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Subject: Regional report on West Africa

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**1. General situation as regards drug trafficking and consumption in West Africa**

**1.1 West Africa is essentially a transit region for drugs.**

The target market for cocaine transiting through West Africa is essentially Western Europe. The main destination markets for cocaine are the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France and Germany, where over three quarters of Europe's consumers of cocaine are to be found. According to the most recent UNODC report (*Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: a Threat Assessment*, February 2013), the amount of pure cocaine transiting through West Africa for Europe is now estimated at 18 tonnes, with a value of USD 1.25 billion, compared with 47 tonnes in 2007. However, although West Africa has become a major player and a hub in international cocaine trafficking, global seizures in the region do not provide a true picture of trafficking, since they are generally still marginal, and on the decrease.

This trafficking stems from the convergence of interests of criminal groups from South America (essentially Colombia and Venezuela), West Africa (mainly Nigeria and Guinea) and Europe.

There is a very strong suspicion that countries such as Nigeria and Mali are producing ever-increasing quantities of synthetic methamphetamine-type drugs in illegal laboratories, mainly for export to Asian markets (India (Mumbai), the Philippines, Thailand (Bangkok), Singapore and Japan) via Cotonou airport in particular, where there have been more seizures of this drug than of cocaine. A new trend of exporting methamphetamine to Europe has been observed in Benin.

The African heroin route, which originates in Afghanistan, crosses the continent from east to west through Ethiopia and Sudan and comes to an end in the Sahel trading area. It now passes through Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, which have become alternatives to the more traditional heroin routes, as evidenced by the seizures made in recent months, rather than Ghana, where no heroin seizures have been recorded since June 2012.

Cannabis resin from the Moroccan Rif crosses Mauritania, northern Mali and northern Niger to Egypt and Libya, or transits through Mauritania to the countries of the Arabian Peninsula (via Chad and Sudan).

Several countries in the sub-region are also producers of cannabis, which tends to be consumed locally.

## **1.2 The western seaboard of the African continent is still the main area of destination and storage for cocaine from South America.**

Brazil, Bolivia and Venezuela are currently particularly active as countries of shipment of cocaine trans-shipped in Cape Verde, as evidenced by the recent seizure, in March 2013, of two tonnes of cocaine off the archipelago's coast, and in coastal areas extending from Senegal to the whole of the Gulf of Guinea (Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria). Traffickers tend to reship drugs by air (essentially using passengers), sea (in freight on container ships and in sailing vessels) and the land route via the Sahel.

### **1.3 Before Operation Serval was launched by France in January 2013, Mali had become a major country of transit for the trafficking of cocaine and cannabis to Europe.**

Negotiations between criminal middlemen and European wholesalers took place regularly in the north of the country, an area traditionally associated with smuggling. Road transport, particularly in goods lorries, was the most frequent means of conveying drugs, but there were also cases of aeroplanes being used, sometimes flying directly from South America<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.4 The coexistence of terrorist movements and drug trafficking networks is of particular concern for the security and stability of West Africa.**

The crisis in northern Mali showed that alliances of convenience had been forged between drug traffickers, seeking to protect and develop their trade, and terrorist groups. In some cases, this was simply a matter of co-existing in the same area; in others, terrorist groups were financed by drug money (particularly by levying a "toll" on drug traffickers' convoys).

While Operation Serval has considerably weakened the terrorist groups operating in Mali (AQIM, MUJAO and Ansar Eddine) and as a result generally disrupted trafficking of all kinds, drug trafficking remains a real threat to the security and stability of Mali and of the region.

### **1.5 Narco-state: a further destabilisation factor.**

Guinea-Bissau, blighted by a succession of coups, political instability and recurring poor governance, has become a narco-state and one of the main centres of cocaine trafficking in West Africa. Colombian cartels are heavily involved in this trafficking, and are supported by prominent local civilian and military figures who have helped them to establish a foothold and operate with impunity. The Chief of Staff of the Guinea-Bissau Navy was detained off the coast of Cape Verde and is being prosecuted in the United States inter alia for cocaine trafficking.

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<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled that the "Air Cocaine Boeing" affair involved an aeroplane that had taken off in Venezuela and was found, burnt out, in northern Mali in October 2009 after delivering a consignment of cocaine.

The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces has been publicly named as a facilitator of organised crime and drug trafficking networks. The current situation is complex and changeable, and it is to be hoped that the situation in the country will improve in time. The transitional government has been charged with organising the forthcoming elections, with the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Ramos Horta, who is working towards this end. The international community, concerned by the current situation, is now discussing how to step up the fight against drugs and organised crime in Guinea-Bissau.

### **1.6 Drug consumption is on the rise in West Africa.**

Although consumption of all types of drugs appears to be constantly on the increase (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana etc.) and presents real public health problems, particularly among young people, domestic demand and local consumption seem still to be marginal; however, it should be pointed out that the countries of West Africa do not have precise data, reliable statistics or observatories to assess trends and developments in consumption.

## **2. Operational needs**

Given the limited equipment available to law-enforcement bodies and their considerable needs in terms of training, the size of the sea, air and land borders to be patrolled, the small number of checks carried out and the insufficient capabilities of the criminal justice system, the needs expressed by mini group members have been identical. The groups note that the work undertaken must be long-term and that meeting the expectations of West African law-enforcement bodies in terms of training and the allocation of resources is a way of mobilising them and motivating them in the performance of their duties.

The mini groups' reports also emphasise the need for state authorities to demonstrate long-term willingness to make the fight against drugs a priority. Guinea has taken this path. The members of the Cotonou mini group submitted a joint statement of 17 September 2012 to the President, calling on the Benin authorities to make the initiatives adopted in support of the fight against drugs a priority and implement them effectively.

Good practices need to be encouraged and shared. The examples provided by some countries should be replicated. Ghana has succeeded in developing good working methods.

These are based on the sharing of skills among anti-drug bodies and intelligence services, targeting goods or persons coming from or bound for sensitive localities and improving bilateral operational cooperation between the countries in the sub-region, thanks to the information provided by the international anti-drug liaison officers platform (*ILU*).

Ghana has also committed to combating money laundering and terrorist financing, to comply with the international legislative and structural standards laid down by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The country was able to leave the FATF monitoring process in February 2013, having eliminated its strategic deficiencies as regards combating illicit financial flows.

International and regional cooperation is of paramount importance.

This cooperation is vital in order to cope with the scale of the trafficking and to carry out effective maritime interdiction, such as the interception (off Cape Verde) of a consignment of two tonnes of cocaine bound for Portugal by the Spanish navy, acting on British and Portuguese intelligence.

Such cooperation has to be carried out in a context where the means of concealment and *modi operandi* used by traffickers are constantly being adapted, as evidenced by seizures in South America of cocaine headed for Benin: 327 kg in a soap-powder container in November 2012, and 121.5 kg of liquid cocaine in tins, and by the increased professionalism of couriers who, to increase their profits, are exporting and importing different products (methamphetamine out of West Africa, and heroin into West Africa) at the same time.

Cooperation must at all times take account of drug-trafficking routes and the presence of major transport or trans-shipping infrastructure. In this regard, ports and airports need to be better monitored. For example, it cannot fail to be noted that no cocaine seizures have been made at the port of Abidjan, through which containers from South America transit.

### 3. Regional and multilateral initiatives to combat drug trafficking in West Africa

**FSP ALCAO** (Priority Solidarity Fund in Support of the Fight against Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa), set up by France, currently covers Guinea, Mauritania, Benin, Togo, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and now also Cape Verde, the intention being to broaden its activities to other countries in the region which demonstrate strong political will. It has three objectives: (1) to structurally reinforce the measures adopted to combat cocaine trafficking; (2) to build the capacities of investigative bodies; (3) to improve regional and international cooperation. It was launched in October 2012 in Conakry and started work in 2013. The next regional training seminar on interview techniques will be held in Lomé (Togo) in June 2013: the workshops will be aimed at customs officers, gendarmerie and police officers and judicial officials. In addition to practical and operational training, the fund contributes to the purchase of equipment which is essential for the services on the ground.

The objective of this incentivising project is not to add to existing initiatives but to take stock of what has been achieved, not least to ensure that they complement each other and to attain greater synergy and efficiency. For instance, in order to respond effectively to the threats from terrorism and large-scale trafficking, a seminar will be held in late 2013 on the identification, seizure and confiscation of criminal assets, as part of FSP JUSSEC (Priority Solidarity Fund for Justice and Security in the Sahel-Saharan Region) launched in 2009, which is intended to reinforce the capacities of states in the area (Mali, Mauritania and Niger). Niger and Mauritania, which are not part of the ALCAO programme, will have the opportunity to take part in the training.

