

## B. Africa

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Available seizure data suggest that trafficking in cocaine remains a major challenge for countries in North and West Africa. Similarly, trafficking in and abuse of cannabis and tramadol remain a challenge for many countries in Africa.

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The lack of official data on drug seizures and drug use prevalence hinders the ability of countries in the region to address their respective drug challenges and the ability of the international community to provide support.

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Africa is among the regions with the lowest levels of availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes.

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### 1. Major developments

484. Despite a lack of official reporting data from many countries in the region, several countries in West Africa continue to report record-breaking seizures of cocaine being trafficked from South America to Europe. Exceptionally large seizures reported by Cabo Verde and Côte d'Ivoire, along with smaller seizures reported by other countries, suggest that North and West Africa continue to be used as a trans-shipment hub for cocaine trafficking. Trafficking in and abuse of tramadol continue to pose a major threat, in particular for countries in West and Central Africa.

485. Africa is among the regions of particular concern with regard to ensuring and monitoring the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and

scientific purposes. In particular, on the basis of reported consumption of narcotic drugs, the region is among those with the least availability of the most widely used opioid analgesics. Determining levels of consumption of psychotropic substances for Africa remains a challenge as only a quarter of the countries have provided to the Board consumption data on any psychotropic substance for the past several years. The Board stresses that there is insufficient availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in many countries of the region and emphasizes the importance of ensuring sufficient availability of and access to internationally controlled substances for medical purposes. Further information on recent developments is contained in the supplement to the annual report of the Board for 2022, entitled *No Patient Left Behind: Progress in Ensuring Adequate Access to Internationally Controlled Drugs for Medical and Scientific Purposes*.

486. The Board continues to provide capacity-building services to countries to assist them in meeting their obligations under the three international drug control conventions, as well as addressing their national drug control challenges. During the reporting period, INCB Learning and the INCB GRIDS Programme conducted several workshops and training sessions for countries in Africa. Additional information can be found in paragraphs 490 and 492–494.

## 2. Regional cooperation

487. In January 2022, the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa organized a regional workshop entitled “Drug surveillance and information systems: improving drug surveillance and information systems to strengthen the implementation of the Lisbon Consensus in francophone West African countries”. The workshop brought together 34 participants from across those two subregions to collaborate on drug monitoring using indicators developed under the Lisbon Consensus, share information on regional and national efforts, develop coordination strategies to improve the quality of data on the drug situation in countries in those subregions and promote a regional community of specialists to improve drug monitoring and related information systems.

488. In March 2022, the ECOWAS Commission organized a two-day online workshop for experts in the treatment of substance use disorders. Fifty-eight officials from health ministries, hospitals and mental health services from ECOWAS countries participated in the workshop. The workshop raised awareness of the application of international standards of care for patients with substance use disorders and reviewed present resources available to experts to establish effective and coordinated systems for

patient-centred care to mitigate the harmful effects of substance use. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants agreed to establish the West African Network of Addiction Treatment Experts to address substance use disorders in the region.

489. In March 2022, the Nigeria-European Union Partnership project launched the Nigeria Cannabis Survey, the first systematic exercise of its kind in the country. The survey used remote sensing over an area of 4,500 km<sup>2</sup> in six states to capture 17,185 photos which, combined with data from aerial overflights and structured interviews in those states, provided a baseline assessment of the extent of illicit cannabis cultivation. The survey found that there was an estimated 8,900 ha of cannabis cultivated in those six states. It confirmed that cannabis fields were located deep inside dense forests and thus established a link between cannabis cultivation and deforestation. It was also found that cannabis was cultivated in combination with other crops, either to conceal the cannabis plants or to yield additional profits. Consumption of domestically cultivated cannabis was found to be predominantly for the domestic market, although there was some evidence of trafficking to other countries. There were also indications of the involvement of organized criminal groups in trafficking cannabis to other areas of the country or onward to foreign illicit markets.

