



Brussels, 18 May 2017
(OR. fr)

9416/17

CORDROGUE 60
COAFR 143
COSI 104
GENVAL 58

NOTE

From: French delegation
To: Dublin Group
Subject: Regional situation in West Africa

West Africa has to cope with multiple threats linked to transnational organised crime in all its forms (such as trafficking, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorism); institutional weakness prevails and is particularly evident in the shortcomings of the criminal justice systems and widespread corruption.

The persistent drug problem in the region and its consequences for security, the economy, society and health weaken the foundations of the rule of law and seriously undermine economic and human development in the sub-region.

The region is an important transit area for the trafficking of cocaine and heroin. It now also has to deal with a significant increase in the number of clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of synthetic drugs and an alarming increase in local consumption of all kinds of drugs.

Regional and international cooperation and coordination play a major role in effectively countering the transnational threats that affect both the continent and the whole international community and in providing a global response to the challenges posed by the drug problem. Apart from the fight against trafficking, the care and medical treatment of addicts, little developed until now, is a major focus for action in the area.

I. Mini groups' work

France, as the regional Chair of the Dublin group for West Africa, has been given the task of studying the situation of the global drug problem in the following countries: Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.

This document has been drawn up on the basis of information from:

- reports of the region's Dublin mini groups;
- the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2016;
- the 2016 report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB);
- the INCB report 'Precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances' (2016);
- sections of the UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2016-2020;
- 2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of the U.S. Department of State.

a. Date and venue of the Dublin mini groups' meetings

In 2017, the Dublin mini groups established in West Africa met:

- on a weekly basis in Accra;
- on 10 April 2017 at the premises of the French embassy in Cotonou;
- on 12 April 2017 at the headquarters of the French internal security service in Dakar;
- on 19 April 2017 at the premises of the French embassy in Abuja;
- on 21 April 2017 at the premises of the French embassy in Bamako;

b. Regional situation with regard to the drug problem

Generally speaking, the available data on the situation of African countries faced with the drug problem are incomplete and unreliable. It is therefore difficult to obtain a complete and precise picture of the use, production and trafficking of drugs and psychoactive substances on the African continent and how the situation is evolving.

While it is primarily perceived as a drug trafficking hub, West Africa actually has to deal with all the challenges posed by drugs. The region is also affected by the production of illicit substances (cannabis and synthetic drugs) and drug use. Cannabis smugglers operate in the sub-region.

The proceeds of local cannabis production are possibly used to finance regional terrorism.

Nigerian organised crime networks are still the main players in drug trafficking worldwide.

They draw on a large diaspora, well-established in West Africa, but also in producer countries and on trafficking routes. Ingenious, organised, adaptable, their extensive capacity for action attested to by their income, they are particularly difficult to dismantle. The Nigerians have moreover extended their field of operation and have moved into the sector engaged in the production and trafficking of methamphetamines bound for South-East Asian markets.

Drug use trends

Drug use is increasing locally. Regional trafficking has led to increased supply and availability of drugs on the market.

In addition to the traditional use of cannabis, opiate use has increased significantly in a region where levels of cocaine use were already high.

In 2014, in West Africa and Central Africa, there were more than 30 million cannabis users, more than one million users of opiates and almost two million users of cocaine.

Heroin is extensively used in Côte d'Ivoire ('smoking rooms' are a feature of Abidjan) and to a lesser extent in Senegal (over a thousand addicts are registered at the University Hospital in Dakar).

West African countries must also deal with high use of Tramadol, a synthetic opioid analgesic exploited for its psychotropic effects.

The increased drug use in the region is a major concern for health authorities and a major challenge in terms of security and public health.

Cannabis trafficking

Cannabis is the traditional drug of choice in West Africa. Regional trafficking is on the increase.

Ghana is the biggest producer and exporter of herbal cannabis in the region. Analyses carried out on recent seizures show an improvement in the quality of the product. This can be explained by the emergence of a more demanding clientèle. Young Senegalese, in particular, who have travelled in Europe, are looking for better quality cannabis than the usual regional product i.e. with a higher tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content.

