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NOTE

from:	French Chair of the Dublin Group
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Subject:	Report of the Regional Dublin Group for West Africa

General situation as regards drug trafficking in West Africa (developments since December 2011)

Since the last Regional Dublin Group report (December 2011), the situation as regards drug trafficking has not changed much. While seizures in West Africa appear to be falling, the information collected to draft this report shows that the countries in the region remain very active in the transit of drugs, in particular cocaine, but also synthetic drugs (methamphetamines), whose transit is increasing exponentially. The drugs are transported by sea (via container) and by air (via passenger or "mule"). The most active criminal groups continue to be the Nigerian and Lebanese groups.

Benin and Togo continue to play a key role in the transit of drugs, in particular at ports and airports, while Côte d'Ivoire is emerging as an increasingly important drug transit country. We are seeing a significant increase in consignments of cocaine arriving in the sub-region via Guinea-Bissau, where the crisis is fostering the growth of trafficking.

The situation has deteriorated in the Sahel region, where the complex political situation and lack of State authority control are stimulating the boom in trafficking.

The countries of the Sahel region (Mali, Mauritania and Niger) continue to play an important role in the transit of drugs to Europe, especially Mali. While prior to the political problems in Mali, drug lords still needed accomplices at the highest level of the Malian State, today the abandonment of the north by all security forces and the implosion of the Malian State allow Malian traffickers and even foreigners complete freedom to operate from Mauritania to Niger. There is also a new cocaine transit route to Niamey airport in Niger.

The new drug route from the production zones to Southern Africa, mentioned in the last Dublin Group report, appears to be establishing itself.

While seizures remain very low in comparison to the scale of trafficking, the Beninese, Togolese and Ghanaian offices for combating drug trafficking and money laundering nevertheless appear to have obtained encouraging results and to be working actively.

Regional and multilateral initiatives to combat drug trafficking in West Africa

1. Two meetings have been organised since December 2011, at the instigation of the American Presidency of the G8, with the main donors in West Africa in terms of combating drugs and organised crime (one in Paris on 27 January 2012 and the other in Washington on 21 February 2012). They aimed in particular to determine methods for better coordination between donors in the region, but also to ensure the smooth transition between the French and American Presidencies of the G8 as regards security matters.

These meetings were held in the follow-up to the ministerial meeting of 10 May 2011 organised by the French Presidency of the G8 on transatlantic cocaine trafficking and the Transatlantic Symposium organised by the United States and the European Union a few days later in Lisbon. These two high-level events provided a platform for the international community to renew its political commitment and to adopt specific measures to combat trafficking, in particular drug trafficking.

The delegations present agreed to promote an approach that was both political and pragmatic in order to mobilise the states of West Africa to achieve tangible results. The courses of action explored consisted of (1) identifying priorities for technical assistance, (2) mapping out the various programmes planned in 2012, (3) analysing drugs policy and regional commitment, (4) ensuring follow-up and (5) building long-term donor coordination.

2. The states emphasised the training and technical assistance given to the police (for example by Germany to Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, by Portugal to Guinea-Bissau, with a budget of USD 3 million per year and by the United Kingdom to Nigeria and Ghana). Portugal also planned training for lawyers and legal professionals at its universities.

France outlined its bilateral cooperation, estimated at EUR 3.7 million for 2012 and, from June 2012, the ALCAO FSP which was to be set up with Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Benin, Togo and Senegal. This programme, worth EUR 1.6 million over three years, would consist of targeted measures to build the capacity of law enforcement and anti-laundering agencies, in a spirit of coordination with the UNODC, the EU and the various countries acting bilaterally.

The American programme WACSI (West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative), worth a total of USD 30 million, would in 2012 be based on an integrated approach with the objective of improving the effectiveness of security operations, strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring efficient capacity building based on five goals: building institutions, establishing legal frameworks, strengthening security operations, reinforcing justice and police special services, addressing the causes and consequences of transnational organised crime, together with Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The EU pointed out that EUR 19 million intended for ECOWAS were currently blocked following an audit on the allocation of funding. The EU was of the opinion that these funds should be released in order to improve ECOWAS's ability to fulfil its mandate: to harmonise drug data collection, identify good practice in combating drugs, coordinate the implementation of national policies, combat laundering by giving GIABA a leading role in the issue (to this effect, of the EUR 19 million, EUR 3 million are allocated to this problem), to develop the European SEACOP and AIRCOP projects, improve technical cooperation and work with the different platforms in Accra and Dakar, as well as with the MAOC-N, while constantly striving to ensure that action taken at regional level complements that taken at national level.

UNODC emphasised the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to be applied in the programmes, without dedicating funds exclusively to police law enforcement. At this stage, according to UNODC, 88 % of funds were currently allocated to this type of action.

3. Given that drug trafficking is a transnational problem, it is important to promote a regional dynamic in West Africa, and ECOWAS must encourage this. This role is moreover specifically mentioned in the G8 + action plan adopted on 10 May 2011 in Paris. It corresponds to the two-pronged rationale of taking ownership of the problem of combating drugs and the necessity for the countries of West Africa to work together in a specific framework.

However, ECOWAS never implemented its anti-drugs action plan (2008-2011), which had been adopted by the ministers in the presence of the main donors. From 2009, the European Union had committed itself to provide financial support to this regional plan to the tune of EUR 19 million (through the EDF), but for the time being no agreement has been reached on how to allocate these funds. ECOWAS would like to be able to receive these funds directly, while donors were in favour of UNODC receiving them and then implementing the regional programme in close consultation with ECOWAS. The point was made that while ECOWAS was the key regional anti-drugs organisation in West Africa and had genuine political legitimacy, this did not mean that it had the operational capacity to implement an anti-drugs action plan.

At the instigation of the United States and France, it was decided that a high-level mission would therefore go to Abuja at the end of June to meet ECOWAS and to encourage it to implement the action plan. The appointment of a new president and new commissioners constitutes a good window of opportunity to carry out this step. The countries and organisations which are the most committed to combating drug trafficking and organised crime in West Africa would of course be expected to participate in this mission and in this way help mobilise ECOWAS to implement its action plan. They would approach ECOWAS jointly in May in order to prepare the high-level mission.

1. DAKAR MINI GROUP

Since the mini group's last contribution to the work of the Dublin Group (November 2011), there has been a significant increase in cocaine arriving in the sub-region via Guinea-Bissau, where the crisis is fostering the development of trafficking.

The last meeting of the local mini-Dublin group (France, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, Canada, USA, European Commission and UNODC) was held on 19 September 2011 at the French embassy during the Central Dublin Group's visit to Senegal, led by the ambassador responsible for combating organised crime and human trafficking. Since then, the trafficking situation in the sub-region and in Senegal has deteriorated (1). Bilateral cooperation developed by France to combat these threats has been strengthened (2). In parallel with this, the mini group has increased the momentum given to the regional platform of drug liaison officers, in synergy with the United Kingdom embassy (3).

1/ General situation in Senegal as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

Trafficking: increasing cocaine deliveries

Senegal is still a transit country for expensive drugs, mainly cocaine destined for Europe, and a consumption country for cheap drugs – mainly "yamba", herbal cannabis produced in Casamance, Ghana and Mali, also known as "hemp".

The strategic position of West Africa on cocaine routes is becoming established, with the emergence of a drug route from the production zones to Southern Africa. It was flagged to the internal security department as the "southern route" at the beginning of November by the Portuguese criminal police investigating the increased presence of Angolans in Guinea-Bissau. Cocaine arriving in this country by sea or by air from South America is transported by boat or by Angolan military aircraft to Angola, sometimes via São Tomé and Príncipe. Some of these drugs are then sent on to South Africa by sea.

