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

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**I. Mini groups' work**

France chairs the regional Dublin group for West Africa, which covers Cape Verde, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal and Ghana.

The mini Dublin groups for the region have not met since the last central group meeting in November 2014.

The information presented in this report was obtained from the following sources:

- the report of 16 December 2014 by the UNODC Executive Director on enhancing international cooperation to strengthen efforts in West Africa to counter illegal drug trafficking;
- the 2014 report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB);

- information provided by French diplomatic posts in the region (Cotonou, Lomé, Malabo, Abuja and Dakar, the last of which has made a summary of the work carried out by the drug and organised crime liaison officers platform, which is made up of French, UK, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and South African liaison officers working in Dakar).

**a. Overview of the regional situation as regards illicit drug production**

Information regarding the cultivation, consumption, production, manufacture and trafficking of narcotic drugs in Africa remains very limited.

**Drug use trends:**

A side effect of drug trafficking in West Africa is an increase in drug use in the region, particularly as regards cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants. This has led to new public health and security issues. According to the UNODC World Drug Report 2014, there could be 2.5 million cocaine users in West and Central Africa (the majority in West Africa).

The annual prevalence of cannabis use remains high in many countries in Africa. Reportedly, about two thirds of persons who have registered to receive drug treatment in Africa have indicated cannabis as their primary drug of abuse. Prevalence of cannabis use in the adult population is highest in West (and Central) Africa, at about 12.4 %.

Young people comprise a significant proportion of drug users. In Benin, for example, 45 % of drug users are young people, with an average age of 22 years. In 2014, Cameroon reported that there had been an average of 5 000 to 6 000 patients treated in the capital annually for diseases related to the abuse of narcotics and psychotropic substances, and that between 75 and 80 % of the hospitalisations for drug abuse had been for individuals between 15 and 39 years of age. A significant number of countries throughout Africa lack any specialised treatment facilities for drug addiction, including rehabilitation facilities, or do not have the institutions or the logistical capacity for treatment countrywide.

As regards substances not under international control, Nigeria has reported abuse of tramadol (a prescription opioid) and has scheduled it as a controlled medicine. Burkina Faso has reported the abuse of datura, a plant containing a combination of anticholinergic substances. Young people in Burkina Faso commonly ingest datura as a tea infusion.

### **Cocaine trafficking**

In February 2013, the UNODC report entitled 'Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment' concluded that, although the flow of cocaine through West Africa had decreased from a peak of 47 tonnes in 2007 to about 18 tonnes, these 18 tonnes would nevertheless be worth USD 1.25 billion at wholesale in Europe, providing organised crime groups with substantial income which would far exceed the entire national security budgets of many countries in the region.

Even with this decrease, these figures confirm the destabilising effects of drug trafficking, which generates corruption and insecurity in the region, and hinders sustainable economic and social development.

The data gathered since 'Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment' was published suggest that the report's findings are still broadly valid. Cocaine trafficking is still a major concern. There seems to have been a shift in the main methods of transport since 2012, with seizures having increased at airports and decreased at sea ports. The increase in seizures at airports is probably related to the growing number of direct and indirect commercial flights between Brazil and West Africa.

The largest seizure of cocaine from a plane to have been made in West Africa since March 2013 took place at Cotonou airport (Benin) in May 2014. Four Nigerian couriers travelling from Brazil to Nigeria were arrested in possession of 48 kg of cocaine. The Moroccan authorities have also seized very large quantities of cocaine from commercial flights travelling from Latin America to Europe via West Africa, including 75 kg at Casablanca airport (Morocco) in March 2014. In 2014, 557 kg of cocaine was seized at this airport, up from just 14 kg the previous year.

However, the various sea port seizures reported since March 2013 show that sea transport is still popular with cocaine traffickers. For example, in December 2013 200 kg of cocaine was seized from a container at the port of Tema (Ghana), in August 2014 56 kg was found hidden in a container at the port of Cotonou (Benin), and in November 2014 500 kg was intercepted on a small vessel travelling from Brazil to the island of São Vicente (Cape Verde). The lack of X-ray machines for containers and the use of the 'rip-off' technique (whereby illicit goods are sent without the knowledge of legitimate players in the transport industry) contribute to the use of sea freight trafficking.

As regards land borders, the reopening of Liberia's borders in February following a slowdown in the Ebola epidemic in the country led to a resurgence of trafficking, mainly with Guinea and Sierra Leone.

### **Heroin trafficking**

There has been an increase in heroin trafficking through West Africa via East Africa, as evidenced by large seizures reported by countries in the sub-region. The amount of heroin transiting West Africa, largely via commercial air carriers, has continued to increase. Ghana and Nigeria have generally seen the most regular detections and seizures of medium-sized shipments. There has also been a growing trend of heroin trafficking to and through Liberia, with a considerable number of people involved currently serving as personnel of the military and police forces. This is supplemented by a growing domestic consumer market in Liberia.

