

**ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2010-2018 AND THE FIGHT AGAINST
ILLCIT DRUG TRAFFICKING: THE CASE OF GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Angela Lartey do hereby declare that this dissertation is the end product of my own research under the supervision of Dr. Ken Ahorsu of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana towards the award of Master of Arts (MA) in International Affairs and that, to the best of my knowledge, it neither contains materials previously published by another person nor materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree by this or any other university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Lartey for their immense support and encouragement to hard work throughout my studies.

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All praise and thanks be to the Almighty God, for how far He has brought me. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my parents, friends and loved ones who supported me throughout my year of study. I also wish to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Ken Ahorsu for his effective supervision of this dissertation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	x
ABSTRACT	2
CHAPTER ONE	1
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Research Objectives	4
1.5 Rationale.....	4
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	5
1.7 Theoretical Framework	5
1.7.1 Systems Theory in International Relations	5
1.7.2 Social Network Theory	6
1.8 Literature Review	8
1.8.1 Definition of Drug Trafficking.	8
1.8.2 Social, cultural, economic and vulnerability Factors influencing drug trafficking	8
1.8.3 The Global Menace of Drug Trafficking.....	9
1.8.4 Drug Trafficking in West Africa	11
1.8.5 Security and drug trafficking in West Africa.....	13
1.9 Methodology of the Study	14
1.9.1 Sources of data.....	14
1.9.2 Research design	14
1.9.3 Sampling Technique	15
1.9.4 Data Analysis	15
1.9.5 Researcher’s Positionality.....	15

1.10 Organization of the study	16
CHAPTER TWO	20
OVERVIEW OF DRUG TRAFFICKING TRENDS ACROSS.....	20
THE GLOBE AND WEST AFRICA.	20
2.0 Introduction.	20
2.1 Global Trend of drug trafficking	20
2.2 Drug Trafficking Trends in West Africa.....	23
2.3 Countering / Managing Drug Trafficking in West Africa.....	27
2.3.1 Negative Effect of Drug Trafficking in West Africa.....	31
2.4 Ghana’s Role in Drug Trafficking.....	32
2.4.1 Interventions to Tackle Drug Trafficking.....	34
CHAPTER THREE	38
ASSESSMENT OF GHANA’S PERFORMANCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE.	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Overview of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.	38
3.2.1 Operationalization of the Regional Action Plan	39
3.4 Ghana’s Achievement in the Implementation of ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.	42
3.4.1 Training and Operations	42
3.4.2 International collaboration and Information Sharing.....	44
3.4.3 Introduction of Specialist Units at Ghana’s Points of Entry.....	45
3.4.4 Financial and Logistics Support	46
3.4.5 Improvement in the Judicial System.....	46
3.5 Challenges in the Implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in Ghana.	47
3.5.1 Lack of Sensitization	48
3.5.2 Sustainability	49
3.5.3 Project Design.....	49
3.6 Measures to improve ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.	50
3.7 Chapter Summary.....	51
CHAPTER FOUR.....	54
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54

4.1 Introduction	54
4.2 Summary of Key Findings	54
4.3 Conclusion.....	58
4.4 Recommendations	59
4.4.1 Recommendation to the Government of Ghana.	59
4.4.2 Recommendations to West African Regional Body (ECOWAS)	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61
APPENDIX	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Reported Drug Trafficking Cases in Ghana by the Gender of Drug Traffickers
from 2009-2015.....33

LIST O FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Major Trafficking routes22

Figure 2.2: Drug Trafficking Trends in West Africa24

Figure 2.3: Major cocaine seizures in West Africa (2005-2011).....28

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIRCOP	Airport Communication Programme
APSEC	Ghana Airport Security
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	Africa Union
BFI	British Border Force International
BNI	Bureau of National Investigation
CEPS	Customs, Excise & Preventive Services
CMO	Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline
DEA	Drug Law Enforcement Agency
DLEAG	Gambia Drug Law Enforcement Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa States
EU	European Union
GIABA	Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering
GPS	Ghana Police Service
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
INTEROPL	International Police
JPCU	Joint Port Container Project
MUJAO	Ansar Eddine and the Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa
NACOB	Narcotics Control Board
NDCMP	Nigeria Drug Control Master Plan
NDIC	United States National Drug Intelligence Center
NDLEA	Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NENDU	National Epidemiological on Drug Use