490. In April 2022, six African countries participated in an INCB Learning seminar to strengthen their compliance with the three international drug control conventions. Officials from Burundi, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and Zambia participated in the online capacity-building seminar. Government officials had an opportunity to further enhance their capacity in terms of monitoring and reporting on the licit trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, and further use I2ES. In total, 145 drug control officials from the competent national authorities of 39 countries in Africa<sup>134</sup> have registered to use INCB Learning e-modules. The e-modules support countries that are expanding their capacity for the control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals and gaining a deeper understanding of the international drug control framework.

491. In April 2022, the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the Embassy of Spain jointly organized a mini-Dublin Group meeting in West Africa at the

<sup>134</sup> Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Cervantes Institute in Dakar. Participants shared information and experiences in fighting transnational organized crime in the region, in particular drug trafficking.

492. On 14 and 15 April 2022, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized an online regional workshop for front-line officers in Nigeria to address issues related to challenges and responding to the threat of new psychoactive substances using the IONICS platform. A second workshop, conducted in person from 9 to 11 June 2022, provided training on the safe interdiction of synthetic opioids and related chemicals and updates on emerging drug trafficking trends.

493. From 27 to 29 April 2022, the INCB GRIDS Programme organized training in Benin for 15 law enforcement officers focused on awareness-raising and safe handling practices related to new psychoactive substances, synthetic opioids and other dangerous substances and on strengthening information exchange using the IONICS platform. Attendees from anti-narcotics departments, borders and residency departments and customs authorities participated in the events.

494. On 13 and 14 June 2022, the INCB GRIDS Programme delivered an awareness-raising and training workshop on the safe interdiction of synthetic opioids and related chemicals for 17 front-line officers from the Ghanaian Food and Drugs Authority and the Ghanaian Narcotics Control Commission, held in Accra. The training workshop was aimed at strengthening information exchange to counter the trafficking of opioids and new psychoactive substances using the IONICS communication platform.

495. In May 2022, the African Union launched the Global Dialogue on Drug Demand Reduction between Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean on the margins of the conference of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals, held in Abu Dhabi. The initiative coordinates and aligns collective efforts by Governments in those regions to address a number of drug issues, including demand reduction, dependency, treatment and care.

496. In June 2022, the African Union held the first ordinary session of the Conference of the States Parties to the African Medicines Agency Treaty, held in Addis Ababa. At the session, the Conference adopted its rules of procedure, considered the assessment report on the Agency's headquarters and selected Rwanda to host it. Representatives of the African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency participated in the meeting.

497. The GRIDS Programme convened the first global conference for operational officers on the interdiction of fentanyl, synthetic opioids and related dangerous substances, held in Vienna from 1 to 5 August 2022. The event

brought together over 140 participants from around the world, including 14 participants from Cabo Verde, Ghana, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania, who engaged in practical awareness-raising and capacity-building related to synthetic opioids.

498. The GRIDS Programme convened the fifth annual operational meeting on countering trafficking of dangerous synthetic drugs and chemicals through postal, courier and air cargo services, held in Vienna from 6 to 9 September 2022. The event brought together nearly 60 officers from 30 Governments and international organizations, including an officer from Nigeria. Participating countries also conducted bilateral and multilateral meetings to enhance cooperation across borders, facilitated by INCB.

499. The GRIDS Programme hosted the interregional workshop on public-private partnerships for the prevention of trafficking of dangerous substances, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 11 to 14 September 2022. The event was attended by more than 120 representatives from 30 Governments, 5 international organizations and 15 Internet-related service providers and their associations, including 24 participants from Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa. Participants exchanged best practices and case examples related to the exploitation of private sector agencies and online platforms for the trafficking of dangerous substances with the aim of strengthening international operational cooperation across borders to prevent future misuse of legitimate Internet-related services.

### 3. National legislation, policy and action

500. In April 2022, the Government of Mauritius established an online platform to strengthen the controls on licit trade in and use of controlled substances, following the 2021 amendment to its Dangerous Drugs Act of 2000. Under the country's drug control legislation, all entities engaging in trade in and use of substances are required to use the new online platform to register all transactional activity. The establishment of the online platform stems from the implementation of the recommendations issued by the country's Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking in 2018.

