

# *Newsletter* of the UNODC/ECOWAS Project Against Drug Trafficking

Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, organized crime related to it and drug abuse in West Africa

Newsletter of the ECOWAS Project, Issue 2, June 2017



## Strengthening Regional Cooperation Against Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa



European Union



UNODC  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

This Project is funded by the European Union



# Strengthening Regional Cooperation Against Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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## *Newsletter* of the UNODC/ECOWAS Project Against Drug Trafficking



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## REGIONAL COOPERATION: A TOOL TO FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING

The principle of free circulation of goods and persons has been a major achievement in West Africa since the adoption of the “1979 Protocol of freedom of circulation, residence and settlement, the ECOWAS zone”. The circulation of goods and people, generates economic opportunities. It is a driving force of regional integration. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is an inter-regional space whose legitimacy has been consolidated over the years at political, economic and diplomatic level. Despite some difficulties, one of the trends observed is the development of the economies of West Africa as well as the qualitative transformation of transport infrastructures.

One of the risks posed by these positive trends, however, is the emergence of new opportunities for cross-border criminal networks involved in illicit trafficking and thus benefiting from the transportation facilities. The challenges of the circulation of criminal assets, border vulnerability and sometimes an inadequate legal framework are yet to be addressed.

Over the past decade, a succession of sub regional meetings of professionals in the field has led to an increasing identification of the challenges posed by this transnational organized crime. Solutions were proposed by Experts from ECOWAS, the European Union, UNODC, INTERPOL and the intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering (GIABA) at the “Conference to Support the Implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan on Drug Control through more Effective Regional Cooperation” held in Abuja in November 2016 proposed solutions to tackle this menace.

Inter-state police cooperation and coordination, collaboration of drug enforcement agencies at national and sub-regional levels, information exchange platforms, adaptation of response mechanisms, and practices for more effective interventions are still present challenges in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The new ECOWAS Action Plan (2016-2020) highlights the importance of “intelligence gathering and police initiated activities, such as the West African Police Intelligence System (WAPIS) between INTERPOL and ECOWAS” as well as the “West Africa Coastal Initiative (WACI), launched in 2009” to support the establishment of specialized, multi-agency units to combat Transnational

**Pierre Lapaque**  
*Regional Representative*  
*UNODC Regional Office for West and*  
*Central Africa*



Organized Crime (UCT), notably in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire.

The UNODC Regional Program 2016-2020 emphasizes its support for "communication and cooperation between different national law enforcement agencies and working along a common border.

The establishment of a West African network of forensic science as expressed at the Abuja conference, will facilitate the work of law enforcement professionals with the contribution of scientific resources in the fight against drug trafficking.

The difficulties highlighted by professionals in the field, if they give an idea of the scope of the site, must above all catalyze the implementation of solutions. It is a matter of pooling forces and resources through information exchange systems, through harmonized police to police procedures and judicial cooperation, with a view to improving intra-regional judicial fluidity in cross-border investigations.

The implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan on Drugs benefits from the political will expressed by the Heads of State and Government and the time is right for greater ambitions in regional cooperation.

*Enjoy your reading !*

# Preventing and Combating Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime

## Regional Cooperation Challenges in West Africa

*How to reconcile the imperatives of regional economic development and integration, and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the principles of free movement of people and goods without increasing the vulnerability of West African countries to transnational organized crime. Through the 2016-2020 Action Plan, ECOWAS Member States have put in place a framework for regional integration that reconciles free movement of people and goods and enhances border security. This text analyzes the issues and proposes an approach.*

### Security Threats

The West African zone is undergoing multiple threats. One of the first challenges is security due to conflicts that promote the illicit trafficking of firearms. The instability created by conflict also favours the development of terrorism-related activities. This creates an environment conducive to trafficking in persons as well as drug trafficking (including cocaine, cannabis resin, amphetamines).

Terrorist groups consolidate their positions by extending their influence. Operations are being carried farther away from their favorite zone of the Sahara, towards the capitals of the Sahel - Bamako, Ouagadougou and Grand-Bassam. The notable fact is that the trajectories of drug trafficking are similar to those of other illicit activities of transnational organized crime. The alleged strategic alliance between criminal groups and terrorist groups also means the development of cross-border operational capabilities.

Approximately 30 tons of cocaine was seized last year, either in West Africa or en route to that area. The estimated value of the drug exceeds the proportion of national budgets devoted to security in the region. In addition, one-third of the cannabis produced in the Moroccan Rift currently passes through the Sahel to the Mediterranean ports or the Red Sea.

Several laboratories active in the manufacture of synthetic drugs (such as amphetamine-stimulating drugs) in the region, were dismantled: in Guinea in 2009. Between June 2011 and May 2015, Nigeria's National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) dismantled 11 laboratories in Lagos and Anambra States.

By **Cheikh Touré**  
Regional Programme  
Coordinator – UNODC



Drug use, particularly of heroin-based cocktails or cocaine including synthetic crack cocaine is increasingly becoming alarming in the region.

