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New York

Provisional

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| <i>President:</i> | Mr. Ipo | (Côte d'Ivoire) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mrs. Cordova Soria |
| | China | Mr. Wu Haitao |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Ms. Edjang Mangué |
| | Ethiopia | Ms. Guadey |
| | France | Mrs. Gueguen |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Umarov |
| | Kuwait | Mr. Albanai |
| | Netherlands | Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Mr. Lewicki |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Kuzmin |
| | Sweden | Mr. Orrenius Skau |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Allen |
| | United States of America | Mr. Hunter |

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Fedotov is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Vienna.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to address this very important topic.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is observing new, alarming trends in drug trafficking in West and Central Africa, with disruptive and destabilizing effects on governance, security, economic growth and public health. Criminal networks are no longer limiting their activities to moving cocaine and heroin through Africa for destination markets in Europe and elsewhere. According to UNODC's *2018 World Drug Report*, West and Central Africa, together with the countries of North Africa, accounted for 87 per cent of the pharmaceutical opioids seized globally, which is largely due to rising use of Tramadol, an opioid painkiller that is widely trafficked for non-medical use in the region.

Along with Asia, Africa saw the largest rises worldwide in cocaine seizures as well, suggesting that cocaine trafficking and consumption have spread to those markets. Through UNODC AIRCOP, which works in several African airports, we know that heroin seizures are on the rise across the region, with Lagos, Accra and Cotonou airports high on the list, closely followed by Bamako, Lomé and Ouagadougou.

Methamphetamine seizures have now reached almost the same level as cocaine seizures, with Lagos and Cotonou the main airports concerned. Recently, an

increase in the number of seizures of such precursors as ephedrine and phenacetin has been recorded at both airports, which may indicate the existence of new laboratories producing psychoactive substances.

At the same time, drug use in West and Central Africa is rising, representing a serious threat to public health. With the caveat that there is a lack of reliable and recent data on the extent of drug use in the area, UNODC estimates that in 2016 there were more than 34 million cannabis users in West and Central Africa, as well as 1.8 million cocaine users. Globally, only one in six people suffering from drug use disorders receives treatment. However, in Africa that figure is much lower, with only 1 in 18 problem drug users having access to treatment.

At the same time, the region is grappling with many other crime-related security threats, including arms trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, cybercrime and maritime piracy, as well as threats posed by terrorism. The linkages among terrorism, illicit drugs and other forms of crime have been widely acknowledged, including by the Security Council.

In August, the Security Council expressed serious concerns about the continuing terrorist activities of Boko Haram and other groups in the Lake Chad basin; links between illicit trafficking in wildlife and natural resources and the financing of armed groups; maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea; and mercenary activities linked to transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, arms and drugs, as well as the smuggling of migrants (see S/PRST/2018/17).

The Sahel region, which receives particular attention through the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, is another area of focus for UNODC. The upcoming phase of the strategy, which is aimed at supporting the police component of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, will focus on strengthening the capacity of the Joint Force in tackling terrorism and organized crime, including drug trafficking.

UNODC continues to reinforce regional and interregional dialogue and responses to drug trafficking. That includes efforts to disrupt the illicit trafficking of drugs and precursors, as well as to intercept financial flows, law enforcement capacity-building and the scaling-up of drug use prevention and treatment services. We seek to support national intelligence and interdiction services, providing

capacity-building through training workshops and e-learning courses, including on intelligence-led policing, detection and investigation techniques, crime scene management, electronic evidence collection and analysis, anti-money laundering and maritime crime.

At the regional level, our work focuses on establishing inter-agency cooperation platforms and mechanisms through AIRCOP, the West Africa Coast Initiative, the Container Control Programme and the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime. Our Office has partnered with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to support the implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan on illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa through technical assistance to enhance drug use prevention and drug dependence treatment, legislation, forensics and law enforcement. That is just a limited overview of what we do to support West and Central Africa. For more information about UNODC's work, allow me to refer members to the briefing note that I understand has been circulated in the Security Council.

While strengthened technical assistance has resulted in some positive developments, there remain formidable challenges for countries in West and Central Africa in building stability and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Post-conflict States and States in transition, including Guinea-Bissau, require greater attention, as recognized by the Council, to address the challenges related to drugs and organized crime alongside political reforms. UNODC remains fully engaged in supporting West and Central Africa, working closely with all its regional and international partners.

I am grateful to the Council for drawing attention to the need for urgent and determined international action and support to address the threat of drugs and for helping to pave the way for a safer, healthier and more prosperous West and Central Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I would like to thank Executive Director Fedotov for his briefing.

The scourge of drug addiction continues to claim too many lives around the world, including in West and Central Africa. The harm caused by illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and consumption is linked to organized crime, illegal financial flows, corruption and, in some cases, even terrorism. Regardless of the region or context, it is clear the corrosive impact of transnational drug trafficking impairs the rule of law, weakens public trust in Government and undermines social and economic development.

While the primary responsibility for international drug control policy belongs to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Security Council also has a role to play in addressing the links among drug trafficking, terrorism and international peace and security. My country is certainly not immune to that threat, as we, too, are facing a devastating opioid crisis of unprecedented scale. The threat is a global one, and no one country can or should have to face it alone.

In response to the challenge, President Trump announced the Global Call to Action on the World Drug Problem on 24 September. Endorsed by more than 130 countries, the framework calls on countries to reduce drug demand, cut off the supply of illicit drugs, expand treatment and strengthen international cooperation. We urge all countries to work towards fulfilling that important initiative because we know that successfully confronting the challenge will require the efforts of every country in the world.

In that regard, we applaud the Economic Community of West African States for its regional efforts to address drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse through its regional action plan on illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa for the period from 2016 to 2020. We also commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its drug-control and anti-crime technical assistance in Africa and throughout the world.

Today, I affirm the commitment of the United States to also tackling that challenge. The United States is investing significant resources in West and Central Africa to counter drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. I will mention briefly a few of those important efforts.

