

# *Ecuador Declared Free of Illicit Crops*

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Quito, October 29 (PL-RHC)-- Illicit crops and drug laboratories ceased to exist in Ecuador, confirmed the Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Control of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances (CONSEP), Rodrigo Velez on Wednesday.

As an illustrative fact, the official said that more than 15,000 drug laboratories have been found in the past five years in Colombia and Peru, while 30 laboratories were found in Ecuador in the same period.

CONSEP controls the entire domestic industry that lawfully uses all these precursors or chemicals. They are used in the oil, food, textile and metal-mechanics industries, among others, stated at a press conference.

According to Velez, institutions as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the National Anti-Narcotics Police, the Joint Command of the Armed Forces, the Ecuadorian Space Institute, the Ministry of Environment, among several others, every year conform an inter-agency committee monitoring.

The monitoring is done by land and air. Qualified specialists visit border areas and some highland provinces, where there has been evidence of crops in smaller amounts.

For these reasons, Ecuador is considered a country free of illicit crops, as recently was declared by the

United Nations (UN), after not finding there coca, poppy or marijuana plantations.

Due to the control achieved by Ecuador, according to Velez, the United Nations asked him to collaborate with other nations of Latin America and eight countries are using the same methodology and tools applied in Ecuador.

According to the Executive Secretary of CONSEP, this situation has prevented the mafias in the drug business of reaching the levels of violence as in other nations of the continent.

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