### Regional Integration Imperatives

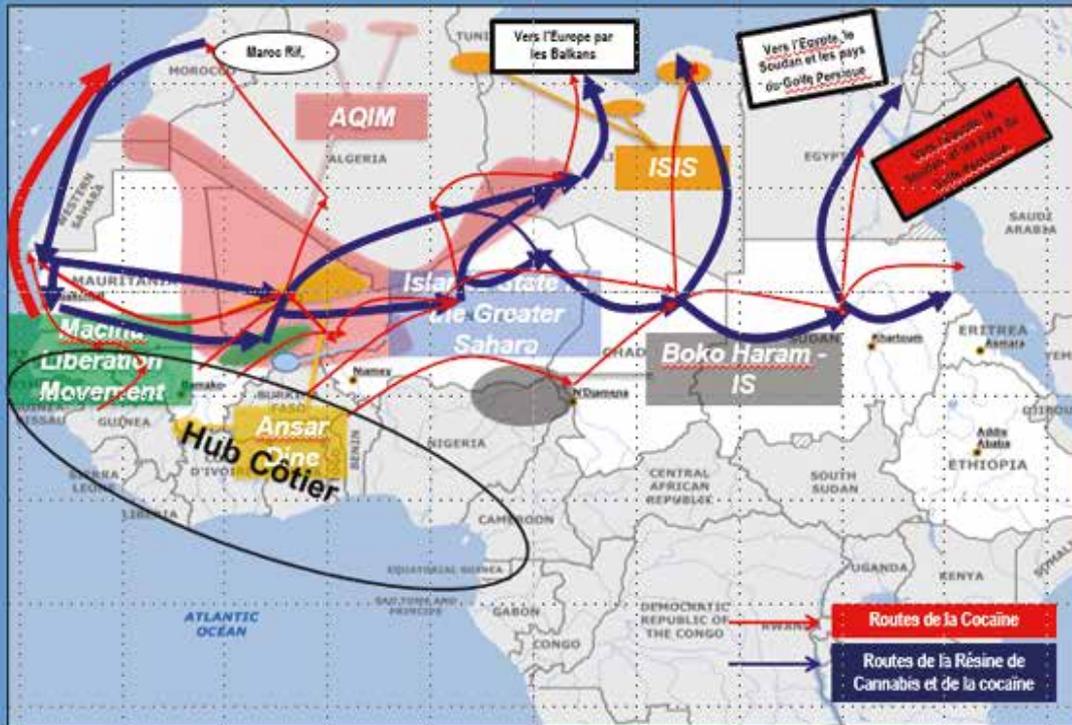
The convention on cross-border co-operation in the ECOWAS area, approved in 2006, was adopted by the Community Parliament in May 2007. The development of corridors and infrastructure for regional trade is important for integration and economic growth in West Africa. It is clear that removing trade barriers creates an enabling environment for the foreign direct investment flows. Cross-border criminal networks could potentially benefit from the new opportunities of regional integration. Hence, a balance must be struck between transport and trade facilitation and control measures for strengthening international cooperation and security. The fight against the various threats to regional stability (fight against terrorism, arms, drugs, etc.) is at the heart of the ECOWAS agenda on security and governance.

### Joint Approach Security / Regional cooperation

Strengthening of regional cooperation can go with a consolidated security approach. The extent of the threats in the region calls for an appropriate response. These include : strengthening security coordination and cooperation through harmonization of relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks; and sharing information through the operationalization of sharing platforms such as WAPIS. The objective of a consolidated security approach includes the exchange and interconnection of data on organized cross-border crime and drug trafficking.

In particular, the capacities of law enforcement professionals must be strengthened, particularly in the concerted management of frontiers in view of their porosity. The Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan Project has put in place important training program for operational techniques in the fight against drugs.

## Connexion entre la menace terroriste et le trafic de drogues en Afrique de l'Ouest, 2016



Based on UNODC ROSEN Research and Awareness Section, 2016

More than 100 policemen, gendarmes and magistrates from countries in the region were involved. Furthermore, cocaine seizures have increased by 95% at airports since the AIRCOP project (Airport Communication Programme). In addition, the head of an international network of drug trafficking in Mali was arrested in October 2016.

### Relevant Networks

In the area of regional cooperation, the Network of Central Authorities of West Africa and Prosecutors against organized crime (WACAP), a major instrument of regional judicial cooperation, supported by legal instruments is essential in the fight against cross-border crime. There is also Inter-Agency Asset Recovery Network for West Africa (ARINWA). But also, the Network of National Institutions for the Fight against Corruption in West Africa (NACIWA) as well as the Regional Platform for Judicial Cooperation for the Sahel countries (Sahel-Platform) and the G5 Sahel Security Cooperation Platform (PCMS).

To date, there are 17 cases of extradition as well as 92 requests for mutual legal assistance. Mali and Burkina Faso received assistance in the review and updating of international cooperation laws. In the judicial field, 382 prosecutors, judges and judicial police officers have been trained.

### Conclusion

Support for the development of regional cooperation mechanisms is at the heart of UNODC's assistance approach which has opted for a regional approach to better combat transnational crime networks. Cooperation within ECOWAS countries and beyond must build on the achievements to ensure maximum effectiveness of the programs implemented in the region.

## INTERVIEW

### Veronic WRIGHT, Senior Legal Advisor – UNODC

*“ Since WACAP creation there has been a steady progression in the amount of cooperation between countries ”*



*Veronic Wright is the Head of the Justice Section at UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa. She is also the Coordinator of the West African network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP) responsible for facilitating Regional cooperation on criminal matters between countries of West Africa; the network consists of the 15 ECOWAS Members States plus Mauritania. Veronic analyses regional cooperation practices and legislation in West Africa countries.*

■ **Considering the WACAP Network, and regarding the ECOWAS Conventions, does the Legal environment favour a good regional cooperation?**

Yes definitely, the WACAP Network provides a platform for efficiently, facilitating the realisation of the obligations that arise in ECOWAS conventions on mutual legal assistance as well as the ECOWAS conventions on extradition and all international conventions or treaties and bilateral ones that relate to the matter of international cooperation and criminal matters ; and that include the UN convention against transnational organised crime otherwise called the Palermo convention, the Convention against corruption and the 1998 Drug convention on illicit trafficking of psychotropic substances.

WACAP platform brings together prosecutors who prosecute drug trafficking and others forms of organised crime as well as officials of the central authorities or departments in their countries that are responsible for dealing with requests for mutual legal assistance and/or extradition and other forms of cooperation to have a safe environment.

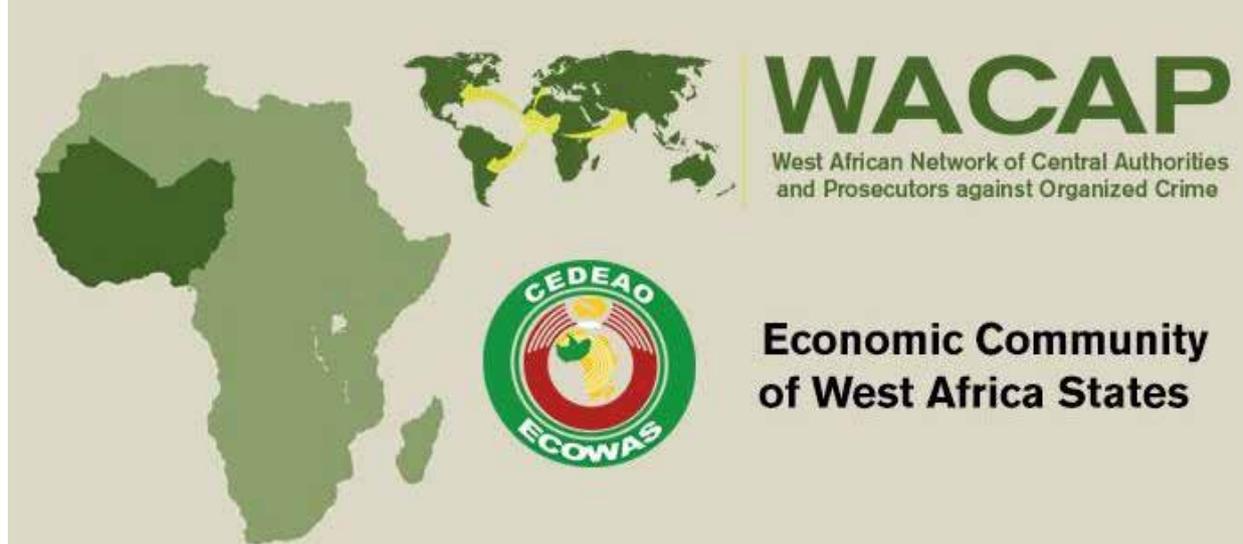
We operate in a region where different countries have different legal traditions. Anglophone countries rely on the Common Law legal tradition, whereas Francophone and Lusophone countries operate mostly the Droit napoléonien Civil Law as well as Mauritania which is a mix between civil and Islamic Law. These different types of legal systems sometimes create some confusion because practitioners are not always sure that the practice they know is relevant in another country.

