



International and Regional Responses to Drug Trafficking in West Africa

A Preliminary Overview

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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the WACD.

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List of Abbreviations

AFRICOM	US Africa Command
AIRCOP	Airport Control Project
AML/CFT	Anti-money Laundering/Counter-terrorist Financing
AU	African Union
CCP	Container Control Programme
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DT	Drug Trafficking
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Police Office
FIUs	Financial Intelligence Units
G8+	Group of Eight
GIABA	Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (ECOWAS)
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IDU	Injection Drug Use
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBC	UN Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	UN Peacebuilding Fund
PRST	UN Security Council Presidential Statement
TOCU	Transnational Organised Crime Unit
UK	United Kingdom
UK DfID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
UK SOCA	United Kingdom's Special Organised Crime Agency
UN	United Nations
UNIOGBIS	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Cote D'Ivoire
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
UNSPM	UN Special Political Mission
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
INCSR	International Narcotics Control Strategy Report
WACI	West Africa Coast Initiative
WACSI	West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative
WCO	World Container Organization
WDR	World Development Report
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

Objective of the background paper

The main objective of this background paper is to develop a preliminary overview of i) the international, regional and national policy and operational responses that have been developed in response to drug trafficking in West Africa to date, and the types of drugs they target; ii) the implementation status of these initiatives; iii) the perceived impact of these responses to date, including the mechanisms that have been established to monitor and measure impact and effectiveness; and iv) the main multi- and bi-lateral partners engaged in supporting regional efforts to stem drug trafficking. The findings of the study were presented to the West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD), as part of its fact-finding work on the impact and response to drug trafficking in West Africa. Since a separate, in-depth paper on treatment services for drug users in West Africa is currently under development, the paper focuses predominantly on responding to trafficking rather than drug use.

Methodology and Structure

Due to time constraints, research for the paper was limited to a desk-based study of publicly available regional-level strategies, action plans, project documents, evaluation and assessment reports principally by multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations and other open-source documents. Official reports from the UN and other international bodies were also reviewed, and where possible, communication with organizations such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) helped bolster relevant sections. The researchers are cognizant of the fact that much of the work in this field is based on extensive consultations, advocacy, negotiation, harmonization, capacity building and consensus building to ensure compliance and adherence to, and implementation of ECOWAS protocols. Hence, further work on assessing what has been achieved in the region would be greatly enhanced by on-the-ground interviews with key actors, particularly at the national level.

The paper is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** provides an analysis of the main findings of the paper, placing specific emphasis on interdiction efforts, i.e. how international and regional actors have responded to drug trafficking in the region, and how issues key to effective policy formulation such as coordination and coherence, assessment of results, and deepening the knowledge base have been approached.
- **Section 2** of the paper provides an overview of the main findings of the review with a focus on:
 - International responses, covering the United Nations system, multi-lateral agencies such as the EU, the World Bank and the G8+, and specialized agencies such as Interpol and Europol. It also provides a

snapshot of the main bi-lateral actors involved in the response to drug trafficking in West Africa.

- Regional and sub-regional response architecture with a specific focus on the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, GIABA and the Mano River Union.
- A sample of on-going joint initiatives developed to respond to drug trafficking in the sub-region.

1. OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Over the past decade, countries across West Africa have had to deal with a rise in the trafficking of illicit substances, particularly cocaine and heroin, and increasingly methamphetamines. The choice of West Africa as a trafficking route has placed pressure on specific countries and exacerbated existing challenges such as crime and corruption. While many countries in West Africa are overcoming obstacles to development and experiencing consecutive years of economic growth, the sub-region remains one of the poorest in the world, with all but three of the sixteen West African states figuring on the United Nations list of least developed countries (LDCs). Although a decline in trafficking has been reported since 2009, recent cocaine seizures in Ghana and arrests of security officers in Sierra Leone and Liberia on trafficking charges, coupled with the discovery of methamphetamine labs in Nigeria are indicators of the on-going problem of trafficking in the sub-region. High unemployment levels, particularly among the youth who make up the bulk of the population in most countries, remain a challenge for national and regional actors intent on responding to drug trafficking, particularly if the illicit drug market remains one of the few income generating activities available.

Until the mid-2000s, drug trafficking in West Africa was not perceived as a major threat. However, in response to several developments, including the continuing flow of cocaine and heroin from South America and South Asia through the region en route to Europe and the United States, as well as the rise of the terrorist threat following the 2001 attacks, external actors began to pay more attention to what was happening in the sub-region. The involvement of high-level public officials and members of security forces in trafficking cases in several countries in the late 2000s as well as the alleged use of the spoils of drug money to finance increasingly expensive electoral campaigns suggested that trafficking was placing additional pressure on already weak governance systems in the sub-region. In addition to these governance challenges, porous borders and weak institutions were facilitating or nurturing the drug trade. Reports of increased levels of consumption of hard drugs across the sub-region coincided with this increased attention, as did political upheaval in countries such as Guinea-Bissau and Mali, and a rise in extremism in some of the poorest and most marginalized areas of West Africa. The drug trade has played either a direct or indirect role in these situations.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Since the mid-2000s a broad range of policy and operational responses have been adopted to respond to drug trafficking in West Africa (see Timeline in Figure 3 below). The majority of these responses stem from commitments under relevant treaties and conventions, from international bodies such as the United Nations (Security Council, Peacebuilding Commission, Special Political Missions and Peacekeeping Operations in addition to the UN counter-narcotics treaty regime), or from other multilateral bodies such as the EU and the G8+. In the absence of a regional framework and in response to external pressure, in 2008 ECOWAS initiated a regional process that led to a Political Declaration and a Regional Action Plan to respond to drug trafficking and its related impacts. Since then, a range of actors including specialized agencies such as UNODC,

INTERPOL, EUROPOL, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (US DEA), and the United Kingdom's Special Organised Crime Agency (UK SOCA) have developed initiatives to support implementation of their own organizational or national policies on drug trafficking and/or in support of the ECOWAS Action Plan at sub-regional or national level. These international responses reflect an increased awareness of the challenges at hand, increased concern regarding potential impacts, and an increased willingness to work with regional and national counterparts. They have however, focused predominantly on controlling narcotics flows and strengthening law enforcement, and less on public health or governance issues, despite the longer-term security implications that neglect of the latter might give rise to.

Over the past five years, entities such as the Security Council, the World Bank, United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA)/ UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as well as humanitarian, development and security experts in particular have advocated for stronger links between development, political and security strategies and actors to better respond to transnational threats such as drug trafficking, and have urged specialized agencies to play a greater role in this regard. The UN Secretary-General echoed these calls for greater integration of agendas in his Five Point Action Agenda,² noting that in order to respond to the heightened threat of organized crime, piracy and drug trafficking, collective action should be mobilized along with new tools and comprehensive regional and global strategies” which would “require integrating

rule of law, public health and human rights responses.” UNODC’s Regional Programmes have served as an important platform for linking these agendas within and across borders, although as noted in the 2011 World Development Report (WDR), significant efforts are still required to fully enable bodies like UNODC to respond to the complex cross-border challenges that impact on development and security today.³

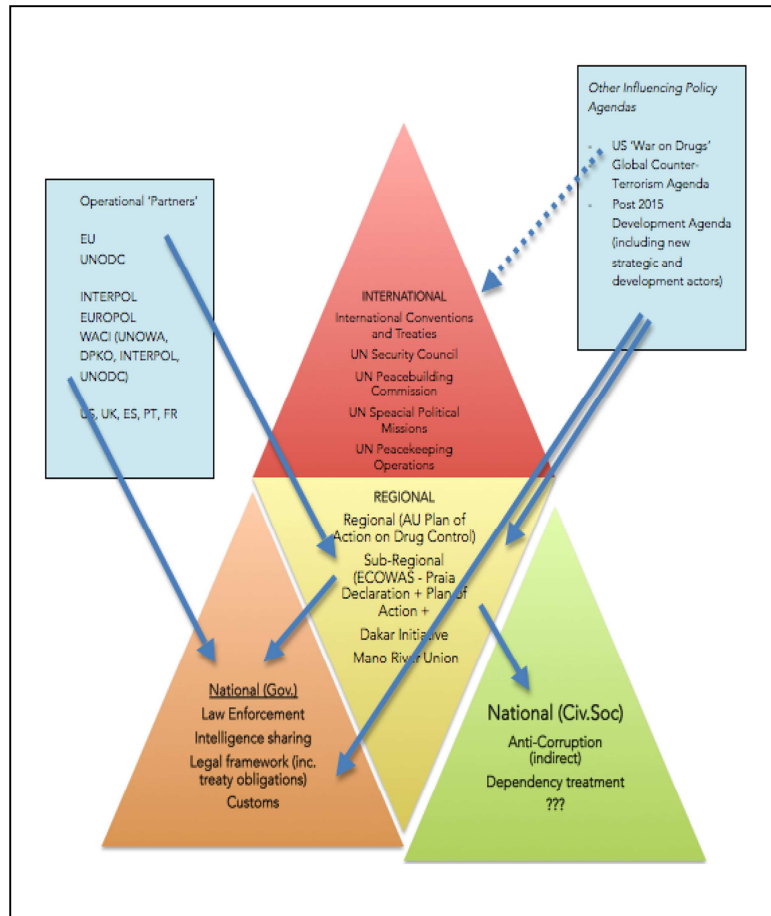


Figure 1 - Summary of Responses to Drug Trafficking in West Africa

² The UN Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda, January 2012 Accessed at: http://www.un.org/sg/priorities/sg_agenda_2012.pdf

³ UNODC, IEA, In-Depth Evaluation of UNODC's IPA (October 2012)

THE REGIONAL RESPONSE

Regional responses have been strengthened over the past few years and significant attention has been paid to increasing regional and national ownership of responses. On the one hand, the AU has adopted increasingly progressive Drug Strategies and Actions Plans (the latest adopted at the AU summit in January 2013). However, due to limited reporting by member states, it is difficult to assess the level of political and operational engagement in implementing AU policy in this area. It is also unclear how the AU Strategies and Action Plans link to the ECOWAS ones and other multilateral and bilateral efforts.

ECOWAS, the main sub-regional body responsible for setting policy guidance and delivering responses to drug trafficking, has made important strides in developing a coherent architecture to respond to drug trafficking and its impacts. The Abuja Political Declaration and accompanying Action Plan on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa was an important step in this regard. Other mechanisms for responding to drug trafficking include the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan adopted in February 2013 and the ECOWAS Maritime Security Strategy, which is in the process of being finalized. In addition to the body responsible for overseeing implementation of the Action Plan - Commission for Gender and Child Development, Youth/Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control - other core ECOWAS bodies such as the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security have played both a direct and indirect role in responding to drug trafficking, including through their support to the West Africa Coast Initiative or through efforts aimed at strengthening governance, the rule of law and even the return to constitutional democracy in some settings. Despite these efforts, ECOWAS remains challenged by other pressing commitments in the sub-region. It also suffers from limited resources and capacity at the operational level. Meanwhile, at the political level challenges remain in terms of mustering the will and capacity to confront the important security, governance and public health challenges posed by drug trafficking. Conversely, recent developments which have led to new agreements with core partners such as the EU and UNODC, are expected to inject renewed energy into the regional architecture and strengthen regional and national efforts to respond to drug trafficking.

At the national level, responding to drug trafficking remains a challenge, although joint intelligence initiatives have produced important results including in terms of seizing shipments of drugs and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Efforts are also underway to harmonize drug legislation across the region. Bilateral agreements on intelligence sharing and extradition have enabled important convictions, although the exact number and details of these cases is still unclear. Yet, most responses still remain focused on intelligence sharing, strengthening law enforcement and the judiciary with limited focus on the public health challenges or the governance and social challenges that have been propelled or exacerbated by the drug trade.

COORDINATION & COHERENCE OF RESPONSE

Despite the growing number of strategies, policies, initiatives and other types of mechanisms that have been developed at different levels (international, regional, sub-regional and national), most appear to suffer from a lack of common objectives, and the lack of an integrated strategic framework to work against. Efforts such as the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) or UNODC's Integrated Regional Programming Approach are positive steps in this direction, particularly since they remain closely tied to regional priorities, and consider regional and national actors as partners in their implementation. Conversely, international actors still need to overcome a range of barriers to more effective coordination and integration of effort (particularly with regional partners) if they intend providing a more effective response to the needs of regional counterparts.⁴

Positive results regarding the detention and sentencing of high-level targets in drug trafficking have been registered in the region.⁵ These efforts have been achieved through the dedicated support of specialized agencies such as the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the UK's Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) to security services in a few countries across the sub-region. However, international, regional and national agencies continue to lack the institutional flexibility needed to work across borders within and beyond the region. As in other areas, there is still limited coordination of activities at the operational level, with serious overlap between traditional donor support in the areas of governance and the rule of law on the one hand, and counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism support implemented by specialized agencies on the other. This reflects a bigger challenge within the broader international system of how responses to domestic rule of law and governance challenges with cross-border dimensions are framed at the higher policy level, and how responses are then operationalized in capitals, headquarters and on the ground.⁶ Pledges have been made to overcome the coordination and coherence challenges regarding responses to drug trafficking in West Africa, although the effects are yet to be seen in practice. An additional challenge lies in the fact that information about who is doing what in the region does not appear to be centralized in one entity at the regional and national levels nor is it generally publicly available, thus detracting from the possibility of monitoring progress and assessing results. Challenges regarding the involvement and leadership of national authorities across the sub-region on coordinating anti-drug trafficking policies have compounded this situation.