The **ECOWAS donors' conference** is scheduled for early June 2013, with a view to releasing the funds needed for ECOWAS to implement its revised action plan on the fight against drugs (the Praia plan). It will be recalled that the EU intends to contribute EUR 16 million. Given that drug trafficking is a transnational problem, the regional dynamic in West Africa, which needs to be encouraged by ECOWAS, is more relevant than ever. Implementing the updated action plan will correspond to a two-pronged rationale of taking ownership of the fight against drugs and the need for the countries of West Africa to work together in this specific framework.

The question of funding the fight against drugs is crucial, as is monitoring the situation in West Africa in order to provide appropriate and effective solutions. The experts meeting held in Washington in January 2013 **as part of the G8 Roma-Lyon Group** focused on the fight against drugs in West Africa with three particular points of emphasis:

- (1) revising and updating the strategy against drugs in West Africa in the light of regional instability, in particular the crisis situations in Mali and Guinea-Bissau;
- (2) incorporating the fight against corruption into the Praia plan;
- (3) coordinating the contributions made by donors. The links between terrorist financing and organised crime were a specific subject of discussion in April, with the UK Presidency of the G8 making the fight against drugs in West Africa one of its priorities. An experts meeting will be held in London on 4 and 5 June on the fights against organised crime in West Africa.

The **fight against money laundering** must go hand in hand with the fight against trafficking, given that trafficking generates illicit financial flows that are reinvested in legal economies and are a source of destabilisation in the region. In this regard, on 18 March 2013 the EU launched a project on combating money laundering (at a cost of EUR 1.8 million) for Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Cape Verde. This project complements and reinforces the EU's Cocaine Route Programme launched in 2009; it aims to ensure the security of electronic information exchange and to set up a database. It will help law enforcement authorities improve their investigations into money-laundering cases and combat organised crime more effectively. It will also help reinforce regional cooperation between those countries.

**Lastly, UNODC was planning to set up a regional programme (Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso)** with an office in Niamey. UNODC wants this programme to operate in tandem with the action taken by the EU and regional organisations in the area and to be set up in close cooperation with the various UN agencies involved (UNOWA, DPKO and DPA in particular).

#### 4. DAKAR MINI GROUP

A meeting of the local mini group (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, Italy, Canada, USA, European Union delegation, UNODC and UNOWA) was held at the French embassy on 25 April.

Information was gathered during the meeting and from the Dakar drug liaison officers (LO) platform. This group, set up under the EU's French Presidency in the second half of 2008, brings together French, UK, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and South African liaison officers. It meets once a week in the French embassy. The platform was launched in June 2009 but it still has no operating budget and its members include only three truly "qualified" LOs: from the UK, Italy and France. The other participants are non-specialists who attend drug-related meetings. However, it is an important source of information, particularly for drafting strategic analyses.

The meeting of the local Dublin mini group opened with a presentation by the UNODC on the state of play as regards trafficking and the measures implemented by the Senegalese authorities to prevent and prosecute such criminal activities. The presentation was supplemented by contributions from the various participants.

The ensuing discussions revealed a common vision with regard to the following aspects:

- Despite a change in approach at the highest level of the State following the election of Macky Sall as President of the Republic in March 2012 (and in particular an awareness of the risks of destabilisation presented by cocaine trafficking), the Senegalese authorities are still not sufficiently committed to tackling drug trafficking; such activities have yet to be made a priority for the internal security services, which are still focused on public order issues.
- In most cases, investigations by the law enforcement authorities are confined to apprehending persons trafficking herbal cannabis by road, or "mules" carrying cocaine by air; such arrests are followed by seizures. Few investigations are carried out into trafficking networks.

- Apart from a small number of information activities (e.g. meetings and workshops), there is no real government policy on reducing supply. The few specific activities which have taken place have been by NGOs or neighbourhood associations.
- The criminal justice system remains largely ineffectual and incapable of properly prosecuting, investigating and judging cases involving trafficking and the laundering of money derived from crime.

#### **4.1 Trends in trafficking**

##### Cannabis

In Senegal, most cannabis trafficking involves herbal cannabis, known locally as hemp or "yamba". This poor-quality drug (which contains a lot of stalks and seeds and little THC) is produced in Ghana, Mali and southern Senegal (Casamance and Siné-Saloum). The sums of money generated by trafficking in herbal cannabis are small (low sale price). This market holds no interest for large criminal organisations.

It should be noted that herbal cannabis from Morocco first appeared in Senegal several months ago (in Dakar). It is imported by road hauliers and still circulated in small quantities. Although this type of cannabis is of much higher quality than the locally produced drug, it is also more expensive. It indicates a diversification in traffickers' "commercial strategies" as they seek out new markets. This drug is still much cheaper than cannabis resin, which has traditionally been exported from Morocco and is beyond the reach of most consumers in Africa (according to the Dakar platform, this trend should be monitored closely).

##### Cocaine

Senegal continues to be a transit country for cocaine bound for Europe, which arrives in the country from South America either by air (transported on board small light aircraft fitted with additional fuel tanks, known as "kamikaze aircraft", which land in Guinea-Bissau) or by sea (on board sailing vessels or merchant ships).

West Africa's strategic position on the cocaine routes is becoming well established, as shown by the large seizures made recently in the sub-region (and in particular the seizure in March of two tonnes of cocaine by the Spanish navy on board the "Pacífico", off the coast of Cape Verde).

Arrivals of cocaine in that archipelago seem to be on the increase, which would explain the price trend in the sub-region (data compiled in January, source: Dakar platform): EUR 14 000 per kg in Bissau, EUR 9 000 per kg in Cape Verde and EUR 9 000 per kg in Nouadhibou, the main port of Mauritania.

As cocaine consumption has risen significantly in Morocco in recent months, new routes for trafficking the drug from West Africa to the Maghreb are likely to emerge (source: Dakar platform).

As cocaine can be bought for around EUR 5 500 per kg in Brazil and sold for up to EUR 55 000 per kg in Europe (source: Dakar platform), it is becoming increasingly common for the quantities transported by the traffickers from the production areas to the places of consumption to be split. The margins being achieved by the criminal organisations are making it profitable for them to organise "little trips", thereby complicating the task of the law enforcement authorities, which are having to contend with an increasing amount of "smurfing" and constantly changing air routes.

To Senegal's credit, the interministerial CAAT (airport anti-trafficking unit), which brings together the police, gendarmerie and customs authorities, now regularly intercepts "mules" carrying cocaine at Dakar international airport. In addition to the arrests and seizures carried out by that unit, which until recently were based on intelligence supplied by the UK and French LOs, interventions are now being organised on the unit's own initiative.

## **4.2 Production**

Local production is still almost exclusively confined to the cultivation of herbal cannabis (in Casamance and Siné-Saloum). The herbal cannabis grown in Senegal is of low quality and intended for local consumption. The ongoing insecurity in Casamance due to the MFDC (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) separatist movement is preventing the police and gendarmerie anti-drugs services from taking effective action there. It should be noted that the Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCRTIS) has a small branch office in Ziguinchor (although it is not engaged in any real operational activities at present).

### **4.3 State of play as regards consumption**

The main drug consumed is herbal cannabis produced in West Africa. Around four tonnes of the drug are reported to be seized in Senegal each year. However, the local statistics are approximate and incomplete.

At the same time, cocaine consumption is on the rise in the smart neighbourhoods of Dakar, in particular in certain nightclubs in the Almadies neighbourhood (approximately FCFA 20 000, i.e. EUR 30 per gram) whereas crack, at the other end of the social scale, has started to appear in the capital's deprived neighbourhoods (at FCFA 5 000, i.e. EUR 7.50 per rock).

### **4.4 State of play as regards cooperation**

#### Bilateral French cooperation

In previous years, French cooperation in the area of internal security had focused on strengthening the capacities of the Senegalese OCRTIS (Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking), which is a fully-fledged directorate of the national police force (e.g. through the provision of training in investigative techniques and donations of equipment, etc.). Such activities used to be financed by the Inter-Ministerial Mission for the Fight Against Drugs and Drug Addiction (MILDT) (some EUR 60 000 per annum up to 2012).

As regards FSP ALCAO, cooperation efforts will focus on measures to strengthen the capacities of the CAAT (airport anti-drugs unit). A training course on targeting traffickers and "mules" is scheduled to be conducted in the workplace (at the airport) before the end of the first half of this year (joint activity: one French and one UK expert). A second training course of the same type could be organised during the second half of the year.

### Other forms of cooperation

UNODC: the ECOWAS Action Plan, which received EUR 16 million in funding from the European Commission in 2009, should be launched this year (operated by the UNODC on behalf of the beneficiary). It will need to be updated. The initial measures planned relate to the justice system and steps to reduce demand, within the framework of a regional approach.