■ **What progresses have been made since the creation of the WACAP Network?**

The progresses made since WACAP creation are remarkable. When we have the first meeting the question we raised was “How many of you have ever sent a request to a neighbouring country or received one?” and the answer throughout the room was: “Oh yes, we receive from the US, or France, the UK, but not really from Senegal, Abidjan, Cap-vert or Nigeria”. Now we see a steady progression in the amount of cooperation between countries of the region and that’s very encouraging.



*Veronic (in the middle) during the training on the Law and the Criminal procedure, Cap-Vert, February 2017*



We also see a gradual improvement in the knowledge of the focal points and other magistrates and prosecutors in the region on the subject of International cooperation and criminal matters and also how to ensure effective prosecution of international organised crime. Therefore, we see a boldness, more confidence in the practitioners that we have been dealing with. I think we should be proud of what we have achieved so far.

#### ■ Can you mention concrete cases of anti-narcotics-cooperation?

Yes, there are concrete cases, for extradition and mutual legal assistance. we collect data, we collect information from our focal points, at least once a year. Generally, all and each of those cases involve drugs, where they are coming from and where they are going.

I remember last year when I was in Accra, there was an extradition of a drug dealer who was traced from Ghana to the United Kingdom. The extradition took some time but was successful. There are other extradition cases dealing with drugs, especially between Nigeria and Ghana, or other parts of the region.

#### ■ Any other issues to be addressed for a more efficient international cooperation?

Les pays sont à des niveaux différents de mise en œuvre législative en ce qui concerne l'obligation à coopérer. Certains pays ont des lois dépassées et c'est l'une principales difficultés à une coopération réellement effective.

Countries are at different levels in terms of legislative implementation of obligations to cooperate. You have some countries whose laws are out to date, so that's one major difficulty that makes it difficult for countries to effectively cooperate.

Secondly is the lack of knowledge of the law and practice of international cooperation, which UNODC through WACAP, the Sahel Platform and ARINWA, is doing a lot to resolve by working with countries to build their capacities.

Thirdly is the issue of resources. Even when they learn, they know the law, if they do not have the resources, if they do not have computers and a steady internet to do the research and to send the documentation on, the process cannot be efficient.

International cooperation can be effective if done fastly because criminals are so much ahead of Law enforcement and the judiciary.

There is also the fact that in terms of extradition, and this links directly to the archaic nature of the legislation, they are still countries that do not extradite their nationals. And there is a problem there; yes, we have the rule that if you don't extradite you should prosecute. But that means that resources should be expended to bring the witnesses and evidence, to ensure that the chain of custody of the evidence is not broken, and that also can complicate matters.

They are some countries that still have very serious punishments that are considered to be against the Fundamental Principles of the Human Rights, like the death penalty, and then the neighboring countries will not extradite. So, these are areas that maybe at the level of ECOWAS need to be worked out.

ECOWAS has done a lot of progress in terms of trade and integration and the free movement of people, and I think that needs to also be realized at the level of crime prevention and criminal justice, and that it should be also a little bit easier to be able to extradite and also to exchange information to effectively prosecute crimes. Because with the movement of people, also comes the movement of crimes, the regionalization, internationalization of crime.

So those are some of the problems I see that can undermine the effective cooperation in the region.

*Interview by Amadou Mansour DIOUF*

\* A regional meeting was organized in November 2016 on Regional Cooperation in West Africa (See recommendations on page 22).

## POLICE COOPERATION WITHIN ECOWAS

### The West African Police Information System (WAPIS)



Left to right: Olivier Bertrand the WAPIS outgoing manager and Richard Gotwe, current WAPIS manager

*In the last decade, West Africa has found itself caught in some of the world's major criminal/ terrorist phenomena, which include cocaine trafficking, trans-Saharan terrorist activity, South-North human trafficking, vehicle theft and arms trafficking. Yet, the region is striving to pursue its development and under the umbrella of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is working towards the creation of a free movement zone, an initiative that is a central component of the region's integration and development strategy.*

In this complex context of threatened development, it is critical that law enforcement authorities across West Africa efficiently cooperate with each other and with the European and global law enforcement community. One key element in building this capacity is the ability of law enforcement agencies to electronically collect, store, analyze and share critical police data, including on wanted persons, drug trafficking, stolen and lost travel documents, stolen motor vehicles and firearms. Without this basic law enforcement tool, efficiently combating maritime crime, trans-border criminal networks and terrorism is unrealistic.

#### Addressing common vulnerabilities

In 2005, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed on a protocol for the establishment of a Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Bureau (CIIB) in order to support ECOWAS Member States in their fight against transnational organized

crime. In 2010, during a symposium in Brussels jointly organized by INTERPOL and the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, the West African Chiefs of Police declared that, in order to meet the challenges faced by the region, countries needed an automated police information system connected at both regional and global levels.

Following this common position, the European Union decided to grant funding to INTERPOL for the development and implementation of a police information system for ECOWAS member states and Mauritania. The WAPIS Programme was born.