Both ECOWAS and the AU Action Plans address some of the prevention and treatment needs of the region, including HIV prevention among Injection Drug Use (IDUs). Investment in these areas by external partners has however, remained marginal in comparison with the investment made in the harder security/ interdiction areas for a long time. Conversely, external actors such as France, the US and the EU are

⁴ UNODC, In-Depth Evaluation of the Integrated Programming Approach, October 2012

⁵ For more detail, see Lansana Gberie's forthcoming paper: Rumour or Reality: The Implication of High-Level Officials in Drug Trafficking in West Africa, A Preliminary Report

⁶ For example, the General Assembly's Sixth Committee is the primary forum for the UN's rule-of-law agenda in the General Assembly. However, much rule-of-law work falls outside its scope, as the Sixth Committee focuses predominantly on international law and much less on country, regional, and transnational issues. The GA's substantive work on rule of law is in fact spread across four separate committees: the First (Disarmament and International Security), Second (Economic and Financial), Third (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural), and Sixth (Legal). (...) [the] dispersal of rule-of-law issues across the four GA committees reinforces the "siloing" consistently criticized by internal and external experts, leading to a concomitant loss of coherence and coordination in the rule-of-law work of UN departments and agencies in New York and the field and among other international actors supporting implementation of their mandates. Kavanagh, Camino and Jones, Bruce (2011), 'Shaky Foundations: An Assessment of UN Support to the Rule of Law.' NYU Center on International Cooperation.

expressing a growing interest in this area, for example, through their support to the Drug Demand Reduction component of the ECOWAS Operational Plan and support of specific global programme on drug dependence treatment in several countries in West Africa.

ASSESSING RESULTS

Based on this initial review, limited investment appears to have been made in monitoring and evaluating results of these manifold interventions. In fact, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are often included as an after-thought; each entity has its own tools and mechanisms to develop benchmarks and indicators, and to monitor and measure progress. Projects and programmes are often under-funded from the outset; and they do not always involve implementing partners, or involve them only superficially. If monitoring and evaluation mechanisms do exist, they tend to focus on specific projects, which are often assessed against policy goals set elsewhere. Indeed, as in traditional rule of law support, monitoring and evaluation tools in this field are often developed to suit the institutional requirements and political prerogatives of donors, who, in light of the financial crisis, are increasingly prioritizing quantitative data - including number of people detained and convicted, or numbers and sizes of seizures - as a means to report on results.⁷ Since donors have to report on progress to their domestic constituencies, numbers are easier to explain than complex transnational issues that are linked to other complex debates on the global drug policy or broader peace, security and development fronts; and to complex domestic challenges such as corruption and the nature of state-society relations.⁸ As a result, efforts are rarely examined against the broader national and regional challenges at hand, thus providing a skewed assessment of progress and success. The few [non-intelligence based] progress assessments that do exist are not always underpinned by empirical evidence, often due to the fact that limited investment (if any at all) was made in collecting the baseline data required to actually develop effective monitoring and evaluation tools in the first place. When serious assessments do exist (see for example the Mid-Term Review of the EU's Cocaine Route Programme), they are not generally used to generate a strategic and on-going discussion on the complexities of assessing and monitoring results in an area that straddles the security, development (particularly health and social development) and governance fields.

Most of the counter-narcotics efforts reviewed for this paper focus on building institutional capacity through technical assistance (mainly capacity building of law enforcement officials and institutions) and increasing cross-jurisdictional collaboration or intelligence sharing as a means to respond to the supply side of the drug trade. Notwithstanding, and particularly at the operational level, in West Africa it appears that these efforts are often implemented in a vacuum or with the aim of producing results elsewhere, with limited regard for the structural challenges and the political economy dynamics that frame the grammar of the institutions that are being strengthened, and the people being apprehended. Limited focus is placed on grounding such strategies in guiding principles such as 'do-no-harm' and respect for fundamental rights. As noted by different scholars, given the dearth of knowledge underpinning many of the approaches, conventional technical assistance for formal institutions or legal reforms can be hopelessly misguided. It assumes that the norms,

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

values, and objectives underlying the concept of the rule of law (which is the ultimate objective of most of these efforts) will take root in the wake of new laws and courts or through the capacity building of judges and police, and pays scant attention to behaviour and attitudes, local culture and history and power relations in this process.⁹

Regarding policies on addiction treatment and other health services for drug users, as noted by one expert, when they exist, they tend not to be guided by evidence of effectiveness, a problem that is not limited to West African countries where policies are often driven by external considerations and not the public interests of citizens.¹⁰ Other challenges to effective drug treatment responses in the region include a very weak empirical base underpinning existing policies; an underdeveloped capacity for research and treatment; political resistance to comprehensive services for prevention of HIV linked to drug injection; more reliance on supply reduction than demand reduction; and cultural beliefs and practices that help sustain the perception of the “addict” as a criminal, social outcast or moral failure.¹¹

In short, overall it does not appear that much investment has been made in developing approaches to analyzing, monitoring and evaluating interdiction efforts and ensuring these efforts are underpinned by the aforementioned guiding principles. Investment in this area is sorely needed to inform more effective and integrated policies that respond not only to regional and international priorities, but also to national and local context and needs.

DEEPENING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Despite having been identified as a serious challenge, the availability of basic drug related data across the sub-region continues to pose serious problems. The latter is in part due to weak data-collection capacity at the national level, whether for technical or political reasons; and the fact that both national governments and external actors rarely prioritize supporting work in this area, despite it being imperative for effective policy formulation whether from a security, governance or health perspective.

In 2011, only one country in West Africa - Nigeria - responded to UNODC’s Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) on drug supply data, and one country - Burkina Faso - partially filled in the questionnaire (See Figure 2 below). This is problematic as regional assessments may then be tied to what emerges from data reported in just a handful of countries. Using other sources (such as data included in reports presented at the Heads of National Law Enforcement Agency meetings in Africa (HONLAF), UNODC notes that the number of ‘reporting’ countries increased to include Ghana, Togo and Benin. The situation regarding data on drug use and drug addiction prevalence is no better.

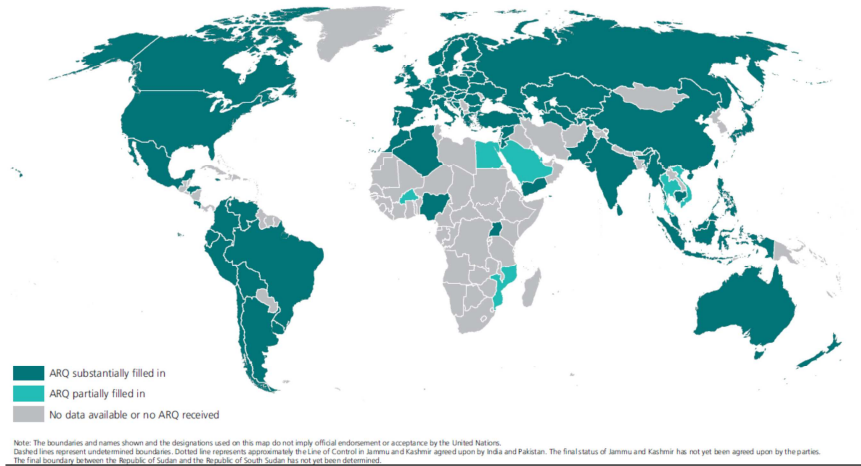
In terms of individual drug seizures - another obligation under the international drug conventions - in 2011 UNODC received reports from just three countries in the region - Nigeria, Ghana and Benin.

⁹ North, Douglass, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, Cambridge University Press, 2009 (with John Joseph Wallis and Barry R. Weingast)

¹⁰ Obot, Isidore (2013), *Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency in West Africa*, WACD Background Paper

¹¹ Ibid

Member states that provided annual reports questionnaire drug supply data for 2011



Member states that provided annual reports questionnaire drug demand data for 2011

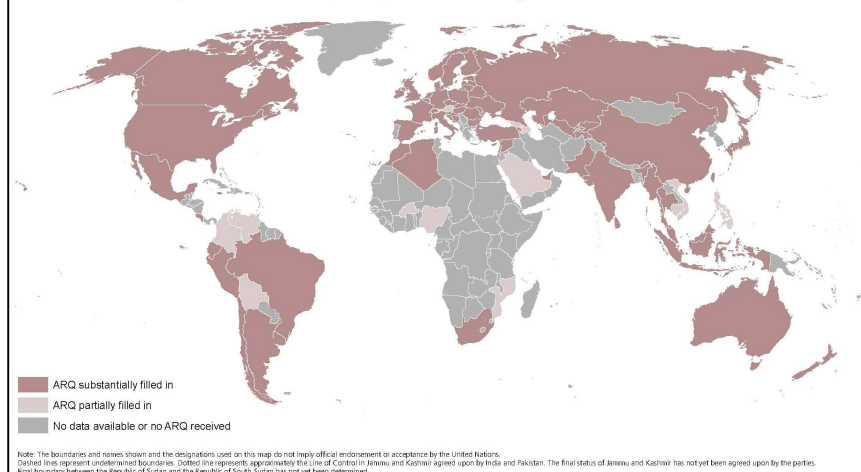


Figure 2

Reporting on seizures is beset by additional challenges. For example, successful seizures of drugs before they reach their final destination can be the result of more effective law enforcement and intelligence sharing, but they can be also the result of changing law enforcement priorities as well as broader issues including changing political and socio-economic dynamics and even seasonal weather conditions. An increase in seizures may also result from some one-off crackdowns or a limited period of aggressive policing and thus may not always be a reliable indicator of trends in the flow of drugs.

According to the UNODC,¹² the collection of such information does however, have its policy value. For example, a recent report by UNODC noted that the wholesale value of only one ton of cocaine exceeds the military budget of many West African countries, underlining the special vulnerability of many West African countries to drug trafficking.¹³ UNODC does note however, that while reliance on such data can produce

¹² Written comments, July 2013

¹³ UNODC (2013), *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, Executive Summary, 2.

skewed results if analyzed in isolation, it can nonetheless help produce important strategic information if compared to the likely drug flows.¹⁴ Such 'interception rate' analysis can provide indications as to the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement. For example, the calculation of interception rates in West Africa confirms that the efficiency or effectiveness of law enforcement is extremely low in comparison with international standards. While existing methods (developed by UNODC) are able to provide reasonably good estimates as to the overall drug flows to West Africa and onwards to Europe, they do not however allow - with any degree of precision - to 'allocate' the drug flows to individual countries. The results are thus of interest for policy makers at the regional level, but less so for policy makers at the national level.

Regarding efforts to respond to some of these challenges, as noted later in the report, ECOWAS is currently undertaking efforts to establish a West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU) that builds on existing (albeit weak) secondary data on drug related treatment demand and seizures data. The objective of this UNODC-initiative¹⁵ is to collect information on drug use patterns in order to establish monitoring mechanisms, which in turn will inform and guide policy makers. Within this context, several pilot projects aimed at establishing National Drug Observatories (NDOs) at the country level are underway with the support of France and the EU. The NDO pilot initiatives are aimed at sharing lessons on monitoring patterns and trends with other countries in the sub-region and feed into the WENDU initiative at regional level. Notwithstanding this initiative, prioritizing investment in regional and national capacity to collect, analyze and regularly update baseline data, conduct regular surveys of citizen perceptions, and conduct analysis of trends and impacts as a means to influence policy remains an important gap begging to be filled.

Regarding research, UNODC's Transnational Organized Crime Assessments (TOCTAs) are generally viewed as valuable instruments for gauging trends in organized crime, including drug trafficking, in different regions and shaping responses. They have been of particular value in West Africa where basic data and analysis on these issues is hard to come by. Ironically, as noted in a recent UNODC evaluation, this aspect of UNODC's work is however "under-funded" including in terms of staff allocation, despite the contribution that UNODC's Transnational Organized Crime Assessments have made to understanding drug trafficking and other organized crime trends. The latter affects programming, "particularly if priorities are to be defined on the basis of sound analysis and broad consultation with different stakeholders."¹⁶ Continued investment in this area is imperative and efforts should be principally aimed at developing capacity of regional researchers and analysts in this area so that effective ownership of the

¹⁴ The basic methodological approach used by UNODC is the identification of a consumer market (e.g. Europe), the identification of the size of this consumer market (number of users * average per capita consumption) plus the seizures (purity adjusted) made in this market (to arrive at the total inflow of drugs into this market) and the identification of the proportion of the drugs that have been trafficked via the transit region under consideration (i.e. West Africa) to the respective consumer market. This can be deduced, e.g. via the analysis of individual seizures made in the main consumer market (Europe) where the trafficking routes could be determined. In addition, the likely size of the local market (West Africa) for such drugs has to be established (users * per capita consumption) in order to provide an estimate on the overall amounts being shipped to this region (i.e. shipments to Europe plus local consumption in West Africa, plus local seizures (purity adjusted) in West Africa). Comparing the amounts of drugs seized in the transit region (West Africa) with the amounts of drugs being shipped to this region (West Africa) gives the 'interception rate'. Increases in the interception rates signal progress made while declines in the 'interception rates' indicate that traffickers have become more successful.

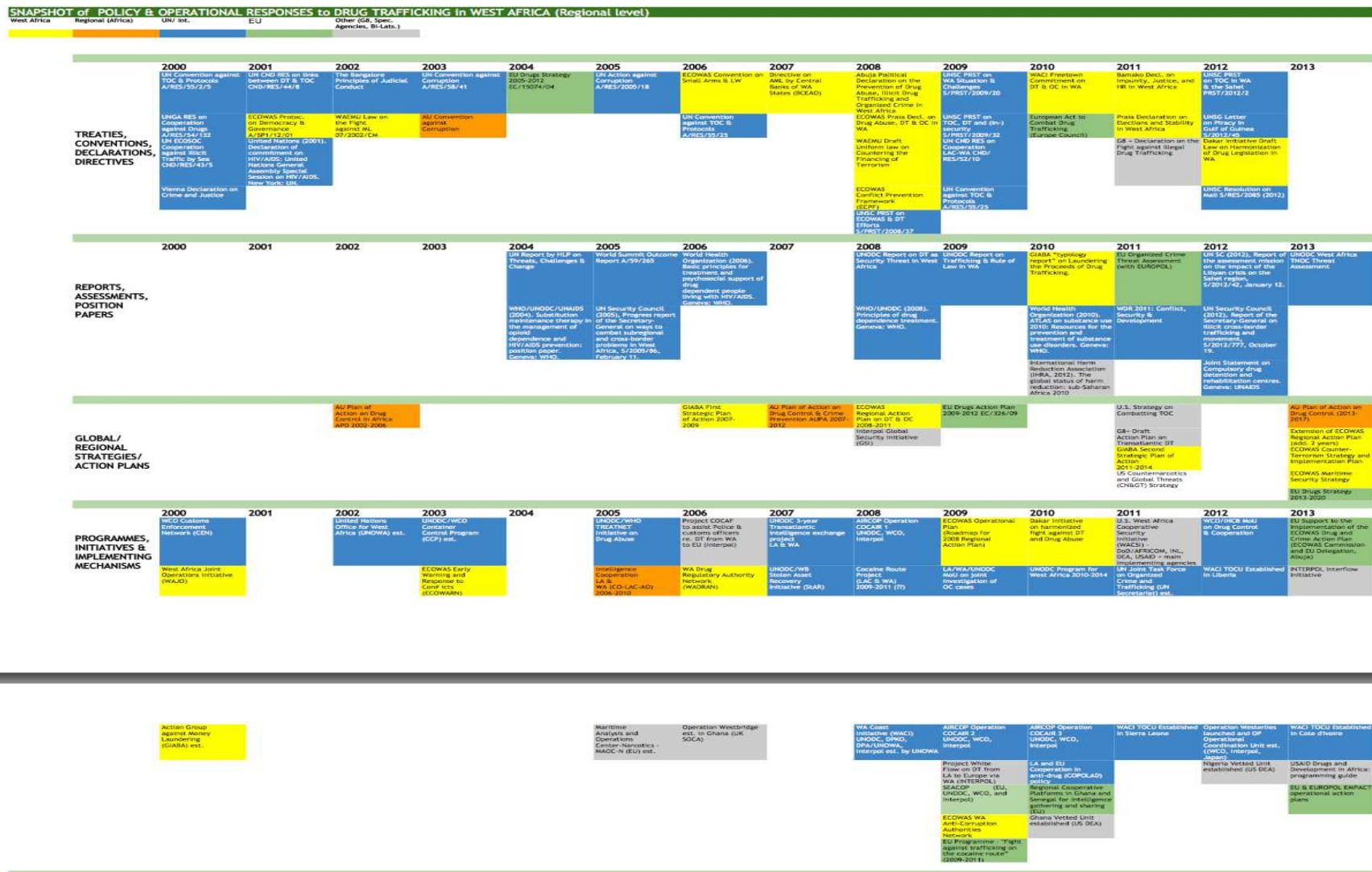
¹⁵ UNODC support to the initiative is funded by the EU's contribution to ECOWAS Operational Plan.