The United States International Law Enforcement Academy programme delivers specialized courses for criminal justice officials from West and Central Africa on counter-narcotics, anti-corruption, financial

crimes and border security, among other related topics. Through three of its facilities, including the United States West Africa Regional Training Center in Ghana and the United States International Law Enforcement Academies in Botswana, we have trained more than 2,100 criminal justice officials in 2018 alone.

In Ghana, the United States Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs supports Ghana's police service with \$1.7 million to launch drug law-enforcement units in four new strategic regions to strengthen its capacity.

In the Gulf of Guinea, we support the 2013 Yaoundé process to address illicit maritime activity. Partnering with INTERPOL, United States assistance to that regionally owned framework includes nearly \$3 million to assist maritime law enforcement agencies in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. We support the efforts of those countries to investigate maritime-based organized crime, improve information sharing, strengthen maritime interdiction and investigation capabilities. The United States Africa Command also partners with those countries to support maritime training and operations such as the Obangame Express exercise and the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership.

In Liberia, the State Department is spending \$2.4 million in support of a transnational organized crime project to promote intelligence-led policing and investigations, interdiction and seizures of illicit drugs, organized-crime prosecutions and capacity-building for security and law enforcement agencies. The initiative, in partnership with UNODC, has already led to increased drug-related interdictions and more than 90 arrests associated with transnational organized crime.

In Benin and Togo, the State Department has invested over \$4 million since 2012 to build the capacity of magistrates to prosecute drug trafficking and related cases through mentorship, technical assistance and collaborative training sessions. Also in Benin, we provide training and equipment to the national police to stem drug trafficking across Benin's land borders and waterways.

The United States also supports training in evidence-based best practices for officials who work on drug use prevention, treatment and recovery services throughout the African continent. Only last week in Nairobi, we supported a major international drug-

demand reduction workshop, with the participation of more than 40 African nations.

In conclusion, the United States remains committed to fighting the drug epidemic globally, including in West and Central Africa. We look forward to working with the Security Council, the region and our partners to strengthen our communities, protect our families and deliver a drug-free future for all.

Ms. Edjang Mangué (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire on convening this relevant briefing on drug trafficking in West and Central Africa as a threat to stability. I also welcome Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and thank him for his valuable briefing and recommendations, as well as the dedication of his team.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is alarmed and deeply concerned by the growing impact of drug trafficking in Africa, particularly in Central Africa. According to the UNODC *World Drug Report 2018*, the overall production of opium and the manufacture of cocaine have reached the highest levels ever recorded. In Africa, that has triggered an increase in the production, trafficking and use of drugs. In spite of the progress made — albeit unevenly distributed — in Africa's development in recent decades, such progress is being undermined by drugs, generating new layers of vulnerability in the development of several countries and communities across the continent. That is due in part to the African population being mostly young, with more than 60 per cent under 35 years of age. Moreover, the unequal and limited development of several countries affects their ability to control the traffic in and use of drugs.

Many African countries are experiencing very serious problems, such as the resolution of protracted armed conflicts — with seven ongoing peacekeeping missions in Africa — in addition to post-conflict situations, the scourge of terrorism, the illegal circulation of weapons, piracy and maritime crime. As Mr. Fedotov explained in his briefing, the complexity and fragility of all of those situations are compounded when combined with the drug trade, which undermines peacebuilding and sustainable development efforts. Narcoterrorism is fuelling the capacity and mobility of terrorist and extremist groups in Africa, providing income to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and

associated groups, as well as Boko Haram, among others. That can in turn increase the influence of criminal and narcoterrorist syndicates in certain local Governments, leading to corruption and destroying the social and moral fabric of communities.

In order to address the situation comprehensively, the African Union adopted its Plan of Action on Drug Control 2013-2017. That stance was reiterated in the Common African Position presented at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016. In the same vein, the commitment to sustainable development in Africa in order to curtail the root causes of poverty and conflict, in accordance with the 2063 Agenda of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reinforces that vision. However, making progress in implementing those efforts is being conditioned by the aforementioned limitations of capacity, resources and contexts.

We pay tribute to the countries of the Economic Community of West African States for their response to the problem of drug trafficking, terrorism and maritime crime, with the collaboration of the United Nations and the international community. Initiatives such as the West Africa Coast Initiative, the Airport Communication Project, the Joint Port Control Units and strengthening criminal investigation and criminal justice, among others, have generated some successes in the fight against drug traffickers and narcoterrorists. However, those successes have led to the establishment of new trafficking routes, facilitated by porous land and sea borders through Central African countries. That in turn is increasing the production, trafficking and use of drugs in the subregion. We recognize the impact that large drug seizures have on traffickers and their allies. We must replicate that across all subregions in order to solve this problem once and for all.

For that reason, we believe it essential that such initiatives — with the participation of the United Nations and various other entities, such as the regional offices, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNODC and other relevant entities, as well as INTERPOL and other partners — attempt to prevent unwanted transfer effects from the very moment the initiatives are conceived. In that regard, we call for the involvement of the African Union from the outset of those initiatives in order to ensure that they are recognized and influential at the continental and subregional levels and integrated into continental strategies. We would thereby be able to

intercept, neutralize and prevent the spreading of drug production, trafficking and consumption to countries and regions that are less affected.

Preventing terrorism and its financing, as well as piracy and maritime crime, remains a priority for the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. National and subregional initiatives, such as the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons; the Intergovernmental Task Force against Money-Laundering in Central Africa; the 2013 Yaoundé Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of Central and West African States on Maritime Safety and Security in their Common Maritime Domain; and others, all tackle the issue of drugs and interregional coordination.