The WAPIS Programme aims to build this capacity and create centralized police databases at national level in each of the 15 West African countries, and to link them together in a regional data sharing platform under the aegis of ECOWAS. Mauritania has also been invited to join the Programme. The WAPIS Programme will thus allow for the routine creation of electronic police data. Apart from the pilot countries: Benin, Ghana, Mali and Niger there is currently virtually none in the remaining west African countries and the sharing of police data, both regionally through the future WAPIS regional platform, and internationally through INTERPOL channels.

The development of West African States depends on the ability of the region's law enforcement agencies to commonly and efficiently address its major security threats. The national and regional police infrastructure being developed by the WAPIS Programme is a key element to strengthening this capacity.

## A Police-to-police cooperation Mechanism

After the first phase (September 2012 – September 2013) devoted to scoping, training and planning of the WAPIS Programme, in which several consultative meetings/workshops were held in Member States, the Programme started its field implementation in October 2013. As of 1st June 2015, the second phase of the Programme had achieved the following.

- facilitated the creation of WAPIS National Committee for inter-agency cooperation in the four pilot countries (Benin, Ghana Mali and Niger);
- procured, installed and provided training for the digitization and field-based insertion of paper-based police data into an electronic system for the purpose of data preservation and future insertion into national WAPIS database;
- defined the technical specifications for and developed the software of the national WAPIS databases.
- ensured support of and partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

By October 2015, the WAPIS Programme had further achieved:

- the setting up of the WAPIS data centers in the four pilot countries;
- training on personal data protection and installation of national WAPIS databases in all four pilot countries;
- inauguration of the national WAPIS database in Accra, Bamako, Cotonou and Niamey;
- Setup of the WAPIS Strategic Orientation Committee.

The current (second) phase of the WAPIS Programme consists in establishing national police databases in four pilot countries in order to develop an implementation strategy for full roll-out of the Programme in the region's 15+1 States. Following the upcoming completion of this proof of concept phase, the third phase of the WAPIS Programme will:

1. consolidate and expand the use of the national police databases created in all four pilot countries;

2. create similar national police databases in the remaining ECOWAS Member States, by providing the legal, operational and technical support and training;
3. develop and establish, in cooperation with ECOWAS and its Member States, the regional police data-sharing platform, including through the provision of legal, operational and technical support and training;
4. foster ownership of the WAPIS infrastructure at national and regional levels and hand it over to national authorities and the ECOWAS Commission.

## Building regional efficiency

In light of the above, it is clear that the third phase of the WAPIS Programme is the core of the Programme's implementation. Once completed it is expected that:

1. ECOWAS Member States will have increased their capacity to collect, centralize, manage, share and analyze its police data;
2. ECOWAS Member States will have increased their capacity to exchange their police data within the region and beyond;
3. ECOWAS will have acquired a better understanding of criminal and terrorist threats affecting the region;
4. The West African law enforcement community will be better connected to the global law enforcement community through enhanced global information sharing.

**Mohamed YANSANEH INTERPOL**  
**WAPIS Programme Coordinator at the ECOWAS**  
**Commission**



Scanning of a truck

## PROFILE

### Mariam Diallo Zorome,

Permanent Secretary of the National Committee for the fight against drugs (Burkina Faso)

“Consumption of illicit drugs is increasing in Burkina Faso”



*Ms. Mariam Diallo Zoromé is the Permanent Secretary of the National Committee for the fight against Drugs (CNLD) in Burkina Faso. This Police Commissioner well-known in Burkina Faso, a gender specialist, is engaged in the fight against drug trafficking and illicit substances. She was introduced by the Information Bulletin of the Support Project for the ECOWAS Action Plan on Drugs. Portrait of an experienced police officer.*

**"The absence of specialized rehabilitation centres for drug addicts is a major problem in Burkina Faso"**

Despite appearances, Ms Zorome Diallo is a sociolinguist by training, thus, she is knowledgeable in languages and holds a certificate of DEA (diploma for advanced studies) in this field. Additionally, she also holds a bachelor degree in Ethnology. However, on her daily work, it is not the latest developments in the linguistic science she has to deal with, but the fight against drugs. The law and order appeal was stronger: "I really wanted to be useful to my country and I aspired to protect the weakest and I believe that is what has directed me to the police. " she explains. She became a Divisional Commissioner.

#### **An experienced police officer**

The official record of the current Permanent Secretary of the National Committee for the Fight Against Drugs (CNLD) in Burkina Faso speaks for itself: Police Commissioner, Gender and Security Specialist, Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Administration Territorial Co-ordinator, and then Project

Officer, Governor of the North-Central Region, and Coordinator of the gender project for gender mainstreaming in the Police.

This strong woman knows the police well for having climbed the ladder. Chief of the Miners' and Morals Brigades at the Central Police Station of Ouagadougou; Head of the Economic Brigade at the Ouagadougou Central Police Station; Commissaire d'Arrondissement of the commune of Baskuy in Ouagadougou. She was also Deputy Commissioner of the commune of Boulmiougou in Ouagadougou. Additionally, she served as Director of the Training and Documentation Division of the local police.

She has been the head of CNLD since 2016. She explains that the Permanent Secretariat is its executive body and, as such, "has the role of coordinating and implementing the national anti-drug policy and the task is to coordinate the prevention, control, treatment and social reintegration of illicit drug



trafficking and drug abuse at the national level. " "Implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly" is also part of her responsibilities.

### Drugs: a rising consumption

When asked about the circulation of drugs in Burkina Faso, she sounded the alarm. She warned that "There is a considerable increase in the consumption of illicit substances in Burkina Faso, mainly narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, especially in schools." According to her, the absence of specialized rehabilitation centre for drug addicts constitutes a major problem in Burkina.

However, the country has a National Drug Policy, a Drug Strategy, with the objective of combating the trafficking of psychotropic substances and the illicit circulation of street drugs. Burkina Faso has also adopted other instruments such as the Law on the Drugs Code since 29 April 1999 and ratified the 1961, 1972 and 1988 Conventions, she said.

### For a more dynamic regional cooperation

Asked about the state of cross-border regional cooperation, the Permanent Secretary replied without hesitation:

"Although regional cooperation, has a great potential, but in its application, it remains very timid and requires a strategy that would make it much more dynamic. "

As such, initiatives as the implementation of the Police Information System for West Africa (INTERPOL) (with the support of the European Union) offer encouraging prospects for strengthening this system Sub-regional cooperation in the medium term.

She also welcomes the existence of regional forums such as the Network of Central Authorities of West Africa and Prosecutors Against Organized Crime (WACAP) or the West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU), in which Burkina Faso is actively participating.