NSC	National Security Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment programme
SIU	Utility and Special Investigation Unit
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
UNTOC	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organize Crime
WACI	West Africa Coast Initiative
WACSI	West Africa Cooperation and Security Initiative
WAJO	West Africa Operation Initiative
WENDU	West Africa Epidemiology Network on Drug Use
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

This study examines the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan and the Fight against Illicit Drug Trafficking in Ghana. It throws light on perceived challenges associated with controlling the drug situation in the country. Additionally, it analyses policy interventions, implemented to deal with drug trafficking and then finally, projects some achievements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan in Ghana and suggests measures for improvement. Using the case of security personnel from Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), Ghana Police Service (GPS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI), a qualitative research approach was used to conduct personnel interviews with drug enforcement officers. The results indicated that Narcotics Control Board is the central coordinating body in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana. The results portray the lack of political will from government, low budget allocation to law enforcement institutions, personnel and logistic constraints, corruption and lack of collaboration and information sharing are some of the challenges faced by the security agencies in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana. The result further unravels the expansion of Narcotics Control Board, the introduction of demand reduction, establishment of specialist units at the Airports and the Harbours as well as collaboration with international agencies. It also highlights on organizations of training and operation programmes, creation of data collection centers and provision of logistics as some of the major achievements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan. Finally, the study recommends quality training exercises, collaboration of regional and international organizations in the fight against drug trafficking and provision of modern logistics from both government and the ECOWAS.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Drug trafficking is a worldwide menace which involves the cultivation, production, distribution and trade in illicit substances barred by law.¹ Several countries on the continent have developed numerous strategies in the drug trade. Countries such as Bolivia, Columbia and Peru, in South America, are well noted for the cultivation of the Coca plant used for the production of Cocaine. The Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent, which include countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and other countries from South East Asia are well known for the production of Heroin. On the other hand, Cannabis can be cultivated in most parts of the world especially Mexico in Central America and Ghana in West African sub-region.²

Drug trafficking has become one of the transnational security threats to the world. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2008) estimated that drug business generated an income of US\$ 500 billion per year in the late nineties and almost doubled at the beginning of the 21st century.³ The production, distribution and utilization of illicit drugs including Cocaine, Cannabis, Heroin among others have attained international concern over the years.⁴ With new anti-drug and anti-laundering measures put in place by European countries and the United States, traffickers have sought reliable midway transit routes to their destination countries. Mostly, drug traffickers utilize the Eastern and Western part of Africa as their transit routes for trafficking drugs.⁵

West Africa, was, hitherto, not a traditional drug trafficking avenue, however, due to enhanced border security checks in the developed world, drug cartels have capitalized on weak states, weak security systems and unapproved geographical locations of the Atlantic

ocean and the Gulf of Guinea. The World Drug Report 2017 issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicated that Ghana and Nigeria are among the most frequently mentioned countries of origin in Africa for Cocaine trafficking. This is because West African leaders fail to give strict operational sanctions to defaulters of the law as a result of corruption and lack of effective institutions to operate on these laws.

Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of UNODC in 2012, affirmed that about 30 tons of Cocaine and 400 kilograms of Heroin were smuggled through West Africa in 2011.⁶ Drug seizures have been reported in most African countries; there have been an overwhelming seizure in Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, to mention a few. Due to this, the Regional body (Economic Community of West African States) realized the adverse consequences and enervating impingement of this menace to the stability and economic progression of the region. To cope with the evolving challenge of the abuse of drugs, illegal means of drug trafficking as well as Organized Crime, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) initiated a Regional Action Plan from 2008-2011 (hereinafter the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan). The Plan was adopted at the ECOWAS Ministerial Conference held in 2008 in Cape Verde with help from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations office for West Africa (UNOWA).