Cocaine trafficking

West Africa is an important transit area for cocaine from South America on its way mainly to Europe (58 % of the quantities channelled through the region) and notably to Italy, Spain, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, but also the United States (12 %), and to a lesser extent Asia (3 %). A large proportion is also used on the continent (26 %).

Cocaine arriving on the west coast of the African continent comes mostly from Brazil (51 %), and in smaller quantities from Colombia (18 %), Peru (13 %) and even from Chile (9 %). This confirms the strategic position of West Africa on the trafficking routes. The value of the cocaine transiting the region is estimated at USD 1.25 billion.

The commercial air route is the most used by the couriers, who are mostly Nigerian or from Guinea Bissau who take flights from São Paulo via Casablanca, Addis Ababa, Dubai or Johannesburg, before arriving in West African countries.

The technique of 'breaking bulk' and the use of several couriers for the same transfer are the modi operandi still being used by traffickers to camouflage the routes, complicate tracing the chain of command, and frustrate the targeting techniques used by law enforcement authorities.

Consignments of cocaine from African soil into Europe come mostly via the air route, even if in some countries (Ghana, for example), the maritime route is preferred.

On European markets, cocaine, purchased for around EUR 5 500 per kilogramme in Brazil, can fetch up to EUR 45 000 per kilogramme. Drug traffickers' profit margins are so high that they can now afford to make multiple small transfers, using different, more discreet routes that are harder to detect.

From 2009 to 2014, 78 % of cocaine seizures on the African continent were made in West Africa, mainly in Cape Verde, in Gambia, Nigeria and Ghana.

From December 2014 to March 2016, at least 22 tonnes of cocaine, on its way from South America to Europe via West Africa, was seized in transit.

Heroin trafficking

Trafficking of Afghan heroin to West Africa (especially to Nigeria) is on the rise via the southern route (departing from the ports of Pakistan and Iran via the Indian Ocean and East Africa) where it is used or dispatched to other countries, especially to the United States. Nevertheless, seizures in the region are rare.

Trafficking of precursors and synthetic drugs

Production of methamphetamines - Crystal Meth (powder) and Crystal Ice (transparent crystals) - mainly bound for Asia (Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia) is high in the region, especially in Guinea and Nigeria.

In Nigeria, manufacturing laboratories are frequently discovered and dismantled. The Lagos Airport Anti-Trafficking Unit makes regular seizures of methamphetamines and the precursors required for its manufacture.

Ephedrine or pseudo-ephedrine are also regularly intercepted in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

Khat trafficking

The region, especially Senegal, Togo, Guinea and Mali, has become a hub for khat trafficking bound for the United States (New York, Atlanta, Denver and Minneapolis).

Trafficking of khat from Ethiopia is booming. The development of the process of lyophilisation of khat leaves, enabling better preservation of the product, makes trafficking it safer as it allows the use of longer, less exposed, routes.

Regional cooperation

In the framework of the UNODC's West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), the aim of which is to step up the fight organised crime and drug trafficking in particular, the third meeting of the Advisory Committee on programmes took place in Bissau in November 2015. High-level representatives from countries contributing to the implementation of the Initiative were present, from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the UNODC and other UN bodies. The meeting made it possible to determine the operational and strategic priorities of the Initiative and to underline the need to intensify sub-regional coordination.

Under the programme set up by INTERPOL to strengthen border management capacities in West Africa, a ten-day operation called 'Adwenpa' was conducted in January 2016 to strengthen controls at the borders of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. That operation was expected to lead to the seizure of almost 900 kg of drugs (cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine and khat).

c. National situations with regard to the drug problem

Benin

Benin has a range of legal instruments and units specifically dedicated to the fight against drugs. However, much progress remains to be made politically and technically, nationally and regionally, to effectively tackle the problem of drugs and organised crime networks. At this stage, there is no comprehensive approach to combating drug-trafficking; instead it is usually limited to ad hoc seizures, without the kind of thorough investigations that would make it possible to dismantle the networks. There is also a significant corruption problem, which affects both the private and public sectors at all levels. There has been shown to be collusion between politicians, enforcement bodies, judicial authorities and traffickers.

Drug use and trafficking:

Locally-grown cannabis is still the most accessible and most used drug in the country. Cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines are not much used. Use of Tramadol, imported from India, is widespread.