Regarding the ECOWAS Action Plan to Support the fight against drugs, implemented by UNODC, the Divisional Representative believes that "it enables States to orientate and develop their strategic plans having in mind sub-regional vision ". This project is particularly willing to support an NGO to advocate for schoolchildren (high school pupils) in order to raise awareness and protect them from drug dependence.

### Increase in drug use calls for training and sensitization of vulnerable groups

Thus, the increase in drug use requires the training and sensitization of the vulnerable groups (school environment, for example). Civil society actors must remain mobilized in the face of this scourge. With actors like the Divisional, the fight against illicit substances combines prevention at the level of users with the fight against criminal networks.

*Take care of yourself!*

*By Amadou Mansour DIOUF  
(UNODC)*

## LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

# THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

*At the regional and international level, instruments exist to facilitate good cooperation between different entities fighting against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in general. Here is a selection of relevant elements of this normative framework.*

### ■ United Nations against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention 2000)

**Article 16. Extradition:** *“If a State Party that makes extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty receives a request for extradition from another State Party with which it has no extradition treaty, it may consider this Convention the legal basis for extradition in respect of any offence to which this article applies.”*

#### **Article 20 (al.2). Special investigative techniques:**

*“For the purpose of investigating the offences covered by this Convention, States Parties are encouraged to conclude, when necessary, appropriate bilateral or multilateral agreements or arrangements for using such special investigative techniques in the context of cooperation at the international level. Such agreements or arrangements shall be concluded and implemented in full compliance with the principle of sovereign equality of States and shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the terms of those agreements or arrangements.”*

**Article 27. (Al.3). Law enforcement cooperation:** “States Parties shall endeavour to cooperate within their means to respond to transnational organized crime committed through the use of modern technology.”

**Article 28 (Al.2):** Collection, exchange and analysis of information on the nature of organized crime: “States Parties shall consider developing and sharing analytical expertise concerning organized criminal activities with each other and through international and regional organizations. For that purpose, common definitions, standards and methodologies should be developed and applied as appropriate.”

### ■ United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)

**Article 7. Mutual legal assistance 1:** The Parties shall afford one another, pursuant to this article, the widest measure of mutual legal assistance in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings in relation to criminal offences established in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1.

### ■ ECOWAS Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal matters (29 July 1992)

**Chapitre II - Article 2:** “Member States undertake to afford to each other, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention, the widest measure of mutual assistance in proceedings or investigations in respect of offences the punishments of which, at the time of the request for assistance, falls within the jurisdiction of the judicial authorities of the requesting Member State.”

### ■ Extradition Convention between the ECOWAS Member States, 6 August 1994

**Chapitre II – Article 2.** *“The Member States undertake to grant each other, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention, the widest possible legal assistance in all proceedings.”*

**AArticle 2. Principles of Extradition:** “States undertake to surrender to each other, subject to the provisions and conditions laid down in this Convention, all persons within the territory of the requested State who are wanted for prosecution for an offence or who are wanted by the legal authorities of the requesting State for the carrying out of a sentence.”

### ■ Directive No. 07/2002 / CM / UEMOA on the fight against money laundering. Signed at Cotonou, on 19 September 2002. Entry into force: 19 September 2002

#### **Article 40. Measures to strengthen international cooperation.**

*“Member States are required to take the necessary steps to cooperate to the fullest extent possible at Community level and with other States at international level for the purpose of exchanging information, Investigations and proceedings relating to provisional measures, as well as the confiscation of money laundering-related instruments and products for the purpose of extradition and mutual technical assistance.”*

# FIGHT AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

## A response through regional networks

*The growing flow of activities related to transnational organized crime faced by West Africa for more than a decade reminds us of the urgent need for a coordinated subregional response and the establishment of Harmonized legal frameworks. Several initiatives backed by various international partners, including UNODC, have been implemented to foster the emergence of such a response.*

**The West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime (WACAP)**, launched in May 2013, is a platform to build the capacity of judges and prosecutors to address organized and serious crime, including justice sector responses to terrorism. It also facilitates international legal assistance at the regional and interregional levels. Focal points include all 15 ECOWAS countries plus Mauritania and Chad as observers. The ECOWAS Commission and the ECOWAS Court of Justice are important stakeholders.

**The Regional Judicial Cooperation Platform for the Sahel countries (Sahel Platform)** was created in June 2010. The Platform brings together national focal points from Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal and further supports sub-regional cooperation in the areas of counter-organized crime and terrorism prevention. Furthermore, in 2015, UNODC supported the development of the PCMS to enhance cooperation on the field of security between the G5 Sahel.

**The Asset Recovery Interagency Network for West Africa (ARINWA)** was launched in November 2014. Drawing on the experiences from the Camden Asset Recovery Interagency Network (CARIN) and the Asset Recovery Interagency Network for Southern Africa (ARINSA), ARINWA provides policy guidance and training on asset forfeiture, encourages exchanges of best practices and facilitates operational cooperation.

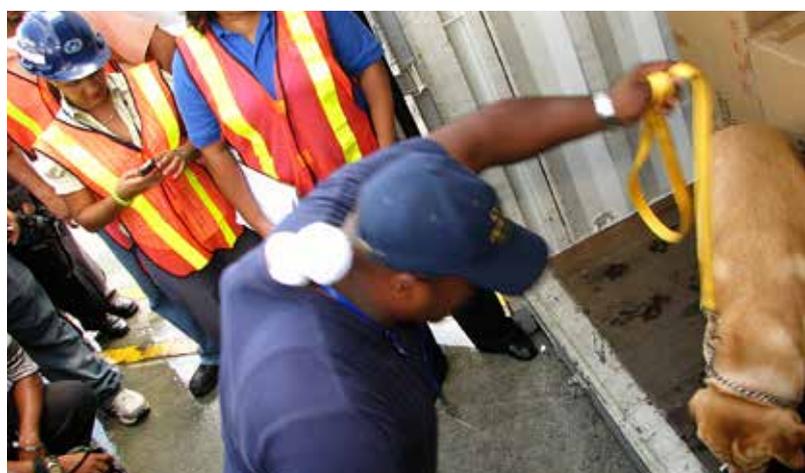
**The Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA)** The Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA) was created in 2010 in order to promote coordination and cooperation between anti-corruption authorities in West Africa.