Drug trafficking is a threat not only to international security, but also to health and sustainable development efforts. We believe that it is important for the Security Council to remain involved in tackling this issue. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reaffirms its commitment to fighting all forms of illegal drug trafficking, production and consumption. Through our Horizon 2020 national plan for sustainable development and economic growth and our membership in Central African and African Union organizations, we are doing our utmost to collaborate effectively with all of our partners in Africa and the world in this important work. The Council can count on us.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I express my gratitude to Mr. Fedotov for his enlightening briefing on drug trafficking in West Africa and the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). I also wish to thank Côte d'Ivoire through you, Mr. President, for having put this topic on the Council's agenda. Like you, Sir, France also considers this to be a particularly important topic and welcomes the opportunity to discuss the matter today.

I will begin with some remarks on the obstacles and perils that the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs pose to the region's security and prospects for development.

As Mr. Fedotov pointed out in his briefing, West Africa faces multiple threats related to transnational organized crime in all its forms and is affected by the issue of drugs in several aspects. The region is an important transit area for trafficking in cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs, as well as a zone for the

production of cannabis and synthetic drugs. The use of drugs is also an increasingly significant issue. The issue of drugs, including its security, economic, social and health consequences, aggravates the structural weaknesses of the region and seriously jeopardizes its development.

Drug trafficking also has a negative impact on the political dynamics of the region. In northern Mali, for example, a significant proportion of armed groups depend financially and logistically on the financial flows generated by the illegal economy and drug trafficking. That situation diverts certain key actors from implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali by generating violence and hindering and hampering the realization of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The widespread corruption that is linked to drug trafficking also undermines people's confidence in the rule of law, particularly the justice system, and can encourage a reflex of community protection and even prompt membership to terrorist groups.

Finally, in a region characterized by both drug trafficking and the presence of a number of terrorist organizations, the issue of the link between organized crime and the financing of terrorism has arisen. While there is evidence of collusion between drug traffickers and terrorist fighters, such cooperation is more opportunistic — for protection rather than for payment — than systematic. The proceeds from trafficking do not seem to be the main source of terrorist financing but could contribute either directly or indirectly.

As to my second point, we should reflect together about our response at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, it is very important that West African States make the fight against drugs a real political priority and promote a balanced approach that acts both to combat the drug supply and to reduce the demand through prevention, care, support for users and harm reduction measures. It is essential that the States of the region strengthen the capacities of the concerned institutions, with the support of donors and international stakeholders.

Those actions must aim in particular at strengthening the entire criminal justice system, particularly the judicial system and asset seizure mechanisms, but also take into account the preventive and social and health care dimensions. The care of dependent persons, which

remains underdeveloped, must become a priority area of action. France has therefore fully supported the creation of the first specialized centre for drug users in West Africa in Dakar in 2014, the Centre de Prise en Charge Intégrée des Addictions de Dakar and is currently supporting the creation of a similar centre in Côte d'Ivoire. Those efforts must be encouraged and supported in other countries in the region.

At the regional level, it is critical to strengthen cooperation in order to effectively fight trafficking and corruption. The response must be based on joint action on the security and development aspects. That is the impetus of the approach deployed by the Group of Five for the Sahel countries in the framework of the Joint Force and the Priority Investment Programme. France fully supports those efforts, in conjunction with its partners. For example, the Alliance for the Sahel, by financing quick-impact development projects in vulnerable areas, helps to provide viable economic prospects for local populations and prevent them from joining networks from the illegal economy.

There are myriad challenges, but the States of the region are not alone in meeting them. Indeed, international organizations, and the United Nations in particular, also have an important role to play in addressing the drug problem.

First, they have the primary responsibility of considering the whole dimension of the issue in the quest for sustainable political solutions to conflicts. Therefore, to continue with the example of Mali, which I mentioned earlier, the fight against drug trafficking in the region is also a means of supporting the implementation of the peace agreement. Sanctions are one of the tools at our disposal to act in that regard, since the participation in trafficking activities is among the designation criteria set up under the sanctions regime for Mali. We must make full use of them.

Secondly, the United Nations must support West African States, at their request, with technical assistance and capacity-building. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work done by the UNODC in that area, particularly by its regional office based in Dakar.

Finally, the United Nations is also the guarantor of a comprehensive and balanced approach that allows not only West Africa but also other affected regions to act together to address the drug problem, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. In that regard, the outcome document agreed to at the 2016

special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (resolution S-30/1) remains our common road map. The ministerial debate of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to be held in Vienna in March 2019, will be another opportunity to reaffirm our shared commitment to combating drug abuse in West Africa and beyond.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important briefing on drug trafficking in West and Central Africa as a threat to international security. We appreciate the briefing delivered by Mr. Yury Fedotov and we take this opportunity to commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the good work that it has been doing in the area of fighting drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes.

That is an issue that we have been dealing with here in the Council in the context of discussions on a wide range of conflict situations in Central Africa, as well as West Africa and the wider Sahel region, including Guinea Bissau, Mali and the Sahel. It has also been a matter of discussion at the level of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The growing threat posed by international organized crime and drug trafficking in some States of West and Central Africa has indeed been a serious challenge that undermines the peace and stability of those regions. The challenge is more prevalent in countries where institutions are weak and lack the capacities necessary to effectively discharge their responsibilities. That is why there is need to provide support to those countries in building their capacities to be more effective in preventing and combating drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes. We appreciate what the UNODC is doing through its regional offices to build the capacity of the law enforcement agencies of those countries and strengthen regional cooperation.

The need to address the challenge posed by drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes through practical and action-oriented cooperation at the regional level has long been recognized. The exchange of information and intelligence, the enhancement of border security, the establishment of regular mechanisms for cooperation and the sharing of experiences and best practices are indeed very critical to dealing with those challenges. The role of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational

Joint Task Force in fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes is very important, and they must enjoy the international support necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

At the level of the Council, we believe that there is need to reflect on the existing strategies and available tools so as to enhance efforts to address the nexus between drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. In that regard, we believe that it is imperative for the United Nations and its relevant bodies to assess their cooperation with the two regions and identify gaps with a view to devising an appropriate strategy to provide the necessary assistance to build their capacity to address that challenge, thereby reducing the ability of terrorist groups and other organized criminals from taking advantage of drug trafficking.