501. In April 2022, the Government of Morocco issued decree No. 2.22.159, which implements some of the legal provisions of law No. 13.21 permitting the legal cultivation of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes in the country. The decree designates three provinces of Morocco where it will be legal to cultivate and harvest cannabis. The decree also established a national agency for the regulation of

cannabis-related activities, which will oversee licensing and other administrative procedures related to cannabis production in the country. Finally, the decree sets out specific regulatory requirements that cannabis producers must follow.

502. In March and April of 2022, the United Republic of Tanzania made several amendments to its drug control and criminal laws related to drug trafficking and drug use offences. An amendment to the Drug Control and Enforcement Act of 2015 further extends the powers of the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority to conduct drug searches. An amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act allows plea bargaining for those charged in drug trafficking cases. Additionally, minor drug use offences have been decriminalized, with a focus on health-based approaches for those persons suffering from drug use disorders. However, public use of drugs remains a punishable offence.

#### 4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

503. An analysis of the drug trafficking situation in Africa is hampered due to the lack of official data in the region. Nonetheless, the limited data available suggest that cocaine trafficking remains a major concern for countries in North and West Africa. Illicit cultivation and seizures of cannabis and cannabis resin occur across the region but are of greatest concern in North Africa. Trafficking in other drugs, including benzodiazepines and MDMA, are sporadic and have been reported by some countries. Determining the extent of trafficking in tramadol is difficult. However, several large seizures of tramadol took place in West Africa, in particular, in Nigeria.

**504. The Board encourages all States in the region to strengthen their drug trafficking interdiction efforts and subsequently make available all information and data related to their efforts to counter drug trafficking, in particular seizure data, to United Nations bodies, including UNODC and INCB, as well as other relevant stakeholders. The Board also encourages donor States to include information collection and analysis programmes as part of their assistance programmes for countries in the region.**

505. Countries in North and West Africa continue to report record seizures of cocaine, which indicates that trafficking of the drug continues to pose a major challenge in the region. Authorities of Cabo Verde, with the assistance of the United States Navy and INTERPOL, seized 6 tons of cocaine from a vessel in the country's territorial waters in April 2022, which was similar to an interdiction by the French Navy in the Gulf of Guinea, near Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2021. Further, in April 2022, authorities

in Côte d'Ivoire seized more than 2 tons of cocaine in Abidjan and San-Pédro in the course of a one-week operation. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria reported multiple seizures of cocaine ranging from a few kilograms to dozens of kilograms, most of which took place at the country's airports. Authorities of Morocco reported seizing nearly 85 kg of cocaine in the first half of 2022, with no reports of large seizures of the kind seen in 2021, when a total of 1.8 tons were seized.

506. Trafficking in cannabis and cannabis resin continues to be heavily concentrated in North Africa, although cannabis seizures are reported across the region. Quantities reported in the first half of 2022 point to a drop in the quantity of seizures. In June 2022, authorities of Algeria reported seizing 724 kg of "kif" (dried material derived from cannabis) in the western part of its territory, along the country's border with Morocco. In the first half of 2022, Moroccan authorities seized approximately 1.1 tons of cannabis resin and 31.5 tons of cannabis. Additional data on cannabis seizures in 2022 are so far limited, which makes comparisons with previous years difficult. For 2021, many countries reported extensive seizures of cannabis and cannabis resin at levels higher than in previous years. Algeria reported seizing more than 71 tons of cannabis. Burkina Faso reported seizing 12 tons of cannabis. Senegal seized 16.7 tons of cannabis resin and 30 tons of cannabis. The Sudan seized more than 380 tons of cannabis, some of which was cultivated in forests that had been illegally logged.

507. Data regarding trafficking in heroin are limited, but seizures have been reported by several countries in the region. In July 2022, Nigeria reported a seizure of 23 kg of heroin, concealed in baby food, trafficked from Southern Africa. In May 2022, the United Republic of Tanzania conducted a major operation in which more than 174 kg of heroin was seized. Algeria, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, the Niger, Senegal and Togo all reported heroin seizures in 2021 ranging from several hundred grams to several kilograms, while South Africa reported seizing 158.2 kg of heroin in that same period.