The countries located on the Gulf of Guinea have continued to see regular seizures at international airports, particularly those in Lagos (Nigeria) and Accra. The drugs seized had been transported from the Persian Gulf states, East Africa and western Asia. No heroin seizures have been made at sea in West Africa since March 2013. However, 58 kg of heroin bound for Nigeria via Benin was seized at the port of Karachi (Pakistan), which is consistent with earlier data showing that Benin is used as a transit country for heroin headed for Nigeria. Various other seizures of heroin bound for West Africa, mainly Benin and Ghana, carried out in ports in Pakistan were reported to the UNODC by Pakistan's Joint Port Control Unit.

Lastly, there has been a marked increase in the quantity of heroin transiting West Africa on its way to Europe, with the majority of it transported on commercial flights.

### **Trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants**

The data gathered since March 2013 show that the production and trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants remains a point of concern in West Africa, as the number of methamphetamine seizures reported to the UNODC by national authorities in the region is on the increase. There have been frequent arrests of air couriers carrying methamphetamine, particularly in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. In 2013, approximately 1 370 kg of amphetamine-type stimulants were seized in West Africa, an increase of almost 480 % on 2012. 90 % of the seizures were made in Côte d'Ivoire. In total, the authorities in Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire) intercepted 1 250 kg of amphetamine in 2013, which suggests that there may be laboratories in Côte d'Ivoire producing amphetamine-type stimulants.

'Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment' also indicated that the production of methamphetamine in the region is a growing cause for concern, with five laboratories detected in Nigeria between 2011 and 2013.

Finally, in May 2014, the UNODC published a report entitled 'Global synthetic drugs assessment: amphetamine-type stimulants and new psychoactive substances', largely based on the findings of studies on amphetamine-type stimulants carried out in West Africa.

### **Trafficking of precursors**

There has also been a marked increase in the diversion of precursors for manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants to West Africa. Only nine countries in Africa have registered with PICS so far. The INCB has called on all governments in the region to register with PICS in order to increase and facilitate the sharing of information related to the diversion and trafficking of precursors. In 2013, the Government of Sierra Leone invoked its right under article 12, paragraph 10 (a) of the 1988 Convention and now requires pre-export notification for all substances listed in Table I and Table II of the 1988 Convention, including for pharmaceutical preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine and for safrole-rich oils. As at 1 July 2014, only 14 out of 54 African countries had invoked article 12, paragraph 10 (a).

#### **b. Overview of national situations regarding illicit drug production, drug use and trafficking, money laundering and precursor control**

##### **Benin:**

Due to its coastal location, Benin, like its neighbours, is highly exposed to drug trafficking (mainly of cocaine) and trafficking of chemical precursors.

Although the official line remains firm on the need to counter drug use and trafficking, and the institutional and legal framework is already in place, the efficiency of Benin's drug policies is hampered by a glaring lack of resources and weak political impetus.

Lastly, although OCERTID is gradually taking over as the central office in charge of combating drug trafficking, the role of the military (and in particular of the President's military intelligence service, the DSLD, at the airport) still hinders the effective handling of anti-drug operations.

***Drug use and trafficking:***

Cannabis (which is sold for between 12 000 and 15 000 CFA francs per kilo) is the most widely used drug, its consumption having become almost a tradition. It is produced locally as hemp and is transported through the sub-region by road, between Accra and Lagos or Niamey. A total of 1 964 kg of cannabis was seized in 2014 (up from 1 758 kg in 2013).

Cocaine (which sells for about 20 000 CFA francs per gram) still has a strong presence. No large seizures were made in 2014, but several medium-sized consignments (50 kg) were seized, including at the Sèmè and Hillacondji border posts. Very small doses sold for 500 CFA francs still circulate, which helps to create and maintain local demand for the drug and spawns related crime. In 2014, 171 kg of cocaine was seized in Benin, mainly at Cotonou airport.

Heroin (which sells for between 15 000 and 17 000 CFA francs per gram) is marginal but still present in deprived areas of Cotonou. 7.3 kg was seized in 2014.

Synthetic drugs are still present, although there have not been many seizures recently.

Chemical precursors imported without justification, on the other hand, are seized in large quantities. No clandestine laboratories have been dismantled on Beninese territory. However, given how simple it is to set up these laboratories, and given the proximity of Nigeria, where similar cases are often dealt with, it is probable that this type of facility could be present in Benin.

Lastly, a significant amount of tramadol trafficking occurs in Benin (43 585 units were seized in 2014). The investigations carried out within services following the President's request for 129 tonnes of tramadol to be destroyed (see previous report) did not lead to any convictions.

***National strategy and international cooperation:***

France and the United States are the main bilateral donors in the field of internal security in Benin, and both have dedicated structures in the country.

Their work in the field of internal security cooperation would benefit from closer cooperation with the various multilateral programmes in Benin (UNODC, European Union).

In the fields of drug addiction prevention and treatment and the rehabilitation of drug addicts, Beninese health professionals took part in training sessions for trainers organised by the UNODC in Togo in March 2013. The UNODC also helped set up drug addiction treatment services in Cotonou and in two of the country's provinces.

**Cape Verde:**

The shift of West African cocaine routes from Guinea-Bissau to Cape Verde seems to be continuing. This can be explained in part by Cape Verde's proximity to the European coast, its vast territorial waters, which are hard to police, and the low wholesale price of cocaine there (EUR 9 000 to 11 000 per kg, compared to EUR 18 000 in Senegal).



An integrity plan has been developed by the Ministry of the Interior. Since March 2013, training has been provided (mainly by the UNODC) for criminal justice practitioners and officers involved in detection and law enforcement on countering money laundering and terrorist financing, community policing, conducting criminal investigations, forensics, and carrying out investigations.

As regards prevention and treatment, a national coordination group has been set up in accordance with the objectives defined in the UNODC national integrated programme for Cape Verde, and work started on 30 September 2013. The UNODC has supported the development of a new draft statute for the National Committee for Coordination on the Fight against Drugs, and has worked together with the Government of Cape Verde to identify priority activities in the field of drug addiction treatment and care. Two pilot surveys, one on the prevalence of use of psychoactive substances in the general population and the other on the prevalence of use of psychoactive substances among secondary school students, were presented to the public in April and June 2013 respectively. The UNODC and the national authorities responsible for the fight against drugs set up a pilot multi-purpose centre in an at-risk area of Praia in January 2013. Since October 2013, training on the treatment and social reintegration of drug addicts has been given to approximately 300 participants, including employees of local organisations and prisons, prison inmates and health professionals.

### **Côte d'Ivoire:**

The Government has supported the implementation of the UNODC's West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) in the country since October 2013. With the support of the Initiative's partners, a decree establishing a Transnational Crime Unit in Côte d'Ivoire was adopted on 5 November 2014.

As regards prevention and treatment, the UNODC has supported the implementation of a programme at the National Institute of Public Health in Abidjan which will provide testing, assessments, brief interventions, outpatient care and guidance. Free or affordable access to the programme will be provided for the most deprived. Training sessions for trainers on scientifically based treatment and care strategies for drug addiction were given to Ivorian health professionals in August 2014. The UNODC and the WHO also support the drafting of a law on treatment as an alternative to criminal sanctions for non-violent offenders with drug-related problems.

### **Gambia:**

It is now clear that methamphetamine is being trafficked from Gambia both to Europe and to Asia and Australia, mainly by Nigerian criminal groups.

Several arrests of French and German nationals at Jakarta International Airport (Indonesia) have shed light on the usual profile of couriers: European, aged between 45 and 50, using tickets bought with cash at the last minute or through agencies based in Banjul (Gambia). The investigations into these cases found that the couriers had never been to Gambia, which would seem to show that there must be an organisation based there.

In 2014, 46 British couriers were apprehended after having transported methamphetamine from Banjul to South-East Asia or Australia.

Operational cooperation between the Gambian services and their foreign counterparts is worryingly poor and is contributing to the expansion of trafficking in the country.

### **Ghana:**

The Government of Ghana approved an amendment to the schedule of the Narcotic Drug (Control, Enforcement and Sanctions) Law of 1990 to control certain new psychoactive substances and other psychotropic substances, such as methamphetamine and its derivatives.

### **Guinea (Conakry):**

From 26 January to 6 February 2014, the UNODC took part in a mission of the Global Focal Point in Guinea on evaluation and programming in the area of justice.

In the framework of the UNODC WACI, the Guinean authorities repeated on many occasions their undertaking to fight organised crime, in particular at a meeting between the UNODC regional representative and the President of Guinea in January 2014. However, it proved difficult to implement the WACI owing to a lack of funding and, more recently, the Ebola epidemic.

There is not enough cooperation between Guinean departments and their counterparts at operational level and that fuels the growth of trafficking in the country.

### **Guinea-Bissau:**

Between 3 and 14 November 2014, the UNODC participated in the inter-institutional strategic evaluation mission in Guinea-Bissau to review the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau to ensure that it was aligned with the priorities identified by the new Government, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2157 (2014). The mission report, which has been finalised, will be incorporated into the report which the Secretary-General is to submit in accordance with UNSCR 2157 (2014).

Implementation of the UNODC WACI was hampered by the political difficulties and the precarious security situation in the country following the *coup d'état* in 2012. Following the presidential and general elections in May and June 2014, the WACI partners have been working with the new authorities of Guinea-Bissau on taking the project forward. At the invitation of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament, the UNODC met parliamentarians and members of the Government between 24 and 27 October 2014 to relaunch cooperation against drug trafficking and the prevention of corruption and terrorism.

### **Equatorial Guinea:**

There have been no new developments since the last Dublin Group report on West Africa.

### **Mali:**

The national integrated programme for Mali was adopted in February 2010. Before the outbreak of conflict in 2012 led to its suspension, Mali was receiving various forms of support from the UNODC for border control, prevention of terrorism, the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing, forensics, the fight against human trafficking and drug demand reduction. As part of its contribution to the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, and with the political and logistical support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, the UNODC resumed its direct activities in the country in June 2014. A specialist in detection, law enforcement and criminal justice began to assist the Malian Government to reorganise the security services responsible for combating terrorism, transnational organised crime and drug trafficking. The UNODC also started to advise high-level officials in detection and law-enforcement agencies and to support capacity building for crime-scene investigation and forensics.

The UNODC also took part, from 6 to 16 February 2014, in an evaluation mission of the Global Focal Point in Mali; one of the mission's results was the formulation of a sectoral plan in the area of justice, focusing on the fight against organised crime and the mobilisation of UNODC expertise to this end.

## Nigeria:

### *Drug use and trafficking:*

Production of herbal cannabis also continues to be high in Nigeria, where 205 tons of packaged herbal cannabis were seized and 847 ha of cannabis plant were discovered and destroyed. This production is mainly intended for local consumption and is not linked to international trafficking.

However, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine transit through Nigeria, which is becoming increasingly noticeable as a place of origin. In 2014 the French customs authorities seized 11 kg of methamphetamine from Nigeria, more than double the quantity seized in 2013. Finally, almost 5 kg of heroin from Nigeria were seized upon arrival in France; up until then, Nigeria had not been a country of origin for this type of drug. Finally, it should be noted that seven laboratories (or similar facilities) for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine have been dismantled in the country since 2011.

The airport hub of Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital, is without a doubt one of the 'strategic' trafficking points. With a daily average of 150 domestic and international flights, and an annual footfall of around 6 100 000 passengers, Lagos international airport is the nerve centre for importing and exporting small quantities of drugs (ingested, in hand or hold luggage, accompanied or unaccompanied). The port of Lagos, on the other hand, is the main entry point for much larger quantities. Very few seizures are made there on account of the "insider" collusion of control officers.

Because of the Nigerian diaspora in areas of production and consumption in West Africa, Nigerian criminal networks have tightened their hold on drug trafficking (cocaine, synthetic drugs). The networks take advantage of the porous borders and poor judicial cooperation in the region to expand their activities.

As regards drug use, Nigeria also saw an increase in cocaine and heroin abuse in 2013. That year, preparations for a national study on drug use and the development of a national system for the surveillance of drugs were launched in the country.

***National strategy and international cooperation:***

The strategy of the Nigerian authorities in combating drug trafficking is primarily shaped by the officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and is fairly effective. Set up in 2004, the NDLEA fights against drug use and trafficking. It has exclusive national competence in this field. With several liaison offices in the provinces and with over 3 000 officials, it is recognised for its expertise by all the foreign partners that work closely with NDLEA departments, in particular in the country's four international airports, where its results are more than respectable.

At the end of 2012, Nigeria received almost USD 120 million from the European Union to finance three major national projects on the fight against drugs and related organised crime. This financial support enabled the Nigerian Interministerial Drug Control Committee to draw up the National Drug Control Master Plan for the period 2015-2019, which provides a roadmap for everyone working to reduce drug supply and demand . Under this project, an institutional assessment of the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency was carried out. Drawing on this assessment, a 12-month programme was designed to promote the use of preventive intelligence and large-scale training activities for officials of drug detection and law-enforcement agencies.

The draft National Drug Control Master Plan for the period 2015-2019 gives full weight to the prevention and treatment of drug addiction and the rehabilitation of drug addicts in the broader strategy to combat the drug problem. The support provided includes capacity-building activities in pilot centres for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and regional centres for drug control training, an assessment of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's advice centres, training of NDLEA advisers and the evaluation and reinforcement of services offered by Nigerian prisons for the rehabilitation of addicts.

The support also covers development of a strategy to provide direct assistance to civil society organisations working on the prevention, treatment and management of drug addiction, establishment of a system to improve data collection and regular feedback for the treatment of drug addiction, and development of evidence-based pilot strategies for the prevention of drug addiction in communities, schools and families. Under the UNODC global project to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS among drug addicts and prisoners and to provide them with care and assistance, there have also been activities in Nigeria, in particular consideration of the legal issues and policies, cooperation with civil society and training staff of detection and law-enforcement agencies.

### **Senegal:**

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 posed by cocaine trafficking), the Senegalese authorities are still not sufficiently committed to tackling drug trafficking; such activities have yet to be made a priority of the internal security services, which are still focused on public order issues.

In most cases, investigations by the law-enforcement agencies are confined to apprehending persons transporting herbal cannabis, produced in Ghana or Casamance, by road, or 'mules' carrying cocaine by air; such arrests are followed by seizures. Few investigations are carried out to dismantle networks of traffickers.

The criminal justice system, far-removed from investigating departments, remains ineffectual and incapable of properly prosecuting, investigating and judging cases involving trafficking and the laundering of money derived from crime. Consequently, even cases of drug trafficking based on objective evidence rarely lead to the delegation of judicial powers (letters rogatory).

### ***Drug use and trafficking:***

In Senegal, most **cannabis** trafficking still involves herbal cannabis (hemp or "yamba", from Ghana via Burkina Faso and then via Mali, with a relatively high THC content compared with the regional product) or with cannabis from Casamance and Gambia (low THC content and cheap).