The UNODC also plans to set up a regional drugs observatory in the Sahel, financed by France.

Spain: no anti-drugs activities are planned for 2013. Cooperation is focusing on migration issues and on stepping up border controls (involvement in the West Sahel regional plan, financed by the EU to the amount of EUR 2.2 million; border measures are being implemented by the Guardia Civil).

Canada: Canadian cooperation is concentrated on support for ECOWAS, which is the only regional institution identified as a discussion partner. No other targeted action on drugs is scheduled for 2013. Canada's priorities in terms of internal security are combating terrorism and tackling illegal migration flows.

Japan: Japan's priorities are combating terrorism, helping to stabilise the sub-region and fostering dialogue with Muslim and African countries.

Netherlands: The Netherlands will fund the UNODC to the amount of EUR 213 000 in 2013.

Germany: there is no anti-drugs programme for 2013. Germany will provide financial support for the UNODC and certain regional programmes; no further details are available at this stage.

Italy: in 2013, two dog-handlers will be trained in Italy and two drug detection dogs will be purchased for the Senegalese gendarmerie. (Four dog-handlers will be trained and five dogs will be purchased in 2013 for the Cape Verde police force.)

European Union: EUR 16 million, financed by the EDF, set aside for regional measures to combat organised crime (no further details available).

Measures to combat money laundering: preparations for a project amounting to EUR 3 million to assist financial intelligence units in the sub-region.

Support for Senegal's CENTIF (Unit for Processing Financial Intelligence) - its Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU): EUR 400 000 over 18 months.

Subsidy of EUR 3 million allocated in 2013 for "borders" project. Operator: IOM. No further details of the project are available.

Project to expand the Sahel strategy (which already covers Mali, Mauritania and Niger) to the "outer circle" (Senegal and Burkina Faso), financed in the long term by the Instrument for Stability.

USA: This country is currently engaged in a pro-active policy of identifying the most outstanding individuals employed by anti-drugs services in countries in the region. In this connection, a commissioner in the Guinea-Bissau criminal investigation department, who had been approached to undergo training at the National Police Academy in France, and a director of the Senegal OCRTIS have recently made study visits to the USA.

#### **4.5 Operational recommendations**

- To strengthen the capacities of the justice system: to train prosecutors, examining magistrates and judges.
- To assign qualified and available liaison officers to the Dakar regional drugs platform, which currently has only two such officers (from the UK and France).

## 5. COTONOU MINI GROUP

### 5.1 Position of the Benin authorities in respect of the fight against drug trafficking and meeting of the Dublin mini group in Cotonou: impact of the various initiatives

1 - The members of the Dublin mini group in Cotonou met on 17 September 2012. The principle of issuing a joint declaration, adopted in 2011, was maintained; the declaration was submitted to the President of the Republic of Benin on 21 September 2012. On that occasion, it was pointed out that although that country had all the resources needed to combat drug trafficking, its results in this area are unsatisfactory, despite official statements professing the country's political will.

2 - In their conclusions, the members of the Dublin mini group were also keen to stress their concern to uphold the principle that the civil authorities should continue to be responsible for combating crime in general and drug trafficking in particular. This concern reflects the actions undertaken by the Beninese armed forces in the field of internal security, despite the fact that they are not qualified to intervene in such a way.

3 - In practice, the political pressure placed on Benin by the Dublin mini group through the two successive declarations made in 2011 and 2012 has started to bear fruit at the level of the senior hierarchy of the security forces, which demonstrates the importance of genuine coordination between the donors and of signalling a common position.

In this connection, several meetings have been held between the directors-general of the police force and gendarmerie, in particular to define the way in which the two forces interact within the Central Office Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCERTID). Finally, liaison officers from the Beninese gendarmerie have been appointed to OCERTID, the UMCC (Joint Unit for the Control of Containers at the port of Cotonou) and the CAAT (airport anti-trafficking unit).

Participation by the Beninese customs authorities remains minimal, however, although cooperation is starting to be established with the recent creation of the latter two bodies.

Finally, thanks to the insistence of the Dublin mini group and the renewed approaches made by the French embassy to the Head of State and the Minister for Presidential Affairs, the Grand-Popo signal station has been brought into service with the declared aim of making up for the lack of maritime surveillance on Benin's western border. However, it has not yet yielded the operational benefits anticipated in the context of the fight against drugs. This situation will not improve unless account is taken of the Dublin mini group's additional recommendation that the Beninese navy's resources should be made available to joint customs/gendarmerie/police units, overseen by OCERTID, at the request of the political authorities.

4 - On the ground, the activities of these various services remained highly unsatisfactory up to the beginning of 2013.

The drawbacks of creating the UMCC and the CAAT in Cotonou as part of cross-cutting projects without at the same time implementing precautions, starting with the actual existence and adoption of official texts clearly defining the tasks and status of those bodies within the existing legal arrangements, according to which OCERTID is the sole unit responsible at national level for operational anti-drugs policy, became evident in 2012.

The difficulties which those units have experienced in their start-up phase are directly attributable to the lack of Beninese-specific technical support among the donors, the failure to consult partners which can offer such support and the apparent disregard for the existing body of law.

The immediate consequence of this has been not only to delay the establishment of the units, but also to bring OCERTID to a virtual standstill by confronting it with a problem of territorial jurisdiction, since these units have been created within its own area of competence without any texts being adopted beforehand.

Corruption constitutes a further obstacle, allowing some officials to justify their inaction and/or lack of willingness.

Faced with this situation, the Director-General of the National Police (DGPN) asked for assistance in drafting specific guidelines, signed by the DGPN, defining the responsibilities of the various units and compensating for the existing legal vacuum, at least in the short term. This intervention has also had the effect of repositioning OCERTID as a body overseeing all operations linked to drug trafficking. These arrangements, together with the advice supplied in connection with drawing up a long-term operational plan, have already produced an effect, and OCERTID's degree of activity over the past few weeks is completely unrecognisable from what it was in 2012.

In addition, the cooperation has led the Beninese authorities to adopt a steering mechanism which rotates between the various forces involved in the CAAT, an initiative launched within the framework of the Internal Security Reinforcement Project in Benin (PARSIB) which aimed to limit the effects of competition between the participating forces. Measures of this type should be incorporated into future projects on account of their proven effectiveness.

Nevertheless, there is still clearly a need to improve coordination between the donors at central level. While the coordination established locally by the representatives of the members of the Dublin mini group in Benin has had positive effects, our local representations are having no impact whatsoever on the initiatives conducted within the framework of cross-cutting projects. In order to improve coordination, it is essential that the latter take account of the experience and knowledge which local technical assistance can provide when planning their activities.

5 - More recently, the enforced retirement of a large number of senior officials in the various security forces has led to the replacement of decision-makers at the highest level (directors-general and deputy directors-general in the customs authority and national police force). This could have a positive effect, given the background and experience of the new appointees.

6 - In accordance with the recommendations of the Dublin mini group in Cotonou, drugs seized continued to be destroyed in 2012 and early 2013. However, this positive development needs to be placed in context. The destruction of these drugs is announced at the last minute, which makes it very difficult for donors to be present in order to ensure compliance with the correct procedures, especially those for verifying the drugs destroyed. Such operations are placed under the responsibility of the Beninese judicial system, whose past failings have been numerous and well-documented (in particular, the theft in 2011 of drugs seized by members of the judiciary), and which continues regularly to obstruct the necessary development of the existing body of law, and indeed the application of current legislation.

## **5.2 Trends in drug trafficking in Benin in 2012**

### ***1 - Overview of seizures in 2012:***

Cannabis: 1 685 kilograms

Cocaine: 69 kilograms

Heroin: 7 kilograms

Methamphetamine: 34 kilograms

Tramadol: 7 kilograms

This amounts to a total of 1 802 kg in 2012 compared to 1 983 kg in 2011, despite the reinforcements obtained by OCERTID under pressure from the Dublin mini group, in particular as a result of the creation of a canine anti-drugs unit.

However, the statistics provided by OCERTID do not take account of the Tramadol seized in May 2012 by the UMCC.

In May 2012, following the targeting of containers supposedly holding pharmaceutical products, that unit seized 61 tonnes of Tramadol at the autonomous port of Cotonou from eight maritime containers travelling from India and in transit for Niger. The drugs have been stored in a warehouse pending their destruction as ordered by the Ministry of Justice. The total resale cost of the 80 094 000 Tramadol tablets seized amounts to around EUR 7 340 000.