**West African Coast Initiative (WACI)** In order to better address the menace of transnational organized crimes, including drug trafficking, UNODC, DPA/ UNOWAS, DPKO and INTERPOL launched in 2009 the West African Coast Initiative (WACI), to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa. WACI strives to create Transnational Crime Units (TCU), meant

to enhance national and international coordination, as well as to enable intelligence-based investigations. TCUs are elite inter-agency units, trained and equipped to fight transnational organized crime and to coordinate their activities in an international framework.

### **Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP)**

In the last few years, West Africa has progressively become one of the world's major transit areas for cocaine trafficking between Latin America and Europe. To combat this growing trend, UNODC, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) have joined forces along with twenty-four countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Caribbean in the design and execution of the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP). Funded by the European Union, the programme aims to facilitate joint investigations and rapid exchange of operational information between law enforcement agencies to promote intelligence-led investigations for intercepting drugs in participating countries.



Container checking operation

## Security and regional cross-border cooperation

### Using forensics in the fight against drugs

*At the Abuja conference on Regional Cooperation in November 2016, the experts demonstrated the value of using the vast resources of forensics to make cross-border crime investigations more effective. But what is forensic science and what is it used for in the fight against drugs and other illicit substances?*



Melinda Manceda (UNODC) together with members of the Forensic Ivorian Police

*[Forensic science is defined as « all the techniques used by the judiciary and the police and gendarmerie forces to prove the crime and identify its perpetrator (anthropometry, forensics, toxicology, etc). [Source: Larousse]*

#### Security Issues

Forensic science should play a greater role in investigations while the relevance of confession should be reduced, particularly considering the fragility of testimony.

« From the beginning to the end of forensic activities, it is essential to be able to demonstrate every step taken to ensure the “traceability” and the “continuity” of the evidences from the crime scene to the court. » [Source: Crime Scene and Material Indices Awareness of Non-Specialized Personnel, UNODC, Scientific and Laboratory Section UNODC, 2009]

The implementation of the forensic program aims at guaranteeing the security of ECOWAS nationals through modern scientific means; in strict compliance with fundamental human rights. The identification of perpetrators, the collection and analysis of crime scene evidence and related documentation can all be much more productive with the resources of the technical and scientific police. Establishing a controlled “forensic chain” is the goal.

Taking consideration of the instruments and the latest methods of PTS must even be integrated into the security sector reforms and the judicial system in the ECOWAS countries. The reliability of the results of police and judicial investigations would be improved.

#### Inventory

The evaluation missions carried out by the ECOWAS Action Plan Support Program show that most countries in West Africa have an investigative unit and/ or laboratory for on-scene investigations crime and fingerprint analysis. Sometimes additional services are provided, including ballistics, document review, explosion investigation digital device analysis, and so forth....

However, drug analyses are sometimes included in laboratory services but are carried out separately by entities under the supervision of another agency (e.g. National Agency) or Ministry.

In most cases, premises and facilities are reduced to their simplest form and cannot provide a first level of forensic services. The implementation of more sophisticated methods and technologies involves updating the equipment according to the standards required for this type of work. Technical adaptation to new forms of organized crime requires a real change.

Legal aspects must also be considered because failure to comply with existing laws and regulations may lead to situations where evidence cannot be used in court. To this must be added the respect due to human dignity in the collection of evidence.

#### Qualitative changes

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministry of the Interior and Security created, in 2009, as part of the National Police Reform and a cyber security strategy, the (Department of Informatics and Technological Traces) (DITT); as well as the Digital Criminalistics Laboratory (DCL), responsible for the extraction and analysis of digital data. GIZ supports the reform of the Ivorian police.

In Senegal, in January 2017 the Director of Territorial Administration, on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security announced the establishment of a forensic science unit equipped with a ballistics analysis laboratory during the current year (2017).

In Niger, a judicial and criminal documentation service was set up in 2015 within the Laboratory of Scientific Police in Niamey.

The ARTECAO project implemented in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, aims at strengthening the techniques of investigation, protection, collection and analysis of material evidence.

However, despite the existence of Technical and scientific police in West Africa, forensic units and laboratories are underutilized by law enforcement and judicial institutions. Evidence and analysis are also underused in investigations and procedures.

#### Towards a sub-regional network

The forensic program of the Drug Support Project assesses needs in order to build capacity in the analysis of precursors and the crime scene. According to the experts, forensic resources could be used in an innovative way by investigators against money laundering, drug trafficking or illicit financial flows. The creation of a West African Forensic Network remains a major challenge.

*Melinda MANCEBO*  
Forensics Programme Officer (UNODC)

*Aissatou B. DIALLO*  
National Project Officer in Forensics (UNODC)

## THE ARTECAO PROJECT: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL CAPACITIES

The objective of the Project “Support for the strengthening of the technical and scientific police force in West Africa” (ARTECAO in French) is “to achieve a regional awareness of the essential role of the Technical and scientific police in the search for evidence and its effective use in judicial proceedings.” The ARTECAO project has two components. The first one with reference to Benin concerns the MODELIZATION of the Technical and Scientific Police, and the second with the objective of setting up a regional expertise centre in Côte d'Ivoire. The project will support “the revision of regulatory texts, the implementation of a training plan, and the adoption of procedural rules for international operational exchange. Finally, one of the objectives remains the “training of specialists from all ECOWAS countries. The ARTECAO project, funded by France, will adopt a coherent approach with financial technical partners: the European Union, USA, Interpol, German GIZ, and UNODC.... ECOWAS, the West African Police Chiefs' Committee (WAPCC), UNODC and INTERPOL wish to develop a regional approach to strengthen the forensic capacities of the Internal Security Forces. Coordinated by Emmanuel Prat, this project has trained to date (June 2017), 1949 people in Africa.



*New equipments of the Senegalese scientific police*

## PROJECT NEWS

Activities of the ECOWAS Action Plan Support Project are ongoing. A major regional conference was held in Abidjan with world-renowned addictions specialists. Here is a report.

### A HIGH-LEVEL SCIENTIFIC CONSULTATION ON ADDICTIONS IN WEST AFRICA



*From left to right: The ECOWAS Official, Ms. Raymonde Goudou-Coffie, Minister of Health, Mr. Hamed Bakayoko, Minister of Interior, Mr. Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative, Mr. Cheikh Touré, UNODC Project Coordinator*

The Regional Office for West and Central Africa of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has organized an important "Conference on the Prevention and Treatment of Drug Use Disorders in West Africa", from 20 to 21 February 2017, in Abidjan, in Côte d'Ivoire. This conference was organized as part of the "project Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa" that is entirely funded by the European Union.

