

West Africa Coast Initiative High-Level Policy Committee WACI POLCOM

PRESS RELEASE

West Africa strengthens fight against drug trafficking and transnational crime

Bissau, 24 November 2015- The Third Meeting of the High Policy Committee (POLCOM) of the West African Coast Initiative (WACI) was held today in Bissau (Guinea Bissau), chaired by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

The fifty participants took stock of the progress in the implementation of WACI, discussed solutions for countries in which its implementation is slow, and took new strategic directions for the extension of WACI until 2017.

The meeting encouraged Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to set up Transnational Crime Units (TCU), to facilitate the collection, sharing and use of information in the fight against this scourge, both domestically and internationally.

The TCUs also aim to enable better synergy of actions from all national administrations involved in the prevention and fight against organized crime. They are also involved in international police cooperation and cross-border joint operations. Their operationalization has already led to seizures and major arrests, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In a country such as Guinea, where Ebola virus epidemic has slowed somewhat the full implementation of WACI, the meeting recommended a reassessment of the jointly with national authorities to find the best solutions for its strengthening.

In addition, participants of Bissau meeting recommended the strengthening of cooperation between the different national TCUs and thought of a simplified mechanism for the adhesion of other West African States to WACI project.

Bissau meeting was held in the presence of Ministers and High Representatives of WACI Member States (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and WACI partners (ECOWAS, INTERPOL, UNODC, and the United Nations Departments of Political Affairs (DPA) and Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO)).

The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) facilitated the organization of this third POLCOM.

West Africa is well known as a transit area for cocaine trafficking between Latin America and Europe, which recently also became a methamphetamine production and increasing drug consumption area. Organized crime poses a serious threat to the stability of the sub-region and an obstacle to its development.

For more information, visit www.unowa.unmissions.org/ www.unodc.org

-Vicky Delore Ndjeuga, chargée de l'information publique pour le Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest
Portable: +221 77- 3339414 – E-mail : ndjeuga@un.org

-Júlia Galvão Alinho, Chief Public Information Officer, United Nations Integrated Peace-building Office in Guinea
(UNIOGBIS) Portable: +245 613 60 45 - E-mail: alinho@un.org



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



United Nations Office for West Africa
UNOWA
Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest