The objective of the Contribution of UNODC to the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is to support the strengthening of capacities of Governments in the region and enhance the accessibility, efficiency and accountability of criminal justice systems in order to combat drug trafficking, illicit trafficking, organized crime, terrorism and corruption.

The Programme has been established within the framework of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel 2013-2017, developed pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2056 (2012) and contributes mainly to the Strategy’s security objectives, as well as to the governance pillar.

UNODC has unique expertise in helping Member States address organized crime, related illicit trafficking and terrorism through legislative, criminal justice and law enforcement advisory services, as well as the promotion of regional and international cooperation.

The Sahel region refers to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. To ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to the challenges affecting the region, the neighbouring countries of the Maghreb region (Algeria, Libya and Morocco) have also been included as participating countries in the Sahel Programme.

Depending on the nature of the activity, linkages are made with other countries in West Africa, such as Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, as relevant and necessary.

The Sahel is one of the poorest regions of the world. It faces simultaneously the challenges of extreme poverty, the effects of climate change, frequent food crises, rapid population growth, fragile governance, corruption, unresolved internal tensions, illicit trafficking and terrorist-linked security threats.

The destabilizing effect of terrorist and criminal groups and their impact on development and security in the Sahel are extremely serious. Criminal activities have reached a level that poses a threat to governance and social stability in the region as well as peace and security of the international community at large.

Criminal networks are increasingly smuggling drugs, illicit products and migrants through the Sahelian route to markets in Europe and elsewhere. Recent events appear to indicate that drug trafficking through the Sahel is on the increase again, representing an important source of income for violent extremist groups in the region.
## Achievements

The publication of a report ("Dakar Declaration on Asset Disclosure") outlining 13 guidelines for wealth declaration by public officials was the first-ever norm-setting exercise in the field of **asset disclosure** in the Sahel and neighbouring West African countries. This was the result of a regional conference on asset disclosure by public officials organized by UNODC and other development partners in Dakar in May 2014.

**Anti-corruption** officials in Niger achieved consensus on proposals related to draft anti-corruption legislation that is poised to be adopted by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly in 2015. The participants’ proposals strengthen the draft law and align it with the requirements of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

Results have been achieved in the area of **firearms control**. Following UNODC support, Mali, Niger and Senegal can now trace illicit small arms in a fast and reliable manner, implementing international best practices of marking such weapons. Draft firearms legislation aligned with international standards is set for adoption in Senegal.

Training capacity in **terrorism prevention** has been established in Burkina Faso and Niger, following a series of UNODC training courses. Judicial officials instruct students using UNODC modules in justice training academies.

Through its judicial cooperation platforms, UNODC has facilitated the exchange of **information** between authorities in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Senegal reported 8 cases of extradition and 68 Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests; Mali 4 cases of extradition and 4 MLA requests; and Niger 11 MLA requests. Also, cooperation through the platforms has allowed Mauritania and Senegal to resume information exchange, leading to the arrests of terrorist suspects.

Niger registered the country’s first ever conviction for **money laundering**, setting a precedent for countries in the region. The Court confiscated an equivalent of USD 843,000. The move shows that law enforcement and judicial authorities are adopting an asset-oriented approach to profit generating crime, increasing compliance with international standards on anti-money laundering. This case followed the establishment of the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARIN-WA).

In December 2014 and shortly after its establishment, the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) at the airport of Niamey, Niger, seized two kilograms of **cocaine** that had been trafficked from Ghana. The JAITF in Bamako, Mali, made four drug seizures totalling 19.2 kg of cocaine and 16.4 kg of methamphetamine only two months after it started operations in 2014.
UNODC promotes trans-border cooperation to tackle illicit trafficking in the Sahel

Criminal networks have stepped up their trans-border operations in the Sahel and expanded their illicit business activities throughout the region. Improving national and cross-border coordination between law enforcement agencies is essential to ensure an integrated approach in the fight against illicit trafficking and organized crime.

To contribute to these efforts, UNODC organized in January 2015 a workshop on border control, with a special focus on land borders. With the objective of bringing together the leaders of different relevant institutions, the workshop aimed at enabling the drafting of recommendations on improving border control, with particular focus on the main entry points of the Sahel region.

The workshop brought together 35 representatives of 20 institutions (such as Police, Immigration, Customs, and Drug Enforcement agencies) from four countries (Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Togo), along with UNODC experts.

UNODC supports Mali anti-trafficking efforts by launching a JAITF

As part of its continued support to counter drug trafficking in the region, UNODC and the Government of Mali officially inaugurated in February 2015 the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAIF) of the Bamako Senou International Airport. The newly established Task Force aims to improve countering drug trafficking in the country by improving the detection, interdiction and investigative capacities of the airport.

UNODC and its partners worked closely with the Malian Government to establish the new Task Force, which recently began its operations at the international airport. From the onset, Malian authorities have been proactive in supporting the creation and daily operations of the Bamako JAITF. Already, there is a strong commitment from the authorities towards operational efficiency and the initial results are already promising. In only two months of operation, the JAITF has made four drug seizures totalling 19.2 kg of cocaine and 16.4 kg of methamphetamines.

AIRCOP delivers training on documentary fraud control

Through its AIRCOP project, UNODC organized a specialized training on documentary fraud control in March 2015, in Dakar, Senegal. Bringing together 34 participants from 17 countries, this event regrouped officials from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean for the first time since the programme’s inception in 2010. The workshop has created a link between AIRCOP beneficiary countries and helped strengthen the coordination of their actions, particularly in the sharing of information between JAITFs. Trainers from the Canadian and French border administrations presented the approaches to counter documentary fraud from both sides of the Atlantic, while also sharing best practices in the same occasion.

Since its creation, AIRCOP trained in West Africa alone 744 officers, including 118 women, through 44 trainings and field coaching missions. This enabled JAITFs to seize over 600 kg of cocaine, 82 kg of heroin, 240 kg of methamphetamine, 377 kg of cannabis and 1.5 tons of counterfeit medicines.
UNODC facilitates the process of marking and registration of small arms and light weapons in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal

UNODC and its UN partners including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) have donated three machines for marking small arms and light weapons to the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Arms of the Republic of Niger. In close collaboration with its regional partners, UNODC and the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) held in September 2014 in Niamey, Niger, a training workshop on the marking and registration of light weapons and small arms. The workshop aimed to help Nigerien authorities trace in a fast and reliable manner illicit small arms and strengthen their capacity to implement international best practices of marking these weapons. In addition to providing technical assistance to member countries, UNODC works closely with national authorities on the implementation of preventive and safety measures.

Government officials build terrorism prevention capacity in Burkina Faso and Chad

Knowledge of the national, regional and international legal framework against terrorism was enhanced during workshops organized by UNODC in Burkina Faso and Chad, in February 2014. The training courses contributed to stronger inter-agency collaboration between judges, prosecutors and judicial police officers. In addition, mechanisms for international cooperation and technical investigations in criminal matters (mutual legal assistance and extradition) were also covered. The workshop in Chad led to the revision of the draft Penal Code, which was not fully compliant with the international standards against terrorism. The event supported criminal law reform to incorporate international provisions on counter-terrorism (the 19 universal instruments against terrorism) in domestic law. Similar efforts were undertaken in April 2014 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, where two technical assistance activities were delivered to train criminal justice and law enforcement officials on the matters discussed above.

UNODC provides specialized training on human rights aspects of extradition and mutual legal assistance

To strengthen the ability of Sahel region States to successfully cooperate against terrorism while respecting human rights, UNODC and the Sahel Judicial Platform organised a specialized training on the human rights aspects of international cooperation in criminal matters. This workshop, held in Dakar, Senegal, in February 2015, brought together 25 officials from various ministries and law-enforcement agencies from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Together with expert practitioners from France, the Plateforme Ouest Africaine « Police et Droits Humains » (POLI.DH), UNODC, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, they discussed legal and practical problems, including police to police cooperation, extradition and mutual legal assistance.