Benin is a transit country for cocaine from South America and for heroin from South East Asia on its way to European markets.

Significant flows of methamphetamine produced in Nigeria also pass through Benin on their way to Europe, the Middle East, South East Asia and South Africa. On 9 April 2017, 13.5 kg of methamphetamine carried by an individual of Nigerian nationality were seized at Cotonou international airport on a France-bound flight.

Cotonou's port and airport are the two main points of entry and exit for trafficking controlled by Nigerian groups.

For 2016, the Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCERTID) has recorded the seizure of 1 422 kg of narcotics, a very large part of which is cannabis. This constitutes a clear drop as compared to the preceding years (4 149 tonnes in 2015 and 2 143 tonnes in 2014). Ninety-six people were arrested (110 in 2015), mainly Nigerians, but also nationals of Ghana and Guinea. Beninese nationals are mainly involved in trafficking cannabis by road.

However, this information is fragmentary and does not reflect the reality of operations to combat drugs in the country, in that they do not take into account gendarmerie and customs service operations.

National strategy and international cooperation:

The legal apparatus for combating the drug problem has remained static for several years. It is made up of the 1997 Law on the fight against drugs and precursors, the 2006 Law on combating money laundering, which set up the National Financial Information Processing Unit (CENTIF) and the 2011 Law on the fight against corruption.

Benin is attempting to strengthen its system for combating illegal financial flows, in particular its investigative capacities and inquiry services, so as to fight more effectively against the laundering of money from the drugs trade; but no real measures have yet been implemented. Nationally, significant money laundering operations are carried out under cover of importing second-hand vehicles.

Despite the firmness displayed in political discourse on fighting the drugs trade, the reality is quite different. The President of the Republic, Patrice Talon, has not included the fight against narcotics and psychoactive substances among the priorities of his government. In the security field, stress is put mainly on intelligence and combating terrorism.

Operationally, imposing the lightest legislative provisions against illegal drug trafficking is given priority by the judiciary, most frequently under a financial arrangement. CENTIF has not launched a single investigation since it was set up, and the national anti-corruption agency (the ANLC) does not have effective resources to fulfil its mission while the real political will is lacking.

In addition, and despite the promotion of this initiative at a seminar organised in Cotonou under the aegis of UNODC in early April 2017, the recent launch of a national integrated anti-drug plan is a long way from being effective and its content has not been finalised.

The establishment of OCERTID within the national police in 1999, tasked with coordinating action at national level, has not produced the hoped-for results; there has not been sufficient exchange of information and cooperation between the departments involved. In addition, OCERTID, which was supposed to be an inter-administration unit, is made up solely of police officers, and its staff is being drastically cut.

To rationalise and improve response in terms of fighting drug trafficking, a joint inspection unit (UMCC) at the port and an AITF bringing together police officers, gendarmes and customs officers have set up in Cotonou. For want of resources, real coordination and synergy between departments, the results of these arrangements have been disappointing.

Reciprocity is in reality too often limited to declarations of intent.

Finally, the police and gendarmerie are supposed to merge on 1 January 2018, by decision of the President. The committee responsible for deciding on the details of the reorganisation have encountered strong opposition from those concerned.

The main bilateral donors are:

- France, applying the priority solidarity fund ALCAO (Support for combating the fight against cocaine trafficking in West Africa). The regional programme launched in 2014 closed at the end of 2016;
- the United States, with its regional programme West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI), which includes its own team in Benin combining action against drugs, money-laundering and corruption;
- the European Union, under the aegis of which training with SEACOP, a project that aims to promote checks on illegal trafficking in seaports in the framework of the 'cocaine route' programme, was organised for the Cotonou port authorities in the first half of 2016.

Cape Verde

Cannabis, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines are the drugs most used in Cape Verde, generally by young city dwellers.

Because of its strategic geographical position in the Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Verde archipelago, made up of ten islands (one of which is uninhabited), is a major transit centre for Europe-bound South American cocaine.

The air and sea infrastructure of the archipelago are used a great deal by traffickers. The capital, Praia, has a well-served international airport with direct flights to the USA, Europe and the north of Brazil. Maritime activity is also important.

