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Bolivia

[La Paz: reduced coca cultivation](#)

A study on the market of coca recommended policies for the expansion of crops



MOSTRA IL TUO BUSINESS *entra nel Club*



After years of waiting, the government of **Evo Morales** has finally published [the Study on the full application of the coca leaf in Bolivia](#) . It is **an analysis of the legal market of the plant started in 2004 by La Paz , in agreement with the National Farmers** . The purpose of the project was to have a useful tool to adjust, by a reduction or an extension of the arable land in the country, the production to the actual needs of consumers.

The **Coca Monitoring Survey** of the ' **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** [quoted](#) the document as already nearing publication way back in 2005, and so in the following years. These expectations have pushed promptly rejected the ' **European Union** to intervene in 2007 with an **economic aid of one million euro** face to give a more rapid pace in the work. Despite these efforts, until 2010 the firm had not yet seen the light. With the motivation of having to make the unexplained 'complementary studies', it took another three years before being able to read the document.

To explain this long delay and the slowness of the work Bolivian might reasonably be the sensitivity of the issue in question. Evo Morales and his party, the **MAS (Movement Towards Socialism)** , are strongly linked to the 'coca growers', skis farmers producing plant. President Morales himself is, since 1996, the **Coordination Committee** of the six federations 'coca growers' region **Cochabamb** to . **axis between the government and the farm lobby** is therefore **a constant feature of life in Bolivian politics** .

In recent years the President and his supporters , while strongly condemning the illegal trade in cocaine, **have strongly supported the legalization of trade of the coca plant** , prevented an international level by **the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs** of 1961. In addition, in recent years, it is tried to push an I increase demand and punctually proposed an increase in production to satisfy it.

The international ban prevents Bolivia, where the use of the coca plant as a tonic and medicine is widespread among the population, to export the plant and its derivatives abroad, taking away the country a possible source of economic livelihood. The main problem that occurs in relation to the study is that, according to the **Law 1008** of 1988, the maximum extension allowed for the cultivation of coca is 12,000. The **purpose of the government was to amend the legislation to provide**

Riccardo Carcano Casali
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spaces up to 20,000 hectares and to increase production , but the document presented by the researchers estimated that 14,705 hectares are sufficient to answer the legal question, estimated at around 20,690 tonnes.

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In fact , **Bolivia is the third largest producer of coca in the world** after Peru and Colombia, **with 25,300 hectares of plantations** , well beyond the threshold hypothetically allowed. So, just when the Government, complying with the requirements of the 'coca growers', he wanted to bring the legal threshold to the actual production, the results of the study have become a major obstacle to the expansion of land to cultivate. They could, therefore, skip the plans of Morales and the MAS, which in late October proposed a meeting with the producers of coca to discuss numerous bills that have been submitted to the Commission for the land and the land of the Chamber of Senators by the associations themselves of farmers. All proposals have in common the increase of arable land and the redefinition of the areas used to grow.

Reoccurs then the clash between those ten years , the Government , supports the plant market , and who , in opposition , is harshly critical of policies favorable to the ' coca growers ' and the conflict of interest between Morales and federations of coca growers. For some time the deputy and leader of the opposition party **Movimiento Sin Miedo (MSM)** , **Juan del Granado** railed against the government procrastination. Last October, he claimed to have had access to some data showing that the national supply needed only 6,000 hectares to be satisfied. According to del Granado, " *the Government of the MAS has concealed for more than three years, in a systematic way, the results of this study .* "

Now that the document was made public, there have been puzzled to see that the figures are very different from those anticipated by del Granado. **Centa Rek** , senator **National Convergence (CN)** has argued that the firm has been altered by the Government to make it more favorable to the coca growers and announced the request to the **Minister of the Government** , **Carlos Romero** , a detailed explanation on the subject. However, some other analyzes, such as the **Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (lapop)** and the opinion of some experts seem to validate the results of the official investigation.

Meanwhile, it is significant that, as [noted](#) the newspaper ' *La Razon* ', the legal coca market has grown by 15 percent in the period 2006-2012. Policies to stimulate demand carried out by Morales have therefore had a certain effectiveness. On the other hand, this does not mean that the increase in the legal consumption of coca, as you wish to the Government, brakes illegal consumption of drugs derivatives, such as cocaine. The problem of illicit drug trafficking remains, therefore, a node that has yet to be dissolved.

At this point, **the government no longer has a plausible justification for increased cultivation** , and, willy-nilly, **producers will have to deal with a possible reduction of their land** . The reduction is likely to take place in the Yungas region, which is part of the district of La Paz, the pole more coca production in the country. This area is also a stronghold of MAS and Morales will face a delicate work of negotiation to reconcile the requirements of reducing the risk of a decline in support from the population of the area.

In order not to complicate your life ahead of general elections in October, 2014, the Government has therefore decided to freeze any proposal for a change in legislation, at least until the time of a hypothetical victory at the polls. The decision is not, however, went to genius to sectors of the opposition, nor does the coca growers, disappointed by Sage MAS.

The search for a solution that does not unhappy at the population and at the same time allows you to control the drug trade deal still long Bolivian leaders , whose main concern seems to not cause riots among the population , as has happened in recent times in the region Apolo, northeast of La Paz. Here, in October, some residents of the area have killed four members of a government team that dealt eradicate illegal coca crops.

The problem of reconciling the fight against drug trafficking with a millenary tradition and essentially harmless, it also offers the possibility for a Bolivian export development, it is still far from being solved.

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