¹⁶ UNODC, In-Depth Evaluation of the IPA, October 2012

challenges at hand can be guaranteed.

Indeed, beyond recent initiatives initiated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Kingdom's Department for International Development (UK Dfid) and the German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ),¹⁷ little investment has been made in conducting systematic research on how the increase in drug trafficking in West Africa has affected development, national and regional economies, social norms, formal and traditional modes of governance in countries across the region. Moreover, limited support has been channelled to developing the capacity of civil society organizations, research institutes, academia, investigative journalists, social media etc. in the region to monitor and assess or analyze trends and impacts of drug trafficking. In addition, the absence of population-based data on demand and consumption patterns and 'subsistence' involvement of local populations in any aspect of the drug trade remains an impediment to the design of effective counter-trafficking interventions as well as measures that effectively respond to drug use and drug addiction prevalence, and reap the benefits of providing integrated drug-related health services as opposed to solely investing in interdiction efforts. Significant effort is still required to overcome these challenges.

¹⁷ See for example, C. Kavanagh et al (2013), *Getting Smart and Scaling Up: Responding to the Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in Developing Countries*, NYU Center on International Cooperation (funded by UK-DFID) and Stearns-Larson (2013) *The Development Response to Drug Trafficking in Africa* (USAID). Further studies in French-speaking countries of West Africa are envisaged to take place late 2013, early 2014.



C. Kavanagh, WACD/KAF May 2013

Figure 3 - Responding to Drug Trafficking in West Africa - A Decade of Developments

2. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

I INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO DRUG TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA

THE UNITED NATIONS (Political Engagement)

	TRAFFICKING & ORGANIZED CRIME IN GENERAL	DRUG TRAFFICKING	DRUG TREATMENT	MONEY LAUNDERING (related to DT)
UN SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSIONS				
UNOWA	√	√	√	√
UNIOGBIS	√	√		
UNIPSIL	√	√		
UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS				
MINUSMA	√			
UNOCI	√			
UNMIL	√			
UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION/ FUND				
GUINEA BISSAU		√		
LIBERIA		√		
SIERRA LEONE		√		

Figure 4 - UN Political Engagement on Drug Trafficking in West Africa

THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The UN Security Council has remained seized of the threats posed by drug trafficking in West Africa since the mid-2000s, primarily in the context of periodic reports by the head of UNOWA, or when discussing peacekeeping or peacebuilding activities in the region, as well as through a series of Presidential Statements on the issues in the late 2000s.¹⁸ For example, in a 2008 Security Council Presidential Statement (PRST) on Guinea-Bissau, concerns were expressed about the threats to security in the region posed by drug trafficking and prevalent conditions within Guinea Bissau.¹⁹ In 2009 and in connection with a meeting on peace and security in Africa and the threat to international security posed by drug trafficking and organized crime, a PRST suggested that the Secretary-General “consider mainstreaming the issue of drug trafficking as a factor in conflict prevention strategies, conflict analysis, integrated missions’ assessment and planning and peacebuilding support.”²⁰ The PRST also suggested enhanced cooperation between the UN and international, regional and state-level organizations working on the topic as a means to improve responses to the issue. Also in 2009, a UN SC Presidential Statement on peace consolidation in West Africa highlighted drug trafficking as a driver of fragility in the region and the limited progress achieved in responding to the issue. The PRST called for “shared

¹⁸ Countries that have tabled the issue of drug trafficking in the Security Council include France, Burkino Faso, Togo, and Gabon.

¹⁹ UN Security Council (2008), Presidential Statement on Guinea-Bissau S/PRST/2008/37, October 15.

²⁰ UN Security Council (2009), Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2009/32, December 8, 2009.

responsibility” and partnerships among states, ECOWAS, UNODC, UNOWA, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), DPA and INTERPOL.²¹

The existence of trafficking routes through the Sahel has also generated Security Council action. Following the 2011 coup in Mali and increased militant activity in the region, the Security Council dispatched a fact-finding team to assess the situation.²² The UN inter-agency assessment report published in January 2012, stated that AQIM may be involved in illegal taxation schemes with drug smugglers in Mali.²³ Subsequently, in February 2012, the Security Council held a session titled “Peace and Security in Africa” with a focus on “the impact of transnational organized crime on peace, security and stability in West Africa and the Sahel Region.” According to the statement issued following the meeting, “transnational organized crime, including illicit weapons and drug trafficking, piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as terrorism and its increasing links, in some cases, with transnational organized crime and drug trafficking,” represented key threats to peace and stability in the region. The Security Council renewed the call for “system-wide” UN coordinated action, the ratification of relevant conventions by countries in the sub-region, and regional support for existing initiatives aimed at curbing drug trafficking and organized crime.²⁴

A subsequent Presidential Statement in December 2012 (S/PRST/2012/26) expressed “serious concern over the insecurity and the significant ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region, “which is further complicated by the presence of armed groups, including separatist movements, terrorist and criminal networks, and their increased activities, as well as the continued proliferation of weapons from within and outside the region that threaten peace, security, and stability.

UN SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSIONS (SPMs)

THE UN OFFICE FOR WEST AFRICA (UNOWA)

UNOWA, a UN Special Political Mission with a regional mandate was initially established in 2002 with a three-year mandate, which was renewed in 2005, 2007 and 2010 through Security Council Resolutions and Letters. One its core functions includes “[e]nhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, in particular, election-related instability and challenges related to security sector reform, transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism. The UN Secretary-General reports to the Security Council every six months on the fulfillment of the UNOWA mandate. UNOWA is an active member of the WACI (see below) and is the entity charged with mentoring and monitoring the implementation of this initiative on behalf of the UN. In October 2012, the UN Secretary-General’s Report on Illicit Cross-border Trafficking and Movement highlighted UNOWA’s efforts to coordinate UN action in the sub-region, calling on the political mission to assist in the development of a “subregional strategy to address the

²¹ UN Security Council (2009), Presidential Statement on Peace Consolidation in West Africa, July 10.

²² UN Security Council (2012), Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, S/2012/42, January 12.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ UN Security Council (2012), Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/2, February 21.

threats of cross-border movements of weapons and armed groups and illicit trafficking.”²⁵

UNOWA is recognized for having used its convening authority, political leverage and transnational reach to raise awareness of transnational threats such as drug trafficking in the sub-region, and to mobilize the support of the international community to the ECOWAS Action Plan on Drug Trafficking and the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability (which includes a provision on preventing the financing of political parties and political campaigns by criminal networks, in particular, drug trafficking networks).²⁶ Despite its efforts in this regard, one of its recent reports (February 2012)²⁷ drew attention to four key drug-trafficking-related issues still prevalent in the sub-region:

- Links between drug trafficking and terrorism, particularly with regard to instability in Mali and the group Boko Haram in Nigeria.
- Trafficking and increased consumption of cocaine, opiates and counterfeit medicine throughout the region.
- The resurgence of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, with the International Maritime Organization reporting roughly 57 attempted or committed acts of piracy in the Gulf in 2012 and 74 in 2011.
- Insecurity along porous borders, particularly the borders between Cote D’Ivoire and Liberia and Cote D’Ivoire and Ghana.

UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED PEACEBUILDING OFFICE IN GUINEA-BISSAU (UNIOGBIS)

UNIOGBIS was first mandated to respond to drug trafficking in 2008. More specifically, it was requested to “facilitat[e] efforts to combat drug and human trafficking and organized crime.”²⁸ This support was scaled up in the 2009, 2010 and 2012 mandate renewal processes whereby UNIOGBIS was requested to first “[extend] cooperation to national authorities in their efforts to combat drug trafficking and organized crime” and to “[assist] national authorities to combat human trafficking, especially child trafficking, drug trafficking and organized crime.”²⁹

Earlier, in 2007, the government of Guinea Bissau drafted a *Terms of Reference for the Strategic Implementation of the Plan of Combat to Drugs*. The plan, backed by the donor community and accompanied by an operational plan drafted by UNODC was to run from 2007-2010.³⁰ Implementation was however, interrupted by internal political upheaval. Following the 2011 coup, the UN Secretary-General’s 2012 report on Guinea-Bissau recommended that drug trafficking be urgently addressed, calling

²⁵ UN Security Council (2012), Report of the Secretary-General on illicit cross-border trafficking and movement, S/2012/777, October 19.

²⁶ Cockayne, James and Kavanagh, Camino (2011), *Flying Blind: Political Mission Responses to Transnational Threats*, in NYU Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*.

²⁷ UN Security Council (2012), Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa, S/2012/977, December 31.

²⁸ UNIOGBIS (2008), *Mandate 2008*, this and subsequent mandates are available at uniogbis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9875&ctl=Details&mid=12840&ItemID=11762&language=en-US

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ The name of the Operational Plan was “Prevent and Combat Drug Traffic in Guinea-Bissau and Promote the Rule of Law and an Effective Administration of Justice (2007-2010),” referenced in Republic of Guinea Bissau, “Terms of Reference: Strategic Implementation of the Plan to Combat Drugs” 2007.

“on Member States to reinforce their commitment and efforts in fighting this scourge at the points of production, transit and consumption and on the basis of shared responsibility for effective results.” The report also “urg[ed] the ECOWAS Commission to expedite action on the implementation of its operational plan on drug-trafficking.”³¹

UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED PEACEBUILDING OFFICE IN SIERRA LEONE (UNIPSIL)

The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) was established by Security Council Resolution 1829 in August 2008. Drug Trafficking is referenced within the mandated support area of “Monitoring and promoting human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law; including efforts to counter transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.”³² Under the rubric of Joint Outreach Initiatives, UNIPSIL aims to “[seek] closer cooperation with national and international NGOs and civil societies as well as with Sierra Leone’s Inter-faith Council and the First Lady’s WISH initiative,” to among other issues, “fight against the spread of illicit drugs.”³³ UNIPSIL also provides support to the West Africa Coast Initiative, including through support to the Transnational Organised Crime Unit (TOCU) in Sierra Leone (see below).

UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN WEST AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN LIBERIA (UNMIL) AND UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN COTE D’IVOIRE (UNOCI)

Neither of the two peacekeeping operations in the region has a direct mandate to respond to drug trafficking in the region. However, in accordance with paragraph 19 of UN SC Resolution 2066 (2012) and paragraph 20 of S/Res/2062 2012, the UN Security Council encouraged ECOWAS and the Mano River Union to develop, with the support of UNOWA, a sub-regional strategy to address the threat of the cross-border movements of armed groups and weapons and illicit trafficking. Both UNOCI and UNMIL have been called upon to provide assistance to these efforts, “as appropriate,” and the Secretary-General was requested to provide regular updates on progress towards the development of the sub-regional strategy.

In Cote d’Ivoire and Liberia, and acting under the framework of the WACI, UNOCI and UNMIL provide minimal support in the form of technical assistance/ advice to the national Transnational Crime Unit. Neither UNOCI nor UNMIL appear to have a dedicated capacity to provide analysis on drug trafficking in their respective areas of operation.

THE UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION (PBC)

³¹ UN Security Council (2012), Special report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, S/2012/280, April 30, 9.

³² UNIPSIL (2013), *Mandate and Approach*, April 17, available at <http://unipsil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9613&language=en-US>

³³ Ibid.

As calls for better coordination within the UN regarding drug trafficking in West Africa have increased, so too has the UN Peacebuilding Commission's focus on the topic.³⁴ In July 2011, a report published by the PBC, UNODC, and UNOWA produced a series of recommendations on how the PBC can better use its leverage to apply political pressure locally and internationally so states and organizations meet existing commitments and improve coordination on drug trafficking issues.³⁵ In this regard, it suggested that the PBC's West Africa configuration:

- Establish an ongoing relationship with the ECOWAS Commission consisting of joint meetings.
- Advocate for a strengthened leadership of ECOWAS Commission in implementing the Praia Declaration.
- Lend support to ECOWAS Commission to establish institutional arrangements and capacity to lead implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan.
- Encourage ECOWAS Commission to join all four PBC country configurations with active participation.
- Mobilize political support for a Regional Cooperation Mechanism to prosecute trafficking cases.
- Establish a working relationship with the WACI, including lending political support and assisting with resource mobilization.
- Ensure that security sector reform and organized crime initiatives are aligned.

It further recommended that the PBC advocate with affected countries to tackle transnational organized crime, provide a forum for information exchange, promote continuous research and analysis on the threat to peace consolidation, and encourage agenda states to sign relevant conventions and protocols. And last, it suggests the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provide support to efforts by ECOWAS and UN agencies in the area of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.³⁶

The outcome of these actions is unclear, although a growing focus on drug trafficking is identifiable in PBC review documents. While drugs were not mentioned in the 2007 Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework,³⁷ the Sierra Leone PBC configuration now includes drug trafficking as one of its three focus areas, in addition to good governance and rule of law, and youth empowerment.³⁸ The most recent Secretary General's report on Sierra Leone states that the PBC, in collaboration with UNODC, provides "mentoring, on-the-job training and technical advisory support to the Transnational Organized Crime Unit" in Sierra Leone.³⁹ Meanwhile, the first review of the PBC's work in Liberia lists "initiating reform of the Drug Enforcement Agency" as a

³⁴ The Peacebuilding Commission was created by the Security Council and the General Assembly in joint resolutions S/RES/1645 and A/RES/60/180. It began meeting in June 2006, and "provides short to medium-term engagement between the international community and vulnerable governments and serves as a forum for bringing together stakeholders to ensure better coordination in peacebuilding." See Better Peace, <http://www.betterpeace.org/node/26>

³⁵ United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2011), *Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime as a Security Threat to West Africa and the Role of the Peacebuilding Commission*, PBSO, UNODC and UNOWA, July, 2.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, December 2007, PBC/2/SLE/1 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=PBC/2/SLE/1 (accessed on 1 July 2013)

³⁸ See for example the report, Outcome of the Peacebuilding Commission High-Level Special Session on Sierra Leone, PBC/3/SLE/6. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=PBC/3/SLE/6 (accessed on 01 July 2013).

³⁹ United Nations Security Council (2013), *Peace consolidation in West Africa Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/977)*, S/PV.6911, January 25.

“rolling deliverable target” under security sector reform, as well as coordination with UNODC among others as an actionable commitment.⁴⁰ A chart on the Peacebuilding Fund’s website listing the PBF’s recipient UN organizations from 2007-2011 states the PBF gave UNODC one grant in 2008 for \$900,000 (for prison reform in GB).¹ Again, it is unclear what the outcome of these efforts has been, and whether specific mechanisms have been established to monitor implementation, including working with partner countries to establish criteria for assessing or evaluating progress.

UNITED NATIONS (Technical Engagement)

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the main UN implementing agency for responses to drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa. It has produced a series of threat assessments on drug trafficking and organized crime in the sub-region since 2008. The first report “Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa” assessed the threat posed by cocaine, heroin and marijuana in the region. In 2009, the agency published a report specific to the impact of organized crime on the rule of law in West Africa; and in 2013, it published a follow up report, “Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment.” UNODC collects and publishes statistics of drug seizures in West Africa and is also deeply involved in programmatic work across the region.

Coinciding with the AUC’s 2007 Revised Action Plan for Drug Control, the AU and UNODC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to increase coordination between their activities. The MOU in turn identified nine priority areas for joint action. The operational program linked to the MOU, officially launched in 2009, aimed at assisting the AU and regional organizations with “policy-making, norm-setting and capacity-building at the continental, regional and national level in the areas of drug control and crime prevention.”⁴¹ To this end and in line with its mandate, UNODC has worked to promote Regional Programmes with sub-regional bodies, such as ECOWAS. These Regional Programmes are currently being evaluated as part of a broader review of UNODC’s Integrated Programming Approach.⁴²

The UNODC 2010-2014 Programme for West Africa includes support to ECOWAS Member States for the development of National Integrated Programmes (NIPs).⁴³ Through the establishment of the NIPs, UNODC hopes to assist with increasing national and regional capacity to collect and analyze data, including identifying trafficking routes and addressing the social and health consequences in local communities in terms of drug abuse and related HIV consequences; however, this is one of the areas where least progress appears to have been made to date.

⁴⁰ See the PBC Report, Outcome of the first Review of the Implementation of the Statement of Mutual Commitments on Peacebuilding in Liberia, of May 2012 (PBC/6/LIB/2), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=PBC/3/SLE/6 (accessed on 01 July 2013).

⁴¹ UNODC (2009), “African Union Commission and UNODC launch joint project to combat drugs and crime in Africa,” March 12, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/african-union-commission-and-unodc-launch-joint-project-to-combat-drugs-and-crime-in-africa.html>.

⁴² According to UNODC’s Regional Office in Dakar, UNODC’s Integrated Regional Programme for West Africa will be evaluated in 2014.

⁴³ The Regional Programme is currently providing support for the development of NIPs in Currently the Mali, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ghana, Burkina-Faso.

The Regional Programme also includes:

- A sub-program on combating organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism. The main areas of engagement under this program are law enforcement capacity building, drug and precursor trafficking, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, illicit trafficking in other commercial goods, acts of piracy, forensic capacities, anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, and terrorism prevention.
- A Container Control Programme (CCP) in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO). This global programme became operational in 2006. In West Africa, the programme is currently operational in Ghana, Senegal, Togo and Benin, while a number of technical assistance activities have been implemented in Cape Verde. The programme aims to increase coordination, establish joint interdiction teams and improve professionalism at borders.⁴⁴ The core of the initiative is the establishment of “inter-agency Joint Port Control Units (JPCUs) consisting of police, customs, gendarmerie, drug law enforcement among others. The teams are trained in risk analysis, as well as profiling and container inspection.”⁴⁵ The current donor countries of CCP include Canada, France, EU, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom and United States, with additional countries donating in-kind contributions. International and not-for-profit organizations actively supporting CCP implementation, including the Business Alliance for Secure Commerce (BASC, who have also contributed some funds), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO/INTERPOL), the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).⁴⁶ It is expected that an on-going evaluation of the GCP, which covers the GCP West Africa initiatives will be completed during the summer of 2013.⁴⁷
- Specific sub-programmes on Research, Justice and Drug Prevention and Health. The aim of these programmes is a more integrated and balanced approach to addressing drug-related challenges.

UNODC is also supporting three projects under the umbrella of the WACI, namely, Building Institutional Capacity to respond to the threat posed by illicit drug trafficking and organized crime in Sierra Leone; Assistance to the implementation of WACI in Liberia; and Assistance to the Implementation of WACI in Guinea-Bissau. As of January 2014, these projects will be grouped into one regional program, which will also cover Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Conakry.⁴⁸ The regional strategy has been endorsed by the WACI beneficiary countries and implementing partners.

⁴⁴ UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010-2014, 13.

⁴⁵ UNODC (2012), *Current situation with respect to subregional and regional cooperation in countering drug trafficking*, written for the Twenty-Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, May 10, 6.

⁴⁶ World Customs Organization (2013), *The UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme*, at http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/activities-and-programmes/unodc_wco_container_control_programme.aspx

⁴⁷ Communication with UNODC Independent Evaluation Unit on April 4, 2013

⁴⁸ Communication with UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa, April 9, 2013.

In addition, UNODC has supported the signing of several bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between countries in West Africa and Latin America to conduct joint investigations on organized crime cases and programmes such as the intelligence exchange initiative “Law Enforcement and Intelligence Cooperation against Cocaine Trafficking from Latin America to West Africa,”⁴⁹ established in 2007 with the support of the European Commission (EC), and the Airport Control Project (AIRCOP) - Anti-money Laundering (AML) (see below), a project aimed at improving communication between police and airports in seven West African countries and Brazil to crack down on drug trafficking. UNODC also organizes expert meetings between ECOWAS states and Mauritania oriented at enhancing cooperation and seeking common solutions, including through mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements, on organized crime and its impacts.

UNODC’s Global Programme against Money Laundering, the Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism (GPML) is also being implemented in the region. In addition, and in order to improve cooperation in criminal matters in the West African region and serve as a basis for capacity building, UNODC is also supporting the establishment of a “West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors” by ECOWAS member states. The first meeting of the Network was held in May 2013 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.⁵⁰

In terms of monitoring and evaluation of its activities, as noted, an evaluation of the UNODC Global Container Programme, which includes West Africa activities, is in the process of being finalized, and the UNODC West Africa Regional Programme will be evaluated in 2014.¹ In the meantime, and under the umbrella of the Regional Programme, the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa (ROSEN) has established an internal monitoring system to “oversee quality control, ensure an effective coordinated approach among the various Programme Offices, and ensure cross-feeding among the field offices.”¹ Regarding UNODC efforts aimed at enhancing coordination and partnerships with regional, sub-regional and other UN bodies and international organizations, it is hoped that the implied commitment in the UNODC Regional Programming framework to shared responsibility with regional counterparts with regard to baseline data collection will be bolstered in the coming period. The latter is crucial for programme design, the establishment of effective and regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and evidently, the development of sound policy responses.⁵¹

⁴⁹ See UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010-2014, 13. Countries involved are Cape Verde, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru, and Venezuela.

⁵⁰ The aim of this first meeting of the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors was:

- to present several technical issues (International cooperation legal framework, MLA Writer Tool),
- to exchange views on several issues (difference common law/civil law, challenges faced by the different countries regarding international cooperation),
- to think to the way ahead

The next WACAP meeting will take place in November 2013, in Cape Verde

⁵¹ According to a recent evaluation of UNODC’s integration efforts, impact assessment remains one of the main challenges that UNODC is facing today (UNODC, In-Depth Evaluation of the IPA (October 2012)). As noted by the UN Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) while “country capacity in some regions may represent a barrier to establishing clear baselines, the absence or lack of availability of baseline data is a recurrent challenge in programme design.” OIOS also highlighted weaknesses or absence of data for some outputs and corresponding indicators, which in turn “have implications on the objective measurement of programme impact and on the required basis for outcomes/outputs design.” The BOA also highlighted the identification and use of baseline data as a critical area requiring UNODC’s attention.⁵¹

OTHER MULTI-LATERAL RESPONSES

THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 states that the EU views West Africa as its third regional priority area, following the Northwest hub of Europe and the Western Balkans, reflecting the importance of West Africa in EU international programming. EU engagement in drug trafficking in West Africa derives from the *EU Strategy on Drugs 2005-2012*, which noted that combating drugs in Europe requires a regional, international, and multilateral approach.⁵² In this vein, a Joint Strategy and EU-Africa Action Plan was agreed upon in 2007. The EU produced its most recent threat assessment on organized crime in 2011. According to the threat assessment, West African criminal groups are increasingly involved in heroin distribution in Europe, “with close cooperation with groups established in source areas and EU criminal hubs.”⁵³ West African groups are also allegedly connected to cocaine trafficking into Europe via land through Spain and Portugal and via air courier. The Assessment claims that West African criminal groups are most sophisticated at “poly-drug trafficking, arranging the transport of cocaine, heroin, herbal cannabis and ecstasy to EU destination markets,” noting their particular talent for altering routes and trafficking methods. The report also stated that “the activities of West African groups have intensified both in the EU and in regions of production for cocaine and heroin.”⁵⁴

The EU Drug Action Plan 2009-2012 included West Africa-related projects “aimed at reducing the demand for and the supply of drugs, including measures of alternative development, and preventing the diversion of chemical precursors,” under the policy objective of international cooperation.⁵⁵ Indicators for success were listed as:

- Drug policy priorities reflected in projects funded
- Projects funded reflect balance between demand and supply reduction
- Synergies established between Member States and EC funding programmes.⁵⁶

In addition, the EU is currently implementing a Cocaine Route Programme (CRP) which includes/ will include projects that involve West Africa: AIRCOP, SEACOP, West Africa Police Information Systems (WAPIS), and an AML.⁵⁷ Within the CRP, the EU provides partial funding to AIRCOP (referenced earlier in relation to UNODC). WAPIS aims to develop a regional information system for police to collect and share pertinent information on crime, serious crime and drug trafficking.⁵⁸ The AML programme will assist Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Cape Verde to strengthen their ability to investigate laundering activity, particularly the “non-banking financial and Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBP) sectors.”⁵⁹ The EU also initiated the Seaport Cooperation Programme (SEACOP) in 2009. With an initial contribution of 3 million euro, implementing partners UNODC, WCO, and Interpol aim to create Joint

⁵² Council of the European Union (2010), *Outcome of Proceedings: EU-West Africa Dialogue on Drugs on 20 May 2010*, June 24, 2.

⁵³ EUROPOL (2011), *EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, 12.

⁵⁴ EUROPOL (2011), *EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, 20.

⁵⁵ European Union, (2008), *EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012*, 2008/C 326/09, December 20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Correspondence with Dr. Axel Klein, June 7, 2013.

⁵⁸ European Commission (2013), *Improving responses to organised crime and drug trafficking along the Cocaine Route: Background Note*, May 2013: Rome.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Maritime Control Units and shared intelligence units in targeted West African ports.⁶⁰ The objective is improved interdiction via improved coordination, information sharing and technical skills. Within the scope of this initiative, in 2011, the EU provided training packages to Cape Verde, Senegal and Ghana; it carried out scoping missions in Benin, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Togo with the aim of establishing joint maritime control units.⁶¹ It remains unclear if the joint maritime control units have been established, but training, capacity building and preparations have taken place. An in-depth evaluation of the first phase of the CRP is currently being finalized.

In 2009 the US and EU established a “joint inventory or matrix of the projects developed by both sides in West Africa in order to avoid duplication and overlap and to fill in as much as possible all gaps in the field of public health, police, customs and judiciary.”⁶² The EU and US also held a meeting in Brussels in 2009 to advance cooperation on counter-narcotics in West Africa, and “discuss curriculum development for their regional law enforcement training centres in West Africa.” The two parties decided that the US would take the lead in coordinating US and EU assistance efforts by combining matrices detailing all US and EU criminal justice sector program assistance and highlighting gaps and duplication. The US also agreed to explore cooperation on visa denial; and take the lead in efforts to reform UNODC data collection processes.”⁶³ The matrix does not appear to be in the public domain and it is unclear what the outcome of these coordination and gap-filling efforts have been. In 2010, UNODC remained the EU’s primary implementing partner in the sub-region, although much of its assistance is still intended for bi-lateral cooperation.⁶⁴

In 2010 the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) branch of the Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact to combat international drug trafficking with the aim of disrupting cocaine and heroin routes, and improving coordination between various anti-trafficking schemes. The Pact was viewed as a major opportunity to interconnect all structures tackling drug trafficking along the major smuggling routes, including in West Africa.