The sums of money generated by trafficking in herbal cannabis are small and hold no interest for large criminal organisations. However, cannabis traffickers are sometimes suspected of helping to finance the rebel Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, although exactly to what extent is unknown.



On 9 March, the Senegalese army carried out a large-scale coordinated operation in several villages of *Basse Casamance* (named operation SINDIAN after a place in the region). Its aim was to put a stop to the spread of herbal cannabis cultivation in the area. It led to the seizure of 3 tonnes of herbal cannabis and the destruction of 18 fields under crop. An eye should be kept on the effects of this operation, which has dealt a blow to the traditional supply routes on the Dakar peninsula. It is likely that there will now be a demand for Ghanaian herbal cannabis, calling for increased monitoring of the Kidira-Tambacounda-Dakar route by the Senegalese internal security forces.

Senegal continues to be a transit country for **cocaine** bound for Europe, coming from South America by air (commercial flights) and sea (sailing boats and commercial vessels).

On the air route, there is an increasing number of transshipments between South America and Senegal. Nigerian customs officers at Lagos international airport have arrested several couriers travelling to Dakar in possession of goods that had previously been on Sao Paulo-Dubai flights.

In terms of maritime container transport, the Joint Container Inspection Unit [*Unité Mixte de Contrôle des Containers* - UMCC], consisting of customs officers and an officer from the Senegalese Central Office against Illegal Drug Trafficking [*Office central pour la répression du trafic illicite de stupéfiants* - OCRTIS] at the port of Dakar has not yielded the expected results. It seems this Office is in need of restructuring.

#### ***National strategy and international cooperation:***

In the area of technical cooperation, in March 2014 a regional workshop was held in Saly (Senegal) as part of the awareness-raising activities carried out by the UNODC's Global Programme against Money Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism. The Office's report on the seizure, confiscation and management of proceeds of crime in West Africa served as the basis for this workshop.

Two structures were set up for drug prevention and care: the first specialised centre for the treatment of heroin addiction and a National Drug Observatory. The aim of the Observatory is to collect data on drug demand and treatment needs. In order to help improve capabilities for the treatment and care of drug addiction, more than 40 health professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, nurses, pharmacists and social workers, public service or NGO employees, received training on how to train their colleagues in scientifically-based treatment and care strategies for drug addiction.

At regional level, a dedicated UNODC research officer is also stationed in Dakar in the framework of the research project specifically on West Africa which the Office has been conducting in the region since April 2013. The project aims to study trends and the impact of illicit trafficking, drug use and crime in the region and the emerging threats, and to increase West African countries' capabilities in the areas of research and analysis of drugs and crime in the region.

At bilateral level, Senegal is also a beneficiary of technical cooperation action conducted by France, particularly under the 'Priority Solidarity Fund in Support of the Fight against Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa' (in particular capacity building of the Senegalese OCRTIS).

### **Sierra Leone and Liberia:**

Sierra Leone reported 17 operations and nearly 2 tonnes of herbal cannabis seized in 2013, reflecting a growing concern in that country about the cultivation of cannabis.

On 28 January 2014, the UNODC Executive Director, in consultation with the executive representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Sierra Leone, sent a letter to member states in which he invited them to continue to provide support to Sierra Leone's Transnational Organised Crime Unit. Set up under the WACI, national and international partners acknowledged the key role the Unit should play in the consolidation of peace and security in the country when the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Sierra Leone ended on 31 March 2014. Although the Ebola epidemic in West Africa has made it difficult to strengthen these units to combat transnational crime in Liberia and Sierra Leone, that effort will resume as soon as possible. As a result of WACI's lead, the recognition of its relevance in Sierra Leone and the renewed interest it generated at the highest political level, a high-level donor conference was organised in New York on 22 May 2014 by the UNODC, in coordination with other WACI partners. The conference has helped to raise the WACI's visibility and mobilise new donors.

In terms of prevention and care, in 2013 and 2014, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the UNODC organised awareness-raising activities, anti-drug marches, speeches and public debates, cultural events, distribution of promotional material - in close cooperation with the Cape Verde Government on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. In Liberia, services for the treatment of drug addiction, such as testing and evaluation, the application of psychosocial protocols, inpatient and outpatient care and follow-up services have started to be offered to teenagers.

### **Togo:**

#### ***Drug use and trafficking:***

Togo is both a transit (between Ghana and Benin) and a consumer country of cannabis. 7 420 kg of herbal cannabis were seized in 2014 by the police and gendarmerie in Togo.

Cocaine seizures have risen sharply in Togo, from 26 kg in 2013 to 269 kg in 2014 (90 % of these seizures were made by the airport anti-trafficking unit from couriers coming from Brazil and transiting through Lomé airport on their way to other destinations in the sub-region).

Lastly, drug detection and law-enforcement agencies from Togo have reported a general trend of increased abuse of medicines containing psychotropic substances, as well as of tramadol.

***National strategy and international cooperation:***

Bilateral cooperation measures in Togo are mainly implemented by France, the UK and the US. The UNODC and the European Union are also present (AIRCOP programme in particular).