During two days, 60 researchers, academics, health facility managers, addictions prevention and treatment specialists, as well as drug control officials, including civil society actors, held discussions around the latest results of scientific research on disorders caused by the use of psychoactive substances. The participants came from ECOWAS Member States other African

countries (Kenya, Morocco ...), Europe (France, Belgium, Portugal ...), Australia and USA.

The State Minister for Homeland Security HE Mr. Hamed Bakayoko, and Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, Ms. Raymonde Goudou-Coffie, who chaired the opening Ceremony, advocated for effective responses, including the establishment of an Integrated National Drug Control Plan for Côte d'Ivoire and the establishment of specialized centers for drug dependence management.

The Abidjan meeting was an important turning point in the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan as it is the first of its kind in Africa since the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the world drug problem in April 2016.

\*The next Newsletter Issue will be dedicated to that important activity

## NEW COMPETENCIES

**The team based in Dakar welcomed three new colleagues, they are very experienced in their respective fields.**

### Aissatou Boubacar DIALLO

*National Project Officer in forensics (November 2016)*



After graduating from the « Ecole Supérieure Polytechnique » in Dakar, she obtained a diploma in Laboratory Engineering - Chemical

Engineering / Applied Biology and a Bachelor's Degree in Hygiene Safety and Environment. A Masters in Genetics from the Faculty of Science and Technology at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar followed. Aissatou has worked with several renowned laboratories, notably with the « Institut Pasteur » where she participated in cancer research projects with the « Institut Joliot-Curie ». It was at the Human Identification Laboratory of the Center for Diagnostics and Research in Molecular Medicine (CDRMM) that she was trained in forensic science by Salt Lake City's Sorenson Forensics. Her know-how in scientific analysis and her experience in the field on Senegalese crime scenes will be of great value to the ECOWAS countries and Mauritania in the fight against crime, in general, drug trafficking and related crimes in particular. She is based in Dakar and will work in close collaboration with Melinda Mancebo, the forensic regional expert based in Abuja.

### Serigne Assane DRAME

*Legal Officer (March 2017)*



Serigne Assane Dramé is a trained magistrate since 2003. He was a sitting judge then an investigating judge and then president of departmental court. He was also an adviser

to the Court of Appeal of Saint-Louis. He has also been Secretary-general of the Senegalese Committee for Human Rights (CSDH), the national human rights institution of Senegal. He was the Coordinator of the National Observatory for the respect of human rights in the extractive sector and member of the National Advisory

Council of the National Commission of Governance of Senegal. Mr. Dramé is an expert in human rights, and has conducted training workshops in partnership with civil society organizations. Co-author of the book "Mining and Human Rights in Senegal". He is also the author of "Comparative study between the ECOWAS Mining Directive and the mining codes of West African countries revised since 2009". He has several international certificates in comparative human rights law.

### Jullien WOIRIN

*Programme and Liaison Officer (April 2017)*

Jullien first joined the United Nations in 2004 as Coordination Analyst within the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia. Two years later, he went on to assume similar functions in Mauritius, actively promoting inter-agency cooperation in the field of Democratic Governance and Human Rights. During that period, Jullien took the lead in the design and implementation of various Police/Prison Reform initiatives, among which a joint UNDP-UNODC project which sought to support the Mauritius Police in its transition from a "Police Force" to a "Police Service". In 2010, Jullien took up his first appointment with UNODC as Associate Expert in Criminal Justice Reform, primarily in support of an EU-funded programme which aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Mauritian Criminal Justice System to prosecute and detain maritime piracy suspects in accordance with international Rule of Law / Human Rights standards. He then continued in Ethiopia with UNODC as Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, where he accompanied the final development stages of UNODC's first National Integrated Programme for the country. He worked with the United Nations Operation Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (of ex-combatants) Officer in Abidjan, and for UNODC as Project Coordinator for the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), working closely with national counterparts toward the establishment of a specialized, multi-agency Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TCU). Between 2000 and 2003, prior to his joining the UN System, Jullien also had a chance to work for the Embassy of France in Namibia, as translator, then with the Embassy of France in the United States, as Deputy Cultural Attaché in charge of educational cooperation. Jullien holds a Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies in "Relations Interculturelles Francophones et Anglophones".

## THROUGH THE MEDIA

Here is a selection of articles on cross-border crime related to drug trafficking in West Africa. The sources of the texts are mentioned for all intents and purposes.

### West Africa : President Sirleaf Calls for Strong Drug Regulation in Ecowas Region



Tramadol Seizure

11.04.2017 - President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has challenged ECOWAS Member States to strengthen their drug regulatory authorities and their powers to enforce drug laws and regulations to curb the counterfeiting of drugs in the region. "All of our countries will need to do more; all of our countries will need to strengthen drug regulatory authorities and their powers to enforce drug laws and regulations," the Liberian leader emphasized. President Sirleaf made the call at the opening of the Delocalized Meeting of the Joint Committee on Health & Social Services and Trade, Customs and Free Movement of the ECOWAS Parliament held in Monrovia on Monday. [...]

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201704120782.html>

#### Tramadol king of Pain Relief Drug Currently Abused in Sierra Leone

19.05.2017- Sierra Leone remains a hub for trafficking for drugs to Europe, North America and Asia there is also an increase in the consumption of heroin and cocaine. Major drugs used and trafficked in Sierra Leone include "cannabis", heroin and cocaine. Cannabis is the most

widely used drug in Sierra Leone, while cocaine is used by affluent people, Sierra Leone is also getting notorious for exporting cannabis to other nations both far and near. On June 2016, the French customs coastguard service together with the Spanish customs patrol teams arrested a ship flying the flag of Sierra Leone in the Mediterranean, and seized 2.1 tons of cannabis resin concealed in a secured cache," who is behind it remains a myth as nothing was said about it back in Sierra Leone, it's an open secret the high and might are involved, but they are the untouchables. Tranquilizers such as Phenergan and diazepam are also being abused in Sierra Leone; diazepam is widely used by call-girls, who often administer it into the drinks and food of their wealthy client and steal away with their valuables like cell phones, watches, and money. [...]