In late 2012, the EU adopted a new Drugs Strategy - *the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020* which builds on past programming activities, the 2011 threat assessment, and interim reviews that have been conducted.⁶⁵ It acknowledges that one of the new challenges to confronting drugs in the EU is the “dynamics in the illicit drug markets, including shifting drug trafficking routes, cross-border organized crime and the use of new communication technologies as a facilitator for the distribution of illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances.”⁶⁶ Regarding drug supply reduction, cooperation with third countries is mentioned under the priority area of “Strengthening the cooperation and

⁶⁰ European Commission (2011), *Long-term responses to global security threats: Contributing to security capacity building in third countries through the Instrument for Stability*, 12-3.

⁶¹ UNODC (2012), *Current situation with respect to subregional and regional cooperation in countering drug trafficking*, Twenty-Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, May 10.

⁶² Council of the European Union (2010), *Outcome of Proceedings: EU-West Africa Dialogue on Drugs on 20 May 2010*, June 24, 4.

⁶³ USEU Brussels (2009), “US-EU Drugs Troika Advances Counternarcotics Cooperation in West Africa Origin”, December 29, available at <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09BRUSSELS1733.htm>

⁶⁴ Council of the European Union (2010), *Outcome of Proceedings: EU-West Africa Dialogue on Drugs on 20 May 2010*, June 24, 5.

⁶⁵ i.e., European Commission (2010), *2010 progress review of the EU Drugs Action Plan (2009-2012)*; and EMCDDA (2011) “EMCDDA trend report for the evaluation of the 2005-2012 EU drugs strategy.”

⁶⁶ Council of the European Union (2012), *EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)*, December.

coordination between law enforcement agencies at strategic and operational level.”⁶⁷ Under the cross-cutting issue of international cooperation, the document states that international efforts should “reflect the integrated, balanced and evidence-based EU approach and include: political dialogue, drug coordination, demand reduction (including risk and harm reduction), supply reduction including alternative development and law enforcement, integration of drug policies within the broader development cooperation agenda, information, research, monitoring and evaluation.”⁶⁸ More generally, the policy calls for adequate funding and expertise to facilitate programming by means of appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The Action Plan for the new strategy will be drafted by the 2013 Presidency.

In May 2013, the EU Delegation in Abuja and the ECOWAS Commission finalized and agreed upon a new framework document - EU Support to the Implementation of the ECOWAS Drugs and Crime Action Plan (see section on ECOWAS below). ECOWAS will be the lead partner via a ‘Standard Grant Agreement’, playing a lead role in policy advocacy, coordination and monitoring, while UNODC will play a contributing role, focusing on supporting the implementation of the more technical aspects of the agreement. It is also expected that in September 2013 the European Development Fund Secretariat will formally endorse the financial agreement in support of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan.⁶⁹

Few available evaluations of EU Drug Strategy-related projects and initiatives implemented in West Africa were found during the course of this research although as noted above, a mid-term review of the EU’s Cocaine Route Programme (CRP),⁷⁰ which is financed by the EU’s Stability Instrument, was finalized over the summer. The CRP has a mandate to “support law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities in third countries along the so called ‘cocaine route’, i.e. from the production countries in Latin America to Europe, via Central America, the Caribbean and West Africa.” The overall objective of the initiative is “to enhance [the] capacity [of these institutions] for international cooperation in the fight against international criminal networks, while fully respecting human rights.” According to this report, while the different initiatives and projects under the CRP “carry the promise of yielding exponential benefits in participating countries over time,” significant weaknesses remain. Overall, these weaknesses “stem largely from discrepancies between the actual outcomes realised by individual projects and the intended programme objectives. In addition there is the continuing fragility of the knowledge base. Little is known about the scale, structure or impact of the West African transit route. The scarcity of evidence blunts the effectiveness of interventions and tempers the commitment of some partners in beneficiary countries. There is, furthermore, the perennial risk that CRP activities come to equate drug control with the fight against organised crime. Neither beneficiaries nor project implementers are always clear that the CRP is not designed to promote public health but protect human security and that the involvement of TCOs in the trade in cocaine is a consequence and not a cause of its prohibition. CRP

⁶⁷ Council of the European Union (2012), *EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)*, December, 9.

⁶⁸ Council of the European Union (2012), *EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)*, December, 14.

⁶⁹ Communications with ECOWAS, May 2013.

⁷⁰ The budget of the CRP totals €34,916,9731 and has been allocated to eight self-standing projects, several of which are being implemented in West Africa.

in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

measures affecting micro-traffickers, coca farmers or drug couriers are sometimes seen as ends in themselves and carry the risk of diverting attentions from the original goal of combating transnational organised crime.” The report acknowledges that in order to be effective, long-term commitment is required so as to allow programme results be “integrated into existing law enforcement structures and for the inter-agency trust to develop, which is a prerequisite for trans regional law enforcement cooperation.” The latter will require securing long term commitments under each individual project “with support actions for a period that extends beyond the commitments of the initial phases”⁷¹

Meanwhile, a 2012 trend report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction states that the decline in seizures since 2008 in West Africa may result in part from “successes of new interdiction efforts, such as the establishment in 2008 of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics (MAOC-N), as well as the later establishment of two Regional Intelligence Exchange Centres (RIEC) in Accra (Ghana) and Dakar (Senegal).”⁷² No evidence was provided to underpin this assessment and as noted above, reliance on seizure data and intelligence alone are not reliable indicators for assessing interdiction efforts.

Conversely, an earlier 2010 EU progress report listed as a highlighted achievement within the framework of the European Pact to Combat International Drug Trafficking, the establishment of two “cooperation platforms” for intelligence sharing and coordinating capacity-building in West Africa - one in Ghana led by the UK and one in Senegal led by France. More generally the report states the EU has increased cooperation with ECOWAS and West African countries to promote local ownership of the problem to fight against ‘partnerships of convenience’ developed between different kinds of criminal groups”⁷³ and that “[c]oherence between internal and external action against drug trafficking, ensured by the Commission and the Council, is of paramount importance.”⁷⁴

THE G-8 +

In 2011, the G8 produced a Declaration and an accompanying Action Plan entitled “2011 G8 + Action Plan Aimed at Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation in the Fight against Drug Trafficking.” The Action Plan focuses primarily on West Africa and Latin American, proposing seven action areas:

1. Encouraging the implementation of international conventions.
2. Building intelligence sharing between the information centres in Senegal and Ghana, the operational centres facilitating maritime interdiction, other networks, and interested states
3. Strengthening maritime cooperation
4. Improving international mechanisms to confiscate criminal assets

⁷¹ European Commission (2013), Mid-term review of the Cocaine Route Programme financed by the EU Instrument for Stability. Final Report (Project No. 2012/302922). Available at <http://corms.esteri.it/downloads/116ce3668c/CRP%20MTR%20Final%20report.pdf> (Accessed 01 July 2013).

⁷² European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2012), *EMCDDA trend report for the evaluation of the 2005-12 EU drugs strategy*, 32

⁷³ European Commission (2010), *2010 progress review of the EU Drugs Action Plan (2009-2012)*, Brussels, May, 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid

5. Addressing the long-term destabilizing effects of drug trafficking
6. Strengthening the capacity of states
7. Providing financial backing to these issues.⁷⁵

It is unclear what the outcome of these initiatives has been and whether specific mechanisms have been established to accompany and monitor implementation of commitments.

DEVELOPMENT ACTORS (General)

The 2011 *World Development Report (WDR)* noted *inter alia* that the extremely high value of illicit trafficked goods in West Africa has made it possible for drug traffickers to corrupt officials at the highest levels; and called for efforts to trace illicit financial flows to identify involvement.⁷⁶ The report lamented the fact that in “areas seriously affected by trafficking and corruption” such as Central America and West Africa, “most countries have nothing approaching the national capacity needed to gather and process information on sophisticated financial transactions, or to investigate and prosecute offenders.”⁷⁷ Moreover, the report highlighted the challenges that international organizations face in responding to cross-border issues not least because responses from international actors remain largely contained within national borders.⁷⁸

While there is an increasing awareness among development actors and both developed and developing countries of the inter-related and destabilizing influence of drug trafficking on development, it remains unclear how it will fit into the overall development agenda. The Rio+20 group highlighted Africa as a priority thematic area, with a focus on sustainable development. The Rio+20 outcome document does not reference drug trafficking or drug consumption *per se*, but called for the prioritization of increased awareness in fighting corruption and illicit financial flows as a means to enable “effective resource mobilization and allocation.”⁷⁹ The earlier 2010 African Economic Outlook report references drug trafficking and organized crime several times as factors linked to instability and high-level corruption.⁸⁰

Deepening the Knowledge Base for Responding to the Impacts of Organized Crime in Development Settings

In line with the findings and policy recommendations laid down in the 2011 WDR, and in light of on-going discussions regarding the post-2015 development agenda, the World Bank, the OECD and several bi-lateral development agencies including USAID, DfID and Germany’s GTZ have invested additional resources in conducting research on the effects of organized crime and drug trafficking on development and governance. As a follow up to the official launch of the 2011 World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development (WDR 2011), the World Bank launched a WDR 2011

⁷⁵ G8+ (2011), Action Plan Aimed at Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation in the Fight against Drug Trafficking, Paris: May.

⁷⁶ World Bank (2011), *World Development Report: Conflict, Development & Security*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 56-7, 281.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.34

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.283

⁷⁹ Rio +20, *The Future We Want*, Outcome Document adopted at Rio+20, June 19, 2013, available at <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/>

⁸⁰ OECD (2010), *African Economic Outlook 2010*, OECD and African Development Bank, 65-6, 72.

database.⁸¹ The database “includes statistics related to civil war, terrorism, and trafficking, as well as socio-economic, demographic and political data” and serves as “a collection of diverse data from multi sources into a single easily navigable depository.” The database is a basic research tool for academics and practitioners which brings together diverse indicators relevant to conflict, security and development, including trafficking and related violence. Also as follow up to the WDR 2011, in February 2012 the the World Bank Group created the Center on Conflict, Security and Development (CCSD) with the aim of “strengthen[ing] the Bank’s work on fragile and conflict affected situations (FCS).⁸²

Meanwhile, the OECD DAC INCAF group commissioned a series of thematic papers supporting its project “‘Global Factors Influencing the Risk of Conflict and Fragility’, including the paper entitled: Transnational organised crime and fragile states.”⁸³ Also in 2012, UK DFID funded an extensive piece of research conducted by NYU’s Center on International Cooperation (CIC) on the Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in Developing Countries;⁸⁴ while USAID published a report and accompanying Programming Guide on Drugs and Development in Africa;⁸⁵ and Germany’s *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* is conducting research on organized crime and development on behalf of the German Development Agency, also in Africa.⁸⁶ The London-based International Drug Consortium involving IDPC, IISS and Chatham House has also been active in some of these areas, with a specific focus on Modernizing Drug Law Enforcement.⁸⁷ Much of this research, which aims to influence development or security policy (or a combination of both), has focused/ is focusing on West Africa, yet it is still unclear what it will collectively lead to in terms of influencing development and agendas in particular and how development assistance is conceptualized in regions such as West Africa where forms of organized criminal activity such as drug trafficking can be directly linked to high-level state actors and other entrenched elites, and where political stability can be highly volatile.

⁸¹ The website is accessible at <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/wdr2011>

⁸² According to the website, “with help from the CCSD, the Bank is able to respond faster, in a more flexible manner, and according to each unique context. The CCSD also serves as a global hub connecting people working in fragile and conflict affected situations across the world, to exchange knowledge and resources across FCS clients and practitioners, and ultimately to help improve development in these countries.” See <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23176362-menuPK:64256345-pagePK:34370-piPK:34424-theSitePK:4607,00.html>

⁸³ See Miraglia, Paula, Ochoa, Rolando and Briscoe, Ivan (2012), Transnational Organized Crime and Fragile States available at: http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Transnational_organised_crime_and_fragile_states_2012.pdf

⁸⁴ Kavanagh, Camino (Ed.) (June 2013), ‘Responding to the Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in Developing Countries’ NYU Center on International Cooperation, NY. Accessible at: <http://cic.nyu.edu/content/responding-impact-organized-crime-governance-developing-countries>.

⁸⁵ USAID (2012), The Development Response to Drug Trafficking in Africa: A Programming Guide. Available at http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Development_Response_to_Drug_Trafficking_in_Africa_Programming_Guide.pdf

⁸⁶ See Judith Vorrath’s work at http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/scientist-detail/profile/judith_vorrath.html

⁸⁷ See the Consortium’s Modernising Drug Law Enforcement (MDLE) Seminar series at http://idpc.net/publications/2013/04/idpc-chatham-house-iiss-seminar-modernising-drug-law-enforcement?utm_source=IDPC+Monthly+Alert&utm_campaign=aa8b2aaea8-IDPC

INTERNATIONAL/ REGIONAL SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

INTERPOL

In addition to initiatives referenced under UN or EU responses, INTERPOL also runs programmes related to drug trafficking in West Africa. Established in 2009, INTERPOL's *Project White Flow* was an initiative aimed at enhancing intelligence coordination to identify mid- to upper-level traffickers transporting cocaine from South America through West Africa into Europe.⁸⁸ The overall objective was to collect and share data on criminal operations to facilitate arrests. In April 2013, *Project White Flow* was replaced by a new initiative called *Interflow*. *Interflow* has primarily the same objectives as *White Flow*, although the initiative will also target the increase in methamphetamine production and trafficking in Africa, and the diversion of chemical precursors. In addition to assisting with information gathering, the project will deploy 'Incidence Response Teams (IRT)' for international investigations upon the request of member countries. It will also convene working group meetings to strengthen intelligence sharing.