## ***2 - Overview of seizures since 1 January 2013***

CANNABIS	COCAINE	HEROIN	METHAMPHETAMIN E	EPHEDRINE
628 kilos	3.767 kilos	144.571 kilos	3.830 kilos	226 kilos

These recent data are interesting, showing renewed activity by the services following strengthened operational cooperation with OCERTID. Operations involving systematic and random checks are now being carried out in some districts of Cotonou. While the quantities are small, the seizures show an increase in local consumption, both in terms of volume and "quality" of the products. Recently a man was arrested for carrying 100 g of brown heroin. This is a large amount for this type of drug, which was virtually non-existent a few years ago.

## ***3 - Drug-trafficking trend in Benin***

Benin is still a very active centre of drug-trafficking.

However, the quantities of drugs seized in 2012 by the central anti-drugs service in Benin are low compared to the quantities imported into the country, one of the main ports of entry for cocaine into West Africa. While there was an increase in cannabis seizures, there were few seizures of cocaine or heroin in 2012. The same can be said for methamphetamine. Local seizures of this synthetic drug do not reflect the reality: trafficking of methamphetamine in the region is constantly evolving.

With regard to heroin, recent seizures show that as a result of its geographical position and the inefficiency of its law enforcement system, Benin is still an active centre for trafficking from Pakistan, despite the vigilance of the United States, which was responsible for all the major seizures of the drug in the country. Today Benin clearly provides an alternative to the more traditional heroin routes.

Cannabis seizures increased in 2012. This is mainly due to an increase in checks carried out by the police stations situated at the borders with Togo and Nigeria. Cannabis, which is increasingly consumed by young people, is widely produced in Benin, especially in the areas bordering Nigeria, where some communities are now growing it as a cash crop. It is cheap and affordable. Cannabis is consumed exclusively in the region.

Leaving aside the seizure of 56 kilograms in a container originating from Bolivia on 13 January 2012 on the basis of information forwarded by the regional anti-drugs platform in Accra, OCERTID seized only 13 kilograms of cocaine in 2012. This is a small amount, given that Benin is currently known to be an active centre of drug-trafficking. The country is used for the unloading, transit, processing, storage and forwarding of cocaine from South America (Brazil, Bolivia, etc.). This situation was confirmed on numerous occasions in 2012 by the seizure abroad of cocaine in containers bound for Benin.

While most of the seizures involve cocaine, trafficking in synthetic drugs (methamphetamine in particular) is growing. In 2012 there was an increase in seizures of methamphetamine at Cotonou airport. This reflects growing interest in this substance on the part of traffickers in the region.

The methamphetamine is mainly intended for the Indian and Asian markets (Mumbai, the Philippines, Bangkok, Singapore, Japan, etc.). Clandestine laboratories have probably been established in Nigeria, while no laboratories have been found in Benin to date. It should be noted that there were more seizures of methamphetamine at Cotonou airport in 2012 than of cocaine. Methamphetamine from the region is now very popular in Asia, and is beginning to be exported to European markets. By way of example, a passenger on a flight from Cotonou was arrested on 9 October 2012 at Orly airport (France) with 7 kg of methamphetamine in her luggage.

The autonomous port of Cotonou, which constitutes a major goods transit point not only for the landlocked states but also for countries bordering Benin (Nigeria and Togo), is a favoured trafficking hub, since the bodies put in place to control and combat drug trafficking are largely inactive. The Joint Unit for the Control of Containers (UMCC) set up in 2011 is ineffective. Apart from the seizure of 61 tons of opioid drugs (Tramadol) in eight containers originating from India, the UMCC has not carried out a single drugs seizure on its own initiative since it was established. The three major seizures from containers (200 kg of heroin and 405 kg of cocaine in 2011, and 56 kg of cocaine in 2012) were carried out on the basis of information provided by the American and French services.

Apart from the drugs sent in sea containers via the port of Cotonou, the long beach in the west of the country, just before the border with Togo, remains a major entry point for the drug into Benin, despite the construction of the Grand-Popo signal station.

Ships come there to unload their cargo onto smaller boats several dozen miles from the coast. The goods are then handed over to local distributors at collection points on the beach itself or else in hotels in Lomé, Cotonou or Grand-Popo, a town on the border with Togo. Traffickers from Ghana and Nigeria come to Benin for supplies. Other, landlocked, countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger – also draw from this source.

The seizures described show that there is still a real problem in Benin at present.

On 29 November 2012, 327 kilograms of cocaine were discovered by the police in Georgetown (Guyana) in a container filled with soap powder. The container was bound for Niger, via Benin. The smuggler was Nigerian.

On 9 December 2012, 121.5 kilograms of cocaine were discovered by the Bolivian police. The drug (liquid cocaine in 3 892 latex pessaries) were concealed in 349 tins of palm hearts. The container's final destination was Benin.

It is a pity that OCERTID, following a tip-off from the Accra platform, was not able to locate and seize 246 kilograms of ephedrine, a substance used to produce the synthetic drug methamphetamine, which arrived in Cotonou by air freight from Belgium on 27 November 2012.

Lastly, it should be noted that new modi operandi and itineraries emerged in 2012 with the increase in methamphetamine trafficking in the sub-region. The "mules" who transport methamphetamine to Asia probably then return to Benin or its neighbouring countries with heroin. Such two-way trafficking of drugs, whether concealed internally or in luggage, provides couriers with a means of increasing their profits.

#### ***4 - Production and consumption (i.a. of synthetic drugs) over the last six months***

##### *Production*

Cannabis is widely produced and now grown by some communities as a cash crop. This production has been observed especially in the Plateau, Couffo and Collines departments.

However, 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 methamphetamine into the country by overland routes.

While the likelihood of synthetic drug production in Nigeria is very high, there are as yet no signs of it in Benin.

##### *Consumption*

Drugs are becoming increasingly firmly entrenched in Benin society. Cannabis produced in Benin is cheap and easily affordable. Consumption is on the rise, in particular among young people. But the most striking development since 2010 is the appearance of significant local consumption of hard drugs.

While last year the emergence of local cocaine consumption was already pointed out, recent operations conducted by OCERTID in the ghettos known as places of consumption have enabled the Benin authorities to detect large quantities of heroin and methamphetamine.

Prices for the resale of drugs to Beninese consumers have remained stable. Since the drug is cut several times, it is sold at a reasonable price which the vast majority can afford.

Sales of cocaine in Cotonou's nightclubs remain high. This phenomenon will inevitably create problems for the local health authorities in the long term (treatment of addicts, development of addiction-related illnesses) and for the national security authorities (increase in petty crime, emergence of networks, etc.).

### ***5 - Salient points or updates***

Results in 2012 were disappointing. The first months of 2012 showed encouraging signs of a positive trend following the major seizure of Tramadol in May 2012. However, for the reasons described above, the anti-drugs activities of the security forces were confined to small seizures, essentially from "mules". This situation is particularly surprising given that OCERTID's personnel was increased and that units were created (UMCC, CAAT). Consequently, it is these services' lack of real willingness to act which is to blame, and has prompted the Director-General of the National Police to request cooperation.

In 2013, the first results are encouraging. While these may be due in part to the new cooperation, it should also be mentioned that the cooperation would have had no impact had it not had strong support from the senior police hierarchy. The remainder of 2013 should enable us to see whether the new dynamic will continue.

## ***6 - Operational recommendations***

Ongoing staff training and operational cooperation based on the transmission of operational data via the regional anti-drugs platform in Accra and from the South American countries are contributing very substantially to OCERTID's results.

The cooperation must not be discontinued.

However, the substantial investment involved must now be made conditional on OCERTID's achieving objectives.

Additional training (in drafting procedures and conducting investigations) also needs to be provided.

With regard to profiling, it may be advisable to consider assigning police or national gendarmerie staff on an ad hoc basis, to provide direct operational support. An arrangement of this kind, even over a single year, could alter the operation of the anti-drugs set-up in Benin profoundly.

### **6. NOUAKCHOTT MINI GROUP**

Spain holds the chair of the Dublin mini group for Mauritania.

On 29 April 2013, a working meeting was held with the participation of Germany, France, Spain, the European Union and the UNDP. The report was subsequently approved by the meeting participants and the United States.

#### **6.1 General situation**

Mauritania is still regarded as a transit country for cocaine (from South America) and hashish (from Morocco), as evidenced in recent years by the large seizures of these drugs, bound for Europe and the eastern Mediterranean.

It should be recalled that Mauritania has signed the principal international agreements on combating drug trafficking, including the Vienna Convention. The following anti-drugs laws exist: law of 18 July 1993 which lays down very stiff penalties, including the death penalty, if the offence is repeated, and the law of 27 July 2005 which makes laundering the proceeds of drug trafficking a crime.

1. **Trafficking trends**

**Cocaine trafficking:** Mauritania is regarded as a transit country for cocaine, as evidenced in 2008 and 2009 by large seizures of the drug, heading for Europe.