The most striking factor of the past few months has been the considerable fluctuation in the price of cocaine in Guinea-Bissau. After a steep increase, when the price settled at around EUR 18 000 to 19 000 per kg in autumn 2011, in a context of increasing scarcity of the drug (significant seizures in Togo, Benin and Cameroon and one and a half tonnes seized in Cape Verde), the price fell sharply in late 2011/early 2012 to EUR 7 000/8 000 per kg. Currently the price of cocaine per kg in Bissau is around EUR 12 000/13 000 (essentially Colombian and/or Peruvian crystal, with purity of 95 %). It should be noted that the price of the drug is around EUR 16 000/kg in Dakar today.

It is also worth highlighting that there has been considerable activity and some agitation among traffickers in the sub-region in the course of the past few months. By way of example, at Dakar international airport, British and French drug liaison officers posted in Senegal recorded numerous trips being made by South American and anglophone African traffickers (Ghanaians, Nigerians). These movements are being investigated. Under the same observation conditions and over the same period, several trips were made by henchmen of Bissau-Guinean military chiefs (vassals of Bubo Na Tchuto, Chief of Staff of the Navy, and of General Indjai, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces).

The downward trend in cocaine prices in Bissau is probably temporary, given continued high demand in Europe. It can be explained by significant cocaine deliveries on the Bissau-Guinean coast at the end of 2011/start of 2012, which gave criminal groups the chance to engage in speculative purchases. This point has been confirmed by technical sources and information collected from other sources by the British and French drug liaison officers from the liaison officer platform.

The political crisis in Guinea-Bissau is further increasing the country's permeability to cocaine deliveries and fostering the development of trafficking.

It is also likely, given the unrest in Mali, both in its inhabited part and in the north, and the residual disturbances affecting Libya, that a new northern cocaine route will emerge towards southern Europe, via these countries and the Mediterranean.

A background note on cocaine trafficking in West Africa will shortly be circulated by the liaison officer platform (jointly by France and the UK).

2/ Update on status of bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes

Bilateral, technical and operational cooperation, developing in an environment that remains difficult

In this deteriorating sub-regional context, no major international drug-trafficking cases have yet been brought to fruition by the Senegalese law enforcement bodies. In general, the courts and security services continue to underestimate the impact of these threats. "Senegal's drug problem is hemp. Hard drugs are more your problem" (Ms Aby Diallo, Director of the inter-ministerial anti-drugs committee).

Internal security services, focused on maintaining law and order, do not invest many resources into investigative activities. The intelligence chain, both in the criminal police and in the *gendarmerie*, works badly. Consequently, obtaining operational results in Senegal, against all forms of organised crime, requires foreign technicians (in this particular case essentially British and French drug liaison officers) to ensure continuous monitoring and impetus for investigations (training in operational situations).

Coordination of the various bilateral technical cooperation efforts against trafficking in Senegal is still inadequate. Logically it should improve with regard to European cooperation through exchanges between drug liaison officers in the regional platform.

As far as French action is concerned, the regional customs post attaché will conduct a seminar in 2012, financed by the Inter-Ministerial Mission for the Fight Against Drugs and Drug Addiction (MILDT), on the creation of a regional customs pleasure craft database (cost EUR 108 700) as well as a regional programme for the creation of a light aviation control and surveillance unit in the customs services of seven countries in the area: Senegal, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania and Niger (cost EUR 185 000).

The internal security department (SSI), also funded by MILDT, launched a programme at the end of October 2011 to build operational capacity in the Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCRTIS) by providing this service with three new vehicles as well as drug-detection kits and fuel vouchers (cost EUR 32 000). In 2012, the SSI received a new grant of EUR 62 500 from the MILDT which will be dedicated to supporting the intervention sections of OCRTIS and the Criminal Investigations Division (DIC) of the Criminal Police Directorate through the supply of two vehicles, laptop and desktop computers for the DIC's group of procedural experts (who process, in particular, applications for international mutual legal assistance for combating drugs), training in targeting suspects and on questioning techniques.

In parallel with these steps to build capacity of the departments involved in the fight against traffickers, the department's drug liaison officer works with members of these units in the field on a daily basis. The advantage of this operational cooperation is that Senegalese police officers from the OCRTIS and the DIC are trained in real conditions how to prepare investigation files on organised crime and how to question criminals, some of them experienced. This dynamic has enabled three French criminals on the run in Senegal to be tracked down and arrested for extradition since the start of 2012, one a drug trafficker sentenced to seven years in prison and two fugitives convicted of multiple offences of various kinds (one of them was wanted in France in connection with 45 different cases). This field work also gives the SSI the chance to gradually raise awareness within the law enforcement agencies of the need to fight organised criminal activities in Senegal (and no longer just herbal cannabis traffickers).

Regional platform of drug liaison officers: results improving despite continuing handicaps

The Dakar platform, initiated by France in 2008 during its presidency of the EU, with the support of the United Kingdom, began operations in June 2009. It holds its meetings in the premises of the internal security department. The missions of the platform are: operational intelligence, in direct liaison with the local investigative services; strategic intelligence (monitoring changes in drug routes used); and training (advice) for local services involved in combating drug trafficking.

The platform's operational record is still poor but is improving. It is also important to specify that only two drug liaison officers are specifically allocated to the organisation: the UK liaison officer from the SOCA (Serious Organized Crime Agency), with regional responsibility, and the French regional drug liaison officer. The other participants are from Spain, Portugal, Italy and South Africa.

Finally, the Dakar platform, unlike the Accra platform, does not have the advantage of on-site partnerships with efficient intelligence services. In Ghana the WESTBRIDGE scheme (five UK Border Control customs officials working on targeting), the SOCA team (two UK officers) and the American representatives from the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration – three officers), have led to the operational successes achieved by the Accra platform, thanks to the methods used to gather intelligence (in particular telephone tapping).

In conclusion, while the Dakar platform has been given a genuine boost at the instigation of France and the UK, the continued lack of qualified and human resources available prevents it from functioning optimally.

2. PRAIA MINI GROUP

1/ General situation in Cape Verde as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

While the Cape Verde authorities have made a firm commitment to combating drug trafficking and the recycling of the proceeds of such trafficking, this must be seen in context. Although such commitment was proven in Operation Lancha Voadora (seizure of one and a half tonnes of cocaine in Praia in October 2011, arrest of individuals including the former president of the stock exchange – a case in connection with which the Netherlands, partners in the investigation, requested and in some respects encouraged action by the Cape Verde authorities), it is less than absolute in terms of combating money laundering in a context in which migrant remittances remain a crucial source of revenue for the country. Regardless of official pronouncements, it seems that the authorities are still not fully convinced of the need to accord priority to ensuring better financial governance in the long term, while, in the short term, Operation Lancha Voadora has led to a 40 % drop in bank deposits in Cape Verde (according to figures supplied by the official responsible for cooperation at the Embassy of Luxembourg).

In parallel with those "major threats", Cape Verde (and in particular the city of Praia) is facing a disturbing increase in crime perpetrated by gangs or "thugs" (small-scale drug trafficking on public thoroughfares, violence against persons) and involving a large number of minors (the severity of this problem was underlined by the Minister for Internal Administration).

2/ Update on status of implemented bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes

Spain, Portugal, France, the United States, the European Union and UNODC are continuing with their actions and programmes of cooperation with the Cape Verde authorities in internal security and in fighting crime and trafficking: providing equipment, training, technical support and information exchange.

The liaison officers meet regularly to ensure close coordination.

UNODC is helping the government in formulating the new integrated programme to combat drugs and organised crime (2012-2016). Four working groups have been set up (bringing together government and civil society) by the Ministry of Justice:

- combating organised crime, illegal trafficking and terrorism;
- promoting justice and integrity;
- drug prevention, research and analysis;
- treatment of drug addiction and rehabilitation.