UNODC promotes penal reform in the region

UNODC organised a workshop on prison reform in Niamey, Niger, in November 2014. The event regrouped officers in charge of penitentiary administrations from Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) for the first time, as well as representatives from Algeria, Central African Republic and Senegal. By discussing and sharing best practices to increase the efficiency of prison management, and promote social reintegration of detainees, the workshop also sought to determine capacity building needs for UNODC to address in 2015.
West and Central Africa

Sahel

- Assessment of borders
- Comprehensive assessment report covering the Sahel region
- Legislative assessments and national stakeholder dialogues
- Workshop on terrorism financing for financial intelligence units
- Dissemination of counter-terrorism tools and publications
- Workshop on international cooperation in criminal matters
- Third prosecutors’ information exchange meeting
- Informal exchange network on firearms trafficking
- Workshop on harmonization of firearms legislation
- Workshop on border control
- Meeting of Liaison Officers in West and Central Africa
- Meeting of Sahel Judicial Platform for information exchange
- Workshop on human rights in terrorism cases
- Regional event to raise awareness on corruption
- Regional conference on anti-corruption
- Training course on integrity and anti-corruption
- Workshop to raise awareness on asset disclosure principles
- Regional workshop on investigative journalism
- Regional meeting on proceeds of crime
- Regional seminar on protection of victims and witnesses
- Regional workshop on access to legal aid
- Regional workshop on prison reform

Mauritania

- Support the development of draft legislation
- Training for justice officials on investigation of terrorism
- Legislative assistance on anti-corruption
- Legislative assistance on arms trafficking
- Legislative assistance on legal aid
- Legislative assistance on organization of the judiciary

Senegal

- Assessment of drug analysis capacity
- Workshop on counter-terrorism universal legal framework
- Awareness raising and collection campaign for firearms
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy
- Workshop on legislative review of firearms control
- Workshop on national firearms control regime
- Training of Dakar Port Control Unit in Ghana (2)
- Training of Dakar Port Control Unit in Togo
- Mentorship for container targeting team in Dakar (4)
- Regional training on container control
Burkina Faso:
- Assessment mission
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity
- Advisory services on drafting curriculum on organized crime
- Advisory services on legal drafting
- Draft legislation on reorganization of law enforcement
- Training for justice officials on investigation of terrorism

Niger:
- Assessment mission
- Support the development of draft legislation
- Legal advisory services on firearms control
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy
- Workshop on revision of anti-corruption legislation
- Establishment of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAIF)
- Training for JAIF staff
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy Training, mentorship programme for law enforcement officials

Chad:
- Assessment mission
- Assistance on legislation on trafficking in persons
- Workshop on counter-terrorism universal legal framework
- Legal advisory services on firearms control

Mali:
- Establishment of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAIF)
- Training for JAIF staff
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy
- Training, mentorship programme for law enforcement officials
**Anti-Corruption**

**UNODC promotes investigative journalism in the Sahel**

A workshop, held from November 2014 in Saly, Senegal, allowed for well-known and novice investigative journalists from 14 countries in the Sahel and West Africa to share knowledge and expertise in investigative techniques to expose corruption and organized crime. Several journalists from the Sahel, Latin America and Europe took part in the meeting which provided an opportunity to share their experience. Participants adopted the Saly Declaration calling, among other things, for the establishment of a Centre for Investigative Journalism for the region with the aim of continuously strengthening the capacity of investigative journalists in the region.

**UNODC consolidates regional anti-corruption efforts in Niamey**

In February 2015, 13 national anti-corruption authorities from countries in the region gathered in Niamey, Niger, for a Regional Conference on Anti-Corruption in West Africa. Organized by UNODC in partnership with the Nigerien High Authority for the Fight against Corruption and Assimilated Offences (HALCIA), this conference brought together heads of anti-corruption authorities, as well as heads of investigation, from the region for the first time since 2012. The event sought to strengthen international cooperation in the region among anti-corruption authorities, connect corruption investigators and develop a strategic plan for the region to support the newly established ECOWAS Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa.

**Government officials in Niger agree on a draft anti-corruption bill**

Anti-corruption officials in Niger achieved consensus on proposals related to draft anti-corruption legislation that is poised to be adopted by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly in 2015. The participants’ proposals strengthen the draft law and align it with the requirements of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This result was achieved at a workshop organized by the High Authority for the Fight against Corruption and Assimilated Offences (HALCIA) and UNODC, held in Niamey, Niger, in December 2014. It was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Parliamentary Network for the fight against corruption, supervisory bodies and civil society organizations in Niger.
Governments launch asset recovery network

To provide effective responses through specialized investigations and regional cooperation, UNODC organized a regional workshop in November 2014 in Accra, Ghana, which officially established the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARIN-WA). This event brought together 47 representatives from countries in the Sahel and other ECOWAS Member States. The meeting was an opportunity for participants to work on case examples and practical exercises in groups and to share best practices in identifying, seizing, confiscating and managing proceeds of crimes.