Since then, however, there have been no noteworthy seizures, probably as a result of the establishment of a security mechanism as part of the fight against terrorism. This mechanism has been stepped up again since the launch of Operation Serval in Mali.

It is nonetheless acknowledged that since 2008 cocaine has been arriving from South America by air and sea at the Gulf of Guinea ports (Guinea-Bissau, Conakry and Sierra Leone, Togo, etc.).

It is then transported to Mauritania by road or by boat, directly from Conakry, the east of Mali or Senegal. The cocaine is then transported primarily by sea for delivery in Europe via the ports of Nouakchott or Nouadhibou.

**Cannabis trafficking:** Mauritania is also and above all a transit country for cannabis originating from Morocco (as demonstrated by the gendarmerie's seizure of 2.5 and 3.746 tonnes in January and May 2012 respectively), en route to the whole of West Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the eastern Mediterranean.

The cannabis resin comes mostly from the Moroccan Rif, bound for Egypt and Libya (via northern Mali and northern Niger) and for countries in the Arabian Peninsula (via Chad and Sudan). After 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.

However, the security measures put in place by the Mauritanian authorities since President Abdel Aziz came to power in 2009, as part of the fight against terrorism, also benefit the anti-trafficking effort, making it more difficult for drugs to transit. Since the Serval intervention in Mali, these measures have been stepped up considerably.

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.

However, no reliable statistics have been produced.

Only the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLCTISS), substantially supported by cooperation with France since 2008 (the LUCTISEM 1, 2 and 3 projects, and currently LUCTISEM 4) communicates the results of its work (seizures, persons apprehended and sent for trial).

In 2012 OCLCTISS recorded the following results:

- 180 proceedings handled, 335 persons sent for trial out of 463 apprehended (including 310 Mauritanians).

Seizures:

- 47.580 kg of cannabis resin;
- 677.822 kg of Indian hemp;
- 7 630 Rivotril tablets;
- 21 vehicles;
- 9 755 700 ouguiyas (approximately EUR 24 390);
- EUR 3 010;
- USD 6 135.

In April 2013, 1 242 tonnes of cannabis were discovered by the Mauritanian armed forces along the border with the Western Sahara. The Zouérat gendarmerie was tasked with the inquiry.

In addition, following a painstaking investigation, the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs (backed by 3 consecutive lots of funding from the Interdepartmental Mission for the fight against drugs and drug addiction - MILDT) recently seized 1 224 kg of cannabis in the north of Mauritania, which had come from Morocco and was bound for Mali. One person was arrested.

2. **Production trend**

The country has no tradition of growing or processing drugs.

Local consumption is limited to some (herbal) cannabis derivatives, linked to traditional practices (Indian hemp).

There is no evidence to suggest that laboratories producing synthetic drugs are operating in Mauritania.

3. **Progress report on drug consumption**

However, it cannot be denied that the presence of drugs in transit (cocaine) could result in an increase in consumption in some sectors of society. Drug-dealing is starting to appear, perhaps set up by intermediaries who are paid in cash by the traffickers. The Mauritians involved in the networks are local intermediaries rather than drug-traffickers.

4. **Progress report on international cooperation**

**1 - Cooperation with Spain**

The Spanish Guardia Civil project to expand the dog-handling unit (for which six dogs had been initially trained under cooperation with France in 2010) is still ongoing. In 2011, 12 additional units from the national gendarmerie were given training in drugs and explosives detection. These units were given four refresher courses in 2012. In March 2013 a twenty-day evaluation mission took place, during which the two staff members deployed noted that the dog-handling unit was still operational. A number of shortcomings were detected and put right.

## 2 - Cooperation with France

Since 2008 the work of the internal security department of the French Embassy has concentrated on providing significant amounts of aid (the LUCTISEM 1, 2, 3 and 4 projects) to reorganise, equip and train the staff of the Mauritanian Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs (OCLCTISS), which is financed by France (MILDT).

In 2011 and 2012, two further subsidies from the MILDT of EUR 50 000 and 71 375 helped provide more equipment (handcuffs, armbands, radio systems, a geolocation beacon, a surveillance vehicle and three quads), but also staff training: OCLCTISS personnel were given three weeks' training in investigation techniques.

Cooperation with France also helped set up a "museum" on the premises of the OCLCTISS with examples of the ways in which traffickers have concealed drugs (table football set with a false bottom, gas cylinders cut through and filled with Indian hemp, tyres, icebox with a false bottom, etc.). The exhibition serves as a lasting record of the techniques used by traffickers, but also to raise awareness among recently recruited staff and to train them for investigations.

In 2013, for the first time, the investigations unit of the Mauritanian gendarmerie will receive specific support in combating drug-trafficking (equipment - training /EUR 75 000 in MILDT loans).

Lastly, the new FSP ALCAO project was officially launched at the seminar on 16 and 17 October 2012 in Conakry, Guinea.

This incentivising project aims to support the involvement of the West African coastal states (Mauritania, Benin, Guinea, Senegal, Togo and Ivory Coast) in combating the trafficking of cocaine from the South American countries.

The three components of the project focus on:

- Structural strengthening of the arrangements for combating cocaine trafficking in West Africa;
- Boosting the capability of specialist anti-cocaine smuggling units;
- Improving international and regional cooperation in the fight against cocaine trafficking.

Under the French cooperation programme, there are already plans to hold two training courses in Nouakchott, and provide equipment in the first half of 2013 (EUR 21 000):

- a one-week joint training course on "drug identification, police investigation and technical intervention" for police, gendarmerie and customs officers (date still to be scheduled);
- provision of drug identification kits and small items of equipment (handcuffs and armbands);
- a one-week joint training course on "the inter-ministerial effort against cocaine trafficking" for judges, policemen, gendarmes and customs officers, scheduled to take place from 30 June to 4 July 2013.

In addition, as part of the ALCAO programme, a gendarme, a customs officer and a judge will take part in a regional training seminar on interviewing procedures in Lomé (TOGO) from 24 to 28 June 2013.

In the second half of 2013 there are plans for two experts to give a one-week training course for 30 police, customs, gendarmerie, judicial and CANIF (Financial Information Analysis Commission) officers on the approach to and analysis of money laundering and the financing of terrorism and drug trafficking.

Lastly, the JUSSEC programme (Justice and Security in the Sahel-Saharan Region) on combating terrorism and organised crime has boosted police operational capability in this area.

### 3 - European Union cooperation

The European Union is continuing to support Mauritania's integrated border management system, which helps to combat drug trafficking.

In 2013 there are plans to provide support for the Mauritanian gendarmerie, which is responsible for 22 of the 45 border posts which the Mauritanian authorities have designated as compulsory border crossings for entering the country. The measures will involve integration of the gendarmerie into the database for checking the entry and exit of persons which is in place at border posts under police responsibility, the construction of certain border posts, the supply of IT equipment and the training of gendarmes detailed to border control duties.

Spain has a Guardia Civil cooperation project, pending approval, to set up a joint police station in Selibaby (Mauritania) with representatives of the forces responsible for integrated border management for Mali, Senegal and Mauritania: gendarmerie, police and customs. .

The Senegalese authorities are engaged in developing a migration strategy and tightening up their border controls, in coordination with the Mauritanian authorities, in order to develop close links between the services responsible for border control and to coordinate action to obtain better results in the fight against all types of illegal trafficking, especially drug smuggling.

Under the "West Sahel" project, which is co-financed by Spain and the EU, gendarmes from the Zouérat region tasked with patrolling the northwest frontier received training and equipment during the first few months of 2013. The courses form part of continuing training, whereby one or two trainers remain with the gendarmes. The idea is for the Spanish trainers to assess in situ what has been learned and whether the technical material allocated is being used correctly. Any errors can then be corrected immediately.

All the training courses include sessions on drug trafficking, means of concealment, etc.

#### **4 - US cooperation**

The United States support the Mauritanian police and gendarmerie through regular training, in particular a border control course in March 2012 and a maritime interdiction course in June 2012, and the supply of equipment (lorries, night vision binoculars, GPS systems, walkie-talkies, etc.). American aid has been given to help the Mauritanian authorities introduce community policing and a free emergency phone number.

**5 - UN cooperation** In 2011 Mauritanian services working on organised crime attended a regional seminar organised by UNODC as part of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking. UNODC is also in the process of implementing its programme of technical assistance in the fight against money laundering and is planning to hold courses on the subject in close cooperation with CANIF. A UNODC visit was made for the purpose in November 2012.

Lastly, UNODC is providing support for the Mauritanian government over a three to four year period as part of an integrated national programme against drug smuggling, organised crime and terrorist financing, by improving the criminal justice system, acting at the level of the courts and the police, and by working on drug demand reduction and AIDS prevention.