The archipelago's limited naval forces are not sufficient for effective control of its territorial waters. According to the authorities, traffickers mainly operate in the maritime area surrounding the archipelago, transferring narcotics at sea; storage of cargo on land seems to be infrequent and brief.

Nigerian criminal groups control the smuggling in the area and are well established in Praia, Mindelo and on the island of Sal. Rivalries between groups contribute to the deterioration of the security situation in the archipelago, with accounts settled and several murders carried out in public. In April 2016, 280 kg of cocaine were seized off the south-west coast of Cape Verde. The same year, the Praia CAAT made numerous seizures and arrests of smugglers. There has also been a rise in cocaine seizures from air cargo originating in the West Indies and French Guiana.

Ghana

Drug use and trafficking:

Cannabis is the most widely consumed drug in Ghana. Heroin consumption continues to increase in the country. At the end of March 2017, a Ghanaian national was detained arriving from Nairobi (on Kenyan Airways) in possession of 432 grams of heroin (ingested), intended for local consumption.

Ghana is a country of destination, transit and production of drugs.

It is still the biggest producer and exporter of herbal cannabis in the region. While Ghanaian production supplying the sub-region does not represent a significant source of revenue, it is a constant concern for law enforcement authorities. There have been big seizures (more than 25 tonnes in 2016, 8 tonnes in 2015). Almost all the cannabis intercepted in neighbouring countries comes from Ghana (90% of the cannabis seized in Burkina Faso and Togo). In August 2016, more than 2 tonnes of cannabis were seized by customs in the Volta region. While there are no recent data on cannabis cultivation in Ghana, some local observers believe it rose in 2016.

South American and cocaine and South Asian heroin intended for European markets also go through Ghana. According to Ghana's Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), couriers apparently go to the Gulf of Guinea region before heading to Europe.

Chemical precursors enter Ghanaian territory illegally via seaports and are used in clandestine laboratories producing methamphetamines and psychotropic substances.

According to NACOB, the amount of drugs (cocaine, cannabis, heroin and methamphetamine) seized in the first half of 2016 clearly fell as compared to the same period in 2015.

On 16 February 2017, 4.2 tonnes of cocaine were seized off the coast of Suriname in international waters, on a vessel flying the flag of Guyana, which had performed a U-turn off the Ghanaian coast, after being pursued by the Ghanaian navy.

National strategy and international cooperation:

Several non-governmental organisations (e.g. LOAD Ghana — Life Out of Alcohol and Drugs Ghana) offer support programmes for drug addicts. Ghana has taken a number of measures to protect citizens and prevent consumption of illegal products: laws against consumption and use of illegal drugs, the Law on Drugs of 1990, which focuses on control, and the imposition of penalties for using or trading in illegal drugs.

Nationally, the debate on legalisation of cannabis was recently re-launched at celebration of the international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the Upper East administrative region. At that time, the Mental Health Authority (MHA) stressed that legalisation was not a solution to the problem of addiction. Alcohol consumption continues to wreak havoc, despite its legalisation; no supporting measures have been put in place. The MHA emphasised the need to strengthen measures for drug addicts, including the construction of special centres.

Regionally, Ghana is working with other West African countries to develop a drug policy reform to deal with production, use, trafficking and organised crime.

As to bilateral cooperation, France provides support to strengthen the operational capacities of Ghanaian anti-drug services and the development of cross-border cooperation.

Within the multilateral framework, a US-funded UNODC project was set up in May 2016 to strengthen the capabilities of the Criminal Investigation Department's Drug Law Enforcement Unit, which is responsible for the fight against drugs, particularly cannabis. At the end of April 2017, two experts from the Guardia di Finanza ran a training course for CAAT officers under the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP).

Mali

Illicit drug trafficking activities have contributed to the climate of violence and the country's deteriorating security situation. They also appear to be one of the root causes of the Malian crisis while, at the same time, the Government and the international community are, paradoxically, not in a strong position to effectively tackle such crime and the networks driving that crime.

Proceeds from trafficking help fund various armed groups, including terrorists, active within the region. These proceeds, along with corruption and money laundering, also compound the problem of illicit enrichment which affects Malian society.

