

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 20 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to submit herewith a summary of the open debate held by the Security Council on 19 December 2018 on “Drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability”, held under the item “Peace and security in Africa”, prepared by Côte d'Ivoire, in its capacity as President of the Security Council in December 2018 (see annex).

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your contribution to the debate, through the remarks delivered by your Chef de Cabinet. I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kacou Houadja Léon **Adom**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 20 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Chair's summary of the open debate held by the Security Council on 19 December 2018 on the subject "Drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability"**

In its capacity as President of the Security Council for December 2018, Côte d'Ivoire is hereby providing the present summary of the open debate of the Security Council on the theme "Drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability" under the item "Peace and security in Africa", which was held on 19 December 2018.

A briefing was provided by Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Mr. Fedotov highlighted new, alarming trends in drug trafficking in West and Central Africa, with disruptive and destabilizing effects on governance, security, economic growth and public health. He emphasized that criminal networks were no longer limiting their activities to moving cocaine and heroin through Africa for destination markets in Europe and elsewhere. According to the UNODC *World Drug Report 2018*, West and Central Africa, together with the countries of North Africa, accounted for 87 per cent of the pharmaceutical opioids seized globally. He stated that, along with Asia, Africa saw the largest rises worldwide in cocaine seizures while heroin, cannabis and methamphetamine seizures were on the rise across the region as well.

Mr. Fedotov stressed that drug use in West and Central Africa was rising, representing a serious threat to public health, with only 1 in 18 drug users having access to treatment. He underscored that the region was grappling with many other crime-related security threats – linked to the illicit drug trade – including arms trafficking, money-laundering, human trafficking, cybercrime and maritime piracy, as well as threats posed by terrorism. He stated that UNODC continued to reinforce regional and interregional dialogue and responses to drug trafficking, including in the Sahel region, and remained fully engaged in supporting West and Central Africa, working closely with all its regional and international partners. Mr. Fedotov concluded that those efforts ranged from establishing inter-agency cooperation platforms and providing technical assistance to law enforcement capacity-building assistance.

Thereafter, all Council members made statements. During the debate, unanimous concern was expressed over the growing impact of the world drug problem on West and Central Africa, a subregion that had become a transit area for trafficking in cocaine, heroin, pharmaceutical opioids for non-medical consumption and synthetic drugs, as well as a zone for the production of cannabis and synthetic drugs. Speakers stated that the overall production of opium and the manufacture of cocaine had reached the highest levels ever recorded in the region, while the region had become a consumption hub for every type of drug, citing the UNODC *World Drug Report 2018*.

Several members noted the harm caused by illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and consumption and their links to organized crime, illegal financial flows, corruption and, in some cases, international terrorism. In that regard, many of the speakers highlighted that the corrosive impact of transnational drug trafficking and organized crime in the region undermined democratic institutions and the rule of law, reinforced corruption, weakened public trust in government and the justice system, while undermining social and economic development. Speakers concluded that drug

trafficking was a threat not only to peacebuilding, stability and international security, as it financed and fuelled protracted armed conflicts, but also to health and sustainable development efforts.

There were near-unanimous calls for a robust and cross-cutting response from the international community to combat and eliminate drug trafficking and, more broadly, transnational crime, based on multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation. Members stated that addressing that challenge required an integrated approach to the drug problem that involved tackling supply and demand together. Several speakers noted that the United Nations, including the Security Council, should play a leading role in those efforts by addressing the links between drug trafficking, terrorism, organized crime and international peace and security.

A frequent point of emphasis was that the international community must assist countries in the region in building capacity by providing technical assistance – at their request – so that they would be better equipped to take the lead in tackling this scourge. That included strengthening the capacities of criminal justice institutions to detect, investigate and prosecute drug trafficking and related crime cases, improving border security and facilitating the exchange of information and training of law enforcement personnel.

Many speakers noted that the international community must work to address the root causes of drug trafficking, including poverty, underdevelopment, instability and armed conflict. This goal could be achieved, some members stated, through building and strengthening capacities and institutions to promote human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development. They also stated that preventing and suppressing the radicalization of young people while focusing on raising their employment and education levels, were equally important.

There were frequent calls for the international community to strengthen coordination and cooperation between regional and subregional organizations and United Nations bodies to form synergies to effectively fight drug trafficking and corruption. Fostering regional and interregional cooperation – by promoting good practices, information exchange and networking as well as the harmonization of legislation across countries in the region – was of similar importance.

Initiatives by international and regional entities and configurations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community – as well as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat – were highlighted. Several speakers expressed appreciation to UNODC for its work in the region through its regional offices to build the capacity of the law enforcement agencies of those countries, strengthen regional cooperation and develop effective tools for practical cooperation.

At the national level, some members stressed that countries in the region must make the fight against drugs a political priority, with the support of donors and international stakeholders. According to speakers that included taking into account the preventative, social and health-care dimensions of the problem.

Côte d'Ivoire organized the debate to draw further attention to and share best practices relating to the impact of drug trafficking as a peace and security challenge in Africa. In its capacity as President of the Security Council in December 2018, Côte d'Ivoire hopes that the debate will enrich the Council's consideration of this matter. Côte d'Ivoire looks forward to collaborating with Security Council members in furthering that effort.