#### **6 - Cooperation with Germany**

Working through the GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation), in January 2013 Germany began working with the directorate-general for national security, especially on training, construction of a border post and forensics.

**6.2 Operational recommendations** The members of the mini group have identified flaws in Mauritania's investigation strategy. The authorities do not follow up on cases where trafficking is detected and there is no subsequent analysis of drug seizures. In addition, there are major shortcomings as regards handling by the judicial system. The public prosecutor should play a major role in monitoring and coordinating the police, gendarmerie and customs, supplementing cooperation at operational level. Judges, investigators, financial supervisory bodies and health/pharmacy services need specialised training.

Mauritania still has very considerable needs in all areas, from basic staff training to logistics support. Both the Mauritanian police and gendarmerie have repeatedly stressed the need for technical resources for surveillance, communications, investigation and toxicological analysis. Training is an absolute priority, starting with training for the instructors themselves.

Other more specific recommendations are listed below:

- o Continue to raise the Mauritanian authorities' awareness of the need to step up their commitment to the fight against trafficking and against the laundering of the proceeds of trafficking.
- o Promote and support the establishment of a national drug trafficking database with input from the police, the gendarmerie, customs and the army.
- o Support the framing of a national anti-drug trafficking policy on that basis.
- o Improve and optimise the material resources of the Mauritanian security forces with responsibility in the area.
- o Ensure the continuity of training by setting up a permanent centre with specialised professional trainers. Emphasise training for trainers. Encourage staff specialisation.
- o Promote a regional cooperation framework, encourage the work of the West African liaison officers' platform based in Dakar, promote an evaluation of the national Interpol bureau and improve its capabilities, as a means of increasing international cooperation.
- o Improve the capability for effective border control and, in this context, encourage implementation of the Stability Instrument.

- o Mauritania has no overall approach to drug trafficking, which makes it difficult to draw up a strategy to combat the phenomenon. The OCLCTISS (Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) does not centralise data on the subject sufficiently; the Mauritanian gendarmerie and customs do not keep it regularly informed of drugs cases. As a result, the OCLCTISS does not really know the full extent of drug trafficking. In addition to the action taken, there should be a special focus on Mauritania's chief ports, Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, as there is little or no checking there and they are a major loophole in the anti-drug smuggling effort.

## 7. ACCRA MINI GROUP

### 7.1 Trends in trafficking

Drug seizures by the Ghanaian Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), assisted by the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI), rose sharply during the first four months of 2013. This increase is partly thanks to:

- the permanent presence of UK customs officers (operation Westbridge) at Accra airport. The team of six officers, five of whom are replaced every six weeks, aims to assist, train and equip the NACOB officers at Accra airport. Flights assessed as sensitive (airline or destination) are checked systematically. Passenger profiling has been carried out.
- the seizure of 200 kg of cocaine at the port of Tema on 12 March 2013; the drug was hidden in tubes of shampoo in a maritime container from Bolivia.

A haul of 218 kg of **cocaine** was seized. In addition to the 200 kg in the maritime container, 18 kg were discovered on passengers, in particular from Dubai (Emirates Airline), Johannesburg (South Africa Airlines) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). By comparison, 18 kg of cocaine were also seized during the first nine months of 2012.

There has been no **heroin** seized since June 2012, as this type of trafficking tends to target other regional capitals (Abidjan, Lagos or Cotonou - seizure of 125 kg of heroin in a container from Pakistan).

Seven kg of **metamphetamine** were seized at Accra airport in the luggage of passengers flying to Asia, the main consumption region, via Nairobi (Kenya) or Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

Ghana remains the main producer of **herbal cannabis** in the region; the figure for seizures since the beginning of the year is estimated at approx. 60 kg.

## **7.2 Production**

There is no information as to the existence of any laboratory producing synthetic drugs in Ghanaian territory. This type of drug often arrives from Togo, then leaves the country for the Asian market. Ghana is therefore basically a transit country. Conversely, the herbal cannabis consumed in Burkina Faso comes exclusively from Ghana. It should be noted that the border is crossed by bicycle.

## **7.3 Drug use**

Historically, herbal cannabis has been the most widely used drug, and still is today. With the economy growing at an estimated 8 to 9 %, the use of drugs such as cocaine or metamphetamine, which previously only transited through Ghana, is now soaring. There is little or nothing available in the way of statistics.

## **7.4 State of play on cooperation**

Like several other countries in the sub-region, Ghana receives support from an international liaison unit (ILU) or international anti-drug liaison officers platform. This group of specialised police officers was set up in 2009 at the suggestion of France and the UK, and corresponds to the unit set up in the francophone area, in Dakar, at the same time.

The Ghanaian international platform, led by the UK, has representatives from the UK, France, the US, Germany, Spain and Canada.

**As regards operational cooperation**, Ghana and its close neighbours (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin) search large numbers of containers or check on air passengers in response to information from the platform.

For the record, there were a number of successful operations in the first few months of 2013:

- In Ghana, 200 kg of cocaine was seized at the port of Tema, as mentioned above, on a tip-off from the UK SOCA.- In Benin, 127 kg of heroin was seized from a container from Pakistan on 29 January 2013, on a tip-off from the US DEA.
- In Panama on 17 January 2013, approx. 125 kg of liquid cocaine was discovered in a container from Colombia bound for the port of Cotonou (Benin).

The platform also makes for improved bilateral operational cooperation between African countries.

A few examples could be highlighted:

- A cannabis smuggling network involving Ghanaian nationals living in Accra was dismantled in Togo (seizure of 3 700 kg). Investigations coordinated by the platform were conducted on either side of the border.
- An investigation by the BNI in Ghana of a Ghanaian national, which revealed direct links with a representative of a Latin American organisation living in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

**On the technical cooperation front**, France has offered to provide a Ghanaian BNI officer in charge of a surveillance unit with experience at the BRI (Research and Intervention Brigade) of the Paris prefecture. The placement, funded by the Foreign Ministry (Directorate for Security and Defence Cooperation - DCSD) would last a week. At the same time, by way of follow-up to training measures put in place in June 2012, the BNI will be offered a dedicated course on surveillance techniques in order to fine-tune these policing methods, which are essential to the fight against international drug smuggling.

Ghana does not receive assistance from FSP ALCAO, launched in Conakry (Guinea) in October 2012.

The BNI's special operations unit is aided and equipped by the UK SOCA, a key partner in the platform. Anti-drug units in Togo, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire are also eligible for financial support.

During the first three months of the year UK customs (UKBA) held a passenger profiling course at the anti-trafficking unit at the airport in Lomé (Togo) and at the Nigerian anti-drugs office.

The Ivoirian authorities have also been offered similar training.

Following the example of the services in Ghana and Togo (OCRTIDB - Central Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering), anti-drug units in the sub-region should continue efforts to improve the quality of their police investigations. Thanks to the sophisticated equipment provided by the UK partner (for SIM card analysis) in Benin and Togo, information has already been gathered which is useful in dismantling organised networks.

NACOB, the Ghanaian anti-drug unit, is responsible for investigations following drug seizures (at ports or airports). A special feature of the BNI's operational branch (SOU) is that it investigates the activities of cross-border criminal gangs in close conjunction with the international liaison officer platform. This example of a dedicated team (17 officers split into two groups) could serve as a model to be copied by countries in the sub-region involved in combating drug trafficking.

Lastly, passenger profiling units equivalent to the UK customs' operation Westbridge at Accra could be envisaged at Abidjan, Lomé and Cotonou airports.

## **8. SITUATION IN COTE D'IVOIRE**

### **8.1 State of play following the crisis in 2011**

There has not been any significant drug seizure in Côte d'Ivoire for some years, on account of the political crisis which culminated in the violence of November 2010 to April 2011.

As the country emerged from the crisis it was found that the staff employed in the services responsible for combating drugs (police, gendarmerie and customs) had little or no training and no equipment. These difficulties were compounded by corruption.

However, the corruption does not appear to be pervasive and it is possible to work with the law enforcement authorities on a basis of trust.

## **8.2 A favourable short-term trend**

The year 2012 saw the resumption of bilateral training (investigative techniques, passenger profiling, course in France) and the supply of drug testing kits. It also saw relatively large seizures of heroin (at least 45 kg) and cocaine (approx. 13 kg) at Abidjan airport.

These drugs, which came by air freight from Pakistan and with passengers from Brazil (Sao Paulo) respectively, were seized thanks to information from the international liaison unit in Accra. Since the beginning of 2012 the Ivoirian police has made, on its own initiative, two seizures of cocaine swallowed by couriers and two similar seizures have been made by the gendarmerie during checks at the airport exit.