508. Data regarding trafficking in other drugs in Africa are limited. However, several countries have reported some seizures during 2022. Morocco reported seizing small quantities of MDMA, the Niger reported seizing several kilograms of methamphetamine, Burkina Faso reported seizing half a kilogram of methamphetamine, and Nigeria reported seizing 350,000 codeine tablets. For 2021, Morocco reported seizing over 1.6 million tablets of various psychotropic substances, including several benzodiazepines.

509. For 2021, only a few countries in Africa have reported to the Board the mandatory information related to seizures

of substances in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention and of substances not under international control. This has hindered the identification of emerging trends in illicit drug manufacture on the African continent. However, the information available suggests that Africa continues to be affected by trafficking of precursor chemicals and chemicals not scheduled at the international level. A comprehensive review of the situation with respect to the control of precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Africa can be found in the report of the Board for 2022 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.<sup>135</sup>

510. Non-medical use of tramadol remains a concern, in particular in West and Central Africa. In the first half of 2022, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria and the Nigerian Customs Service reported several large seizures of tramadol, including 1.5 million tablets totalling 886 kg seized in March, 9.1 million tablets totalling 1.3 tons seized in April, 500,000 tablets totalling 407 kg seized in June, and 2.7 million tablets totalling 1.6 tons seized in July. Burkina Faso and the Niger also reported seizures of several thousand tramadol tablets during 2022. For 2021, seizures of tramadol were reported by Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

## 5. Prevention and treatment

511. Determining the extent of drug use in Africa continues to be impeded by the lack of available information and prevalence data. This lack of data hinders the region's ability to determine the scope and consequences of drug use. It also hinders Governments and the international community as they seek to respond effectively by adopting and implementing evidence-based drug use prevention and treatment programmes.

**512. The Board reiterates its call to all States in the region to develop mechanisms to improve the collection of information on drug use prevalence with the aim of developing drug use prevention and treatment strategies that are based on evidence and tailored to each country's specific needs and realities.**

513. According to the UNODC *World Drug Report 2022*, the estimated prevalence of cannabis consumption in Africa was 6.54 per cent of the population (approximately 49.2 million people). For opioids, including prescription opioids, the estimated prevalence of consumption of those drugs stood at 1.23 per cent (approximately 9.2 million people). For opiates, mostly heroin, the estimated prevalence of

consumption stood at 0.49 per cent (3.6 million people). The prevalence rates for the consumption of other drugs in Africa did not exceed more than 0.3 per cent of the population in 2020. For many substances, the prevalence data for some subregions of Africa were not available.

514. In 2021, Algeria established two centres offering opioid substitution therapy using methadone, with 100 patients receiving treatment. The Government plans to expand the programme to treat up to 320 patients in total by the end of 2023.

515. In February 2022, Mauritius published the report on a population survey of people who use drugs. The report builds on existing initiatives, such as the National Drug Control Master Plan for the period 2019–2023, to address the country's drug problem. The report contains a number of recommendations to reduce stigma for people who use drugs and discrimination related to drug use disorders, improve treatment services and promote a multisectoral integrated approach to addressing drug use in the country.

516. A 2021 study in Kenya assessing the trends in drug use in the country found that the misuse of prescription drugs is on the rise owing to lower perceptions of harm related to the use of those substances as legal medicines. The substances in question are several types of internationally controlled benzodiazepines, as well as codeine and tramadol, which are sourced from hospitals and pharmacies. Use of cannabis edibles, including cookies and sweets, is also on the rise. The study provides a set of recommendations to address drug misuse, including a recommendation to establish better controls at pharmacies and hospitals in order to prevent diversion of medicines, and a recommendation to sensitize the public to emerging drug trends in the country and the associated harms.

517. Over the course of 2021, the United Republic of Tanzania provided treatment services to more than 890,000 persons with varying drug use disorders. Services were provided in specialized treatment centres and regional and district hospitals that have mental health units. In addition, the country now runs 14 opioid substitution therapy sites that use methadone and buprenorphine, located across the country and which provide treatment services to approximately 11,500 people on a daily basis. In April 2022, the Government released a set of guidelines for trainers on how to raise awareness among children, youth and parents on drug use prevention and the effects of drug trafficking.

<sup>135</sup>E/INCB/2022/4.