Although Mali has an institutional and legal framework to effectively combat drugs, the results achieved are dwarfed by the scale of the problem and the trafficking that is rampant in the country. This is partly due to the lack of material and human resources available to law enforcement authorities and judicial bodies, given the budgetary constraints and the various security issues facing the country. Even so, the impact of networks and corruption on the fight against trafficking should not be underestimated.

Drug use and trafficking

It is clear that there is domestic drug consumption in Mali, as evidenced, for instance, by the seizure of individual doses of a number of illicit drugs. However, there are no reliable statistics to help quantify and analyse the scale of problem.

Mali is an important transit area for cannabis resin, cocaine and amphetamine- type stimulants (ATS) destined for markets in Europe, the Middle -East and South East Asia.

Cannabis resin transiting Mali from Morocco follows a complex route before reaching its final destination. It is routed through Algeria or Mauritania, before being sent via Niger to Libya from where it is exported to Europe, or it continues onward to Chad, Sudan or Egypt bound for the Middle East.

Cocaine which enters Africa via the ‘coastal hub’ of West Africa is routed through Mali before reaching Europe via the same route: Algeria, Morocco or Niger, then Libya.

The trafficking of ATS has been a growing problem in recent years. The presence within the country of large quantities of chemical precursors would suggest the existence of clandestine laboratories, although none have been formally identified or dismantled in Mali to date.

The majority of these precursors are legally imported from India. The ATS produced in Mali or in the sub-region are mostly sent to Europe as well as South and South-East Asia.

The 2016 activity report for the Malian internal security services shows that results have fallen far short of the estimated scale of the trafficking.

The four main law-enforcement authorities have charged only 258 persons for drug offences: the Central Narcotics Office (184 persons), the criminal police’s narcotics unit (46 persons), the customs agency (22 persons), the gendarmerie (6 persons). In 85 % of cases, the offenders were Malian nationals.

Most of the drugs seizures were in Bamako and in the south of the country. There were few seizures in the centre and the north of the country through which much of the international traffic is routed (particularly Moroccan cannabis resin), not least because of the unstable security situation and the low deployment of specialised units in these vast areas. The seizure of 500 kg of cannabis resin in January 2016 by Malian customs authorities in Nioro in the Sahel region would suggest that the traffickers, who usually use routes much further towards the north of the country, have been using a new route.

In 2016, seizures were carried out on land routes and on postal freight (khat), and comprised:

- 73 seizures of cannabis amounting to 10 833 kg;
- 1 seizure of 1.9 kg of cocaine and 405 individual doses (bags);
- 1 seizure of heroin (100 bags, not weighed);
- 3 seizures of heroin derivative (35 doses, not weighed);
- 3 seizures of crack (300 doses, not weighed);
- 1 seizure of 1 370 kg of khat;
- 1 seizure of tramadol (12 500 capsules);
- a total of 637 kg of medication.

National strategy and international cooperation

Over the past ten years, the Malian authorities have significantly strengthened the legal and institutional framework combating trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances through:

- the creation of the criminal investigation police's drugs unit in the Bamako area in 2011 (16 staff);
- the creation of the Airport Anti-Trafficking Unit in 2011 based at Bamako international airport (14 staff);
- the creation of the Central Narcotics Office in 2015, a service with national jurisdiction with around 100 staff and an office in each administrative region;
- the creation in 2015 of the specialised judicial centre for combating terrorism and transnational crime, a national structure with 3 prosecutors and 4 examining magistrates;
- the ongoing operational setting up of the specialised judicial centre's Specialised Intervention Brigade (SIB), which is expected to comprise around thirty staff. Under the authority of the judicial centre's head prosecutor, it will be responsible for laying down detailed legal procedures regarding terrorism and large-scale trafficking, including drug trafficking;

- Act No. 01-078 of 18 July 2001 on Control of Drugs and Precursors, which constitutes an effective legal framework;
- Act No. 2016-008 of 17 March 2016 on the Uniform Act on the Fight against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism establishing, for instance, the National Unit for Processing Financial Intelligence (CENTIF).

The Interministerial Mission coordinating the fight against drugs, provided for by the 2001 Act on Control of Drugs and Precursors, was never set up.

In the field of international cooperation, there appears to be no specific bilateral or multilateral programme on the fight against drug trafficking, even though a large number of one-off measures have been taken in the country.