It is to be recalled that the African members of the Council — Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia — organized an Arria Formula meeting in June on maritime crime as a threat to international peace and security. The discussion that took place at that meeting is very much linked to what we are discussing today. The Gulf of Guinea has been a major hub for maritime crime and drug trafficking.

Criminal networks are increasingly moving heroin through maritime routes and that is a significant challenge that requires an enhanced response. Important discussions took place during the Arria Formula meeting, and we know that there have been efforts to have a Council product on that important issue. We hope that the Council will be able to pronounce itself on that matter, and we fully support the efforts of Equatorial Guinea, as a representative of the Central Africa region, in taking the lead on that important issue.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to thank Executive Director Fedotov of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for his briefing to the Council today.

Transnational organized crime not only finances and fuels conflict but also reinforces corruption and undermines institutions, thereby destabilizing already fragile environments. The citizens of the affected societies are the ones paying the price for that. Addressing the root causes of conflicts and instability entails recognizing the severe impact of transnational organized crime.

West Africa is a transit location for drug trafficking, which makes the region vulnerable to organized crime. Drug trafficking is closely linked to instability in the region, in particular in the Sahel, where smuggling networks are used by terrorist groups as a source of financing.

In the Council, we often see the devastating and potentially long-term effects of conflicts on the public institutions of a country. Conflicts contribute to eroded trust in societies and undermine democratic institutions and the rule of law. In those contexts, criminal interests can gain a strong foothold. That is one reason why it is crucial to include the broader rule of law and justice chain in our peacebuilding efforts. Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels is a fundamental cornerstone of stable and resilient societies, as also recognized in Sustainable Development Goal 16. Providing access to justice, as recently highlighted in resolution 2447 (2018) on police, justice and corrections, is equally important.

When designing and planning the United Nations work in conflict-affected regions, the Council needs to ensure that the role organized crime plays in conflict dynamics is reflected. The connection between organized crime and conflict suggests that policing must be a strategic consideration in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. In a context where peacekeeping is, to a large degree, about introducing or strengthening the rule of law, the role of police is critical.

Throughout our tenure on the Council, we have continuously advocated for an increased focus on preventive efforts, in which United Nations policing would play an important role. The Council has also repeatedly and included in numerous resolutions mandates or references to combating criminal flows and networks.

To ensure a more coherent response to drugs and crime, we need to foster cooperation and information exchange between the different authorities of Member States and with international and regional entities such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL, UNODC and the Economic Community of West African States. Regional cooperation is one of the most effective operational tools for preventing organized crime and insecurity. The UNODC regional programme in West Africa has, as we have heard today, also contributed significantly

to enhancing the capacity of West African States to tackle narcotics smuggling.

Finally, it is important that the Council continue to recognize the role that organized crime and drug smuggling play in conflict. If we fail to consider these issues when designing our conflict response or efforts on peacebuilding and prevention, we will not be able to address root causes or conflict cycles appropriately. This is true for West Africa as well as for other regions plagued by conflict.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Côte d'Ivoire for taking the initiative to convene this meeting and Executive Director Yury Fedotov for his briefing.

West and Central Africa have become key targets of an onslaught of international drug trafficking. The criminal activities that transit through countries of West and Central Africa seriously undermine their economic development and social stability and fuel crime, violence and terrorism. To address the region's drug trafficking problem, the international community should propose work in the following three areas.

First, we must work to help countries in the region build capacity so that they are better equipped to take the lead in tackling this scourge. The countries of West and Central Africa are being held back by an array of challenges in terms of resources, expertise and know-how, capacity and others when it comes to combating transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. They need robust support from the international community. While fully respecting their ownership, the international community should help them formulate anti-drug trafficking strategies, develop greater enforcement capacity and effectively tackle this scourge and other forms of transnational organized crime. International anti-drug trafficking cooperation should be scaled up on the basis of broad participation and shared responsibility, with a focus on clamping down on the drug consumption market so as to curb drug production and trafficking at the source.

Secondly, the international community should work to strengthen coordination and cooperation between regional and subregional organizations and United Nations bodies to form synergies. China applauds the strengthened cooperation between regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States,

on the one hand and, on the other, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in areas such as combating drug trafficking with greater intensity, joint border control and joint law enforcement, whereby each institution can leverage its unique advantages and expertise. The United Nations should continue working in its coordination role to better marshal and allocate resources and to provide a staunch buttress for the efforts of regional countries and organizations.

Thirdly, we must work to tackle and try to overcome the root causes of drug trafficking. Poverty and underdevelopment serve as hotbeds for drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime in West and Central Africa. We encourage the United Nations agencies based in West and Central Africa to work closely together, and we hope that international partners will honour their aid and investment commitments without delay, focusing on helping the countries of the region with capacity-building and infrastructure development so that they are in a better position to seek and achieve self-reliant and sustainable development in West and Central Africa at the earliest possible date.

At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in Beijing in September, China announced its commitment to cooperating with African countries on matters of peace and security. Such cooperation includes 50 assistance programmes aimed at combating drug trafficking, strengthening border security and enforcement, and combating piracy and transnational organized crime, inter alia, with a view to endowing African countries with greater capacity to maintain peace and security.

China, along with the international community, will continue to support Africa in tackling the challenge of drug trafficking and help African countries achieve peace, stability and development as soon as possible.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the presidency for organizing this important meeting, as well as the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Yuri Fedotov, for his briefing.

We are aware that the region of West Africa presents multiple challenges. Violent conflicts, as a principal factor, have placed the institutional structure

of the countries of the area — and therefore their populations — at serious risk. This is compounded by transnational organized crime and petty crime, which are additional factors that negatively affect the deepening and prolongation of conflicts. Likewise, the fragility of borders and the lack of available resources to combat criminal activities in the region have fostered the proliferation of controlled substances and their use as a means of financing armed groups and terrorist organizations.