In November 2012, the World Container Organization (WCO), INTERPOL, and Japan Customs conducted a joint operation, Operation WESTERLIES, which resulted in the seizure by customs officials of 220 kg of narcotics with a market worth of approximately 15 million Euro, and the arrest of some 39 suspected traffickers.⁸⁹ The Operation, aimed at methamphetamine manufactured in Africa destined for the Asia Pacific, included cooperation between some 82 customs administrations and nine WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs) supported by INTERPOL. INTERPOL formed part of the WESTERLIES Operational Coordination Unit (OCU) located at WCO headquarters for the duration of the Operation.⁹⁰

INTERPOL also has a Medical Product Counterfeiting & Pharmaceutical Crime (MPCPC) Unit that monitors seizures of these products, with a special focus on West Africa.⁹¹

According to INTERPOL, no monitoring and evaluation mechanism has been established to oversee the *White Flow* initiative, as it is a support activity to member countries.⁹² In general, progress is assessed in relation to seizures and arrests made by national implementing partners. INTERPOL has no apparent internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to oversee its involvement in Aircop, Waci or similar initiatives. For example, in 2011, and within the framework of the *White Flow* initiative, INTERPOL convened "44 investigators from 28 transit and destination countries for an operational Working Group meeting in September to exchange information, discuss strategies and coordinate future operations. According to UNODC, as a result, Sweden and Norway were both able to arrest drug traffickers sought by German authorities."⁹³

EUROPOL

⁸⁸ INTERPOL (2012), "Fact Sheet," June.

⁸⁹ World Container Organization (2012), "Customs officials intercept illicit drugs, ivory and currency in global enforcement operation," November 29.

⁹⁰ World Container Organization (2012), "Customs officials intercept illicit drugs, ivory and currency in global enforcement operation," November 29.

⁹¹ Communication with INTERPOL, April 15, 2013.

⁹² Communication with INTERPOL, April 15, 2013.

⁹³ INTERPOL (2011), *Annual Report 2011*.

EUROPOL's main response area in West Africa is on intelligence gathering and investigation for the sake of apprehending criminals and facilitating seizures. The agency is an active implementing partner for the EU through "operational action plans" set forth by the EU policy cycle.⁹⁴ In 2010, EUROPOL established an interim period during which it implemented eight European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) projects, the first of which was aimed at "weaken[ing] the capacity of organized criminal groups active or based in West Africa to traffic cocaine and heroin to and within the EU."⁹⁵ In 2010, EUROPOL supported investigations of West African criminal groups (as well as groups in the Balkans), trafficking heroin into Europe. This effort produced 44 match reports, 4 analysis reports, and 2 intelligence notifications (although the actual impact of these results is difficult to determine).⁹⁶

In 2013, EUROPOL launched a new four-step strategy (2013-2017) in line with the new EU Drug Strategy. The multi-year strategy intends to address the most significant drug threats facing the EU and will focus on:

- Completing a new threat assessment
- Setting policy priorities on the basis of the threat assessment
- Establishing EMPACT
- Setting out operational action plans (OAPs) to combat priority threats identified in the aforementioned threat assessment.

SAMPLE OF BILATERAL RESPONSES

A number of countries have initiated or support activities in response to drug trafficking in West Africa, often motivated by national interests in stemming the flow of drugs to their own countries; or stemming the flow of drug monies into the financing of terrorist activities and preventing the laundering of illicit funds through Western financial institutions. Some bilateral actors also link their support to development prerogatives. For example, France has provided specific support to strengthening drug dependence treatment services at the country level and to the establishment of the afore-mentioned pilot project regarding the establishment of National Drug Observatories. The principal bi-laterals in West Africa working on drug-related issues include France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The following provides a sample of responses currently implemented by two of the sub-region's main bi-lateral partners - the United Kingdom and the United States.⁹⁷

THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

SERIOUS ORGANIZED CRIME AGENCY (SOCA)

⁹⁴ Council Conclusions on the creation and implementation of an EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime, doc. 15358/10 COSI 69 ENFOPOL 298 CRIMORG 185 ENFOCUSTOM 94.

⁹⁵ EUROPOL (2013), *Drug Markets Report: A Strategic Analysis*; EUROPOL (2012), *EU Policy Cycle SOCTA EMPACT*, October 3-4.

⁹⁶ EUROPOL (2011), *EUROPOL Review: General Report on EUROPOL Activity*.

⁹⁷ These two countries were chosen principally due to the accessibility of open source documentation.

The UK Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) works with several West African countries to combat drug trafficking, mostly focusing on intelligence sharing for seizures of drugs in transit. For instance, the SOCA website highlights an August 2010 seizure for which SOCA worked with a Law Enforcement Detachment unit from Cape Verde to recover 30 kilograms of cocaine off the coast of Cape Verde. According to the Agency, the operation exhibited “coordination by the Maritime Analysis & Operations Centre (Narcotics), acting on intelligence from a French Central Office against Illegal Narcotics Trafficking investigation,” and reflecting “a significant period of work by SOCA, the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (MAOC(N) and the Royal Navy to develop the capacity of Cape Verde counter-narcotics operations.”⁹⁸

OPERATION WESTBRIDGE (OW)

Operation Westbridge is a joint project established by the UK’s HM Revenues and Customs and the Ghanaian narcotics authority in 2006 to disrupt drug trafficking via air travel from Ghana to the UK. In a speech in 2011, MP Henry Bellingham noted that due to its success, “Operation Westbridge (...) has been extended to Nigeria, resulting in combined seizures of over 600 kilograms of cocaine, 250 kilograms of heroin and close to 2000 kilograms of cannabis.”⁹⁹ The program targets all major narcotics and is seemingly assessed by the amount of seizures. One official mentioned that SOCA operations in West Africa are seriously undermined by the limited resources available to cover the whole sub-region and the lack of institutional (and political) flexibility needed to support work across regions within and beyond Africa.¹⁰⁰

DFID

In addition to law enforcement initiatives and stemming from the outcome of the 2011 WDR and work towards the post-2015 development agenda, as noted above, the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned a study on the impact of organized crime (including drug trafficking) on governance and development to help inform broader policy and programming responses. The study was finalized and launched in June 2013,¹⁰¹ and provides an extensive development-oriented framework for assessing how and when development actors might engage in settings where drug trafficking and other forms of organized criminal activity are prevalent.

THE UNITED STATES

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR)

⁹⁸ SOCA (2010), SOCA welcomes ‘milestone’ in West Africa’s fight against drugs, September 3, available at <http://www.soca.gov.uk/news/270-soca-welcomes-milestone-in-west-africas-fight-against-drugs>

⁹⁹ Henry Bellingham (2011), “The relationship between the UK and Ghana is strong and vibrant,” February 22. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-relationship-between-the-uk-and-ghana-is-strong-and-vibrant>

¹⁰⁰ Interview, SOCA, May 2012.

¹⁰¹ Kavanagh, Camino (Ed.) (June 2013), ‘Responding to the Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in Developing Countries’ NYU Center on International Cooperation, NY.

The U.S. Department of State produces the INCSR, an annual report describing “efforts of key countries to attack all aspects of the international drug trade.” It contains one volume on drugs and chemical control activities and one volume on money laundering and financial crimes.¹⁰² The Drug and Chemical Control section contains country reports for West African countries, providing detail on drug-related threats, and government efforts to combat drug trafficking, including in conjunction with international partners. The money laundering volume addresses steps taken by countries labelled as “major money laundering nations” to “improve their AML/CFT regimes.”¹⁰³ Only a few West African nations are covered in this volume (namely Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria).

WEST AFRICA COOPERATIVE SECURITY INITIATIVE (WACSI)

The U.S. Government initiated a multi-governmental agency effort called the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI), which aims to bring together various efforts undertaken by individual parts of the U.S. Government to promote an “integrated U.S. whole-of-government approach in close coordination with [its] African and international partners.”¹⁰⁴ The WACSI has five pillars:

- Build accountable institutions;
- Establish legal and policy frameworks to counter transnational organized crime;
- Strengthen security operations;
- Reinforce justice operations; and
- Address the socio-economic causes and consequences of transnational organized crime.¹⁰⁵

The efforts of key U.S. Government agencies in implementing the WACSI strategy are described below.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT (INL)

Within the State Department, the INL has primary responsibility for combating international narcotics and crime. INL programs “support two of the Department’s strategic goals: (1) to reduce the entry of illegal drugs into the United States; and (2) to minimize the impact of international crime on the United States and its citizens.”¹⁰⁶ In West Africa, INL “supports institutional reform to make countries’ security and criminal justice sectors more effective and to help them combat narcotics trafficking.”¹⁰⁷ In addition to supporting capacity building efforts to address narcotics and crime, INL promotes intergovernmental collaboration through the Trans-Atlantic Partnership on “dismantling networks, crime-terror pipelines, and asset recovery

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department Of State, “The West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative: A Shared Partnership,” Bureau Of International Narcotics And Law Enforcement Affairs. The USG will provide USD \$60 million in new and existing US support to implement the WACSI multi-sector program.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/166329.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/fs/2013/209434.htm>

expert networks.”¹⁰⁸ Aligned with WACSI’s fifth pillar, INL also supports programs within the public health system to build treatment capacity to address problematic drug use in West Africa. In this context, in 2012 the INL supported an assessment mission on drug demand reduction across 14 countries in West Africa, leading to the production of assessment reports for each country and to the concrete support of drug dependence treatment programs in six countries as of 2013.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA)

The DEA currently has two offices in West Africa - in Ghana and Nigeria - and is planning to open a third office in Senegal. Its objective in Africa is “to identify, target, and dismantle significant international [drug trafficking organizations].”¹⁰⁹ Its ‘near term strategy’ is to investigate drug trafficking organizations (DTOs that pose a threat to the United States and its partners in Europe, Africa, and Asia and “initiate bilateral and multi-lateral criminal investigations into these groups.”¹¹⁰ To do so it works with particular host countries in West Africa to develop investigative units within national law enforcement agencies. For example, in 2010, the DEA and Ghana authorities established the *Ghana Vetted Unit* - the first unit of its kind in West Africa and in 2012, it established a vetted unit within the Nigerian law enforcement department.¹¹¹ The DEA’s longer-term strategy consists of a series of programs on operational needs and capacity building. It provides training programs on investigative and tactical techniques to law enforcement officials through its International Training Section.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD)

Within the U.S. Department of Defence (DoD), issues of transnational organized crime fall within the purview of Counternarcotics and Global Threats (CN>). The CN> 2011 strategy states that, “The Department of Defence, as the single lead agency for detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illicit drugs into the United States and an important contributor to national efforts to counter transnational organized crime, conducts operations and activities to disrupt and degrade the national security threats posed by drug trafficking, piracy, transnational organized crime, and threat finance networks reasonably related to illicit drug trafficking activities. The Department of Defence supports government agencies and Departments, and partner nations’ anti-trafficking and counter threat finance efforts worldwide.”¹¹²

The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) is “responsible to the Secretary of Defense for military relations with African nations, the AU, and African regional security organizations. A full-spectrum combatant command, U.S. AFRICOM is responsible for all U.S. Department of Defence operations, exercises, and security cooperation on the

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/fs/2013/209448.htm>

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Harrigan (2012), Statement of the Honorable Thomas Harrigan Deputy Administrator Drug Enforcement Administration Before The Senate Caucus On International Narcotics Control United States Senate Regarding Countering Narcotics Threats In West Africa, May 16.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ US Department of State (2013), *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Country Reports*, March 5.

¹¹² <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=721746>

African continent, its island nations, and surrounding waters.”¹¹³ Within AFRICOM, the Counternarcotics and Law Enforcement Assistance Division (CN) is particularly responsible for building up regional anti-narcotics forces, including “building capacity through training, equipment, information sharing and infrastructure.”¹¹⁴ AFRICOM’s CN provides approximately “\$20 million in annual assistance to African partner nations to help improve their capacity to combat transnational narcotics trafficking. Ordinarily the U.S. Department of Defence is restricted to military-to-military engagements, but special legislation allows the U.S. military to partner with civilian law enforcement agencies in counternarcotics initiatives.”¹¹⁵

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

Meanwhile, as noted above, the U.S. development agency, USAID, has undertaken analytic work to better understand the relationship between drug trafficking and development that revealed how the impact of drug trafficking is already evident across development sectors in a new programming guide, *The Development Response to Drug Trafficking in Africa: A Programming Guide*. The programming guide focuses mainly on the nature, scope and impact of cocaine and heroin trafficking, drugs which, according to the report, pose the greatest risks to development in the region at present. Amphetamine-type stimulants are also included as an increasing risk. USAID is now applying the findings of this analytic work to design, implement and evaluate programs that address the underlying development challenges that facilitate transnational organized crime, mitigate its development impacts, and ensure that development assistance programs are crime-sensitive.

¹¹³ <http://www.africom.mil/about-the-command>

¹¹⁴ Donna Mills (2012), “DOD, Agencies Cooperate to Confront West Africa Trafficking,” AFRICOM, May 18. <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/8982/dod-agencies-cooperate-to-confront-west-africa-tra>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/8759/africom-funded-projects-assisting-african-partners>

II. REGIONAL RESPONSES TO DRUG-TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA

THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

The AU first approached the issue of drug trafficking and drug use in 2002 with the AU Declaration on Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Africa (2002-2006) and the Revised Plan of Action for Drug Control in Africa (2002-2006). Prior to this, the AU's predecessor - the Organization of African Unity (OAU) - had produced a declaration recognizing the threats posed by drug trafficking in Africa.¹¹⁶ The 2002 Revised Plan focused on:

- Institution building and policy development
- Information, research and networking
- Legal systems and implementation of laws
- Integrated drug demand reduction
- National Law Enforcement and Control Capacities
- Regional Law Enforcement and Control Measures and International Cooperation.¹¹⁷

Complementing its efforts to combat drug trafficking, in 2003 the AU adopted the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. The aim of the Convention was for member states to strengthen national capacity and promote cooperation among member states in combating corruption and fostering conditions for transparency.

Subsequently, in 2007, the AU drafted a Revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for 2007-2012 focusing on seven key priority areas:

- Effective policy formulation and coordination
- Increasing shared responsibility and collaboration
- Capacity building for law enforcement and justice systems
- Mainstreaming drug issues into development strategies
- Capacity building to combat HIV and AIDS
- Enhancing understanding of drugs and crime for policy making
- Promotion of sports and culture in fight against crime and drugs.¹¹⁸

The 2007 Plan of Action was accompanied by a plan outlining implementation mechanisms, follow-up and evaluation. At the national level, existing agencies focusing on drug control and crime prevention were responsible for following up with national level action plans in line with the AU action plan. They were also charged with revising and proposing new policies, providing national services and support to civil society for victims of drug abuse, raising awareness of policies to combat drugs, and preparing country progress reports.¹¹⁹ The mechanism called on Member States lacking such agencies to establish them. At the regional level, Regional Economic

¹¹⁶ Organization of African Unity (1996), *Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Control Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking in Africa*, 32nd AOU Summit, Yaoundé, July, 1996.

