



Terms of Reference

Commission on the Impact of Drug Trafficking on Governance, Security, and Development in West Africa

1. Background

1.1. In recent years, the trans-shipment of illicit narcotics from Latin America through West Africa to Europe and North America has increased significantly. Organized crime syndicates are now operating in West Africa to ensure safe passage of their drug cargos through the region. At the same time, drug consumption in the region both of locally produced products and trafficked imports, notably cocaine, have increased substantially.

1.2. These developments pose a serious threat to the peace and stability of West Africa, which is emerging from decades of violent strife. As the African Union observed, “drug profits are distorting economies of many African countries and in some of the poorest states, the value of trafficked drugs exceeds the country’s gross national income. Countries have also borne the brunt of negative health consequences and costs associated with fighting drug-related crime.”¹ The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that the drug trade through West Africa alone is now worth \$800 million a year.

1.3. In light of these developments, on April 18-20, the Kofi Annan Foundation, in partnership with the Centre on International Cooperation at New York University (NYU), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPKTC), and the Intergovernmental Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), with the support of the Open Society Foundation (OSF), organised a workshop in Dakar, Senegal, to analyse the *Impact of Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking on Governance, Security and Development in West Africa*.

1.4. The workshop noted that various initiatives have been undertaken aimed at curbing the inflow and diffusion of illicit drugs in Africa. In 2007, the African Union developed a region-wide policy on drug control with a corresponding action plan. In October 2012, the AU policy and plan was the subject of review by the Conference of African Ministers on Drug Control. While noting some successes, the AU Commission also identified serious capacity constraints that had inhibited the full implementation of the action plan and stated that it “was not sufficiently results based”. The plan has now been revised and updated and awaits endorsement by the region’s heads of state and government.

1.5. In 2008, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in collaboration with UNODC, drafted the Praia Plan of Action and a political declaration against illicit drug trafficking. The Action Plan and the Declaration were later endorsed by ECOWAS Heads of State. Subsequently, the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability included a provision on preventing the financing of political parties and their campaigns by

¹ AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017). CAMDC/EXP/2(V)

criminal networks, particularly drug trafficking networks.

1.6. Despite these important initiatives, participants at the workshop arrived at a consensus on the need for a regionally-led independent, high-level body or group of “champions” to strengthen and intensify the on-going work of regional and national actors on drug trafficking and related issues in West Africa. This group, in the form of a high level commission, would aim to mobilize public opinion and catalyse political support for further action at national, regional and international levels before drug fuelled problems become totally unmanageable. At the same time, the Commission will review the impact of increasing levels of drug consumption in West Africa and how current policies and practices can be changed to deal with dependency in a manner that reduces harm and discourages a custodial response to dependency.

1.7. Recent events in the Sahel region have reinforced the concerns expressed at the Dakar workshop. The apparent convergence of drug traffickers, arms traders and armed extremist groups, if left unchecked, could destabilize the region. This makes the design and implementation of preventive measures, based on solid analysis and assessment, all the more urgent.

2. Purpose of the Commission

2.1. The Commission will have three basic objectives:

i. Mobilizing public awareness and political commitment:

- The Commission will examine ways and means to enhance the political priority accorded to drug trafficking and its impact on West Africa. It will undertake a campaign to raise awareness of the drug trafficking problem and its ramifications, including for governance and public health. It will also seek to inform and advise political leaders and the general public on effective and humane ways to tackle dependency without resort to incarceration or criminalisation of users.

ii. Developing evidence based policy recommendations:

- In order to fully understand the scale and impact of trafficking and growing drug consumption, and to be able to make evidence based policy recommendations, the Commission will use available data and analysis, which will be compiled into a series of background papers to help shape the direction of the Commission’s work programme. New research work would only be initiated if gaps are clearly apparent in the currently available information. The Commission’s work will focus, inter-alia, on the following themes as a basis for policy discussion and follow-up:

- Drug Trafficking and its impact on Governance in West Africa
- Drug Trafficking and threats to National Security in West Africa
- Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency in West Africa

iii. Developing local and regional capacities and ownership

- The Commission will seek to establish the priority areas for action, and identify the appropriate ‘change agents’ within the region and the capacity support that will be needed to effect change;
- The Commission will facilitate the development of networks of relevant actors in the region, for example, by bringing together various research institutes, universities, individuals and think tanks to develop and undertake peer reviews for the Commission;
- In all its actions, the Commission will seek to promote regional ownership, engage with existing initiatives and build on and support the valuable work of regional and other partners, including the AU, ECOWAS, UNODC, and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA)

3. Composition of the Commission

i. The Commission

- The Commission will comprise up to 12 individuals, reflecting the diverse and multi-layered nature of West African society and institutions. These sectors include, but are not limited to political life, civil society, health, security and law enforcement, and the judiciary. It will also be necessary to secure the involvement of individuals with a solid understanding of, and background in, illicit financial flows and their impact on the wider economy;
- One of the members will serve as Chairperson;
- The Commission will also include popular figures to facilitate greater interest and engagement among young people;
- The Commission will aim to achieve a gender balance in its membership and a mix of English, French and Portuguese speaking members.

ii. Review

- The Commission will have access to individuals with knowledge and experience in dealing with drug policy issues at a high political level in other parts of the world. They would be available to share their experiences and lessons learned with the Commission as the work progresses.
- Technical and civil society experts will be on call to review specific reports, studies and recommendations prepared for the Commission as needed.
- Most of the work of the Review Group will be done by electronic exchange but at least one or two meetings of the Group will be arranged at a suitable moment in the calendar of the Commission.

iii. Support

- The Commission will receive support for:
 - Organising meetings of the Commission, and events to launch and reports/findings of the Commission;
 - Liaison among Commission members, with partner organizations and civil society;
 - Communications and media/outreach;
 - Production of Commission reports or studies.

4. Outline of the Programme of Work

4.1. The programme of work will extend over twenty months:

Preparatory phase focussing on:

- The identification of Commission Members and establishment of the Commission;
- Identification of support requirements for the Commission;
- Compilation of background papers for the meetings of the Commission.

Implementation phase, which will focus on:

- Review of background information and inter-action with political and security actors, drug policy experts, and civil society partners as a basis for developing the Commission's findings and recommendations;
- Three formal meetings of the Commission, plus associated meetings with stakeholders and experts as may be needed;
- Preparation, production, launch and dissemination of reports of the Commission;

Advocacy phase: public advocacy and discussion across the region based on the findings and recommendations of the Commission.

5. Provisional Timeline

5.1 The provisional timeline, which may need to be adjusted with experience, is established as follows:

Preparatory phase: November – December 2012

- Completion of Terms of Reference for the Commission;
- Selection of Commission members;
- Identification of support requirements;
- Preparations for the first meeting of the Commission.

Implementation phase: January - December 2013

- *January 2013: Inaugural Meeting of the Commission*
 - o Commission Members meet to review and endorse Programme of Work,
- *June 2013: Second Meeting of Commission*
 - o Mid-point stock-taking of programme of work
 - o Meeting with Review group
- *December 2013: Final Meeting of Commission*
 - o Launch of Report
 - o Decision on next steps regarding public discussion and advocacy activities.

Advocacy and Dissemination Phase: January – June 2014

- *January – June 2014*
 - o Dialogue and Advocacy by Commission members throughout West Africa with political and non-governmental actors and the general public.

6. Outcomes

Expected Outcomes	Indicators
Greater awareness by governments and society at large on the dangers posed by drug trafficking and organized crime.	Increased and prominent political and public discussion, and media coverage, of drug and related threats within and outside the region.
Vulnerability of West Africa to threats posed by drug trafficking is reduced.	Adoption and implementation of preventive strategies at national and regional level that identify and deal with threats from drug trafficking.

Country and regional strategies and policies on dependency are strengthened to reflect a preventive and harm reduction approach.

Reduction in incarcerations for dependency and increase in use of harm reduction and therapeutic practices in dealing with dependency.

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