The region therefore faces a challenge of a transnational nature that requires a robust and cross-cutting response from the international community, based mainly on a broad degree of international cooperation. We consider it imperative to adopt urgent, serious and rigorous measures that are also time-specific to counteract drug trafficking in and around West Africa through a multidimensional approach that neutralizes drug circulation at points of origin, production, destination and consumption.

Furthermore, we believe that, in addition to difficulties posed by the geographic backdrop, limited State control in the affected territories further exacerbates the situation, allowing criminal organizations to adapt their illicit activities in order to avoid losing their competitive edge and, of course, profits. This adaptability translates into an increase in their resistance and resilience to actions taken both by the States of the region and by other international and regional organizations.

The consequences of this scourge are very well known in terms of its impact on the security sector and the economic sphere. It deepens the fragility of many States of West Africa, not to mention its negative effects on the social sphere, since the sale and consumption of illegal substances severely jeopardize the integrity of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. We must not forget that women and children are the targets of violent extremism, armed groups and traffickers in persons and in drugs.

Moreover, the link between terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations related to these crimes is becoming increasingly overt, as these organizations collect economic resources and legitimize them through money-laundering and other mechanisms that tend to diminish or eliminate State control. In this vein, we commend the important advances developed in the framework of cooperation

between the Economic Community of the West African States and UNODC.

A clear example of this is the support project for the Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organised crime and drug abuse, which is consistent with the policies and strategies outlined by the region and based on the pillars of the strengthening of justice and law enforcement institutions, strengthening the legal framework, reducing drug demand and building capacities for investigation and monitoring. It is therefore necessary to highlight the remarkable effort and work and transcendental links and exchange of information between the two organizations, which have allowed these initiatives to show the way forward in the fight against drug trafficking in West Africa.

We cannot fail to note the work of the West Africa Coast Initiative, which is a project that, since 2009, has pooled the efforts of the Department for Political Affairs and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNODC and INTERPOL. The initiative focuses on the most vulnerable countries and those in post-conflict situations to reduce their vulnerability to drug trafficking and organized crime by strengthening their national capacities, providing the necessary assistance to strengthen the control of coastlines and airspace, and training members of relevant State institutions.

In conclusion, we echo the words of Mr. Jean Lapaque, Regional Representative of UNODC for West Africa, who said that the Sahel crisis

“violently reminded us of the precariousness of peace in West Africa... the hybrid and transnational character of the security threats in the West African space... the existence of flashpoints of tension that could flare up at any time... In addition to structural and historical vulnerabilities of the past, there are today new factors of cross-border conflicts... The rise of these new threats constitutes a priority in the agenda of the States and their partners... as they jeopardize great advances in peace and security achieved these past ten years.”

In this regard, we call on all States to address the issues of West Africa and the Sahel through multilateral, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and to work on strengthening effective measures to combat and physically eliminate drug trafficking and, more broadly, transnational crime.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to thank the presidency of Côte d'Ivoire for convening this very important briefing on the drug situation in West Africa, and also express gratitude to Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his comprehensive report.

This meeting provides a unique platform and opportunity to share experiences related to the combat against the production and distribution of drugs through joint multilateral action. Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in West Africa remain matters of great concern for us. In the affected countries, including in West Africa, profits from drug trafficking are used to destabilize States and also threaten both development and stability. Besides their damaging effects on people, they give rise to corruption and a shadow economy, which are reinforced by money-laundering and transnational crime and increased funding to terrorist groups, thereby impeding sound political stability and the progress of the African region.

According to the *World Drug Report 2018* released in June by UNODC, Tramadol, an opioid used to treat moderate and moderate-to-severe pain, has become a growing concern in many regions of Africa and Asia. The report also indicates that Africa and Asia are emerging as cocaine-trafficking and consumption hubs. It is well known that drug trafficking and related illegal activities constitute the most serious threats to security and human well-being worldwide.

My delegation makes the following observations with regard to combating the drug problem in West Africa.

The prompt and decisive action that is needed calls for political will and regional collaboration to take action at the regional and national levels. First, we need to address factors that trigger distressing global trends, instability, armed conflicts in many regions of the world and refugee flows, together with unresolved problems of poverty and disparities in development, all of which further derail progress and impede the full effectiveness of our interventions. Therefore, critical engagement is necessary to implement different international programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the security, judicial and law enforcement sectors.

We must aim for a major overhaul of the criminal code, with a harmonization of legislation across countries of the region. Our measures should be focused on stricter law enforcement and justice systems, together with early warning signals, intelligence management and sharing, and rigorous border control, with the help of UNODC and INTERPOL. All these operations must be reinforced with capacity-building, training and support by way of state-of-the-art detection and communication equipment. We encourage West African countries to continue to strengthen their national institutional frameworks and responses against these perilous threats, in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, United Nations country teams, UNODC and INTERPOL.

Trafficking heroin from production centres to heroin markets requires a global network of routes and facilitation by domestic and international criminal groups. In these circumstances, we need to relentlessly search for ways to improve, strengthen and unite our efforts. We should make better use of the enormous potential of UNODC to share experience and best practices, train personnel and develop effective tools of practical cooperation. Capacity-building is the key word for success.

This will be achieved only through a more effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. We welcome the continued efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to advance the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, including through the development of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. We believe that the establishment and deployment of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force will positively contribute to maintaining stability in the region and help countries, subregional organizations and UNOWAS to address more effectively cross-border security threats, including drug trafficking and piracy.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan is ready to work hand in hand with others to improve and intensify the impetus of mutually beneficial cooperation to mobilize all possible efforts to counter the drug problem in Africa and globally.

Mr. Albanai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset to welcome Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on

Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and thank him for his informative briefing on drug trafficking in West Africa and its impact on security and stability in the region. I also thank the presidency for convening this meeting in order to address an extremely important issue related to security and stability in West African States.