The USA offers judges and representatives of the security forces (national and criminal police) a number of training sessions and visits each year. Most of that country's efforts in terms of cooperation aim at strengthening maritime surveillance capability, in particular through support for COSMAR (COntrol SurveillanCe MARitime, a structure bringing together military and police officers which is not as yet very effective).

Spain and Portugal (which have two police officers stationed in Praia: one with the criminal police and one with the national police) organise training in combating illegal immigration and strengthening border controls on movements of persons. As a result of Portuguese cooperation, a project supporting the creation of an intervention unit within the national police force in Praia to combat juvenile delinquency was implemented in 2008 but was not completed on budgetary grounds. For the same reasons, Portugal is currently planning to close one of the two police correspondent posts.

The EU programme (budget aid for developing the Special Partnership in the security sector) is approaching its end. The last budget aid disbursement (EUR 3.1 million) will be made by December, and an assessment has been carried out. In general, progress has been noted in the indicators on training and recruitment of national and criminal police, border protection and training of prisoners. The main problem though is still the setting up of a Financial Investigation Unit, which, over the three years of the programme, has not really been able to function, for lack of human, financial and legal resources. A second phase of the programme (2012 to 2014) is being worked on, with the same procedures and amounts.

At the same time, it should be noted that UNODC is intending to hold a regional seminar on combating money laundering and the financial aspects of organised crime in Praia in July.

3/ Recommendations

- to strengthen airport security (combating the terrorist threat and trafficking);
- to support the establishment of a specialised judicial centre (favourable context given the judicial proceedings of Operation Lancha Voadora);
- to strengthen the capacities of the Financial Information Unit (local TRACFIN-type body).

3. COTONOU MINI GROUP

Benin's involvement in drug trafficking in the region, irrefutable proof of which was provided in 2011, was confirmed by the seizures carried out in the early part of 2012. While most of those seizures relate to cocaine, trafficking in synthetic drugs (and in particular methamphetamines) is growing.

1/ General situation in Benin as regards drug production and trafficking

International drug trafficking in Benin rose sharply in 2011, as evidenced by the large number of seizures from sea containers both bound for Benin (1 tonne of cocaine seized in Brazil, Togo and the USA and 575 kg of heroin seized in Pakistan) and detected within its territory (405 kg of cocaine and 200 kg of heroin).

The seizures carried out in the first quarter of 2012 (56 kg of cocaine in a scrap metal container and a large number of mules detected at the airport) prove that traffickers are still making considerable use of this network.

Benin is therefore still active in terms of drug trafficking, in particular as regards cocaine. The country is used for the unloading, transit, processing, storage and forwarding of cocaine originating in South America (Brazil, Bolivia, etc.). Drugs are subsequently forwarded by land, sea and air routes, and to a lesser extent by post. Most of the cocaine is shipped to Europe.

The autonomous port of Cotonou, which constitutes a major goods transit point not only for the landlocked states but also for those countries bordering Benin (Nigeria and Togo), is a favoured trafficking hub, where the structures put in place to control and combat drug trafficking are largely ineffective.

The international airport, which is used by 400 000 passengers each year and which provides connections to Europe via Air France, SN Brussels Airlines and Royal Air Maroc, is often used by traffickers (large number of seizures of drugs concealed internally).

The rise in the number of seizures of synthetic drugs observed at Cotonou airport since the beginning of 2011 was borne out by three more seizures of methamphetamine during the first quarter of 2012, revealing the growing interest being shown by traffickers in this type of drug in the region.

Investigations conducted by the Benin anti-drugs office have revealed that it is primarily Nigerians who are behind such trafficking, with the Beninese profiting from it on a secondary basis.

2/ Consumption and production (of synthetic drugs in particular) during the last six months

Regional trafficking is being driven primarily by Nigerian nationals, who supply half of the cannabis consumed in Benin. The same network is also responsible for smuggling heroin, cocaine and methamphetamines into the country by overland routes.

The methamphetamine is intended for the Indian and Asian markets (Mumbai, the Philippines, Bangkok, Singapore, Japan, etc.). It is likely that clandestine laboratories have been established in Nigeria, since no such laboratories have been found in Benin to date. It is also worth noting that, on 29 March 2012, methamphetamine was detected being carried internally for the first time; this drug is normally concealed in passengers' hold or cabin baggage.

The sale of cocaine in Cotonou nightclubs is increasing. Most consumers of this drug are young people from well-to-do Beninese families and Lebanese nationals. This growing phenomenon is bound to present the Beninese health authorities with problems in the medium term (treatment of drug addicts, spread of diseases linked to drug addiction, etc.).

Moreover, the production of methamphetamine in the region will probably also lead to significant consumption at local level, not only by young people but also by adults with demanding jobs (taxi drivers, HGV drivers, warehouse workers, labourers on building sites, etc.).

3/ Salient points or updates

The increase in methamphetamine trafficking in this sub-region could give rise to new operating methods and routes. The "mules" who transport methamphetamines to Asia will probably then return to Benin or its neighbouring countries with heroin. Such two-way trafficking of drugs, whether concealed internally or in luggage, provides facilitators with a means of increasing their profits.

4/ Stepping up measures to combat drug trafficking in Benin and identifying needs in terms of outside assistance

Measures to combat drug trafficking were stepped up in Benin in 2011 and are continuing at the time of writing (early 2012). Such measures have resulted in multiple seizures of drugs at the international airport and at the port of Cotonou. These results have been obtained through an increase in staff numbers at the Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCERTID), the creation in July 2011 of the Joint Unit for the Control of Containers (UMCC) at the autonomous port of Cotonou, the provision by France of continuing training for staff in combating drug trafficking and the transmission of operational information to OCERTID by the French anti-drugs services (Accra regional anti-drugs platform and internal security attachés present in countries in South America). In addition, the anti-drugs services have been assisted in their investigations and research through the provision of equipment and urine drug testing kits, financed by loans granted by the Inter-Ministerial Mission for the Fight Against Drugs and Drug Addiction (MILDT).

It should be noted that, on a proposal from the Ministers for the Interior and Justice, but unfortunately without any international representative present, the 56 kg of cocaine found in a container was destroyed just a few days after it was seized; such action contrasts sharply with the previous ill-judged procedure whereby any drugs seized were kept in the court registries for years at a time at the proven risk of being reabsorbed into the trafficking circuit.

Unfortunately, several other recommendations contained in the joint declaration following the last meeting of the mini Dublin group (such as the construction of the Grand-Popo signal station and the inclusion of the police and customs authorities in the Central Office) have yet to be implemented.

Following a French trial requested by the President of the Republic, a "dog-handling unit" has been set up. Staffed by police and *gendarmerie* officers, it has been provided with sniffer dogs (mostly trained to detect drugs, but including an explosives component) by South Africa. South African instructors are also providing training in the establishment of "handler/dog" partnerships.

Improvements could be made in terms of the equipment and resources of the national drug and toxicology laboratory. The laboratory's main tasks are to identify and analyse the psychotropic substances seized, to provide training for members of the public security forces responsible for drug monitoring, to raise public awareness of measures to combat drug trafficking and to initiate research.

This body, with its motivated and highly-qualified managerial staff, is plagued by a severe lack of scientific equipment. Maintenance facilities are also inadequate. Technical equipment was last donated by France in 1989. Consideration could be given to purchasing modern tools to improve the performance of the laboratory, which is regularly approached by OCERTID to identify all products seized on Beninese territory as drugs or possible drugs.

OCERTID has proven highly effective over the past six months, in particular at Cotonou airport in view of the large number of drugs seized.

While it has not carried out any major seizures on its own initiative without intelligence provided by foreign authorities, the office's staff have proven themselves to be highly motivated. Given the high level of such trafficking, however, this office still needs our support in terms of training and equipment in order to increase its effectiveness both at the airport/seaport and in the circles frequented by young people.

Since OCERTID is the only body to endeavour to combat this phenomenon at operational level, it seems essential to continue to lend it support.

4. SITUATION IN TOGO

Monitoring of the local situation in terms of drug trafficking. Relatively calm following earlier seizures. Vigilance maintained. Need to support the unit responsible for combating the phenomenon.

1/ General situation in Togo as regards drug production and trafficking

Since early autumn 2011 the number of drug seizures (cocaine and amphetamines) has dropped sharply at both the port and the airport. This follows the large-scale cocaine seizures at the port in summer 2011 (from four containers in transit from Brazil to Benin) and many seizures involving passengers bound for Asia, particularly Malaysia.

It would therefore appear that the traffickers have, temporarily at least, stopped using those routes. This information has been communicated to the regional liaison officer platform in Accra.

2/ Consumption and production (of synthetic drugs in particular) during the last six months

Although the local authorities continue to insist that drug use is on the increase, the situation appears to remain stable. Cannabis continues to be the most used drug. In terms of production, no laboratories have yet been discovered in Togo.

3/ Salient points or updates

The two most recent seizures of large quantities of drugs (in December 2011 and March 2012), from containers at the port of Lomé, involved Tramadol, classified as an opiate.

Togo, like other countries in the subregion, remains particularly affected by the whole issue of fake or counterfeit medicines and accompanying public health problems.

As regards narcotics, the Central Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering (OCRTIDB) is becoming increasingly involved in following up cases. A series of arrests have recently been made of people attempting to recover containers in which large quantities of cocaine were discovered in August 2011. This is a new and very positive development which is being closely followed by the service.

5. SITUATION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1/ General situation in Côte d'Ivoire as regards drug production and trafficking

The authorities' efforts are focused on the airport and the port of Abidjan, and the first successes have come at the airport. No seizures have been made at the port despite the attentions of the customs service. The large volume of goods in transit (approximately 25 million tonnes a year) and the seizures made at European ports prove the existence of trafficking by sea.

The recent drug seizures at Houphouët Boigny international airport in Abidjan, and those in Spain and France in late 2011, confirm that Côte d'Ivoire remains a transit country for traffickers.

However, the seizures at the airport suggest it could also become a country where drugs will be used. The low quantities seized suggest a growing demand from consumers with the money to buy them.

2/ Consumption and production (of synthetic drugs in particular) during the last six months

Cannabis, which is produced in all regions of the country, continues to be the most used drug because of its low cost and the ease with which it can be obtained. Operations by police involving arrests of users in "smoking rooms" are too infrequent to stem the use of the drug.

There is no evidence that any laboratories exist in Côte d'Ivoire. However, preliminary information gathered as part of an investigation arising from the most recent seizure of methamphetamines indicated that the drugs had been manufactured locally.

3/ Salient points

There have been two cocaine seizures at Abidjan's international airport since the start of 2012. One of the couriers had hidden sachets of cocaine in the labels of children's clothing and the other had swallowed pellets. Both were travelling from Brazil via Dubai.

The local authorities responsible for combating drug trafficking, particularly the *gendarmerie* and the customs, are working in close collaboration with France. Several suspect containers have been scanned and their contents checked following intelligence provided by the French.

6. BAMAKO MINI GROUP

Whereas previously they benefited from the laxity, not to say complicity, of the Malian state under President Amadou Toumani Touré, drug traffickers in Northern Mali are, thanks to the rebellion, not currently encountering any real obstacles to their activities.

1/ General situation in Mali as regards drug production and trafficking

The seizures we know of are too small (no data is available for 2012) for it to be possible to analyse trafficking trends accurately. However, the emergence of methamphetamines around a year ago has been noted.

Moroccan cannabis transported via Mauritania is intended for Malian traffickers, who convey it to Egypt via Niger and Libya. Cannabis also comes from Ghana, via Burkina Faso.

Heroin is sent from Guinea-Bissau and transported via Guinea.

Cocaine from South America is then exported to Europe by smugglers who conceal the drug internally.

In 2011, according to the local authorities, 23 kg of cocaine and 2 tonnes of cannabis were seized. It had been hoped that, with the creation of the Central Narcotics Office in Mali, which was due to become operational in 2012, the number of seizures would increase.

Since the coup d'état of 22 March, the Office has been in limbo, waiting to find out how it will be used by the new authorities. Field offices recently set up in the towns of Mopti, Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu have been abandoned.

There are concerns that the division of Mali into two parts – the north under the control of AQMI, Ansar Eddine and the MNLA, the south administered by the recently appointed interim authorities in Bamako – will lead to a significant increase in trafficking via Mali. Whereas prior to this de facto partition of the country drug lords still needed accomplices at the highest level of the Malian State, today the abandonment of the north by all security forces and the implosion of the Malian State allow Malian traffickers and even foreigners complete freedom to operate from Mauritania to Niger.

2/ Consumption (of synthetic drugs in particular) during the last six months

In Bamako, cocaine and heroin use appears to be growing at an alarming rate. Kayes and Sikasso are cannabis-producing regions.

3/ Salient points or updates

This report deals only with events prior to the coup d'état of 22 March, from which the authorities responsible for combating drug trafficking are still reeling, with the police hierarchy operating in chaos ever since.

On 2 January 2012, two Malians living in Gao, Mohamed Saleck and Ahamed Sidi Hamed were intercepted near Anes-Barka (Niger) in a vehicle containing several assault weapons and one tonne of cannabis.

The organiser of the network, Housseyni Ould Ahmed Salim, an Arab from Timbuktu, was also implicated in what was known as the "Air Cocaine" case. Like other prominent persons, he has never been investigated by the Malian authorities on the subject. This case is worth quoting as it again highlights the complicity of the Malian army. Colonel Mohamed Ould Meydou (a figurehead in the Malian army against Tuareg rebels, nicknamed the "Scorpion of the Sands" for his exploits) is claimed to have provided security for the convoy during its passage through Mali.

On 16 January 2012, 2.5 tonnes of cannabis resin from the Moroccan Rif, probably headed for Aziz Ould Attaye, from Timbuktu, was seized in Nouadhibou (Mauritania) by the Mauritanian *gendarmerie*. Malian specialised services describe him as a close contact of Moroccan and Colombian drug traffickers, who make use of his services for logistics and escort facilities. They also suspect him of supplying weapons to AQMI.

In late February 2012, Mohamed Ould Awainatt (who apparently supplied off-road vehicles to safeguard and transport the seven to ten tonnes of cocaine to Burkina Fasso after the "drug cargo" had become blocked in Tarkint) held in custody by the state security service in connection with the case since May 2011 was suddenly released by direct order of the President on 19 January 2012.

What is more, he was never heard in the judicial proceedings....

His release followed negotiations between Awainatt and the Malian authorities. It would appear that, in return for his freedom, Awainatt, who is the leader of a large Arab ethnic group, pledged to make men and equipment available to fight the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which had begun to seek independence for what it sees as its territory.

These three cases symbolise what the fight against drugs constitutes – or constituted – in Mali: the first demonstrates the relaxed, not to say complicit, attitude of the state authorities, and the second identifies the role played by AQMI terrorists in the drug-trafficking networks. Local specialised agencies view the role played by AQMI in drug trafficking as setting up checkpoints, which are considered to be security posts, to demand payment of money to pass through areas under their control. In the third case, the Malian authorities drew support from various different ethnic groups that make up Malian society, although the most influential of its members were involved in organised crime.

4/ Stepping up measures to combat drug trafficking in Mali and identifying needs in terms of outside assistance

As stated previously, the creation of the Central Drugs Office (OCS) is a key objective of the FSP JUSSEC project. The lack of motivation among police officers seconded to departments supported by JUSSEC and the fact that the law setting up the project viewed it as an interministerial structure stand in the way of building up the OCS.

