

Communiqué

“West African Common Position towards the United Nations General Assembly Special Session 2016 on the World Drug Problem”

20 January, 2016 in Accra, Ghana

We, representatives of government ministries, law enforcement agencies, drug policy experts and civil society who participated in the Regional Consultation on Drug Policy Reform on “The Road to UNGASS” which was held in Ghana from 19-20 January 2016, which attracted 11 West African countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone hereby make the following declaration with respect to drug policy reform in West Africa;

Reaffirming the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation, the Common African Position towards UNGASS, AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to address drug trafficking, production and consumption, and calling upon West Africa Member States to take the measures necessary to fully implement the actions set out therein, with the view to attaining, in timely manner their goals and targets.

Acknowledging the serious threat posed by drug trafficking and production to governance, peace and security stability and economic growth in West Africa, a region that has only recently emerged from decades of violent conflict;

Recognising the efforts made by Member States to comply with the provisions of the single Conventions on Narcotic Drug of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;

Acknowledging the threat of drug use to public health and social development in West Africa;

Mindful of the current drug policy that has fostered abuses of human rights of drug users, burdened the criminal justice system, deterioration of public health, proliferation of violence, spread of HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis prevalence and taking priority away from effective treatment and rehabilitation for people who use drugs;

Acknowledging that narcotic drugs trafficking is a major problem that threatens security, social welfare, economic development and political stability in West Africa;

Welcoming the opportunity that the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) 2016 on the world drug problem provides the region to review its progress in the International Cooperation against the World Drug problem;

Recalling that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that requires effective and increased international cooperation;

We hereby **recommend** the following inputs towards the contribution of Member States to the outcome document of the UN General Assembly Special Session:

Drugs and Health

- Tackle drugs from public health perspective and not only as a national security and safety issues;
- Allocate more resources to facilitate treatment, interventions and facilities for drug users;

- Integrate harm reduction in national drug policies to complement demand and supply reduction;
- Institute harm reduction programmes and facilitate access to health care in prisons;
- Make available and accessible substitution treatments and risk reduction measures to drug users
- Support and create an enabling environment for the private sector and CSOs to get involved in treatment, rehabilitation and recovery services;

Drugs and Crime

- Equip adequately the law enforcement agencies in border regions, port of entries and exits to respond effectively to drug trafficking within the region;
- Strengthen the law enforcement agencies technical capacities;
- Ensure balance and proportionality in both drug demand and supply policies and direct the punitive criminal sanction component of the policies to drug traffickers and suppliers;
- Ensure strict law enforcement for drug traffickers and particularly those who target minors;
- Promote collaboration within the region in order to increase the frequency of the identification and capture of major drug barons and cartels;

Drugs and Alternative Development

- Promote alternative livelihoods programmes for individuals, families and communities whose vulnerabilities makes them susceptible to engaging in illicit drug production;
- Explore the possibilities of the production of cannabis for pharmaceutical, cosmetologically and industrial purposes;

Policy and Legal Reforms

- Allocate adequate resources for institutions to undertake research and support evidence based drug policies;
- Promote public health and human rights perspective that is guided a drug policy in addition to criminal justice approach;
- Harmonize drug legislation within the West African sub region to deny drug traffickers a safe haven in West Africa;
- Promote and operationalise alternative measures to incarceration or non-custodial sentencing mechanisms for minor non-violent drug related offence in accordance to the international drug conventions.

Drug Use Education

- Promote evidence based programmes on Drug education, rehabilitation and treatment centres;
- Enhance Information, Education and Communication /Behavioural Change (IEC/BCC) actions to reduce drug consumption prevalence;

Essential Medicines for Palliative Care and Pain Relief

- Ensure the provision of opiates and other essential uncontrolled medicine for palliative care and pain relief as enshrined in WHO convention;
- Provide access and support for opiates and other essential and controlled medicines for palliative and pain relief as enshrined in the WHO convention;

Civil Society Engagement and Support

- Strengthen collaboration between civil society and government in the effort to address the risk associated with drug trafficking, consumption and production; and
- Support civil society organisations working in the field of prevention, treatment and recovery.

On behalf of 2016 conference delegates

This communique done in Accra this day 20th of January 2016.