No seizures have been made at the port of Abidjan, although there is a strong presumption that cocaine is arriving on board container ships.

Since summer 2012 there have been no further seizures of air cargo and seizures from passengers have been only few and far between.

The Ivoirian services respond excellently to requests for checks on passengers or cargo flagged up by Accra, but show a lack of initiative as regards checks or continuing investigations. Those in charge of the services feel neglected by their superiors, who have more important priorities in terms of restoring internal security.

In short, there is no reluctance on the part of Côte d'Ivoire when it comes to combating drug trafficking, but neither is there a very proactive approach, apart from the dismantling of "smoking rooms" and the seizure of large amounts of cannabis (around 1.5 tonnes since the beginning of 2013). The dismantling of smoking rooms also revealed significant local consumption of cocaine and heroin. To date, we have no information on the traffickers, or on any routes used for drugs which could be sent on to Europe.

### **8.3 Stepping up bilateral and international cooperation**

Bilateral cooperation between France and Côte d'Ivoire will be extended and increased by FSP ALCAO. This priority solidarity fund will also make it possible to provide training for magistrates in this area with which, according to their Côte d'Ivoire representative, they are unfamiliar. The responsibilities of the French regional attaché to the Dakar customs authorities have been extended to cover Côte d'Ivoire.

The airport anti-trafficking unit (CAAT) has just been set up in Abidjan as part of the AIRCOP project, and its members, comprising 39 officers from the police, gendarmerie and customs, underwent initial training from 15 to 26 April 2013.

Lastly, officers from the UK customs are due to start a long training course for Côte d'Ivoire customs officers in the next few weeks. This may be complemented by donations of equipment, which have yet to be confirmed. Their priority is Abidjan airport.

## **9. SITUATION IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

### **9.1 A radically changed regional situation**

(A) In the last 10 years, West Africa has emerged as a "new hub for the smuggling of cocaine from South America to Europe" (cf. the 2012 report by the International Narcotics Control Board - INCB).

In 2011, over half of the air couriers coming from West and Central Africa who were arrested in European airports had departed from Nigeria; 26 % had departed from Cameroon and 18 % from Benin.

As well as cocaine, the trafficking of heroin and methamphetamine has increased in West Africa, notably Afghan heroin which is transported to West and East Africa via Pakistan and the Middle East, while increasing quantities of methamphetamine are manufactured in West Africa, mainly in Ghana and Nigeria. The instability in the region lends itself to the development of trafficking and also to the emergence of new routes and modi operandi.

**(B)** However, since 2007 or 2008, the traffickers appear to have adopted a new strategy, turning to containerised shipping to smuggle cocaine into West Africa.

Large seizures in 2011 (9 out of 14) were made in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. Almost half of the cocaine seized from maritime freight containers had been shipped from Brazil. The INCB reports that traffickers also use commercial aircraft and carriers to transport cocaine shipments to West Africa.

However, faced with these new modes of transportation, the Equatorial Guinea security forces did not make any seizures in 2012.

## **9.2 Equatorial Guinea - still relatively protected**

**(A)** Equatorial Guinea is a country which enjoys strong and relatively constant growth, drawing its wealth essentially from the exploitation of its hydrocarbon resources. The presence of numerous financial partners and the development of bilateral cooperation projects between states (for example, China, Spain and Brazil) mean that the country enjoys a certain level of economic confidence. The security forces are omnipresent and - no doubt involuntarily - act as a deterrent to the criminal networks and any plans they might hatch in Equatorial Guinea for trafficking drugs.

Consequently, the conditions in Equatorial Guinea are not naturally favourable for parallel markets (such as the trafficking of weapons, drugs, human beings, etc.), which usually constitute sources of profit and capital; instead, such markets gravitate towards other countries in Central Africa.

However, the possibility cannot be excluded that drug-trafficking circuits might use Equatorial Guinea to enter Africa from Latin America (Columbia, Venezuela, etc.). Nevertheless, it is still probably more advantageous for them to confine the trafficking routes to the north of the Gulf of Guinea and the Niger Delta, thereby reducing the risks linked to the inspection of vessels.

**(B) No genuine anti-drug policy has been drawn up and implemented by the authorities of Equatorial Guinea, since drugs are not classified as a problem.**

Although recommendations have been made in certain speeches by the President and in the media encouraging young people not to take drugs, as is the case for alcohol, no comprehensive awareness-raising, information or prevention campaigns have been conducted. In the airport zone, the customs and police authorities do not have the powers or the resources to pursue an effective preventive or enforcement policy against drugs.

**(C)** A number of projects were carried out by France in 2012, and others are due to be undertaken in 2013 as part of the fight against drugs:

≡ training ≡: training measures were proposed by the cooperation gendarmerie to the Ministry of National Security to provide staff with drugs training (knowledge, analyses, etc.). The training was carried out at the criminal police training centre (a region-specific national training centre based in Porto Novo, Benin);

≡ equipment – resources ≡: proposals for equipment have been made to the Ministry of National Security in order to provide anti-drug resources (analysis kits); they are awaiting approval by the authorities;

≡ participation ≡: encouraging selected staff to take part in various seminars that could be held at regional level;

= setting up drug squads =: implementing this project (including an initial training course in France and the purchase by the gendarmerie of sniffer dogs trained in Gramat) will depend on the general progress of the larger project of which it forms part - the setting up of two criminal police units - which for some months now has been awaiting the approval of the authorities of Equatorial Guinea.

## **10. SITUATION IN GUINEA**

President Alpha Condé has said that the fight against drugs in Guinea is a priority. Shortly after he was elected in December 2010, the Guinean head of state decided that the anti-drug department (OCAD - Central Anti-Drugs Office) should be attached directly to the presidency.

With 230 officials, this department - which, unusually, is staffed by both the gendarmerie and the police - extends across the whole country. The headquarters and branch offices (port and airport) of the OCAD are in Conakry, but it also operates on the borders with Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali and Sierra Leone.

The fight against drugs in West Africa requires international investment. The EU, France and the United States have therefore committed funds for the promotion of national and regional projects. France is playing an active part in the fight against drugs, with a project dedicated entirely to West Africa: FSP ALCAO, which was launched in October 2012. The FSP consists of three main elements:

1. Structural reinforcement of the measures to combat cocaine trafficking.
2. Capacity-building for the specialised services.
3. Improved regional and international cooperation.

FSP ALCAO, which covers Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Togo, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, will require synergy, collective effort and a pooling of resources in order to cope with the constantly changing activities of drug traffickers.

The operational activities will provide indications as to the drugs circulating in the country, the routes used, the development of production, the pattern of consumption, the various organisations involved in the fight against drugs and the exchanges between them. It will take some time to get a real overview.

### **10.1. Detection**

With a 300 km coastline on the Atlantic ocean and land borders with six countries, Guinea remains a particularly vulnerable country. Traffickers use these natural entry points to bring drugs into the country, for local consumption or for transport to other countries. However, whatever the mode of transport used, it is always the work of an organised mafia which has been constantly changing until now - being sometimes Nigerian, and at other times Guinean.

#### - Indian hemp

Benefiting from a favourable soil and climate, hemp was first grown in the region bordering Sierra Leone and is now being cultivated in other regions in the rest of the country, in particular the prefectures of Forécariah, Kindia, Mamou, Kankan, Macenta and Beyla. Farmers hide their hemp production among other crops.

Investigations have shown that hemp trafficking is sector-based. Each component is separate: production, transport and sales. To date, there has been no evidence of a fully-fledged mafia group organisation with the infrastructure for producing, transporting and selling the drug. Only the Sierra Leone production might be said to show signs of a more structured organisation.

The merchandise is bought by Guinean wholesalers. The drugs are then sent to Conakry, either in dugout canoes belonging to fishermen wanting to supplement their income, or overland in lorries or bush taxis whose drivers are poorly paid and who also do not belong to the organisation. In the overland vehicles, the drugs are hidden in sacks among other goods such as coal or rice. The sea transport takes place at night, with the goods being unloaded before daybreak.

The price per kilo varies according to the quality and the season, ranging from GNF 160 000 to GNF 250 000. The hemp is then resold in sachets of around 200 grams, costing between GNF 35 000 and GNF 50 000, or in balls or cigarettes of just under 1 gram, costing GNF 1 500-2 000.

Small quantities are also carried on scheduled airline flights. 46 kg of Indian hemp was seized at Gbessia International Airport in Conakry in early March 2013 from a young Guinean man travelling to Morocco. The drugs were discovered in his luggage. His travel documents showed that he had made four such journeys in less than two years. The figures available for 2012 show that 2 600 kg of Indian hemp was seized.