Even the director-general of police has admitted that it is a real challenge to retain officers in the OCS. He has personally received several applications from officers asking to be posted back to their original departments. When asked about this, Colonel Massa Maiga, head of the OCS, played down the phenomenon, stating more simply that some of his men had been "miscast" despite having passed the selection tests.

Colonel Maiga also lamented the OCS's lack of financial autonomy. He cited as an example the fact that his officers could not pay rewards to informants, even though this means of gathering information was vital to combating drug trafficking effectively. Furthermore, he claims that his men deserve a specific bonus for the difficulty of their tasks. In practice, a police officer carrying out traffic checks would be in a better position to make ends meet than one posted to a specialist department with greater professional risks.

7. NOUAKCHOTT MINI GROUP

Spain holds the chair of the Dublin mini group for Mauritania, which meets once a year. Mauritania is part of the Maghreb regional subgroup. The mini group held a meeting on 10 April 2012 which was attended by the representatives from the embassies of Germany, Spain, the United States and France; Japan did not attend.

1/ General situation in Mauritania as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

Mauritania, which is twice the size of France with a population of just over three million, is considered a transit country for cocaine. Evidence of this is provided by seizures of the drug headed for Europe in 2006 and 2007. Since that time, however, no further seizures of note have been made. Mauritania's geographical location, the trade relations it enjoys with the Canary Islands and with the continent, its lax customs controls and mechanisms for tackling the drugs problem all make it attractive for drug trafficking, the scale of which is unknown as no reliable statistics exist. The country has no tradition of growing or processing drugs.

1.1 – Cocaine trafficking

Cocaine generally arrives by air or sea from Latin America at the ports of the Gulf of Guinea (Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Togo, etc.).

It reaches Mauritania by road or by boat from Guinea, from Mali in the east, or Senegal. The drug is then transported by road (by lorry, van or off-road vehicle) to Morocco or Mali, either by sea to Nouadhibou using fishing boats headed for the Canary Islands (Atlantic route) or to Nouakchott in containers destined for the Europe via the Straits of Gibraltar.

1.2 – Cannabis resin trafficking

Produced mainly in Morocco, cannabis resin is sent to Egypt and Libya (via northern Mali and northern Niger) and to the countries of the Arabian peninsula (via Chad and Sudan). Upon entering Mauritania, two main routes are used, one in northern Mauritania and the Sahara along the border with Algeria, then via northern Mali and northern Niger, and the other to the south-east via Nouakchott, following the "road of hope" to the Malian border

1.3 – Relatively limited drug use

Hard drug users are relatively few and far between, according to the head of the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLTIS). However, he thinks that the presence of cocaine in transit could boost consumption in certain circles.

However, herbal cannabis known as "yamba", grown along the Senegal river or coming from Ghana via Mali, is used in the poorer districts of Nouakchott.

Of particular concern is the increase in alcohol consumption, particularly among young people. Sale of alcohol is completely prohibited, as is consumption of alcohol by Muslims under the Penal Code, which states: "Any Muslim of age who voluntarily and consciously consumes alcohol shall be punished by 80 lashes".

On the instructions of President Abdel Aziz a police operation conducted by OCLTIS was launched in March 2012 in a number of restaurants in Nouakchott, which, among others, implicated eight French citizens.

2 – Legal framework

2.1 – International agreements

- Mauritania has signed the three international agreements:
- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961;
- The Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971;

- The Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, signed in Vienna in 1988 and ratified by Mauritania in 1993.

2.2 – Domestic legislation

Domestic legislation on combating the illicit production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances dates back to 1993. Islamic in origin, it provides for extremely severe penalties.

Offences linked to laundering the proceeds of trafficking are punishable under the law of 27 July 2005. Mauritania is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). In May 2005, it was the subject of a mutual evaluation report by MENAFATF. At present, the anti-money laundering law is rarely enforced.

3/ Bodies responsible for combating drug trafficking: police action can be supplemented by the armed forces

3.1. – Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLTIS)

Theoretically, OCLTIS, which is part of the Directorate-General for National Security, has legal jurisdiction in the fight against drug trafficking. It is also theoretically responsible for centralising drug trafficking statistics provided by the *gendarmerie* and the customs service.

In terms of numbers, the staff complement has gone from about a dozen officers in 2006 to the current complement of 40 but the office is still poorly placed to tackle drug-running at national level, all the more so since the investigators have varying levels of competence.

The national *gendarmerie* plays a very active role in combating drug trafficking. In January 2012, it uncovered an international cannabis trafficking network (2.5 tonnes seized) between Morocco and Mali via Mauritania, leading to the imprisonment of several traffickers. This case shows that Mauritania continues to be a transit country for Moroccan cannabis.

3.2 – Far too little coordination and communication

OCLTIS has no precise information on the scale of the trafficking, at local or international level.

OCLTIS is unable to centralise such information sufficiently as it is not systematically informed of drugs cases by the *gendarmerie* or the Mauritanian customs service.

As evinced by the case of 2.5 tonnes of cannabis seized in January 2012, the *gendarmerie* never informed the police of the procedure.

In these circumstances, it is hard for the Mauritanian government to define a policy for combating drug trafficking.

The public prosecutor's office ought to play a greater role in supervising and coordinating police and *gendarmerie* departments.

3.3. – Investigations very often confined to Mauritania

It can be noted that investigating departments have a tendency to confine their activities to Mauritania. While arrests and imprisonment of traffickers do occur, investigations do not stretch beyond the Mauritanian borders, for instance as part of regional cooperation. Investigative departments, like magistrates, are not sufficiently aware of the international ramifications of trafficking. They have little or no contact with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and do not use the Interpol network.

3.4 – Sporadic reporting of suspicious transactions

The number of reports of suspicious transactions made by Mauritanian banks to the Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF) is negligible (3 in 2010). This situation is due in particular to the newness of the regulations, to a lack of awareness among the management of banking institutions, to the failure of CANIF to impose penalties, and to the fact that it is possible to transfer money when making personal journeys instead of using the banking system.

3.5 – Security structure used to fight terrorism may benefit war on drugs

There is reason to believe that the security structure put in place by the various security forces as part of the fight against terrorism also serves to combat drug trafficking, making it *de facto* more difficult for drugs to transit Mauritania than before (at least as far as cocaine is concerned), and all the more so because controls at the land borders have been tightened considerably since the conflict in Mali.

Since this military and police structure has been in place, there have been no more sizeable seizures of cocaine. However, it cannot be said that cocaine has ceased to transit Mauritania. There is probably a causal relationship between the security structure that has been set up and the decline in cocaine seizures. But then again, it is possible that transit via coastal routes to and from Morocco has increased.

4/ International cooperation

4.1 – Spain

The Guardia Civil's project for developing a dog-handling unit, the creation of which was initiated by France in 2010, is still under way. In 2011, the national *gendarmerie* was given introductory training in the detection of drugs and explosives for 12 dog handlers (6+6). The unit will undergo reviews and retraining every three months in 2012.

4.2 – France

In 2011, EUR 50 000 from the Interdepartmental Mission for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction (MILDT) was used to buy a vehicle fitted for long-term covert surveillance (underwater) and to provide various equipment as well as training for the Anti-Drug Trafficking Office.

There is a third project for 2012, with EUR 71 375 earmarked for the supply of 3 quads and individual equipment and a training course in investigation techniques.

Furthermore, France, the European Union and the IOM funded the building and fitting out of border posts which will be involved in the fight against drug trafficking.

4.3 – European Union

Under the European Commission's West Sahel programme, "generalist" police, *gendarmerie* and customs personnel received training in detecting and identifying drugs. The Spanish *Gardia Civil* is responsible for implementation of this project. Since September 2011 such actions have been conducted at Naouakchott in the context of border controls, then at Rosso and Nouadhibou.

4.4 – United States

The United States support the Mauritanian police and *gendarmerie* by means of regular training sessions. There are plans, for instance, for training in border controls in March 2012 and a maritime interdiction traineeship in June 2012, as well as a transfer of equipment (lorries, night-vision goggles, GPS, hand-held radios, etc.).