Nigeria

Trafficking

Nigeria is a producer of cannabis, which is consumed on the domestic market and is, to a lesser extent, exported to West Africa and Europe.

The country remains one of the world's drug trafficking hubs and an important transit country for heroin and cocaine destined for Europe.

Cocaine from South America is flown directly to Nigeria from Brazil. It may also pass via Dubai, Ethiopia or other West African countries, where there are fewer checks at airports, before reaching Nigeria by land.

Heroin reaching Nigeria passes through Kenya and South Africa.

It is thought that the increase in drug trafficking by air via Lagos international airport is partly due to the continued growth in air passenger traffic. According to the national authorities, the total number of passengers passing through Nigerian airports in the third quarter of 2015 came to almost 4 million, an increase of 8.5 % over the second quarter of that year. Between January and March 2016, more than 30 people were arrested at Lagos airport for drug trafficking offences.

It is very likely that sea routes are used to bring drugs into Nigeria, even if the volume of seizures is small.

In the first ten months of 2016, the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) seized 276.18 tonnes of cannabis, 290.64 kg of methamphetamine, 136.08 kg of cocaine, 19.74 kg of heroin, 6 kg of amphetamine, 1 046.87 kg of ephedrine, 65.7 kg of khat and 76.6 tonnes of other psychotropic substances, amounting to a total of 354.3 tonnes of illegal products.

There are major methamphetamine producing facilities within the country, particularly in the south-eastern states and in the Lagos area. Domestic producers are said to benefit from the expertise of operators of illegal Mexican laboratories. Between 2013 and 2015, ten illegal laboratories were discovered. In 2016, the authorities seized 1.5 kg of methamphetamine and several chemicals including acetic acid, acetone, benzaldehyde, hydrochloric acid and toluene when dismantling an industrial- scale production unit.

National strategy and international cooperation

Nigeria carries out major prevention campaigns directed at young people. Demand reduction programmes are set up for the benefit of vulnerable communities. In 2016, support was given to 2 500 people with substance misuse disorders, an increase of 18 % over the previous year.

In order to tackle the production of synthetic drugs, the country is considering whether to amend the legal framework for controlling imports of chemical precursors.

There is international cooperation in the context of the activities carried out by UNODC and the European Union as well as in the bilateral relations with the United Kingdom, and the United States, in particular.

Senegal

Drug use and trafficking:

Senegal is the only country in West Africa which has a drug addiction treatment centre offering integrated information, treatment, rehabilitation, vocational training and social reintegration services for persons suffering from disorders linked to drug abuse or addiction. The centre, which is in Dakar, offers methadone substitution treatment and outpatient treatment. Kits containing sterile syringes, condoms and basic medical equipment to prevent the transmission of blood-borne diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis C are also distributed to drug users, outside the centre, by mobile teams.

The number of injecting drug users in the conurbation is estimated at more than 1 300, about 12 % of all known addicts in Dakar.

Apart from the traditional consumption of 'yamba' (herbal cannabis with a low THC content), the consumption of crack, which had previously been marginal, has been rising significantly for two years. Cocaine consumption remains incidental, essentially in Dakar and on the Petite-Côte, where it is used recreationally by affluent young people from the Lebanese community. Heroin consumption is increasing markedly.

The transport infrastructure available, as well as its geographical location, make Senegal a favoured point of entry for drugs into Africa, before they are transferred within the continent and to Europe.

Cannabis grown to the south of the Casamance supplies the market locally and in the countries of the region. It has a low THC content and sells for between EUR 30 and 50 per kilogramme.

Cocaine arrives by land and sea from neighbouring countries, including Guinea-Bissau and Mali, before being transported to Europe by sea and by air.

The country also has to contend with quantities of methamphetamine, imported from Nigeria.

At the end of 2016, seizures of khat decreased.

National strategy and international cooperation:

Numerous bilateral cooperation activities are being implemented in Senegal. France, Spain, Italy, and the United States in particular are providing support with capacity-building for the operational services responsible for combating drug trafficking (training, regional exercise, coordinated customs operations, equipment, etc.).