Source: <https://wadpn.blogspot.com/2017/05/tramadol-king-of-pain-relief-drug.html>

#### The African Union Second Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population And Drug Control

02.05.2017- The Second Session of The Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC-2) of the African Union (AU) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from the 20-24th March 2017 under the theme “Youth, Health and Development: Overcoming the Challenges towards Harnessing the Demographic Dividend”. The youth population is growing rapidly in Africa and it is estimated that 68% of the population on the continent are under age 30. Hence, the AU Head of States and Government at their 26th Ordinary summit in Addis Ababa on 31st January, 2016 consider as a priority, and as also articulated in the AU Agenda 2063, critical investment to unleash the full potential of African youths to boost socioeconomic development. Within this context, drugs and drug control effort as it affects youth development is now being considered. [...]

Source: <https://wadpn.blogspot.com/2017/05/the-african-union-second-meeting-of.html>

### **More effective regional cooperation to counteract international drug trafficking in West Africa**

Abuja, 24.11.2016- The activities carried out by organized crime are transnational in nature and the West African region is not spared. In the next decade it is expected to develop the economies of West Africa and qualitative transformation of transport infrastructure. To date, 24 transport programs of some 24 million USD are financed by the African Development Bank until 2030.

Not counting those financed by the European Union to facilitate cross-border movements. All these initiatives should facilitate the transport of goods and people across the subregion by promoting regional integration and thereby reducing poverty around the “corridors of development.” [...]

Source: <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/fr/2016-02-06-ecowas-regional-cooperation-abuja.html>

### **Terrorism: "The borders between Mali, Chad and Niger no longer exist in judicial matters"**

Faced with numerous attacks by jihadists and all sorts of trafficking, Niger, Mali and Chad signed an agreement on judicial cooperation on 9 May in Niamey. In the field of terrorism and drug trafficking, the agreement, signed Tuesday 9 by the Ministers of Justice of these three countries of the Sahelian band, provides several provisions. These include the establishment of international rogatory commissions, the exchange of judicial documents between States, the appearance of witnesses, experts and prosecutors and a co-operation in the field of extradition. “The borders between Mali, Chad and Niger no longer exist in judicial matters,” said Chadian Minister of Justice, Ahmat Mahamat Hassane, who welcomes “an historic agreement” in “the fight against terrorism and the Cross-border crime”.

Source: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/436857/politique/niger-mali-tchad-signent-accord/>





# CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS DRUG ACTION PLAN THROUGH EFFICIENT REGIONAL COOPERATION

22-24 November 2016 – Abuja, Nigeria

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We, ECOWAS law enforcement practitioners, gathered in Abuja (Nigeria), from 22 to 24 November 2016, under the framework of the Project to “Support the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa”, organized by UNODC, conscious about the stakes and challenges associated with drug trafficking and organized crime in West African Member States and beyond, are:

- Noticing that the use of drugs in West Africa is increasing, as the region has become a major hub for the transit, production and consumption of illicit substances;
  - Aware that networks of illicit drug trafficking and organized crime are constantly adapting to law enforcement and judicial efforts, through a diversification of routes and concealment methods;
  - Noting that these same criminal networks benefit from the principle of the free movement of goods and persons within the ECOWAS area;
  - Emphasizing that the information available suggests very probable links between drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism;
  - Aware that the porosity of borders calls into question the effectiveness of the enforcement of law enforcement in the fight against drug trafficking;
  - Noting the slow pace of harmonization of legal and operational mechanisms at the regional level, making the investigation and prosecution of transnational drug trafficking particularly problematic;
  - Aware of the operational and practical difficulties caused by the language barrier between countries, which is often an obstacle to effective collaboration;
  - Observing the obstacles to a more efficient intra-regional judicial cooperation;
  - Considering that the ECOWAS Plan of Action 2016-2020 constitutes a strong commitment of the countries of West Africa in the fight against drugs;
  - Convinced that the Abuja Conference provided an exceptional opportunity for sharing experiences and information to law enforcement officials from ECOWAS Member States; and
  - Noting the weakness of intra-regional mechanisms for information sharing between law enforcement agencies.
- Recommendations:**
- 1) Operationally**
- strengthening information-sharing platforms between law enforcement agencies on the activity of criminal networks, in order to take adequate and real-time measures to combat organized crime;
  - promotion of police-to-police cooperation;
  - relevant training on the fight against international drug trafficking, adapted to the regional and national context;
  - sustained investment by Member States in the provision of adequate equipment;
  - the implementation of joint operations between the competent services.
- 2) From a legal and judicial point of view**
- the harmonization of national legislation to remove the obstacles from reinvesting seized assets in the fight against organized crime;
  - strengthening judicial cooperation, in particular through the WACAP network;
  - Effective implementation of sub-regional conventions on international criminal cooperation (extradition, mutual legal assistance).
- 3) In terms of coordination**
- strengthening the capacities of inter-ministerial committees in each Member States in acting as facilitators for a more efficient cooperation at the national level between agencies with a mandate in countering drug trafficking and between ECOWAS Member States;
  - the regular holding of meetings, with the support of ECOWAS and UNODC.
- 4) From a forensic perspective**
- carrying out a regional inventory in order to establish the forensic areas of competence by country;
  - the organization of a discussion forum to develop a process for the accreditation and certification of scientific and technical forensic laboratories in the region, in order to comply with international standards and rules in this field;
  - better use of forensic resources in regional drug control operations;
  - the establishment of a West African network of forensic science, before June 2017, based on the Terms of Reference adapted to regional realities.

*Abuja, 24 November 2016*

## WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL COOPERATION



UNODC, in collaboration with ECOWAS, organized a "Conference in Support of the Implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan Against Drug Abuse through more effective Regional Cooperation", on 22-24 November 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria. This regional meeting was organized as part of the project Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa that is entirely funded by the European Union (Abuja Office). The conference brought together high-level law enforcement bodies (Police, Gendarmerie, Magistrate, etc.) from ECOWAS member states in order to exchange on the most effective ways to achieve a more efficient interstate cooperation against cross-border criminal networks connected to drug trade. Representatives of UNODC, the European Union and INTERPOL also attended the meeting. In addition, organizations such as the Support Project for Strengthening the Technical and Scientific Police Force in West Africa (Artecao), the Intergovernmental Group Action Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) were represented. High-quality communications addressed cross-border issues in the fight against drugs and organized crime networks. [For the resolutions of this meeting please see previous page]





“The Convention gives us a new tool to address the scourge of crime as a global problem. With enhanced international cooperation, we can have a real impact on the ability of international criminals to operate successfully and can help citizens everywhere in their often-bitter struggle for safety and dignity in their homes and communities.”

*Kofi Annan, Foreword to the United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime and the protocols thereto (New York, United Nations, 2004)*