Whereas the activities carried out by the UNODC as part of the national integrated programme for Togo initially aimed to strengthen national capabilities to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, since 2012 their focus has switched to drug demand reduction.

In terms of prevention and care, since November 2012, the national integrated programme for Togo has focused on treating drug addiction and preventing illicit drug use by organising prevention activities in the school system and treating and rehabilitating drug addicts. A national reference centre for addictology and a unit for the treatment of drug dependence were created in February 2013 at the University of Lomé. Aid was also provided to launch services for the treatment of drug addiction in a health clinic in the centre of Togo. In August 2013, an evaluation of drug addiction treatment services was carried out in cooperation with the National Anti-Drug Committee.

With a view to raising the awareness of young people in Lomé about the risks of illicit drug use, 65 teachers were given training in October 2013 on the health consequences of illicit drug use and on the prevention of drug addiction in schools. Training sessions for trainers on scientifically-based treatment and care strategies for drug addiction were also given to Togolese health professionals in March 2013.

**c. Summary of the discussions of the region's mini Dublin groups**

The region's mini Dublin groups have not met since the last central group meeting in November 2014.

**d. The main topics to be monitored by the mini groups**

In view of the above, the mini groups for the West African region should monitor in particular:

- The development or implementation of the national anti-drug strategies;
- The establishment of appropriate legislative and structural frameworks or, where such frameworks exist, their effectiveness;
- The development of tools to monitor drug consumption and drug trafficking (monitoring bodies) with a view to having reliable data on which to base the measures carried out by national authorities and donors;
- Capacity-building in the region's judicial services and the development of regional and international judicial cooperation;
- Capacity-building in operational services responsible for combating drug trafficking at the borders and within the territory of the states;
- The coordination of bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes in the region.

## **II. The nature of regional or sub-regional problems**

The problems posed by drug trafficking and resulting crime in West Africa are manifold:

- A strong presence of African (Nigerian, in particular) or other criminal organisations (Colombian) in the region;
- Weakness of certain regional or state institutions, lack of political will, susceptibility of some authorities to corruption, potentially resulting in some instances in a destabilisation of state institutions;
- Lack of resources to establish, train, equip and operate bodies responsible for combating drugs;
- In some instances, relations maintained by these bodies with criminal organisations operating in other areas (trafficking, arms trafficking) or with terrorist groups (particularly in the Sahel region);
- The growth of a local consumer market in transit regions likely to cause a dual problem in terms of public health and order.

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

- the development of regional and inter-regional cooperation, as well as coordination arrangements at international, regional and bilateral levels with a view to improving the effectiveness of the response to the drug problem;
- the monitoring of the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan (ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States) combating the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and illicit drug use in West Africa (2008-2015) and preparation of the follow-up plan;
- the coordination of assistance given by donors to support drugs policies carried out at state level (national strategies, capacity-building, coordination) and by regional organisations;
- the monitoring of the commitment of all players in the fight against drugs in the region: states, regional and sub-regional organisations, civil society, etc.

#### **IV. Date and venue of the mini groups' meetings**

The region's mini Dublin groups have not met since the last central group meeting in November 2014.

#### **V. Conclusions and recommendations of the regional group on:**

##### **a. Policy initiatives**

In June 2014, the West African Commission on Drug Trafficking, a non-governmental initiative bringing together West African public figures and launched by the Kofi Annan Foundation, published a report on the consequences of the fact that the region had become a global hub for drug trafficking. While stressing that drug use was a public health rather than a criminal justice issue, the Commission recommended that counter-narcotics measures be better integrated into work on preventing corruption and money laundering in the region.

At the sixth session of **the African Union** Conference of ministers responsible for combating drugs and crime prevention, held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 10 October 2014, ministers reviewed the follow-up to the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017). In its opening statement, the INCB highlighted the regional challenges in public health (prevention and care, the availability of substances for medical purposes, the training of health personnel).

The African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the period 2013-2017 provides the strategic framework to shape drug-related policy development. The priority areas for 2013-2014 included: a) the implementation of the Common African Position on controlled substances and access to pain management drugs; b) the implementation, on a continent-wide basis, of minimum quality standards for the treatment of drug addiction; c) the adoption of measures to allocate the confiscated proceeds from drug trafficking and related offences to demand reduction and treatment programmes; d) stepping up research on drug control and the monitoring and evaluation of drug abuse and trafficking trends; and (e) facilitating continent-wide training for the treatment of drug addiction.

On 3 November 2014 in Vienna, the UNODC Executive Director and the new European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development reaffirmed their commitment to cooperation between the UNODC and the European Union, in particular in West Africa.

**b. The priorities to be addressed by donors in relation to Sections II and III above**

The efforts made by donors in West Africa need to be included in a comprehensive strategy integrating security, development, governance, human rights and the rule of law.

The new ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, drawn up with the support of the UNODC, will define the priorities for combating drug trafficking and transnational organised crime in West Africa for the period 2016-2020. Launched at the tenth meeting of the Inter-ministerial Commission for the Coordination of Drug Control that ECOWAS member states held in Cotonou (Benin) from 28 to 31 January 2014, it will constitute an important strategic framework for implementing donor activities in the region. It should, in particular, cover the following thematic areas:



- improvement in the effectiveness of national and regional cooperation in the detection and suppression of drug trafficking and organised crime;
- the establishment of appropriate, adequate and effective criminal justice systems;
- effective and sustainable demand reduction through the prevention of illicit drug use, treatment of drug addiction and rehabilitation;
- the establishment of a viable system for the collection of valid and reliable data to monitor drug trafficking, organised crime and illicit drug use.

A new UNODC regional programme for the period 2016-2020 is being drawn up to take into account the updating of these objectives. The Office states that the list of donors for West Africa (including donors for global projects) has expanded since March 2013. It now includes Germany, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cape Verde, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Spain, the United States of America, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Turkey, as well as the European Union, the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, the Peacebuilding Fund and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC - Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries).

While donors primarily finance programmes relating to the fight against organised crime, illicit drug trafficking and terrorism and programmes aiming to strengthen justice and integrity, it is nevertheless more difficult **to recruit donors as regards improvements in health and the prevention of drug addiction, awareness-raising and investment in research. Greater involvement of civil society** could be sought through close cooperation with non-governmental organisations in the field, based on the measures conducted in 2013 and 2014, in the context of the UNODC Global Youth Initiative, or in the context of the Global Project on HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support for drug users and those living in prison (UNODC, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, in association with non-governmental organisations)

**Priorities to be addressed by the states in the region:**

In investigating and combating illicit drug trafficking, it is important **to strengthen legislation and national means of action**. However, the legal framework in most of Africa does not match the urgency resulting from the increase in drug use in Africa and its ongoing status as a major destination and transit area. Over the past year, there has been very little progress as regards regulation and action at national level. **Capacity-building in the justice system remains, in particular, a priority** (the training of judges, for example), as does **support for and capacity-building of operational services** responsible for border and territorial checks.

**Interinstitutional coordination at national level** also remains an important objective. This is included in a certain number of joint regional and global initiatives such as the UNODC West African Coast Initiative, the UNODC-WCO (World Customs Organisation) **Global Container Control Programme**, the UNODC-WCO-INTERPOL **Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP)**. In the Global Container Control Programme, joint multi-agency port control services have been established in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Senegal and Togo, and there has been a steady improvement in drug seizure figures. In particular, since the launch of the Container Control Programme, a total of one tonne of cocaine has been seized in West Africa. The AIRCOP project aims to strengthen drug interception capabilities at specific international airports in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. It enables joint interception teams to be set up at international airports and connects these to detection and law enforcement databases as well as international communication networks in order to allow the real-time exchange of operational information with a view to intercepting illegal shipments. Such teams are currently operational in Benin, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Dominican Republic, Senegal and Togo and, in early 2015, they will be set up in Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Niger and Panama.

From 2011 to 2014, training was provided under the AIRCOP programme to 461 officers, and there were very promising results with regard to seizures: 454 kg of cocaine, 276 kg of cannabis, 59 kg of heroin, 181 kg of methamphetamine and 1 396 kg of counterfeit medicine. There was a total of 196 seizures and 228 arrests. COCAIR IV, a joint operation by the WCO, the UNODC and INTERPOL between September and November 2013, which involved joint interception teams in airports and other detection and law enforcement units from 27 countries, achieved significant results: a total of 1 724 kg of illicit drugs were taken in 98 seizures.

As regards **public health policies**, donors should focus on the **Joint UNODC-WHO Programme on Drug Dependence, Treatment and Care**. There are a many public health challenges in the fight against drugs in the West African region: a) providing additional resources to prevent and treat drug addiction and rehabilitate drug abusers; b) ensuring the availability of sufficient quantities of controlled substances for medical purposes; c) improving the training of health professionals and competent authorities in the treatment, after-care, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug abusers.

One of the four sub-programmes of the UNODC regional programme focuses on health issues and the prevention of drug use. In addition, all the national integrated programmes and national strategies have adopted an integrated approach and include an important drug demand reduction component. The UNODC has provided assistance to West Africa in this area through national projects in Cape Verde, Nigeria and Togo and (1) the **'Treating drug dependence and its health consequences'** project (Treatnet phase II), (2) the **Joint UNODC-WHO Programme on Drug Dependence, Treatment and Care**, (3) the **programme designed to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS among drug addicts and prisoners and to provide them with care and support** and (4) the **programme for the prevention of illicit drug use and treatment of drug-related disorders aimed at at-risk children and adolescents**.