4.5 – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

In 2011, under ECOWAS's Regional Action Plan to combat drug trafficking, Mauritanian services took part in a regional seminar organised by the UNODC. The UNODC is also set to provide technical assistance in the fight against money laundering in collaboration with the Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF). Mauritania is also eligible for the National Integrated Programme for fighting drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorist financing, a project which is intended to make the criminal justice system (police and justice) more effective. Activities were also carried out in the areas of drug demand reduction and AIDS prevention.

4.6 – Germany

A German evaluation mission to identify police cooperation projects is planned for June 2012.

5/ Recommendations

Mauritanian needs in terms of the training of basic personnel and logistical support remain considerable. Requests for technical resources for surveillance, communications, investigations and toxicology analysis have been reiterated by the Mauritanian police and *gendarmérie*. Training actions are a priority for all players in the fight against drugs and money laundering (police, *gendarmérie*, customs, magistrates, banks, Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF)).

- Continue to raise the Mauritanian authorities' awareness of the need to demonstrate an even more tangible commitment to combating drug trafficking and the laundering of proceeds of trafficking;
- Promote and support the establishment of a national database on drug trafficking with input from the police, the *gendarmérie*, customs and the army;
- Establish a system for processing, analysing and utilising the database;
- Create national files of wanted persons and criminal records which could eventually be linked up to other countries in the region;
- Provide support for defining a national anti-drug trafficking policy;
- Second one or more *gendarmes* to the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLTIS) as liaison officer(s);

- Improve and optimise the material resources of Mauritania's competent security forces;
- Provide vehicles for transporting the national *gendarmerie's* police dogs;
- Boost technical and forensic police capacities and the exchange of information on the products seized;
- Set up a toxicology laboratory;
- Provide support for improving capabilities in tax detection, the detection of the laundering of the proceeds of drugs and surveillance of the financial system;
- Suggest that the reporting of suspicious transactions to the Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF) be made mandatory;
- Raise awareness among the management of financial institutions and examine the scope for exchanging information with the Central Bank of Mauritania when large sums of money destined for countries that are members of the Group are reported;
- Improve border control capacity and in that context urge implementation of the Instrument for Stability;
- Organise awareness training in the identification of drug products for officers in the general police, *gendarmerie* and customs departments.
- Implement training of all players in the various stages of the law enforcement system (police, *gendarmes*, prosecutors and magistrates) for the fight against drug trafficking;
- Promote a regional cooperation framework and encourage the work carried out by the liaison officer platform for West Africa, based in Dakar.
- Support an evaluation of the Interpol National Central Bureau and boost its capacity as a means of international cooperation;
- Ensure the exchange of operational, tactical and strategic information with the services of member countries of the mini-group in Mauritania;
- Promote the exchange of experts on the subject.

8. SITUATION IN NIGER

Although there is no Dublin mini-group in Niamey, Niger is affected by international drug trafficking, which local services are tackling with the help of the Internal Security Department. There has been a marked evolution in the last six months, in particular with the emergence of a cocaine transit route by Nigerian "mules" at Niamey international airport.

1/ General situation in Niger as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

Ongoing transit of large quantities of cannabis resin in northern Niger:

On 2 January 2012 Nigerien armed forces attempted to intercept two heavily laden Toyota Land Cruisers driving along a track approximately 150 km to the south-west of Arlit (northern Niger). The chase, in which shots were fired by both sides, ended ten kilometres further along the track, after one of the vehicles managed to outstrip the armed forces, the second vehicle being left immobile after an accident. Two Malians living in Gao (Mali) and an Algerian living in Tamanrasset (Algeria) were arrested. They had been transporting one tonne of cannabis resin, which they said had been loaded in Mali and was bound for Libya. Weapons and ammunition, as well as Thuraya satellite telephones, a GPS and a mobile telephone were also seized.

The National *Gendarmerie* in Arlit, which was put in charge of the investigation, sent the individuals to appear before the local public prosecutor. They were placed in custody and a preliminary investigation was opened.

However, the Anti-Drug Coordination Centre (CCLAD) in Niamey was not informed of these developments until early February 2012.

On 28 January 2012, a Nigerien army patrol tried to intercept a convoy of 15 heavily-armed Toyota Land Cruisers 230 km north of Arlit, very close to the Algerian border, where it seemed to have come from. After a heavy exchange of fire, the convoy managed to make its escape, leaving behind two vehicles, one of which was completely destroyed. The second vehicle was carrying 875 kg of cannabis resin, divided into 35 packages, which were handed over to the Arlit brigade of the *gendarmerie*. Several automatic weapons were also seized. Again, this case was not reported to the CCLAD until four weeks later.

In these two cases, the French embassy's internal security department alerted the CCLAD, the body which should have been in charge of investigations, as soon as it heard about the incidents, but all the evidence which could have been useful in these investigations (documents, means of communication, vehicles) was held by the Nigerien armed forces, making it difficult to update the specific data used to trace drug routes in West Africa and preventing networks from being identified.

Discovery of cocaine being smuggled internally through Niamey airport

On 17 February 2012, officers from the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (DST, equivalent of the French Central Border Police Directorate) at Niamey airport took charge of a Nigerian national who had just been sent back from Casablanca airport (Morocco). The individual, travelling on a Guinean passport, said he wished to travel to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) via Casablanca and Dubai (United Arab Emirates), with his initial point of departure being Niamey. Complaining of stomach pains, he was taken to hospital, where x-rays showed he had swallowed several dozen elongated pellets. As he was considered to be well enough, he was placed in custody at the CCLAD headquarters. He died there on the morning of 20 February. An autopsy revealed 56 pellets containing cocaine which, added to the 20 pellets expelled whilst the individual was in custody, made a total of 76 pellets, weighing 1 200 grams in total.

The CCLAD investigation identified a Nigerian accomplice, likely to have fled to Lagos (Nigeria), and led to the arrest of another probable "courier", also of Nigerian nationality.

Focussing on the opposite direction of travel, on 7 December 2011, in a targeted operation based on prior intelligence, police officers at Casablanca airport arrested a Nigerian carrying capsules containing cocaine from Sao Paulo via Madrid, intending to travel on to Abidjan. He informed on two other "mules" of the same nationality, one of whom was supposed to travel to Niamey carrying 62 capsules of cocaine, weighing a total of 1 030 grams.

The same day, five Nigerians were arrested at Houari Boumediène airport in Algiers when, having arrived from Sao Paulo via Madrid, they tried to travel on to Niamey. X-rays showed a total of 385 capsules containing a total of 6.49 kg of cocaine.

Police at Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey were particularly well aware of these attempts to establish new drug trafficking routes, since the French embassy's internal security department was able to confirm the existence of a genuine network of Nigerian couriers arriving in Niamey from Nigeria by coach and buying their air tickets either directly or through an accomplice, showing photocopies of passports to the travel agency. The return journey to Nigeria is also completed by coach.

This was the case for Nigerian national Eugène Eze, arrested on 5 March 2012 at Roissy CDG airport, who had swallowed 74 capsules of cocaine, weighing a total of 1 396 grams. This individual had travelled from Lagos to Niamey by coach, then bought his air ticket from Niamey to Madrid via Paris at the Air France agency in Niamey.

Suspicious of narcotics being trafficked from Nigeria to North Africa along the Niger-Chad border:

Narcotics trafficking (the nature of drugs involved is not yet known) seems to be organised by former rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (FARS), starting in Nigeria, then moving towards the north-east of Niger. This route would pass through the Lake Chad region then head north through Bihabirim and Yogou (Chad), and N'Gourti and Bilma (Niger).