¹¹⁷ Kwesi Aning (2010), *Organized Crime in West Africa: Options for EU Engagement*, 5-6.

¹¹⁸ African Union (2007), *The Revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for 2007-2012*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

¹¹⁹ African Union (2007), *Mechanism for Implementation, Follow-Up and Evaluation of the Revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012)*, 2-3.

Communities (RECs) were to establish a focal point on drugs and crime to assist the coordination of the action plan's implementation, hold regional meetings, produce regional progress reports, strengthen links with UNODC, and contribute to raising awareness.¹²⁰ Member states were requested to submit biennial reports on the status of implementation to the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention "for its consideration and action" and to make recommendations to the relevant AU Organs.¹²¹ It is unclear how Member States have responded to these requests.

In 2010, the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention defined more specific priority areas to include: Strengthening cooperation and coordination in the fight against drugs and crime; harmonizing drug control legislation of member States by 2012; improving control over precursor chemicals; exploring the need for an African training facility for the treatment of drug dependence; and strengthening the AU's Continental Early Warning System.¹²²

In December 2012 the AU Conference of Ministers assessed implementation of the earlier plans and approved a revised Plan of Action for 2013-2017, which was formally adopted at the January 2013 AU Summit. The revised action plan includes four key priority areas, notably:

- Enhancing continental, regional and national management, oversight, reporting and evaluation of the AU Plan of Action.
- Evidence-based services scaled up to address the health and social impact of drug use in Member States.
- Countering drug trafficking and related challenges to human security through supporting Member States and RECs to reduce trends of illicit trafficking and supply reduction in accordance with fundamental human rights principles and the rule of law.
- Capacity building in research and data collection enhanced through strengthening of institutions to respond effectively to challenges posed by illicit drugs, and to facilitate the licit movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes.¹²³

The 2013 implementation and follow up plan builds on the earlier one although the functions of the National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have been strengthened.^{124 125}

¹²⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹²¹ Ibid, 5.

¹²² International Narcotics Control Board (2011), *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2011*, E/INCB/2011/1, INCB, Vienna: United Nations, 44.

¹²³ African Union (2013), *AU Plan of Action on Drug Control 2013-2017*.

¹²⁴ The NCBs will be responsible for:

- Establishment of operational inter-sectorial drug coordinating committees.
- Development and implementation of detailed national Plans of Action with clear objectives, milestones, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and development partners and indicators using the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) as a guideline.
- Compilation and submission of drug related questionnaires, baseline studies, drug use epidemiology reports, and treatment data.
- Launching drug policy advocacy campaigns.
- Adopting and implementing minimum quality standards for drug use prevention and treatment.
- Strengthening legal and policy frameworks.

Overall, the new AU Plan of Action “represents a welcome, progressive and balanced menu of activities designed to reduce drug harm, supply and demand in the region.”¹²⁶ It also includes “refreshing commitments to the protection of public health, the upholding of international human rights law, and the diversion of people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system.”¹²⁷ Crucially, it also allows for the setting of clear objectives and targets by which progress and success can be measured – an element that is often overlooked (or purposefully avoided) by drug strategies in other parts of the world. It remains to be seen however, how much importance the AU places on effective implementation of the new strategy. In this regard, it will need to not only ensure strong political and financial commitment to support implementation of the policy, but also “expand advocacy for evidence-based services to be scaled-up, engage people who use drugs, learn from data collection best practices; improve social inclusion and reintegration of marginalized groups; and moreover, monitor impact and possible negative consequences.”¹²⁸ In this regard, a range of multilateral and bi-lateral organizations and NGOs were invited to take part in the Continental Expert Meeting organized by the AU in Kampala, Uganda in February 2013 to help identify priority programmes and interventions for improving drug demand reduction efforts in Africa. UNODC for example, intends to closely collaborate with the AU on the Drug Demand Reduction component and related data collection aspects of the 2013-2017 AU Action Plan on Drugs.¹²⁹

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

For more than two decades, governments across the sub-region have been apprised of the threats posed by drug trafficking and organized crime. In response to their earlier commitment to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, many of the West African countries already have basic laws (some of which are regarded as very harsh) that deal with drug trafficking and consumption.¹³⁰ ECOWAS countries are also members of the UN Convention against Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Crime and its three supplementary protocols (see Figure 4 below). Specifically, many West African states, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia have drug law enforcement legislation dating as far back as the 1930s, dealing mostly with cannabis use and cultivation and more recently,

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- Provision of necessary national services, and support to civil society organisations in favour of victims of drugs and crime.
 - Biannual preparation and submission of national progress reports (to the AUC).

¹²⁵ The RECs will be responsible for:

- Coordination, dissemination and popularization of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) and its implementation;
- On-going and regular regional consultations with national coordinating bodies on drug related issues within the region;
- Preparation of regional progress reports in consultation with stakeholders and submission to AUC on an annual basis;
- Strengthening of partnerships within the region, in order to ensure technical support for effective implementation of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017);
- Promoting support for activities and programmes of regional institutions and CSOs.¹²⁵

¹²⁶ IDPC Advocacy Note (2012), *Recommendations for the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017)*

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ UNODC, July 2013

¹³⁰ United Nations Treaty Collection website (2013).

cocaine trafficking.¹³¹ Many countries have also signed mutual assistance agreements with third countries to facilitate intelligence sharing and extradition requests.

RATIFICATION OF AND ACCESSION TO RELEVANT CONVENTIONS IN WEST AFRICA															
	Benin	Burkina Faso	Cabo Verde	Cote d'Ivoire	Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Liberia	Mali	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Togo
UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs (1961), as amended by the 1972 Protocol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UN Convention on Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UN Convention Against TNOC and Protocols (A/RES/55/25)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓
UN Convention Against Corruption (A/RES/58/4)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ = Ratified and/or acceded
 (✓) = Signed but not ratified
 (X) = Signed but not ratified

Figure 5 - Ratification and Accession to DT-Relevant Conventions in West Africa

ECOWAS has developed several strategies in the context of narcotics control. Early initiatives to respond to drug trafficking included:

- Declaration 'Community Flame Ceremony - the fight against drugs,' 21st Summit of Heads of State and Government in Abuja, Nigeria
- Resolution relating to Prevention and Control of Drug Abuse in West Africa (ECOWAS 1997)
- Decision on the establishment of a Regional Fund for Financing Drug Control Activities (ECOWAS 1998)
- Decision on establishing the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) (ECOWAS 1999).

With the exception of activities undertaken by ECOWAS's Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), which has been engaged in combating the activities of money laundering through its capacity-building and training programmes,¹³² limited progress was made to respond to drug trafficking in the early 2000s.¹³³ This lack of progress coupled with increasing pressure from international bodies and certain states led to the adoption of a Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa -

¹³¹ Aning, Kwesi (2008).

¹³² The GIABA programmes are aimed at improving the capacity of member states to respond to the threats of drugs and money laundering,

¹³³ In 2007 and 2008, ECOWAS leaders commented strongly on the lack of progress in stemming the increases in drugs being trafficked across the region. ECOWAS (2007 and 2008: 2).

the Abuja Declaration - and an accompanying Regional Action Plan to address the security threats posed by drug trafficking in the sub-region. The endorsement of these instruments by ECOWAS heads of state and government in December 2008 was preceded by an ECOWAS Ministerial meeting and a meeting of experts held in Praia, Cape Verde in October that same year. A critical aspect of ECOWAS's approach has been to ensure the responsibility of each individual state in implementing the Action Plan, which consists of five thematic areas:

- Mobilizing ECOWAS political leadership and address the need for adequate national budget allocation by ECOWAS member states for preventing and combating illicit drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse
- Effective law enforcement and national/regional cooperation against the high-level increase in illicit drug trafficking and organized crime
- Developing and strengthening appropriate and adequate legal frameworks for effective criminal justice
- Confronting emerging threats of increased drug abuse and associated health and security problems
- Creating valid and reliable data to assess the magnitude of the drug trafficking

The ECOWAS Action Plan ran until 2011. An internal ECOWAS assessment of the period covering 2008-2011 highlights ECOWAS' engagement with regional training initiatives, operational activities, and drug use education programs, as well as technical and financial support provided for information sharing and project implementation.¹³⁴ ECOWAS has "provided support to the organisation of Annual Meetings of Coordinators of the Inter-Ministerial Drug Coordinating Committee to support knowledge and information sharing, and networking, and also provide a platform for member states to report on progress regarding the implementation of the Regional Action Plan."¹³⁵ The latter includes operational meetings, meetings of experts to design and implement joint operations, and expert meetings on drug demand reduction. ECOWAS also provided support to a June 2012 meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) held by the Ghana Narcotics Control Board in Accra, Ghana.¹³⁶ Upcoming initiatives include conducting research to promote regional legal framework harmonization and establishing a network to collect and correlate drug use data.¹³⁷ According to ECOWAS' internal assessment, several member states for example, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Cape Verde have made important efforts in strengthening law enforcement efforts. Some, such as Cape Verde and Senegal, have developed good policy practices in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug users.

ECOWAS has also stressed other important milestones achieved with the support *inter alia* of member state experts, the UNODC and Interpol since the adoption of the Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action. These include: building internal capacity and enhancing coordination within ECOWAS; supporting the development of national strategies and regional networking; and improving overall understanding of the issues among various stakeholders (youth, media, education establishments, CSOs etc.) in the region.

¹³⁴ Correspondence with ECOWAS, May 28, 2013.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The regional Action Plan has also given impetus to national, bi-lateral and sub-regional initiatives, for example the WACI (see below), to support the establishment of TOCUs in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea.

Despite these developments, the general perception is that the overall impact and effectiveness of the regional architecture has been low, particularly due to resource constraints within the sub-regional body and limited implementation capacities at the national level. ECOWAS itself notes that inadequate resources and financial support as well as delays in building consensus on strategic approaches have slowed progress.

Under the 2008-2011 Action Plan, an Interdisciplinary Committee was established to promote coordinated responses to drugs and crime and a Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) was created to report to the UN Security Council. In addition, an ECOWAS Commission Operational Plan was developed in 2009 to guide regional and national activities. The MEM's structure and function was set out at an August 2011 meeting. The aim was to establish it as a semi-permanent structure. Occasional *ad hoc* Monitoring Mission Teams (MMTs) would evaluate country-level implementation of the Action Plan on a voluntary basis. A 'checklist' made by the ECOWAS Commission on the basis of the Regional Action Plan's objectives, outputs, and activities will provide guidance on what will be monitored and evaluated. Despite these intentions, it does not appear that the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism has formally initiated its work.¹³⁸

Conversely, following a period of uncertainty regarding the status of the Abuja Political Declaration and Action Plan (as noted, they had formally run until December 2011), in February 2013, ECOWAS Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to the instruments, extending them for an additional two years.¹³⁹ In March 2013, ECOWAS and the EU Delegation in Abuja finalized and agreed on a new framework agreement entitled "EU Support to the Implementation of the ECOWAS Drug and Crime Action Plan" and totalling approximately 16.5 million Euros. Implementation modalities include a Standard Grant Agreement with ECOWAS and a Contribution Agreement with UNODC. The agreement is aimed at enabling ECOWAS to address capacity issues and play the leading policy role in advocacy, coordination and monitoring. UNODC will take the lead in implementing the more technical aspects of the Plan while working closely with ECOWAS to build capacity and sustainability.¹⁴⁰

Already in 2009 it was envisaged that the EU would provide support to facilitate operationalizing elements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan. For a range of reasons - both political and technical - the formal endorsement of the 10th European Development Fund's programming documents¹⁴¹ was delayed. It is now expected that the European Development Fund Secretariat will make a final financing decision in September 2013. For ECOWAS, such an agreement would help address some of the resource issues experienced by the Commission.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ See the Regional Action Plan for more detail.

¹³⁹ ECOWAS (2013), *Final Communiqué*, Forty Second Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, February 28.

¹⁴⁰ A first tri-partite meeting EU-ECOWAS-UNODC was held in May 2013 to discuss component actions of the Contribution Agreement between the EU and UNODC.

¹⁴¹ Ref. 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme for West Africa - EU Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime related to it, and Drug Use.

¹⁴² Communication with ECOWAS Secretariat, May 2013.

In addition to the ECOWAS Action Plan, several sub-regional initiatives have been developed to support programmatic implementation and enhance cooperation and coordination in the region. These include:

- *The Dakar Initiative*, a sub-regional initiative signed by seven countries in February 2010.¹⁴³ The Initiative intends to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan and the Political Declaration. One of the main outcomes of the Dakar Initiative to date is an effort by the Senegalese Ministry of Interior to draft “a document [aimed at] harmoniz[ing] existing national legal instruments at a sub-regional level to fight drug trafficking in a coordinated and more efficient manner.”¹⁴⁴ A first draft of the ‘harmonization law’ was tabled in November 2012.
- The *West Africa Drug Regulatory Authority Network (WADRAN)* is a network established in 2006 to promote regional regulatory cooperation to combat fake pharmaceuticals. It is forum for national drug regulatory authorities and is affiliated with ECOWAS.
- Operation level joint initiatives (see section on joint initiatives below)

Other Instruments/ Declarations/ initiatives that have implications for responding to drug trafficking include:

- The *ECOWAS 2013 Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan*, (adopted in February 2013).
- The *ECOWAS 2013 Maritime Security Strategy* (under finalization).
- The *2011 Bamako Declaration on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights*, which offers recommendations on fighting organized crime, illicit trafficking, terrorism and piracy.¹⁴⁵
- The *2011 Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa*, which includes a recommendation on preventing the financing of political parties and their campaigns by criminal networks, particularly drug trafficking networks.
- In complex settings such as Guinea Bissau and Mali, the Chiefs of Defence Staff and Inspector Generals of Police of troop and police contributing countries also include a focus on drug trafficking in their responses to security challenges.

GIABA

¹⁴³ The seven countries are Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania.