On Monday, the Security Council heard a briefing by Mr. Fedotov (see S/PV.8426), in which he underscored the close interrelationship between drugs and instability in Afghanistan. We are of the view that the same applies to West Africa as well. Continued instability in certain States of the region creates an environment that could be exploited by organized criminal groups to step up illegal drug trafficking, and gives them the opportunity to strengthen the use of commercial routes to forward drugs to their final destinations. Those groups use some States of the region as drug distribution centres, especially since its geographic location puts it strategically at the heart of established trade routes and networks.

There is an inherent relationship between corruption and drug trafficking. Political and security instability in certain States of the region directly contributes to facilitating drug trafficking. Weak Governments and failure to enforce the law in certain States allow criminal groups to use the region as part of their criminal network. Therefore, the focus must be on building the capacities of West African States.

We appreciate the efforts that are being made by the United Nations through UNODC and the United Nations Office for West Africa. We also appreciate the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to combat drug trafficking. We would like to point in that regard to its Regional Response Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa for the period from 2016 to 2020, and we call on the States of the region to continue their efforts to implement it. We welcome the ECOWAS Drug Unit's recent meeting in November on the issue.

We also welcome the midterm report of the UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa, which covers the most recent developments regarding efforts by regional countries to enhance their capacities to combat these threats. We commend the 924 activities that UNODC carried out between July 2016 and July of this year, and we urge the Office to continue its efforts to advance the priorities outlined in the report,

including combating corruption, strengthening judicial frameworks and supporting the Group of Five for the Sahel in the area of cooperation between the police and the judiciary.

In conclusion, the West African region has great potential that if used well can undoubtedly bring about steady increases in economic growth and development. However, it is also facing many challenges, particularly the presence of armed groups and illicit trafficking networks, that threaten some States' stability and security. We commend and encourage UNODC in its efforts to combat transboundary crimes and the United Nations Office for West Africa for its contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, with a view to achieving stability and development for the peoples of the region. We fully support their work in that regard.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Côte d'Ivoire presidency for taking the initiative to convene this briefing of the Council on the very topical issue of combating drug trafficking in West Africa. We also thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his participation in the meeting and for his informative and detailed briefing.

We are firmly convinced that effectively countering the threat of drugs in the West African States is possible only on a basis of coordinated efforts by the entire international community, with the United Nations playing a leading role. In that regard, we confirm our unwavering support to the sanctions regime targeting people and organizations linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida who finance terrorist activity through proceeds from illegal drug trafficking. The continuing mutual ties between criminal activity, including drug-related activity, and international terrorism, particularly where material support for it is concerned, are very alarming. The high indicators for pharmaceutical opioids for non-medical consumption, synthetic drugs and heroin addiction are particularly worrying. A number of States in the region continue to be transit hubs for opiates from Afghanistan and cocaine from Latin America. We are hoping for a comprehensive review of all of those issues in Vienna in March 2019 during the scheduled review of the implementation of the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking

and Organized Crimes in West Africa and the 2009 Regional Response Action Plan.

Among the priorities within the framework of measures to deal adequately with the drug issue is the quest for effective alternatives to this kind of criminal business. In particular, the promotion of programmes reconfigured to take local realities into account and designed to create additional job opportunities in the region would be of major help in that regard, and the involvement of the business community, as well as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, could make a significant contribution to that. We believe it is vital to continue giving special attention to preventing and suppressing the radicalization of young people, while focusing on raising their employment and education levels, including through policies aimed at implementing specialized projects under the auspices of the United Nations and UNESCO.

We also think it makes sense to continue improving and strengthening border security, the exchange of information and the training of law-enforcement personnel. We have been pleased with UNODC's success in extending expert assistance to African States on ensuring security and stability. We support UNODC's work in that regard, and its cooperation with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other regional bodies. Needless to say, it is also important to develop anti-drug cooperation among the countries concerned themselves, in bilateral, regional, subregional and multilateral formats, based on the principle of shared and joint responsibility.

For our part, we have consistently taken measures to assist African States in training personnel, particularly in the areas of health care and law enforcement. We are committed to continuing a constructive dialogue and effective cooperation in the fight against drugs.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefing by Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Peru has noted with concern the impact of the world drug problem on West Africa, a subregion that in recent years has become an area of production and consumption as well as one of transit to European

markets. Inadequate border controls and political and socioeconomic crises have encouraged transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, which corrupt institutions and erode the social fabric. In some parts of the region, rivalries between drug traffickers over control of areas of influence exacerbate intercommunal tensions. In some cases, a country's authorities and security forces may be co-opted. In many others, links are established with armed groups and terrorist organizations. Illicit drug trafficking often results in vicious circles of violence and corruption that can destabilize countries, undermine public safety and increase the risk of violent conflict. We would like to highlight three actionable areas where we believe the Security Council can contribute to combating those threats. We consider them essential to preventing conflicts, combating terrorism and consolidating sustainable peace.

The first area is identifying and combating the ties between organized crime and terrorism. Resolution 2195 (2014) recognizes the existence of that connection, particularly in Africa. In May (see S/PV.8247), the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/9) stressing the importance of increasing our understanding of those ties in order to improve our response. To that end, we believe it is important that the Council and its Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism continue to expand their understanding of this issue and adopt the necessary measures to deal with it wherever it appears.

The second area is focusing on root causes. Peru acknowledges that if we are to tackle transnational organized crime and drug trafficking we need a multidimensional approach that among other things builds and strengthens capacities and institutions to promote human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must also fight corruption and promote the creation of opportunities and decent employment, especially for young people and rural communities. In that regard, despite the challenges we continue to face, we would like to highlight Peru's successful model of alternative, comprehensive and sustainable development, which has enabled us to combat the flow of drugs by promoting rural development.