2/ Anti-narcotics operations by Nigerien services and operational recommendations

In too many cases, the Niamey Anti-Drug Coordination Centre is not informed of large seizures of cannabis resin in areas far from the capital until several weeks after the event. These are unacceptable practices in anti-narcotics operations, typified by the failure to report back to the CCLAD. Those responsible are the services involved (armed forces, *gendarmérie*), but also the local magistrates who do not pass information on to the Ministry of Justice.

With regard to the activity of couriers carrying cocaine pellets concealed in their bodies, the SSI asked the Nigerien National Police Directorate to keep travel agencies under surveillance, and asked the DST at Niamey airport to be more vigilant with regard to travellers of Nigerian nationality. Of course, the CCLAD has itself become better informed about this method of operation, which is completely new to Niger.

When Nigerian "mules" are intercepted in France or in any other country, it seems necessary to determine during the ensuing investigation which travel agency sold the air ticket, with this information being sent back as soon as possible to the SSI in Niamey, in order that it can attempt to identify other couriers or accomplices. The Nigerien authorities are in fact ready to take action to ensure that their capital city, so far very well protected from such crime, does not become a hub for international cocaine trafficking.

Forthcoming cooperation activities planned by France concerning the CCLAD will involve reinforcing the support provided for the FSP JUSSEC project since its inception in September 2009, particularly in the area of officer training (on shadowing, surveillance and questioning, and direct entry of data on proceedings).

It has been proposed to EU Member State donors and to the EU itself that the premises intended to house the CCLAD field office in Agadez be restored, the building itself needing to be demolished and rebuilt. The funds allocated to FSP JUSSEC and MILDT for 2012 will principally be spent on vehicle, computer and office equipment for the field office, which will in the interim be housed temporarily on the premises of the regional headquarters of the national police, and on equipment for the CCLAD field office in Zinder.

Awareness-raising measures for high-ranking officers of the defence and security forces concerning the challenges raised by bringing the whole country under judicial control will need to be initiated in the near future in order to make more certain that detainees and exhibits are produced and that documents and evidence are preserved.

9. ACCRA MINI GROUP

Regional assessment of drug trafficking concerning the area under the responsibility of the Accra (Ghana) platform. Serious efforts are being made by the Ghanaian authorities.

1/ General situation in Ghana as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

No major changes in the countries of West Africa. There has, however, been a appreciable drop in seizures at ports in the subregion. Cocaine routes remain unchanged. For information, a container transporting 56 kg of cocaine from Bolivia was seized in February 2012 at the port of Cotonou (Benin). Account should be taken of the relative growth of East African ports (Mozambique).

International airports still being used by criminal organisations to send drugs carried by couriers.

Abidjan, Accra, Lomé and Cotonou airports are the main destination airports in Africa. Cotonou airport is frequently used for departure to Europe (e.g. to Brussels with Brussels Airlines).

Increase in seizures of methamphetamines and opiate-based medicines.

Seizure of 1.4 kg of methamphetamines at Cotonou airport (Benin).

Seizure of 3 704 kg of Tramadol (opiate-based medicine) at the port of Lomé (Togo).

Ghana – some significant seizures

Seizure by the police in Akosombo (near Lake Volta) on 7 March 2012 of 138 kg of herbal cannabis intended for the local market.

Arrest at Accra airport on 5 April 2012 of a Moroccan passenger travelling from São Paulo via Dubai carrying 2.7 kg of cocaine concealed in her hold luggage.

The role of criminal organisations: in Ghana and other countries of the subregion, Lebanese (cocaine trafficking and laundering of drug money) and Nigerian (narcotics trafficking, particularly methamphetamines) organisations control most of the market.

Herbal cannabis remains the most commonly used drug. There has been an increase in methamphetamine addiction. No information on precise drug use figures.

2/ Salient points or updates

The internal security department of the French Embassy in Ghana welcomes the considerable progress made in terms of collaboration with the Ghanaian anti-drugs agencies (NACOB and BNI). Despite a sometimes cumbersome bureaucracy, operational communication is improving all the time.

10. YAOUNDÉ MINI GROUP (not updated)

1/ General situation in Cameroon as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

The successes achieved by West African coastal countries in monitoring operations are clearly prompting the moving or intensification of drug trafficking operations to the Gulf of Guinea and, in particular, Cameroon, where the weak monitoring structures and endemic corruption undoubtedly favour illegal activities stemming from the South American continent.

"Since 2000, Cameroon has become a country of origin, transit, destination and consumption for all sorts of drugs" according to the criminal police directorate in Yaoundé. As early as 1997, when Law No 97/019 of 7 August 1997 was promulgated, a significant increase in the trafficking of cannabis, heroin, cocaine and psychotropic substances had already been noted by the police.

Since early 2010, the data transmitted to the Interpol office in Yaoundé have shown a clear rise in the problem in Cameroon. A large number of messages from Brazil have reported trafficking cases involving Cameroon nationals and foreign residents in the country, in particular Nigerians.

Seven of Cameroon's ten regions, though not the three in the north, are involved in cultivation of cannabis for both internal consumption and export to Europe and Central Africa. Since 1997, fields have been established for such commercial purposes in a number of forest areas in the south and mountain areas in the west, thereby turning towns such as Batouri, Belabo, Bafia, Mbalmayo, Nkongsamba, Foubot and Mbouda into major production centres. Some of the drugs are consumed locally (541 kg were seized between 2009 and 2010), whilst the rest are produced for the CEMAC region.

The transit of heroin and cocaine through Cameroon has been a mounting concern, as exemplified by the seizure on 5 July 2011 of 141.5 kg de cocaine in a container from Brazil. In 2010, 62 kg of cocaine that were leaving Cameroon were seized, and 14 kg were seized on entry to the country: 30 people were arrested.

Psychotropic substances, consisting of injectable ampoules and tablets (Diazepam and Tramadol), have been seized regularly within the country, at the port of Douala, in airports and at border posts.

A kilogram of methamphetamine bound for Japan via Nigeria was recently seized at Yaoundé airport.

So the increase in the drugs problem is forcing Cameroon to question the effectiveness of the monitoring and control instruments deployed by the agencies involved in the strategy to combat drug trafficking.

2/ National policy pursued by the Government

Aware of the dangers raised by the drugs problem, Cameroon adopted a law on 7 August 1997. The act severely punishes any offence related to the cultivation, possession, transportation, sale and consumption of drugs and to the laundering of money obtained through such activities. The other main government initiative to raise people's awareness of the dangers of drugs was the creation of an advisory body, the National Anti-Drug Committee (CNLD), in 1992. The body has 16 members including a representative of the General Delegation for National Security and is responsible for coordination and scrutiny of all problems relating to illegal use of drugs and drug abuse. This led, in 2006, to the government's adoption of a ten-year plan, to be implemented by the CNLD, aimed at covering all problems relating to drug trafficking and abuse, as well as all prevention, law enforcement, treatment, rehabilitation and awareness-raising measures.

Each year, national NGOs are involved in activities to combat drug abuse and smoking connected to the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June). They focus in particular on preventing local drug abuse, raising awareness and modernising the technical, legal and judicial tools for combating trafficking of precursors and money laundering.

3/ Services responsible for combating drug trafficking

Within the criminal police directorate (DPJ), the Subdirectorate on Drugs, which is the most recent structure of the criminal police, theoretically has exclusive competence for combating drug trafficking on behalf of the national police. It has three departments (operations, enquiries and reports; liaison; and documentation and analysis), whose directors are genuinely well-intentioned but lack any real experts amongst their staff and have absolutely no resources.

The Subdirectorate is also responsible for centralising the drug trafficking statistics provided by other state services, however the latter fail to provide any.

There is no central, interministerial office for combating illegal drug trafficking which could collate and analyse information and steer the state services' fight against it.

– National *gendarmerie*

The central department for criminal investigations (SCRJ) simply has two junior officers in charge of monitoring, amongst other things, any drug-related cases arising at national level.