¹⁴⁴ UNODC (2013), *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, Introduction.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

The Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) was established in 2000 as an additional ECOWAS mechanism focusing on responding to money-laundering. One of GIABA's main activities is to monitor country-level implementation of anti-money laundering legislation and regimes. Based on GIABA's country reports one can glean that all ECOWAS member states are in various stages of implementing policies, through the drafting of guidelines and decrees and the establishment of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) to investigate money laundering. The reports also demonstrate that countries across the region face serious challenges in confronting money laundering. As noted, some countries have established FIUs to analyze suspicious transactions and pass the information to law enforcement. However, aside from Nigeria, Senegal and Cape Verde, there have been limited numbers of convictions for money laundering in West Africa despite reports that money laundering is prevalent in the region.¹⁴⁶

In 2010, GIABA produced a "typology report" on *Laundering the Proceeds of Drug Trafficking*. According to the report, drug trafficking money derives from several sources, including local production or sale of imported narcotics, repatriated drug proceeds, money from drug couriers, and profits generated by the secondary businesses related to drug trafficking, such as false identity providers, recruiters, or drug packagers. Traffickers "employ complex means to launder money generated from drug trafficking including the use of lawyers, bureaux de change, trade, cash couriers, front companies, purchase of real estate, etc."¹⁴⁷ The report highlighted procedural issues that hinder national and regional responses to money laundering related to drug trafficking. For example, anti money-laundering legislation tends to be more recent than drug trafficking laws, so implementation is hindered by both the lack of familiarity and lack of capacity. It is also problematic that drug laws themselves are often applied at random and without consistency regarding product and quantity. While trafficking is usually conducted in countries with "unstable political, social and economic situation and weak controls," the laundering typically occurs "in stable countries in the region with a fairly stable economy, where cash dominates transactions and it is difficult for authorities to monitor cash inflows and outflows, as well as some in countries outside the region."¹⁴⁸ In this regard, a more effective regional response and cross-border jurisdiction agreements are needed. Compounding the lack of capacity to investigate money-laundering cases, the report notes that drug cases do not tend to lead to asset seizure after conviction. It also states that coordination between FIU and investigating agencies remains weak. With cross-border implications in a range of cash heavy economies, GIABA has called for a regional common strategy and better domestic links between drug enforcement agencies, money laundering data and FIUs.¹⁴⁹

GIABA's first Strategic Plan of Action 2007-2009 was independently evaluated in 2010. Key successes noted include the fact that all ECOWAS states had approved anti-money laundering legislation; some thirteen Financial Investigation Units (FIUs) had been established; cooperation between Member states and civil society had been strengthened; and cooperation with international and regional partners grew

¹⁴⁶ UNODC notes that in Senegal alone, some 12 convictions on ML charges have taken place since 2009. This information is not publicly available.

¹⁴⁷ GIABA (2010), *2010 Annual Report*, 75.

¹⁴⁸ GIABA (2010), *2010 Annual Report*, 76.

¹⁴⁹ GIABA (2010), *2010 Annual Report*, 77.

stronger.¹⁵⁰ The evaluation also noted several challenges inhibiting GIABA's work. For example, ECOWAS regulations can cause high administrative costs which hinder GIABA's performance ability, Member States lack extradition and MLA protocols; a lack of political will among Member States to implement GIABA mechanisms, the fact that monitoring data is mostly qualitative; and the lack of resources to support Member States in responding to the shortcomings identified in their mutual evaluations.¹⁵¹ Building on the findings of the evaluation report, GIABA developed a follow up Action Plan - The Second Strategic Plan of Action 2011-2014 - which includes seven priority areas:

- Institutional Development Support
- Compliance Monitoring; Research and Typologies
- Technical Support to Member States
- Partnerships (cross-cutting issue)
- Regional and International Cooperation (cross-cutting issue)
- Coordination (cross-cutting issue).

THE MANO RIVER UNION

The Mano River Union is less active on the drug trafficking agenda. In 2013, and in line with Security Council recommendations, UNOWA will convene a meeting between ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, UNOWA and other UN entities to discuss border control, cross-border trafficking, and the development of sub-regional strategy about cross-border movement.¹⁵² Both UNMIL and UNOCI have been encouraged by the Security Council to support the development of this strategy and to include updates on its development in their own reporting.¹⁵³

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¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² UN Security Council (2013), *Peace consolidation in West Africa Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/977)*, S/PV.6911, January 25.

¹⁵³ See para. 20 of S/Res/2062 (2012) on Cote d'Ivoire, and para.19 of S/Res/2066 (2012) on Liberia.

III. EXAMPLES OF JOINT INITIATIVES AIMED AT RESPONDING TO DRUG TRAFFICKING

WEST AFRICA COAST INITIATIVE (WACI)

In 2009, UNOWA launched the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), a sub-regional initiative aimed at strengthening capacity and intelligence capabilities in four pilot countries in support of implementation of the ECOWAS Plan of Action, and involving UNODC, DPKO and INTERPOL. The objective of the WACI is to provide equipment, technical assistance, and specialized training across countries in the sub-region. The February 2010 “WACI Freetown Commitment”¹⁵⁴ was signed by Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone to establish TOCU and establish or strengthen FIUs, along with providing continued political and technical support to combating transnational organized crime in their countries. The countries also committed to signing and pushing for the ratification of relevant regional and international legal instruments to combat organized crime.

Sierra Leone has a fully operational TOCU which investigated 50 criminal cases in the first half of 2011, resulting in 25 convictions. The TOCU also assisted on “in-country fraud inquiries, on behalf of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and UK SOCA.” At the time of the most recent report, UNODC was assessing extending the INTERPOL I-24/7 information exchange system to the TOCU and Sierra Leone’s airport and seaport.¹⁵⁵ In Liberia, as of 2012, an office for the TOCU has been established, training was provided to TOCU personnel, and a board to assess procedures and conduct was established.¹⁵⁶ In Guinea-Bissau, UNODC has suspended its activities due to the coup in April 2012. Prior to this, they had been providing training and equipment to TOCU staff and members of the Financial Intelligence Unit. Political stability in Cote D’Ivoire hindered the program from moving past the joint assessment mission in 2009 until May 2012, when a second joint assessment was undertaken.¹⁵⁷

An independent review of the WACI states that its biggest achievements have been bringing the pilot countries under the umbrella of the ECOWAS Abuja Declaration, increasing cooperation across borders among the pilot countries, creating some institutional change by bringing together actors from different law enforcement agencies within a country, allocation of monies from national budgets for the WACI program, and helping to link local needs and capabilities with “universal criteria and norms.”¹⁵⁸ The review does not outline the criteria that were used in the development of this assessment.

¹⁵⁴ The initiative’s full name is *West Africa Coast Initiative “WACI” Freetown Commitment on Combating Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*

¹⁵⁵ UNODC (2012), *Current situation with respect to subregional and regional cooperation in countering drug trafficking*, presented at the Twenty-Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, AfricaUNODC/HONLAF/22/CRP.1, May 10, 4.

¹⁵⁶ UNODC (2012), *Current situation with respect to subregional and regional cooperation in countering drug trafficking*, presented at the Twenty-Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, AfricaUNODC/HONLAF/22/CRP.1, May 10, 4.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Authors specifically cite progress in Sierra Leone’s inter-agency coordination and intelligence gathering and operational capacity. Tim Goudsmid, Andrea Mancini and Andrés Vanegas Canosa (2012), “Security Sector Reform, Crime and Regional Development in West Africa,” in Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr (Eds) *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development*, Chapter 5, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

AIRCOP CONTROL PROJECT (AIRCOP)

AIRCOP is a border and customs focused program jointly implemented by UNODC, INTERPOL and WCO and funded by the EC and Canada. It was launched in January 2010 with the objective of creating Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITF) in eight airports along trafficking routes in West Africa, including one in Brazil,¹⁵⁹ and one in Morocco. The JAITFs are intended to improve communication and capacity at targeted airports. Both the CCP (see below) and AIRCOP are interdiction-focused initiatives targeting cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, or other controlled substances, such as illicit pharmaceuticals. Although a specific evaluation report was not available, a EC report lists AIRCOP's achievements as the following: "strengthened controls at major international airports; increased awareness of airport inspection services about smuggling risks on flights; collection of data on cocaine trafficking in the regions concerned; improved information sharing between customs and police services; 25 significant seizures: chemical precursors (Côte d'Ivoire), 1,870 kg of cannabis (Gabon), cocaine (Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Cape Verde and Mali), and several seizures of cash, arms and African works of art."¹⁶⁰ In a WCO presentation of AIRCOP presented at a trans-Atlantic symposium, impact was assessed in the number of seizures occurring after the program's implementation. According to the same source, AIRCOP provides real time operational communication and the training and creation of joint forces that bring together all drug related agencies at an airport.¹⁶¹

CONTAINER CONTROL PROGRAMME (CCP)

As noted above, UNODC is currently implementing a Global CCP in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO). The CCP was developed to support governments establish sustainable enforcement structures in selected sea and dry ports as a means to minimize the risk of shipping containers being exploited for illicit drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime. The programme became operational in 2006. In West Africa, the programme is currently operational in Ghana, Senegal, Togo and Benin, with a number of technical assistance activities also having taken place in Cape Verde.

In each country in which the programme is implemented, UNODC works with governments to establish a unit dedicated to targeting and inspecting high risk containers. In partnership with the WCO, UNODC delivers a basic training programme, provides technical and office equipment and also connects the unit to the WCO's ContainerCOMM - a restricted branch of the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) system dedicated to sharing information worldwide on the use of containers for illicit trafficking. UNODC also supports governments in establishing a suitable institutional framework for the unit, through some form of inter-agency agreement. Key to success of the programme is UNODC and WCO's ongoing support for the units through mentoring, exchange visits, study tours and advanced training in specific issues.

¹⁵⁹ Assessment missions carried out by 2011 in Dakar, Senegal; Bamako, Mali; Praia, Cape Verde; Lagos, Nigeria; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; Lomé, Togo; Accra, Ghana; Conakry, Guinea; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. See Bertrand, 2011.

¹⁶⁰ European Commission (2011), *Long-term responses to global security threats: Contributing to security capacity building in third countries through the Instrument for Stability*, 12.

¹⁶¹ Pierre Bertrand (2011), "Better inter-service and interagency cooperation through a secure and responsive communication system," World Customs Organization, presentation at the Trans-Atlantic Symposium on dismantling transnational illicit network, May 17-19.

According to the CCP's 2012 Annual Report, the West Africa units established under the programme seized 56kg of cocaine, 155 tonnes of Tramadol, a further 16 tonnes of fraudulent medicines, as well as various cigarette, counterfeit and commercial fraud seizures. In 2013, the CCP units have so far seized, *inter alia*, 127kg of heroin and 282kg of cocaine.

OPERATION ATAKORA

With the aim of combining training with operational activities, in July 2012, ECOWAS and INTERPOL conducted a week-long joint initiative, starting with three days training in Lomé (Togo) followed by three days of operations in Togo, Benin and Ghana, and a day of debriefing. ECOWAS funded the initiative, which is especially designed for law enforcement officers from various agencies responsible for drug investigations in the above-mentioned countries.

After the three days training, Operation “ATAKORA” was launched, particularly focusing on drug trafficking at airports, sea ports and land borders in the three countries by engaging the 36 investigators and law enforcements officers in the respective countries. INTERPOL’s Trainers and ECOWAS representatives participated in the operations as observers. The operational activities led to the arrest of some 74 traffickers and seizures of 7894,275 kg of different kinds of drugs. As a result of the success of the 2012 operation, a follow-up operation is planned for 2013 on fake drugs for (Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Togo) to be supported by INTERPOL.

INCB’S EPHEDRINE PSEUDOEPHEDRINE INTELLIGENCE (EPIG) INITIATIVE

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) is an independent, quasi-judicial expert body established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 by merging two bodies: the Permanent Central Narcotics Board, created by the 1925 International Opium Convention; and the Drug Supervisory Body, created by the 1931 Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs.¹⁶² The INCB is the independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations international drug control conventions. It produces annual reports and implements different initiatives related to its mandated areas of work. Four West African countries¹⁶³ took part in the International Narcotics Control Board Operation EPIG aimed at addressing Ephedrine Pseudoephedrine Intelligence Gaps in Africa. The 3-months operation assessed legal shipments of precursors for methamphetamines with the aim of adopting measures to tighten tracking of these chemicals. An internal review of the programme noted that there were no longer large-scale shipments to or through African countries previously identified. However, recent discoveries of labs and shipment seizures demonstrate that continued and longer-term attention is needed.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² The INCB has 13 members, each elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of five years. INCB members may be re-elected. Ten of the members are elected from a list of persons nominated by Governments. The remaining three members are elected from a list of persons nominated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for their medical, pharmacological or pharmaceutical experience. Members of the Board shall be persons who, by their expertise, competence, impartiality and disinterestedness, will command general confidence. Once they have been elected, INCB members serve impartially in their personal capacity, independently of Governments. See

¹⁶³ Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal

¹⁶⁴ International Narcotics Control Board (2013), “Project Prism Special Alert, Results of Operation “EPIG,” INCB Project Prism, February 20, 3.

JOINT INITIATIVES AIMED AT RESPONDING TO DRUG DEPENDENCY AND TREATMENT

UNODC and the World Health Organization (WHO) are implementing a Joint Programme on Drug Dependence Treatment and Care aimed at increasing quality and quantitative treatment services for drug dependent persons. The Programme, which is supported by the United States (INL) and France and which is ongoing in 6 countries in West Africa in 2013-2014, is centered on the following strategic areas of action:

- Supporting drug dependence treatment related assessments, data collection, monitoring and evaluation as well as research and the development of technical tools;
- Supporting capacity building on evidence-based drug dependence treatment and care;
- Supporting drug dependence treatment service development and evidence-based service delivery;
- Supporting advocacy related activities on the issue of drug dependence as a health disorder and the coordination and development of evidence-based policies on drug dependence treatment and care.

Within the framework of the Joint UNODC-WHO programme, a pilot National Drug Observatory (NDO) will be established in Senegal with the support of France. A new Specialized Reference Treatment Centre which will host the first Methadone Programme for IDUs in West Africa is also contemplated in the programme.

The European Union, the government of Nigeria and UNODC have finalized a programme of work in various response areas including treatment and prevention. One of the initiatives will include the establishment of a National Drug Observatory (NDO) in Nigeria.

Discussions are ongoing with EU, ECOWAS and UNODC to support the ECOWAS Operation Plan which includes a specific component on drug use epidemiology (surveys and data collection) and on drug use prevention and drug dependence treatment.

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