We believe the third area to be strengthening regional and neighbourhood cooperation. We think

that it is essential for the international community to fight threats from a regional and neighbourhood approach since we face a phenomenon that is usually cross-border in scope and develops patterns based on the various geographic contexts in which it operates. In that regard, we would like to highlight the Regional Action Plan to Address Illicit Drug Trafficking, Related Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa, which was developed by the Economic Community of West African States, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In addition to other initiatives supported by that Office, we also underscore the launch of the Compendium of Best Practices on Drug Use, Prevention, Drug Use Disorders Treatment and Harm Reduction in Africa, in partnership with the African Union and in coordination with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. We also highlight the role of neighbourhood cooperation through the establishment of joint commissions, which in addition to helping combat criminal networks, serve to strengthen the intelligence services and border control required to combat illicit drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, natural resources and weapons.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his very comprehensive briefing.

Over the past few years, drug use and drug use disorder have become a growing concern in West Africa. According to the *World Drug Report 2018*, not only is West Africa a transiting hub for drugs but it has also grown to become a consumption hub for cannabis and cocaine. Addressing that challenge requires an integrated approach to the drug problem that involves tackling supply and demand together. In that regard, Poland commends the UNODC presence in West Africa through its Regional Office for West and Central Africa, in Senegal, as well as the UNODC country office in Nigeria. Cooperation with regional organizations and States in the region is crucial. Therefore, we welcome UNODC's support for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member States in the area of border control through mentoring, exchange visits, study tours and advance training on specific issues.

Strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS and its member States to take sustainable actions against drug trafficking, drug abuse and transnational organized crime is of utmost importance. We need to remember

that drug trafficking is one of the main sources of income for terrorist groups, as mentioned by several delegations already. If they are to be more efficient in detecting illicit financial flows, countries should focus primarily on border security. However, bearing that in mind, we cannot forget that the porous borders of developing countries are one of the biggest challenges they face in the course of the fight against terrorism. We should be aware that drug trafficking will be one of the main sources of income until the socioeconomic problems of Africa are resolved and African citizens are able to find beneficial and legal sources of income. That is why supporting Africa's development is potentially the most effective tool for combating drug trafficking and drug use disorder.

It is our obligation to provide capacity-building and respond to requests for technical assistance. Those actions, in order to succeed, need to be undertaken in coordination with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations. Therefore, we commend Project CRIMJUST, a joint initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by UNODC, in partnership with INTERPOL and Transparency International, for contributing to effectively fighting organized crime, in general, and drug trafficking in particular, along the cocaine route in Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa.

We support the purposes of the project aimed at, first, strengthening the capacities of criminal justice institutions to detect, investigate and prosecute drug trafficking and related crime cases; secondly, fostering regional and interregional cooperation among criminal justice institutions by promoting good practices, information exchange and networking; and, thirdly and lastly, enhancing institutional integrity and accountability of criminal justice institutions to reinforce mutual trust and confidence within and between both regions, with the active involvement of the civil society organizations.

In conclusion, let me express our full support to UNODC's work on drug trafficking in West Africa, based on its Regional Programme for West Africa (2016-2020).

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): May I say, at the outset, how much we welcome Côte d'Ivoire's initiative to bring this issue back to the Council's agenda, which I think we last considered in 2013. It is a timely moment to look at it.

May I also welcome the briefing by Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and thank UNODC for its efforts in that area, including, of course, through its Regional Programme for West Africa.

Conflict, corruption and ungoverned spaces all allow criminality to flourish. It can take many forms and includes the trafficking of drugs, but not only drugs. It includes the trafficking of people and of weapons. Organized criminal networks can also support and facilitate the emergence and operations of terrorist groups. Indeed, it is quite frequent and common that, in their early stages, terrorist groups rely upon income from organized crime. Sadly, West Africa has been affected by those issues in recent years and we have seen that it is marginalized groups — be they children, women or minority ethnic groups — that often suffer the most.

The impact of such criminality is not only felt by individuals; it is felt in communities and by States. It undermines the rule of law, human rights and the ability of States to provide services and pursue the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for all of their citizens. Cross-border criminal networks, smuggling and trafficking goods and people across State jurisdiction can also constitute a threat to international peace and security. Drug trafficking is one form of that challenge, but we saw the same argument convincingly made in resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017) on the trafficking of people.

As we have heard today, that has unfortunately been the case in the West African region, which, as UNODC has outlined, has become a significant consumption and transit zone for heroin and cocaine, enabling flows towards destination markets. The money and the violence that accompany that trade have devastating consequences. As I have said, drug trafficking can be both a means by which armed groups raise funds but also a source of conflict in themselves. Criminal gangs can corrupt and weaken a State at just the time that a strong State with strong institutions is needed to prevent conflict. I agree very much with those around the table who have talked about the importance of considering the issue holistically within the prevention and peacebuilding setting.

We should note and welcome the efforts in the region, in particular the work of the Group of Five for the Sahel, for greater stability and in tackling terrorism.

We also need to support the Economic Community of West African States; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Chambas; and the excellent efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, as well as those initiatives that address the drivers of instability, including, of course, climate change, poverty, marginalization and corruption. The United Kingdom is playing its part. We are increasing our staffing and expertise on tackling organized crime in the region and are working with our partners in the region to counter trafficking and strengthen the rule of law and border security, as well as supporting development and the provision of services.

There is no silver bullet to ending drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa or, indeed, anywhere else. It will take a comprehensive approach by the States in the region, holistically supported by the United Nations family and its international partners. We welcome the renewed focus on criminality brought by you, Mr. President, in calling today's meeting, and we stand ready to assist all countries suffering from this insidious threat, as we ourselves suffer too.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting. I also would like to thank the Mr. Fedotov, Executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his very informative briefing.

