscured.

It is equally important to reiterate that there can be no confusion between the instruments designed to promote alternative development—financial and otherwise—and the ultimate goal of alternative development, namely to increase the individual and social opportunities enabling persons who, for one reason or another, have become involved in the cultivation of plants that can be used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs, to abandon that activity in a sustainable way.

## **Conclusions**

The challenge of addressing illicit crop cultivation has many interrelated facets. Firstly, such crops are often grown by communities that face conditions of extreme poverty, instability or external pressure and that lack other opportunities to overcome those conditions. That is why it is necessary to ensure, before any eradication of illicit crops takes place, that those communities will have sustainable alternative livelihoods. Achieving that requires the determination and assessment of the social, technical and economic feasibility of such alternatives. But it also requires the provision of essential basic services to enable those who have voluntarily or involuntarily been involved in illicit crop cultivation to establish a dignified existence under conditions that befit the modern world. It also necessitates an approach that reintroduces farmers into the governance framework, and above all the culture of lawfulness from which they have been excluded.

In that regard, it should be recalled that a significant proportion of that population has been living within an institutional system defined by actors that operate outside the framework of the law and tend to impose their decisions by force. Ensuring that that population not only understands the need to comply with the law but also is able to do so is one of the great challenges of alternative development. That understanding and that ability require the presence of the State, which in most cases has been absent from the regions most affected by illicit crop cultivation. Therefore, alternative development programmes cannot simply be the responsibility of a specialized body. It

must be the responsibility of a group of entities that, through the shared exercise of their responsibilities, are able to contribute to opening up paths towards social, political and economic development, and inclusion by working hand in hand with the population concerned.

Given that the problem of narcotic drugs is seen as a critical issue at the international level, responsibility for solving that problem must also be assumed at that level. However, that does not mean that a group of countries has the right to dictate rules with which all those affected in one way or another by the production or use of narcotic drugs must comply. What it does mean is that there is a need to implement, with the participation of the population concerned, structures and processes of shared responsibility in which every global, national and local social actor assumes part of the financial and other costs of addressing the problem—insofar as each of those actors has contributed to the problem in one way or another and to a greater or lesser extent.

Moreover, it is vital that alternative development programmes be designed with the future in mind. Past experiences and the lessons learned from those experiences should be taken into account in order to guide forward-looking actions, but those actions should not be held back by the failures of the past, which are clearly attributable to the absence of the conscious, organized and efficient exercise of shared responsibility by the individual actors called on to promote such development. In other words, the true potential of alternative development has yet to materialize owing to the lack of genuine and active shared responsibility.

The actions in question should be the focus of specific partnerships established on the basis of a systematic programme and a long-term commitment to promote alternative development. Within such partnerships, all actors, including small-scale farmers; local and national authorities; enterprises; members of the international community; non-governmental organizations with a local, national or global reach; and other institutions could contribute, to the extent possible, their efforts, capacities—including technical expertise—and financial resources.

The responsibility of national and international public actors is not limited to issuing guidelines or adopting standards with a global or national reach to promote alternative development and thus replace illicit crops. Their responsibility commits them to ensuring that the standards they issue are flexible enough to be applied in a versatile manner by the persons who are located in the area concerned. Those experiencing the problem as farmers, neighbours or authorities with jurisdiction over that area should be fully familiar with the characteristics of those standards and are also expected to assume responsibility for the cost of implementing the solutions adopted.

However, that flexibility cannot be achieved and such persons cannot be called upon to assume their full share of responsibility until they have become part of the group that has participated in the discussion and adoption of the measures concerned. In other words, farmers and, in general, members of local communities must be part of the partnerships and not seen as the “object” of those partnerships. Moreover, it is on the basis of partnerships established in that manner that commitments of financial and other support that link the various actors should be formalized.

Furthermore, in the case of alternative development, almost all of the solutions that may be proposed require the commitment of other private actors. They play a role either in promoting the productive development of small farms that have already eradicated or are in the process of eradicating illicit crops, or in facilitating access to input and product markets. The role of promoter may go beyond the mere provision of advice or financial resources. With the informed agreement of the farmers, that role may, for example, develop into a partnership between entrepreneurs and small-scale producers.

Partnerships should be forged between various groups, each composed of actors from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. These include government entities at the national, regional and local levels; farming communities willing to eradicate illicit crops; centres for generating knowledge and technologies applicable to alternative development processes; international cooperation agencies; other non-governmental organizations interested in supporting alternative development processes and multilateral agencies that can create an enabling environment for the access of products to international markets.

Multilateral bodies and national Governments have a dual role: to shape the regulations applicable to alternative development processes, each within its area of competence, and to participate directly in the implementation of the programmes and projects defined within the framework of the partnership. Although the composition of partnerships would vary, community members committed to substituting illicit crops through alternative development programmes and projects should always have a major role in those partnerships.

Moreover, all of those actors are called on to play an important role in the creation of an enabling environment for alternative development, ensuring, for example, land rights, respect for the rights of indigenous groups and other minorities, human security, and the existence of political and financial institutions that are stable and inclusive<sup>15</sup> at the local level. Thus, shared responsibility also extends to other areas that determine the impact of alternative development programmes.

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<sup>15</sup>In the sense of institutions that serve citizens, as proposed by Acemoglu and Robinson [36].

The sphere of activity of each of those actors is different, and they are therefore ranked on different hierarchical scales. That does not mean, however, that those hierarchies have to be replicated in every partnership. It is proposed that partnerships should have a non-hierarchical structure, a network organized according to the specific characteristics of each programme, on the basis of which the actions of the various actors are coordinated.

In today's world, that coordination does not require a physical presence, and as a result, networks between the actors in a partnership are becoming increasingly important. In addition, those networks do not necessarily connect locations that are close to one another; some of the persons or entities that form part of the various groups of actors may be located in remote places, far from not only members of other groups but even members of their own group. It is important, therefore, to geographically locate every member of the partnership; to understand that every member is a component of the alternative development support network; and to establish the channels that connect them with the other members, and the type of flows that each is expected to generate and receive in order to develop the partnership. In other words, it is a question of translating the partnership into a network and "spatializing" it in order to understand and guide in a more appropriate manner the processes that take place within it.

Beyond technical exchanges at various levels, creating an international movement around alternative development has proven to be difficult. Nevertheless, the multifaceted network of local, national and international partnerships that is needed for alternative development to become increasingly effective will by itself create more linkages, more cooperation and a stronger sense of working towards common objectives among the various actors involved. As such, shared responsibility—if properly embodied in practical arrangements—will contribute to creating and strengthening an international movement around alternative development, especially if backed by the visibility and marketing power of the international private sector.

Alternative development cannot be regarded as a religion with almost immutable dogmas and practices. Far from being subject to rigid rules, the partnerships that are necessary for its success should be designed as practical, flexible and effective tools that are geared towards a future that transforms the tenets of human development into reality for those who have experienced the uncertainty of poverty, lawlessness and insecurity. The alternative development strategy requires the commitment of multiple actors and, for that reason, must be implemented on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility that is clearly established for each of those actors and expressly assumed by them. Today, that responsibility is part of the ethical commitment of every individual, every organization and every State to others.

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