

Universal Declaration of Coca Rights

A Framework for Freedom, Justice, and Regulation

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Abstract

The coca plant (*Erythroxylum coca*) has been cultivated and used for millennia by Indigenous communities for medicinal, spiritual, and nutritional purposes. However, prohibitionist policies have criminalized its cultivation, use, and trade, leading to economic and social injustices. This declaration asserts the universal right to grow, consume, and distribute coca and its derivatives—including cocaine and crack—through a rights-based framework prioritizing harm reduction, economic justice, and regulatory fairness. Using scientific, historical, and legal analysis, this document challenges the war on coca and proposes a new model of engagement rooted in human rights and public health.

Keywords: Coca, Drug Policy, Human Rights, Economic Justice, Harm Reduction, Indigenous Rights

Preamble

Recognizing that the coca plant has been cultivated and used for millennia by Indigenous and other communities for medicinal, spiritual, and nutritional purposes [4, 6, 10];

Acknowledging that the criminalization of coca, cocaine, and its derivatives has disproportionately harmed Indigenous peoples, small farmers, and marginalized communities, while fueling violence and corruption through prohibition-driven policies [9, 5, 1];

Affirming that all people have the inherent right to cultivate, trade, process, consume, and research coca and its derivatives, free from unjust persecution or stigmatization [8, 2, 11];

Asserting that responsible regulation, harm reduction, and human rights must replace prohibition as the guiding principles for coca-related policies [7, 12];

We, the undersigned, declare the following rights:

Universal Declaration of Coca Rights

Article 1: Right to Cultivate and Use Coca

Every individual and community has the right to cultivate, harvest, and use the coca plant for personal, cultural, spiritual, medicinal, and commercial purposes.

Coca cultivation shall not be subject to criminalization or eradication, provided it is conducted in accordance with environmentally sustainable practices [5, 4].

Governments and international bodies shall support and protect traditional coca farmers from violence, exploitation, and economic marginalization [11, 1].

Article 2: Right to Process, Trade, and Commercialize Coca and Its Derivatives

The right to freely process, refine, trade, and sell coca-based products—including raw coca, extracts, infusions, and derivatives such as cocaine and crack—shall be recognized and protected.

National and international policies shall ensure that coca farmers and producers receive fair economic compensation and are not excluded from legal markets [3, 8].

Article 3: Right to Research and Medical Use

Scientists, medical professionals, and researchers shall have the right to study coca and its derivatives, free from political or ideological restrictions.

Coca, cocaine, and other coca-based substances shall be recognized for their medicinal properties, and their use in healthcare shall be permitted and promoted where beneficial [12].

Article 4: Right to Personal and Recreational Use

Every adult shall have the right to consume coca, cocaine, or crack in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

Public health approaches, including harm reduction, education, and safe consumption spaces, shall replace punitive drug laws [7, 1].

Article 5: Right to Protection from Prohibitionist Violence

Governments and international bodies shall immediately cease forced eradication programs, militarized drug war interventions, and punitive measures that disproportionately impact marginalized communities [9].

Article 6: Right to Economic and Social Justice

Coca farmers, workers, and producers shall have the right to fair trade conditions, unionization, and cooperative ownership of their industries.

International bodies shall end trade barriers and economic sanctions that punish coca-producing nations or prevent them from developing legal coca industries [8].

Conclusion

This declaration affirms the inherent rights of individuals and communities to engage with coca in all its forms. It calls for a radical shift from prohibition to regulation, from criminalization to harm reduction, and from exploitation to justice. We demand an end to the war on coca and a new era of rights-based, evidence-driven policies.

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