Dakar is the headquarters of the UNODC Regional Office for West Africa and of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA).

d. Key points followed up by the mini groups

The mini groups for the West Africa region have followed up on the following points in particular:

- the development and effective implementation of the national and regional anti-drug strategies;
- the establishment and the effectiveness of appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks;
- developing the property aspect of national arrangements for combating drug trafficking (combating money laundering, seizure of assets of criminals);
- strengthening the operational capacities of the law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities;
- strengthening coordination between the services involved and the pooling of resources;
- improving the coordination of regional cooperation;
- developing tools to monitor drug consumption and trafficking;
- effective coordination, at local level, of international cooperation activities.

II. The nature of the regional and sub-regional problems

West Africa faces major, multi-faceted security threats which are causing serious instability in the region and beyond and severely undermining the development of the countries in the region. One of these threats is illicit activities linked to drug trafficking, which present multiple problems.

Based on the information available and an analysis of the regional situation with regard to the drugs problem, several observations can be made:

- a region affected by all the components of the drugs problem (consumption, production and trafficking) and its consequences in terms of health, security and development;
- the development of production units for synthetic drugs;
- substantial presence of African (and especially Nigerian) criminal organisations;
- institutional weakness at national and regional level, together with a lack of political will and very widespread corruption;
- insufficient resources allocated to strengthen the capacity of the authorities responsible for combating the drugs problem;
- weak cooperation and a failure to pool and exchange information between the authorities responsible for the fight against trafficking;
- lack of legal harmonisation between ECOWAS countries;
- security problems which have become more acute, with possible links between organised crime groups and terrorist groups.

III. Issues to be discussed by the Dublin Group at central level

Based on the analyses of the regional situation sent by the region's mini Dublin groups, there are a number of issues which could be looked at or monitored by the central group, including:

- support for and monitoring of the implementation of the UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2016-2020. This programme includes a pillar on combating transnational crime and illicit trafficking, including trafficking in drugs and precursors, as well as a pillar on the prevention and treatment of drug addiction;
- monitoring of the implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan to combat the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and illicit drug use in West Africa (2016-2020).
- coordination of measures implemented by donors to support drugs policies carried out at state level (national strategies, capacity-building, coordination) and by regional organisations;

- the development of regional and inter-regional cooperation, as well as of coordination arrangements at international, regional and bilateral levels;
- raising awareness among stakeholders of the need to take demand reduction more fully into account in policies and actions implemented at regional level;
- supporting the establishment of instruments for research, the collection of information and the monitoring and evaluation of policies.

IV. Recommendations and conclusions of the Regional Group

a. Policy initiatives

- Support the implementation of national action plans and regional programmes to combat the drugs problem;
- Implement comprehensive policies that address every aspect (health, security, financial, social, economic, etc.) of the drugs problem;
- Ensure the establishment and application of an effective and complete legal framework which includes the property aspect of the fight against drug trafficking with the establishment of operational arrangements for the seizure of criminal assets;
- Strengthen cooperation and coordination at national and regional level;
- Strengthen the capacities of the authorities responsible for combating the drugs problem;
- Strengthen research and data collection capacities;
- Research and identify the links between the different forms of crime in the sub-region, and with terrorist groups.

b. Priorities to be taken into account by donors

- Ensure effective coordination of cooperation measures implemented at bilateral and multilateral level;

- Ensure proper coordination of measures implemented with existing regional programmes and initiatives (UNODC West African Coast Initiative (WACI), Global Container Control Programme (CCP), Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP). Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organised Crime (WACAP), Sahel Regional Judicial Platform, Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARIN-WA), etc.);
- Ensure that all the issues linked to the drugs problem are taken into account (law enforcement aspect: combating illicit drugs trafficking and terrorism and strengthening the justice system; economic aspect: combating production; health aspect: prevention and treatment; cross-cutting aspect: establishment of reliable data collection systems, etc.);
- Develop prevention and demand reduction measures, for the benefit of addicts, in cooperation with civil society actors, in particular;
- Ensure regular monitoring of cooperation measures implemented and their results in the framework of the Dublin mini group meetings.

V. Monitoring the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations approved the previous year

The recommendations made in the previous report, based on the measures in the ECOWAS action plan, remain valid and form the basis for action by donors and international organisations in the region.
