



Republic of Guinea-Bissau

National Operational Plan to combat drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in Guinea-Bissau

2011-2014

I. BACKGROUND

On 27 October 2010, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a letter informing on Guinea-Bissau's efforts to combat drug trafficking and organized crime. In the correspondence, the Prime Minister also requested the support of the United Nations to revise and to extend the 2007-2010 *Operational Plan for combating and preventing Drug Trafficking to and from Guinea-Bissau: Promoting the Rule of Law and Effective Administration of Justice*, prepared with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)¹.

To reach consumer markets in Europe, cocaine may transit via West Africa. According to UNODC estimates, and excluding what is imported for local consumption², around 21 tons of cocaine transit the region every year. The resulting profit in consumer countries (more than US\$ 1 billion) outweighs the Gross Domestic Product of Guinea-Bissau, estimated by the International Monetary Fund at US\$ 825 million in 2010³.

Guinea-Bissau has been particularly targeted by international drug traffickers due to its lack of resources providing optimum conditions for illicit trafficking to take place on a large scale. This situation drew the attention of the international community. In this regard, the United Nations Security Council called "*for urgent consideration of how the UN System might improve its support for Guinea-Bissau's fight against international drug trafficking and organized crime*"⁴. This led to the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and to the development of the 2007-2010 Operational Plan.

The results obtained over this period were encouraging: a functioning Judicial Police, participation to the West Africa Coast Initiative⁵, a functioning Financial Intelligence Unit, a prosecution service more capable, a pool of magistrates specialized on drug trafficking and organized crime cases, daily expert advice on law enforcement operations and prosecution activities, a reformed penitentiary system and administration, etc. Altogether, these achievements of the 2007-2010 Operational Plan laid down the foundation of a judiciary system more able to cope with the scourges of drugs and crime.

¹ The Plan was then the object of a donors' conference, hosted by the Government of Portugal in Lisbon on 19 December 2007.

² UNODC, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, April 2011 and UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2010

³ IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, October 2010

⁴ Statement of the Presidency of the Security Council of 24 October 2007 on Guinea-Bissau

⁵ Joint initiative from UNODC, the UN Department of Political Affairs/UN Office for West Africa, INTERPOL and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone are also part of the Initiative.

Having addressed the most immediate shortcomings, a longer-term approach now needs to be taken to ensure security and development in Guinea-Bissau, with particular focus on security sector reform, justice, and on building the capacity of the Government to further tackle illicit drug trafficking⁶. The drug and crime situation in the region evolved over the past years, with the restructuring of criminal networks. Guinea-Bissau's response must adapt as well and build on existing capacity now allowing it to have a longer-term vision.

In addition, this new response needs to take into account emerging problems. As drugs were making their way through the country, consumption of new drugs began to appear⁷, although its price is still a major obstacle to a widespread use. This leads to particular concerns in terms of social cohesion and public health, notably with regard to HIV/AIDS. Similarly, the important cannabis consumption among the youth and the emergence of new vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, require particular attention, especially in terms of treatment of addiction and reinsertion.

On 27 June 2011, the Government of Guinea-Bissau adopted a *Political Declaration to combat and to prevent Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime*. This Declaration reaffirms Guinea-Bissau's commitment to promoting an environment free from drugs and crime conducive to socioeconomic development and stability. To achieve this objective, the Declaration provides for a number of principles and commitments to be translated into actions. In doing so, it adopted the present document, which contains the operational objectives and the activities needed to reach them.

The National Operational Plan is not to be regarded as a mere security-oriented initiative. On the contrary and as increasingly outlined by international institutions⁸, socioeconomic development and thriving economy is better achieved in a stable, predictable and relatively secure environment where legal rights and obligations are upheld. Moreover, the National Operational Plan represents Guinea-Bissau's additional contribution to the implementation of the 2008-2011 *ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa*.

⁶ This need was also stressed by the Security Council in its Resolution 1949 of 23 November 2010

⁷ Particularly crack and cocaine

⁸ See World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*, January 2011

II. STRUCTURE

The National Operational Plan is divided into three thematic areas:

- **Law Enforcement:** Weak law enforcement agencies contribute to making Guinea-Bissau vulnerable to transnational illicit trafficking. The previous Operational Plan (2007-2010) included a strong law enforcement component focusing on the Judicial Police, improved interdiction and detection capacity, the ability to detect suspicious financial flows, combating corruption, and the Public Order Police. Not all targets were met, but the national authorities are now more capable to detect and investigate on organized criminal activities. Building on these, the new Operational Plan aims to extend the authority of the State over the entire territory and to further develop specialized competencies and capacity. This includes overhauling the training of law enforcement institutions, improving interagency cooperation, and better securing the national territory.
- **Criminal Justice:** Putting an end to impunity and restoring confidence in the justice system are critical steps to avoid that Guinea-Bissau becomes a safe haven for criminals. These steps are thus essential to establish stability and an effective rule of law-based criminal justice system. The previous Operational Plan addressed the most pressing issues, such as providing specialized training to police, prosecutors and judges, as well as basic equipment, and setting the foundations for longer-term legal reforms and effective practice. Building on this first Plan, the new Operational Plan intends to conduct further legislative reforms, including on procedural law and evidentiary mechanisms; to increase the local and regional capacity to cooperate internationally on criminal justice matters; and to enable the country to promote effective extradition and mutual legal assistance and recover illegally-obtained assets. These activities on international cooperation may also provide an opportunity to address witness protection measures, which are essential for the successful prosecution of perpetrators of transnational organized crime.
- **Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS:** The use of Guinea-Bissau for the transit of cocaine towards consumer markets is beginning to have an impact on the health of citizens through increased consumption, while cannabis use is widespread among the youth. Injecting drugs involves high risks of HIV infection, and the promiscuity in certain environments makes the infection spreading even faster. Both drug use and HIV/AIDS have devastating consequences on younger generations and prevent them from reaching their full potential. These aspects were not included in the previous Operational Plan as they emerged only recently. The new Operational Plan acknowledges this new situation and put a strong focus on prevention, developing treatment capacity and on improving reinsertion opportunities, with the help of all relevant stakeholders acting locally.