In Treatnet Phase II, a rapid assessment of drug consumption and the prevention and treatment measures taken to address it was carried out in all West African countries in 2013. The findings highlighted the lack of reliable information on drug use and the absence of scientifically-based drug addiction treatment and care provision in the region. Other conclusions were that, although cannabis accounted for the majority of treatment requests, many patients would seek or be sent for treatment (mainly in psychiatric hospitals) only if they had already suffered from serious drug-related disorders. Those conclusions highlighted the **need to make treatment services more accessible and to include testing, assessments and brief interventions in the region's health and social systems.**

**Priorities to be addressed at regional level: Strengthening national capabilities in regional and international cooperation**

At regional level, **emphasis still needs to be placed on integrated initiatives that have a broad geographical scope, and on the effective coordination thereof.**

The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and drug use in West Africa was extended until 2015 to promote greater cooperation **between detection and law enforcement agencies. The West African Coast Initiative (WACI)**, operated with the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), forms part of these efforts. It covers Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and has, for instance, involved joint operations carried out by the police forces of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

On 29 October 2013, the Initiative's High-Level Policy Committee adopted a new regional approach: while continuing to set up transnational crime units in the recipient countries and make these operational, the Initiative highlighted the importance of regional cooperation between the authorities responsible for detection and law enforcement. Since 2013, it has also been extended to Côte d'Ivoire. Transnational crime units are now fully operational in Liberia and Sierra Leone and there have been several initiatives promoting coordination and the exchange of information. There have been very substantial results in terms of arrests, convictions and drug seizures owing to joint operations, amongst other things. For instance, the Sierra Leonean Transnational Crime Unit played a key role in an international operation leading to the seizure of more than 17 tonnes of hashish (resin) in March 2014.

Outside the West African region, **inter-regional initiatives** which bring the countries of West Africa and the Sahel and North Africa into a common framework should be supported. In particular, these could seek **to establish accessible, efficient and accountable criminal justice systems in the Sahel and West African region** in order to combat illicit trafficking, organised crime, terrorism and corruption **through an integrated multidisciplinary approach**. A number of research reports, including those drawn up by the UNODC, have highlighted the close links between terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime in the Sahel region.

To this end, **the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organised Crime (WACAP)** was launched with the support of the UNODC in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in May 2013. Its aim is to boost the capability of the central authorities responsible for preparing and responding to requests for mutual legal assistance and extradition in relation to serious offences and organised crime. All ECOWAS member states participate in the network, which also carries out its activities in conjunction with competent regional bodies such as the ECOWAS Court of Justice and the Africa Prosecutors Association. Biannual meetings allow members to share experience, best practices and information on their respective legal systems. The network also provides hands-on training on judicial cooperation.

Regional meetings were held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) from 28 to 30 May 2013, in Praia from 12 to 14 November 2013 and in Ouagadougou from 27 to 29 May 2014. The network has already achieved tangible results in facilitating cooperation between member countries in specific cases of transnational organised crime and enabled the countries to identify their assistance needs.

By the same token, **the strengthening of operational exchange structures** (for instance, the Dakar regional "drugs" platform) through the assignment of qualified liaison officers could help strengthen analytical capability at regional level and maintain operational exchanges with services responsible for combating trafficking.

At inter-regional level, **the Sahel Regional Judicial Platform**, established in June 2010 with the support of the UNODC, comprises Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal as national focal points. It has continued to conduct activities aiming to facilitate extradition and mutual legal assistance at inter-regional level in the fight against organised crime and terrorism prevention. Since March 2013, an annual plenary meeting has been held in Nouakchott (from 28 to 30 October 2013) and another in Bamako (from 17 to 20 November 2014). As in the case of the Network of West African Authorities and Prosecutors against Organised crime, the platform has succeeded in mobilising the Sahel countries and in strengthening their capabilities in the area of sub-regional cooperation.

The establishment the **Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARIN-WA)** was approved, with the support of the UNODC, at a regional workshop held in Saly (Senegal) from 24 to 28 March 2014 and the network was officially launched at its second conference held in Accra from 24 to 26 November 2014. Drawing on the experience of the CAMDEN Assets Recovery Interagency Network and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network of Southern Africa, the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa provides its members with advice and guidance through designated focal points, supports asset recovery training, promotes the exchange of best practices and facilitates requests for operational cooperation. It also seeks to develop informal relations between focal points in order to facilitate international cooperation on asset recovery.

In addition to their regional or inter-regional character, these initiatives have the benefit of being cross-cutting, as they cover border control, forensics and criminal justice. As such they are powerful tools to address the interaction between terrorism and all types of trafficking (drugs, weapons, etc.) seen in certain areas of the sub-region.

Finally, **strengthening the capabilities of West African countries in the collection and analysis of data must remain a priority**. The UNODC held training workshops on this issue in Guinea in March and August 2013, Senegal in August and September 2013, Sierra Leone in August 2013 and Liberia in November 2013. The Office has also helped the competent national bodies in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Mali to improve their participation rates and the quality of their contributions to the UN Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and to the annual reports questionnaire, by developing a standard template for drug seizures. As a result of the above, 17 Central African and West African countries sent the UNODC their data on drug seizures and arrests of traffickers in 2014, which is an encouraging record. The establishment of the National Drug Observatory in Dakar, Senegal, is a significant step forward in developing the ability to understand phenomena related to the trafficking and the consumption of narcotic drugs.

## **VI. Monitoring the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations approved the previous year**

The recommendations made in the previous report are still valid and form the basis of action by donors and international organisations in the region. They broadly reflect the preparatory work on the new ECOWAS Action Plan (2016-2020) and the UNODC regional programme for the same period.