Transnational organized crime causes and aggravates conflict, and that was one of the main messages during the 6 November debate (see S/PV.8393) on the role of policing in peacekeeping operations, which included the participation of numerous United Nations Police Commissioners. During that meeting, we stressed that financial gains from organized crime are a source of income that fund insurgent groups and terrorists and thereby perpetuate the cycle of conflict. Like other forms of crime, drug trafficking fuels corruption, terrorism and other illicit trafficking. It transcends borders and affects the lives of millions of people around the world, especially young people. To counter drug trafficking in West and Central Africa, we need an integrated approach. Let me mention three main aspects in that regard: first, regional security cooperation; secondly, criminal justice; and, thirdly, sanctions.

First, with regard to regional security cooperation, regional problems require regional solutions, supported by the United Nations where needed. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a staunch supporter of closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations like the African Union. As such, we are a supporter of sustainable financing for African Union peace support operations. In order to tackle drug trafficking in West and Central Africa, regional initiatives are key, and UNODC plays a crucial role in facilitating such initiatives, including within the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. UNODC facilitates cooperation through projects like the West Africa Coast Initiative and the Airport Communication Project, which the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports. In the context of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), we welcomed the regional approach to drug trafficking in the mandate of its Joint Force. We support the G-5 Sahel Security Platform, aimed at exchanging information on criminal and terrorist activities in West Africa.

That brings me to my second point, concerning criminal justice. Security and justice are two sides of the same coin. Impunity for drug trafficking undermines trust in public institutions and hampers sustainable peace and security. A criminal justice response is crucial to upholding the rule of law and ensuring cooperation between local populations and security forces. The role of the police is essential in that regard. That was one of the reasons for which the Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with Côte d'Ivoire, drafted resolution 2447 (2018), on policing, justice and corrections, which the Security Council adopted unanimously last week. Furthermore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports strengthening the justice sector in Mali through the police component within the G-5 Joint Force. In criminal justice, cooperation to share evidence and ensure due process is pivotal. Accordingly, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supported the secondment of a Nigerian prosecutor in Italy to facilitate information sharing and mutual legal assistance in the area of illicit trafficking. We recommend similar secondments in other Member States and institutions.

Concerning my last point — sanctions — criminal networks thrive in conflict and in situations in which corruption and impunity are widespread. The Council must use its entire toolkit to address threats against international peace and security, including through

targeted sanctions against traffickers who spoil peace processes and weaken institutions. We already have good practices. In the Mali sanctions regime, the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs is a listing criterion, and in the Libya sanctions regime, the Council targeted human traffickers. We have done it before, and we must not shy away from doing it again.

In conclusion, drugs damage countries' social, health-care and economic systems. In my introduction, I talked about an integrated approach to counter drug trafficking. Ultimately, the Sustainable Development Goals provide such an integrated approach. We must ensure the rule of law and better living conditions for our people so that drug traffickers cannot get a foothold. Let this be our joint goal in our fight against drug traffickers in West and Central Africa and around the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

My delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting on the theme "Peace and security in Africa: drug trafficking in West Africa as a threat to stability". My delegation commends Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), on his excellent briefing.

Drug trafficking today represents a public health and national security emergency, and even a source of subregional instability, as it deeply affects the social fabric and undermines States' ability to govern at the political, economic and social levels. It is fuelled by structural vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the social and criminal justice system, as well as by increasing levels of poverty, which drug trafficking networks and terrorist groups exploit. Once considered a transit area for certain types of narcotics, West Africa today has become a production hub, a consumer market and a destination point for every type of drug. In their fight against the scourge of drug trafficking, the countries of West Africa — already faced by difficulties resulting from vulnerabilities in their border control systems — must confront evolving security threats owing to alliances between terrorist groups and drug traffickers' networks.

The drug phenomenon appears to be one of the main causes leading to students' failure in schools and generates new forms of urban violence affecting the safety and well-being of populations. Moreover,

the phenomenon fosters the burgeoning of criminal economies, which, through money laundering, insidiously infiltrate the economic fabric of States, particularly in the areas of transportation, the hospitality industry and real estate. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Interministerial Committee to Fight against Drugs estimates that approximately 12 per cent of the population between the ages of 15 and 64 use drugs, and puts the amount of drugs seized between 2017 and the first half of 2018 at 286 tons. In an environment characterized by the weakening of central State authority and the armed assertion of tribal and regional irredentism, the resources derived from drug trafficking are both a high stake and an important lever in influencing local and national political dynamics. In replacing central State authority, elite members of the local population and armed groups involved in drug trafficking increase their influence on intra- and inter-community relations, as well as on local political dynamics.

Faced with the threat posed by drug trafficking to stability in West Africa, the States of the region must shoulder the primary responsibility of responding in accordance with national and subregional strategies. In Côte d'Ivoire, the fight against drug trafficking, production and consumption is carried out by both the Interministerial Committee to Fight against Drugs and civil society organizations through an approach based on prevention, care and suppression. With regard to prevention, the Government is stepping up activities involving raising awareness on the harm caused by drug use in synergy with civil society. Care involves health and social responses provided by specialized institutions such as the Regional Law Enforcement Training Centre. In terms of suppression, the national strategy is aimed at tracking down drug traffickers and combating money laundering through the National Unit for the Processing of Financial Information.

The effectiveness of national strategies to combat drug trafficking depends on their coherence with subregional initiatives with the support of key partners, such as UNODC. To that end, Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the establishment of the Regional Programme for West Africa 2016-2020 to support the regional action plan to address illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa of the Economic Community of West African States. Such programmes reflect the commitment of the States of West Africa to strengthen regional cooperation in the

areas of information exchange, judicial cooperation, combating financial flows related to drug trafficking and preventing the diversion of resources used to manufacture drugs. Likewise, my country commends UNODC for its continued support for these regional plans, which has included the establishment of joint port control services and an airport communication project that extends beyond West Africa.

In conclusion, my country would like to recall that the collective commitment of the States of the region

to pool their resources greatly depends on the success of the fight against drug trafficking in West Africa, which is a guarantee of the preservation of peace and stability in the region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.