Trafficking in Indian hemp is on the increase. The drug is used by all socio-professional categories and increasingly by young people in the large cities and in mining areas. This drug, sold near schools and nightclubs, has a higher THC content than cannabis resin produced in Morocco and builds up tolerance, leading to greater consumption.

Consumption of this drug has many consequences for young people, both in medical and in economic and social terms. These young consumers drift into crime, manipulated by all sorts of mafia organisations which are often the cause of the country's current social problems.

#### - Cocaine

The arrival of President Alpha Condé has made it possible to continue the efforts to combat cocaine trafficking that were instigated by the military junta under Dadis Camara. Guinea had become a hub for cocaine trafficking in West Africa towards the end of the Conté presidency. Colombian traffickers were very prominent there between 2005 and 2010. They are still present, but for the time being they have left the field to Nigerians and Guineans. The latter are bringing the drugs in via Guinea-Bissau and also via Sierra Leone. The Nigerians are organised into a real network and work with each other, with groups from the same town or even the same neighbourhood. They have recently formed partnerships with the local population in order to have a base which enables them to control the trafficking without becoming too exposed.

The seizures carried out during this period provide a precise map of cocaine trafficking, centred around three main areas: Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Mali. Cocaine, the most expensive drug, sells for between EUR 12 000 and EUR 20 000 per kilo, depending on the quality. It is targeted at the wealthy, and there is now a local market.

The number of seizures has been very low, with a yield of 25.225 kg in 2012. The fall in the number of seizures recorded in 2012 is not necessarily a sign that trafficking has decreased but rather that the *modi operandi* have changed and have yet to be discovered.

Overland, sea or air routes are used. Guinea-Bissau is a major supplier of drugs, which are transited by courier. The Nigerians use taxis, public transport or lorries. The quantities transported range from one to several kilos; the drugs are then resold in Conakry. The cocaine may be used to manufacture crack, which sells at GNF 15 000 for just under a gram.

The drug is still transported from Guinea to Europe via scheduled airlines. In January 2013, a passenger was arrested travelling to France with 22 kg of cocaine. It is possible that other methods, such as body-packing, are being used, but to date the checks put in place have not been effective enough to confirm this.

Maritime surveillance arrangements are also insufficient at the present time, but this could change with the establishment of maritime policing under the authority of a maritime Prefect.

- Heroin

This drug is virtually non-existent in the country. One seizure of 400 grams was made in November 2012 at the border with Mali. There are no statistics relating to the consumption or transport of heroin.

- Synthetic drugs

Drug laboratories were set up during the period 2005-2010, when the Colombians established a base in Guinea. The dismantling of those laboratories and the end of deliveries of precursor products marked the end of that era.

There have been no investigations to date aimed at identifying businesses which use precursor products.

**10.2 The activities of the various donors**

There is frequent information-sharing between donors and training actions are now being pooled. Rather than projects overlapping, attention is now being paid to the different strands of each subject area, which are being combined for greater effectiveness. The programmes are therefore constantly progressing, and are having a professional impact that more fully reflects the contribution of the donors as a whole. For example, the UNOCD's WACI programme (West Africa Coast Initiative) may assume responsibility for some strands of the ALCAO project.

The fight against drugs in West Africa, and in Guinea in particular, must be stepped up, by deploying trained personnel and also by allocating equipment. If the country only benefits from training projects, and does not receive equipment, the results achieved will continue to deteriorate. The OCAD is a destabilised unit, with no resources for drafting procedures and no equipment for its operations.

Although there is corruption within OCAD, it is important for the unit to be modernised so that police officers can be more involved in the fight against drugs. If it remains in its present state, one can expect a growing lack of interest in its mission and increasing corruption.

## 11. PRAIA MINI GROUP

### 11.1 Analysis of the security situation

Although the Cape Verde islands still appear to be relatively peaceful, common crime is on the rise. Assaults and damage to property, in particular burglaries, are constantly increasing. The deportation to their country of origin of young Cape Verdean offenders, which began a few years ago, initiated mainly by the USA, has led to the formation of gangs, primarily in the capital. The gangs, made up of violent individuals known locally as "thugs", have brought insecurity and drug trafficking on the streets.

Serious crime, mainly linked to international cocaine trafficking, is an increasing threat to security in Cape Verde.

In March 2013, the trial took place in Praia of some 15 individuals charged in connection with Operation "Lancha Voadora", in which 1.5 tonnes of cocaine were seized in October 2011 from a vessel attempting to unload its cargo on the island of Santiago. A large number of people were detained following the seizure. 15 prominent figures (including the president of the Praia stock exchange) were arrested. This case, which involved Cape Verdeans based in Europe as well as those living in the archipelago, also uncovered money laundering activities which had enabled mafia organisations to gain a firm foothold in the country.

The trial began under unusually heavy security: not only the police but also detachments of the armed forces and anti-aircraft guns were deployed.

Holding the trial is a matter of strategic importance for Cape Verde, and the verdict, expected on 3 June 2013, will give an indication of how courageous the judiciary is and how willing the political authorities are to clamp down on drug trafficking and money laundering.

Recently, on 23 March 2013, the Spanish navy seized 2 tonnes of cocaine from a vessel from Venezuela bound for Porto (Portugal), 700 nautical miles south-west of Cape Verde. The seizure was the result of an investigation by the UK and Portuguese authorities.

The former Chief of the Naval Staff of Guinea-Bissau, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto, was arrested by the US authorities in international waters near Cape Verde. The Americans and their prisoner transited via Cape Verde before flying to the United States.

These incidents give an idea of the scale of the drug trafficking in the vast exclusive economic zone of Cape Verde and in the surrounding area.

The country's weaknesses are still apparent, particularly when it comes to coordinating government resources. As far as border control is concerned, tangible measures have already been implemented to increase effectiveness and step up airport security.

However, much remains to be done in the field of maritime surveillance and port border controls. The coast guard, responsible for maritime policing, is under-staffed and under-equipped (136 officers, a few light vessels and a single ship capable of undertaking open sea missions, all for an archipelago of 10 islands) and does not have sufficient funding to carry out the necessary patrols. As a result, it tends to rely, no doubt too heavily, on the assistance and vigilance of the navies of friendly nations.

## **11.2 Update on security cooperation between France and Cape Verde**

The following activities are on the agenda for 2013:

- Invitation from the Director of the Dakar Criminal Police to meet the heads of Senegal's counterpart departments as well as the "drugs/organised crime" liaison officers of the Dakar Platform of Liaison Officers, whose weekly meetings are held in the French Embassy.

- Participation of five officers from the Cape Verde criminal police force in a regional training scheme on drugs (investigation techniques), along with officers from the Senegal and Guinea-Bissau criminal police.
- Participation of three officers from the Cape Verde Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) in a regional training scheme on combating money laundering (processing suspicious transaction reports), along with officers from the equivalent departments in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (CENTIF).

## 12. YAOUNDE MINI GROUP

### 12.1 State of play

Cameroon seems fairly unaffected by drug trafficking, since no reliable or accurate statistics are compiled, or at least published, by the gendarmerie or the police. It is therefore very difficult to analyse the situation with any accuracy. However, its strategic position (the port of Douala) and its economic development (several large cities) are inevitably generating an "emerging" market.

Trafficking is reportedly on the increase, but mainly concerns cannabis, cocaine and Tramadol (the medicinal product known as Tramol). Cocaine, which is not produced locally, comes mainly from Nigeria. There is no large-scale organisation for selling drugs; small quantities are reportedly sold on the streets by cigarette vendors and "call boxers". The drugs are transported, in large quantities in the case of cannabis, in sacks of food on bush vehicles known as "OPEP" (illegal taxis).

Tramol, in the form of pills, is brought in illegally from Nigeria and also from Indonesia and India. It comes into Cameroon via the Extreme North region and the West region (an English-speaking area) and is reportedly sold by street vendors of medicinal products. The drug appears to be very popular with young children.

Ultimately, it is clear that the drugs come mainly from Nigeria and are apparently often hidden in spare automobile parts which account for a large percentage of trade with that country.

## 12.2 Production trends

The only drug produced is cannabis, which is grown illegally in rural areas.

## 12.3 Recommendations

Cameroon is still not sufficiently proactive when it comes to combating drug trafficking and drug addiction. In order for progress to be made, action is needed in all areas:

- training and deployment of the security forces in the fight against drugs;
  - providing the security forces with detection and prevention equipment;
  - capacity-building in the justice system: training prosecutors, examining magistrates and judges;
  - implementing a real policy of prevention and awareness-raising among the public;
  - combating illegal sales on the streets ("call box" stalls, street vendors of medicinal products, etc.);
  - stepping up controls at borders to combat smuggling.
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