Signed:

S/N	Signee	Designation	Institution/Organisation	Country
1.	Henry Tachie-Menson	Director	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana
2.	Abdulai Haruna Alhassan	Deputy Director	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana
3.	Elikem K. Ahadzi	Assistant Director	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana
4.	Yaw Akyasi-Sarpong	Executive Secretary	Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)	Ghana
5.	Michael Addo	Divisional Supervisor	Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)	Ghana
6.	Juddy Mensah	Head of Department	Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)	Ghana
7.	Sylvester Koomson	Central Regional Commander	NACOB	Ghana
8.	Adamu Mohammed	Focal Point Ghana	West Africa Drug Policy Network- Ghana Chapter	Ghana
9.	Mary Eyram Ashinyo	Public Health Physician	Mandela Washington Fellow	Ghana
10.	Aïda Sylla	Chef de la Division Santé Mentale	Ministry of Health	Senegal

S/N	Signee	Designation	Institution/Organisation	Country
11.	Abdoulaye Ba	Directeur Adjoint des Affaires Criminelles et des Grâces Présidentielles	Ministry of Justice	Senegal
12.	Matar Diop	Coordonnateur du Comité Interministériel de Lutte Contre la drogue	Ministry of Interior	Senegal
13.	Idrissa Cissé	Directeur De l'Office Central De Répression du Trafic Illicite des Stupéfiants (OCRDIS)	Ministry of Interior	Senegal
14.	Saka Orou	Délégué Général du Comité Interministériel de Lutte Contre l'Abus de Stupéfiants et de Substances Psychotropes (DG-CILAS)	Ministry of Interior	Benin
15.	Woudecon Médard	Chef Office Central de Répression du Trafic Illicite de Drogue (OCERTID)	Ministry of Interior	Benin
16.	Ayemonna Houngan Claire	Président du comité provisoire des droits de l'homme	Human Right Institution	Benin
17.	Houinsou Dieudonné	Focal Point	West Africa Drug Policy Network – Benin Chapter	Benin
18.	Chukwumah, Gloria Modupe Omatie	Director HOD Food & Drug services Department	Federal Ministry of Health	Abuja - Nigeria
19.	Morie Lengor	Director of Crime Services/ Chairman of transnational organised crime	Ministry of Interior	Sierra Leone
20.	Albert Macauley	Head of Human Resource of Sierra Leone Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)	Ministry of Interior	Sierra Leone
21.	Augustine Sheku	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Immigration Department	Sierra Leone
22.	Krouma Mamadou	Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel de Lutte Anti-Drogue (CILAD)	Minister of Interior	Cote d'Ivoire
23.	Binate Abdouramane	Directeur de la Police des Stupéfiants et des Drogues (DPSD)	Minister of Interior	Cote d'Ivoire
24.	Francisco Julio Sanha	Chief of the National Committee on Drugs	Ministry of Justice	Guinea Bissau

S/N	Signee	Designation	Institution/Organisation	Country
25.	Badilé Paulo Sanca	Police Judiciaire	Ministry of Interior	Guinea Bissau
26.	Eloisa Borges	The Executive Secretary of the National Commission on Drugs	Ministry of Justice	Cape Verde
27.	Tall Aguibou	Coordinateur National du Comité Interministeriel de lutte contre la Drogue	Ministry of Interior	Guinea
28.	Camara Farimba	Directeur Général de l'office Central Anti-Drogue (OCAD)	Ministry of Interior	Guinea
29.	Esther Grant	Division of Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health	Liberia
30.	Anthony Souh	Director General of Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA)	Ministry of Interior	Liberia
31.	Olubusayo Akinola	Programme Officer - Drug Demand Reduction	Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)	Nigeria
32.	Idrissa Ba	WACD Commissioner	West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD)	Senegal
33.	Alpha Abdoulaye Diallo	WACD Commissioner	West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD)	Guinea
34.	Christine Kafando	WACD Commissioner	West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD)	Burkina
35.	Cheikh Toure	Regional Programme Coordinator	United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime	Nigeria
36.	Babacar Diouf	Experts on Drug and Prevention Health	United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime	Senegal
37.	Lansana Gberie	UNGASS Consultant	Open Society Foundations	Sierra Leone
38.	Isidore S. Obot	Executive Director	Centre for Research and Information on Substance Abuse in Africa (CRISA)	Nigeria
39.	Adeolu Ogunrombi	Regional Coordinator	West Africa Drug Policy Network (WADPN)	Nigeria
40.	Maria-Gorreti Ane	Africa Consultant	International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)	Ghana
41.	Nana Asantewa Afadzinu	Executive Director	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	Ghana