Judicial authorities in the Sahel increase information exchange

The Judicial Cooperation Platform for Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal) has been established to strengthen regional capacities to exchange information on transnational criminal cases, provide advisory services to national counterparts and facilitate contact with structures and interlocutors in other countries. Through this Platform, UNODC has facilitated the exchange of information between judicial authorities relating to more than ten cases. Also, cooperation through the Platform has allowed Mauritania and Senegal to resume information exchange, leading to the arrests of terrorist suspects. The latest annual meeting took place in Bamako, Mali, in November 2014.

UNODC strengthens regional intelligence cooperation to combat terrorism financing

During a regional workshop held in Niamey, Niger, in October 2014, representatives of the Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of all Sahel countries identified strategic areas for improving the fight against the financing of terrorism, in coordination with their counterparts from UEMOA countries, Morocco and Cameroon. Participants focused in particular on increasing operational information exchange among FIUs as well as between FIUs and other investigative and intelligence services involved in the fight against terrorism. A better understanding of terrorism financing typologies was also achieved, along with an assessment of States’ vulnerability to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its financing. The latter was identified as an emerging topic which closely interlinks with terrorism.

Sahel countries set priorities to protect and assist victims and witnesses

UNODC organized a regional meeting in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in December 2014, which provided an overview of the legal and practical challenges faced by Sahel countries in protecting and assisting victims and witnesses of crime. The meeting brought together 39 participants from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Senegal, representing the police, judiciary, civil society and UN organizations. Participants formulated specific recommendations to improve the situation. These included the signature of cooperation treaties between the countries in the region to facilitate the reintegration of victims and witnesses into the society, the establishment of compensation funds for victims, the development of a guide for police on women victims of violence, and the provision of training for justice professionals as well as the need to address access to legal aid for victims.

UNODC and justice academies strengthen partnership

In a move to enhance expertise with magistrates in areas relevant to countering drugs, crime and terrorism, UNODC initiated a partnership with Centres for Judiciary Training (CJT$s) from the region. During a regional meeting of CJTs, held in Dakar, Senegal in December 2014, UNODC provided expertise on international cooperation, as well as on countering drugs and arms trafficking, money laundering and terrorism. The issues of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants were also addressed. Closer cooperation with the Centres will contribute to increasing the sustainability of UNODC capacity-building efforts towards magistrates in the region.
Sahel Programme activities from January 2014 to March 2015

**Updating national legislation**
- Workshop on counter-terrorism universal legal framework - Chad
- Workshop on counter-terrorism universal legal framework - Senegal
- Workshops on the review of civil aviation related laws - Nigeria
- Comprehensive assessment report covering the Sahel region - Sahel
- Workshop to raise awareness on asset disclosure principles - Sahel
- Regional workshop on investigative journalism - Sahel
- Draft legislation on reorganization of law enforcement - Mali
- Regional event to raise awareness on corruption - Sahel
- Workshop for justice officials on anti-corruption - Burkina Faso
- Workshop on revision of anti-corruption legislation - Niger
- Regional conference on anti-corruption - Sahel
- Workshop on national firearms control regime - Senegal
- Assistance on legislation on trafficking in persons - Chad
- Legal advisory services on firearms control - Chad
- Legal advisory services on firearms control - Niger
- Workshop on harmonization of firearms legislation - Sahel
- Meeting of Sahel Judicial Platform for information exchange - Sahel
- Workshop on human rights in terrorism cases - Sahel
- Workshop on international cooperation in criminal matters - Sahel
- Advisory services on legal drafting - Mali
- Third prosecutors’ information exchange meeting - Sahel
- Informal exchange network on firearms trafficking - Sahel
- Training on international cooperation - Burkina Faso
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Burkina Faso
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Mali
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Senegal
- Assessment mission - Mali
- Assessment mission - Chad
- Assessment mission - Niger
- Assessment mission - Burkina Faso
- Legislative assessments and national stakeholder dialogues - Sahel
- Awareness raising and collection campaign for firearms - Senegal
- Workshop on legislative review of firearms control - Senegal
- Storage security and stockpile management of firearms - Burkina Faso
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Senegal
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Niger
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Burkina Faso
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Mali

**Capacity in forensics, including firearms management**
- Advisory services on drafting curricula on organized crime - Mali
- Training course on integrity and anti-corruption - Sahel
- Training for justice officials on investigation of terrorism - Burkina Faso
- Training for justice officials on investigation of terrorism - Mauritania
- Training for justice officials on investigation of terrorism - Mali
- Workshop on terrorism financing for financial intelligence - Sahel
- Dissemination of counter-terrorism tools and publications - Sahel
- Regional meeting on proceeds of crime - Sahel
- Training, mentorship programme for law enforcement officials - Mali
- Assessment mission - Burkina Faso
- Legislative assessments and national stakeholder dialogues - Sahel
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Burkina Faso
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Mali
- Assessment of drug analysis capacity - Senegal
- Assessment mission - Mali
- Assessment mission - Chad
- Assessment mission - Niger
- Assessment mission - Burkina Faso
- Legislative assessments and national stakeholder dialogues - Sahel
- Awareness raising and collection campaign for firearms - Senegal
- Workshop on legislative review of firearms control - Senegal
- Storage security and stockpile management of firearms - Burkina Faso
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Senegal
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Niger
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Burkina Faso
- Strengthening the national firearms marking strategy - Mali

**Strengthening border control**
- Assessment of borders - Sahel
- Workshop on border control - Sahel
- Meeting of Liaison Officers in West and Central Africa - Sahel
- Mentorship (6 weeks) for container targeting team in Dakar - Senegal
- Establishment of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) - Mali
- Establishment of JAITF - Niger
- Training for JAITF staff - Mali
- Training for JAITF staff - Niger
- Training of Dakar Port Control Unit (in Togo) - Senegal
- Training courses of Dakar Port Control Unit (in Ghana) - Senegal
- Regional training on container control - Senegal
- Regional workshop on access to legal aid - Sahel
- Regional seminar on protection of victims and witnesses - Sahel
- Regional workshop on prison reform - Sahel
- Support the development of draft legislation - Niger
- Support the development of draft legislation - Mauritania

**Improving justice systems**
- Regional workshop on access to legal aid - Sahel
- Regional seminar on protection of victims and witnesses - Sahel
- Regional workshop on prison reform - Sahel
- Support the development of draft legislation - Niger
- Support the development of draft legislation - Mauritania
Strategy

The Sahel Programme works closely with Governments from Sahel countries at the political and technical level. In January 2015, the respective Governments approved the extension of the Sahel Programme until 2017 (previously 2016), and further integration of Algeria, Libya and Morocco into activities and initiatives in the region.

Activity implementation is coordinated with the other UN agencies participating in the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy, most notably with the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Coordination at the strategic level takes place with the offices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of UNOWA, and the SRSG and Head of the Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali (MINUSMA).

UNODC participates in the Steering Committee of the Sahel Coordination Mechanism set up to oversee the activities of all UN agencies involved in the implementation of the UN’s Integrated Strategy. UNODC is a co-convener, with UNOWA, of the Task Force on Security, one of the three main pillars of the strategy.

Management

The Sahel Programme is implemented by substantive sections, mainly based at Headquarters (Vienna) and at ROSEN (Dakar). These include teams working on justice, firearms control, anti-corruption, terrorism prevention and container control.

Total budget: USD 59 million
Available budget: USD 13.7 million (voluntary contributions only)

Donors

Activities of UNODC in the Sahel are supported by:
- Austria
- Canada
- Denmark
- European Union
- France
- Germany
- Japan
- Norway
- United States of America

Implementation of activities

From January 2014 to March 2015, the Sahel Programme has implemented 80 activities in the thematic areas covering border control, firearms, terrorism prevention, criminal justice reform, human trafficking and anti-corruption. Most activities had a national focus while over 30 activities undertaken had a regional scope.

The Sahel Programme has reached a total of 2,179 direct beneficiaries*

* as of March 2015