– Customs

There is a surveillance division attached to the General Directorate of Customs in Yaoundé. This body acts on its own initiative or on the basis of intelligence, however there is no specialised structure in the port of Douala or the airports.

– Armed forces

Army personnel contribute to combating trafficking in operations carried out throughout the country.

4/ Update on status of bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes

Police cooperation is largely promoted by France and Spain, and to a lesser extent by the United States.

- Spain: police cooperation has mainly focused on combating illegal immigration since the recent arrival of a security attaché.

- France: a ten-day training course on operational investigative techniques will be provided by two French experts by the end of November 2011. In addition, the two security/immigration advisers posted in Yaoundé and Douala make an indirect contribution through their presence at these airport platforms and their advice on combating illegal trafficking. For instance, the recent seizure of one kilogram of methamphetamine was made at Yaoundé airport after some operational intelligence had been sent by the SSI via the international cooperation directorate in Paris.

5/ Recommendations and definition of needs

- Continue to encourage the Cameroon authorities to take the decision to create a central inter-departmental body (like a central national police office), consisting of the various national players responsible for combating drug trafficking and capable of analysis, provision of intelligence and drafting of an overall strategy;
- Carry out an audit with a view to strengthening the capacities of police officers and structures within the *gendarmerie* and enabling them to engage in more effective investigative work (training, equipment and methods);
- Promote the establishment of a national database on drug trafficking, with input from the General Delegation for National Security, the *gendarmerie* and customs, thereby providing a tool for analysis and monitoring of these problems;
- Support the establishment of centralised files of wanted persons as a means of reinforcing the work of investigators and improving cooperation with foreign services;
- Promote the introduction of dog handling units at the port of Douala and the two international airports (Douala and Yaoundé);
- Improve and optimise the specialised technical resources of the security forces;
- Strengthen the capacity of the technical and forensic police services;
- Provide training to the key players in the criminal justice system on combating drug trafficking;
- Assess the operations of the regional and national Interpol office in Yaoundé with a view to improving its capacity as a vital partner in international cooperation.

11. SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU (not updated)

1/ General situation in Guinea-Bissau as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

Guinea-Bissau remains at the hub of trafficking in the sub-region, against a background of general inaction and impunity. However, it is becoming more difficult to assess the volume of trafficking and its economic impact.

According to UNODC, drug trafficking has resumed on a massive scale following a period of calm during which cocaine trafficking had appeared to diminish due to the networks being destabilised by political assassinations, and to the increased attention being paid by the international community. Drug trafficking is now said to be mainly carried out by air, and UNODC considers the situation to be a cause for concern as the political destabilisation is entirely linked to drug trafficking, exacerbating the risk of a descent into a drug economy.

2/ National effort against the drugs trade

The fight against drugs in Guinea-Bissau depends on a few people and institutions which should be supported, in an atmosphere of widespread laxity or complicity at high levels in the army and the state.

The level of corruption and involvement by the political and military authorities is such that the Director of Guinea-Bissau's Criminal Police, Ms Ahukarie, recently resigned because of numerous death threats from traffickers and mounting pressure from high-ranking army officers.

Efforts to combat money laundering must take priority in Guinea-Bissau, given the penetration of illegal funds generated by the drugs trade and the instability they cause for the country's already fragile economy. France is setting up a dedicated project in the area. It should help boost capability to carry out investigations (including legislative investigations) and financial analysis on the part of judicial bodies, drawing on the services of the Ministry of Finance (CENTIF: Unit for Processing Financial Intelligence) and the Central Bank, and set up links between financial institutions, the criminal investigation department and the public prosecutor's office.

3/ International and regional cooperation

Greater regional cooperation, in particular by setting up regional centres to prosecute offences committed in other countries in the region.

Since 2007, Guinea-Bissau has had a national integrated programme (PNI), the "Operational plan to combat and prevent drug trafficking to and from Guinea-Bissau".

In February 2010 the country also joined the "Dakar Initiative" to boost cooperation against drug trafficking between Senegal and six of its neighbours.

Guinea-Bissau is a member of the GIABA (the anti-money-laundering group) and also participates in the "WACI", the West African Coast Initiative, which is designed to boost capabilities in the areas of national law enforcement and cross-border cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking. The European Union allocated EUR 2 million in 2008 to help set up a specialist anti-drug trafficking unit at the Criminal Investigation Department (PNI Objective 1). Management of these funds has been delegated to UNODC.

For its part, Brazil began support for establishment of a training centre for the security forces in 2010.

Portugal has been cooperating with the criminal investigation department for a long time.

4/ Recommendations

Some progress has been made, but needs to be consolidated and stepped up; there is still a great deal to be done in four areas at least: a crackdown on corruption and money laundering, establishing a prisons policy, preventing drug use and its impact on public health (in particular HIV/AIDS), and translating the desire for regional cooperation into practice.

12. SITUATION IN GABON

Mediocre results in terms of seizures. Difficulties in implementing cooperative actions, due to structural weaknesses in the law enforcement agencies.

1/ General situation in Gabon as regards drug production, consumption and trafficking

The OCLAD (Anti-Drug Central Office) reports few seizures for the first quarter of 2012, amounting to around forty kilograms of cannabis. These were mainly the result of arrests made in the provinces, particularly the north of the country, near the border with Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Cannabis is mainly found as herbal cannabis and is transported in bundles.

The traffickers arrested often transport the goods along rivers and by sea, and try to send them to the cities. Investigators have had trouble identifying any structured networks of traffickers. Since the start of 2012 there have been no significant seizures of heroin or cocaine.

Local drug production is mainly cannabis-related. No extensive plantations have been discovered. Specialised investigators believe that most cases relate to extra production for local consumption and small-scale trafficking. No laboratories for producing opiates or synthetic drugs have been dismantled during this period.

As far as consumption is concerned, two worrying trends are emerging:

- in terms of public health, the authorities are concerned by the addictive consumption by adolescents of alcohol and cannabis, taking place near educational establishments in the capital. The internal security department (SSI) and cultural section (SCAC) of the local French Embassy plan to work with our partners on preventive action to tackle this problem (see paragraph 3);
- we have also noted, when dealing with particularly violent cases of armed robbery, that the perpetrators of these crimes were acting under the influence of synthetic drugs, amphetamines, or a combination of counterfeit medicines produced in Asia or West Africa.

2/ Outlook

The Anti-Drug Central Office continues to operate in a state of complete destitution. A large number of police officers are assigned to the office, mainly straight after their training, but they are not provided with weapons, means of communication or transport. Although the office has outposts in strategic locations, these are even worse equipped.

For the past two months, since General Ngoo left, the office has been without a director. The French embassy's internal security department had started discussions with General Ngoo, who was very interested in the development of our cooperation, but it has now been left with no valid contact point. There was a plan to bring together the customs authorities, *gendarmerie* and national police forces (FPN) in order to plan training in this field, with two objectives:

- monitoring the high level of maritime traffic in Gabon's commercial ports (targeting containers, creating a narcotics sniffer dog unit, etc.), as well as air traffic at Léon Mba Airport;
- providing specialised training for investigators, both in techniques for combating drug trafficking (surveillance, shadowing, phone tapping, etc.) and specific aspects of these crimes (money laundering).

Regional institutional players (EU, ECCAS, United Nations Office for Central Africa), which are already aware of these issues in the context of the fight against trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea, could also have been involved in this work. The appointment of a director to succeed General Ngoo should allow these various cooperative projects be run successfully.

In more concrete terms, with regard to prevention, the Commander-in-Chief of the police forces, General Mistoul, has requested our help in fighting the addiction problem affecting secondary school pupils in the capital city. The SSI and SCAC of the local French embassy are therefore planning training sessions for "anti-drug police trainers" able to visit schools to warn young people about the risks of drug use.