On 27th and 28th February 2013, the Ivorian government together with Authority of Heads of State within ECOWAS extended the duration of the Regional Action Plan by two years.⁷

On 5th September 2016, ECOWAS Ministers of Justice and Interior prolonged the Regional Action Plan which is now the ECOWAS Drug Action Plan from the year 2016 to 2020.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the collective goal of the Regional Action Plan is to facilitate the limitation of Organized crime in West Africa, the effect of drug abuse as well as drug trafficking.⁸

The objective of the study is to gradually establish a sustained regional capacity to monitor, coordinate and harmonize drug policies in West Africa with four main outcomes.

These are: to increase its support in the area of monitoring and coordination capacity, to promote policies and advocacy undertaken in the West African sub-region, to promote information sharing of practices and experiences which will enable the emergence of more specialized expertise in drug prevention and treatment in West Africa and finally, improve national institution and legal frameworks to encourage sub-regional, regional and international collaborations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research conducted in the West African sub-region indicated a worrying situation in the areas of consuming and trans-shipment of hard drugs such as Cocaine, Heroin and Methamphetamine.⁹ A valuation of 183,000 (range: 95,000-226,000) deaths related to drugs were recorded in 2012. The figure above translates to a mortality rate of 40.0 (range: 20.8-49.3) Some 450,000 people were reported dead for drug abuse in 2015.¹⁰ The inimical consequences of drug trafficking on the individual may include psychological effects, stigmatization from society and the family and health risks which may lead to death. This tarnishes the image of countries as well as affects human resources within the region. However, there is scarcity in the area of research literature to fully comprehend the efforts being made by countries and the Regional body to combat the drug trade. Various literature on narcotic substances in the sub-region has been from a policy perspective.

The study delves into the achievements and challenges faced in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in West Africa since the inception of the ECOWAS Action Plan from 2010 to 2018, using the case of Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

- ❖ What are the various challenges that confront law enforcement agencies in combating drug trafficking?
- ❖ What are some of the policy interventions implemented by the government to deal with drug trafficking in the country?
- ❖ What are some of the measures needed to improve the ECOWAS Action Plan in Ghana?
- ❖ What are the achievements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan in the fight against drug trafficking in Ghana?

1.4 Research Objectives

With the purpose of this study slated at exploring the Action Plan as well as fight against issues of illicit trafficking of drugs in Ghana, the following objectives were formulated:

- ❖ Examine perceived challenges linked with controlling drug trafficking in the Ghana.
- ❖ Describe policy interventions implemented to fight drug trafficking in Ghana.
- ❖ Examine some measures to improve the ECOWAS Action Plan in Ghana.
- ❖ To offer suggestions as recommendations for improving ECOWAS counter drug in West Africa.

1.5 Rationale

Organizations such Ghana Police Service (GPS) and Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) tasked to analyze the challenges of drug trafficking in the country, lack informational and institutional capacity to identify and address the growing problem. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will provide policy direction to government and the ECOWAS in remolding the Action Plan on Organized crime, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Abuse of drugs.

Furthermore, this initiative will assist the country in projecting policies and laws that will act as a check on offenders who flaunt them.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The focus of the study will be on the achievements made since the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan in Ghana. Despite the fact that the Action Plan was implemented in 2008, it focuses essentially on ECOWAS Regional Action Plan from 2010 to 2018, with a critical assessment of Ghana. In this regard, the study will assess the challenges faced in curbing the drug menace as well as examining some policy interventions adopted by government to combat the drug situation. It also explores the achievements made by the Action Plan and measures taken to improve upon it.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

A number of theories can be linked to the study of illicit drug trafficking and Organize crime but the Systems theory in International Relations and Network theory are used in the study.

1.7.1 Systems Theory in International Relations

One of the early writers to adopt the Systems concepts in International Relations was Morton Kaplan.¹¹ He was interested in discovering the conditions of occurrence of Systems transformation. Kaplan used the Systems concept of homeostasis and homothetic (transition from one state to the another) to examine changes due to the number of elements within the international systems.¹²

The Systems theory treats an organization as a system. Mele, Pels and Polese described an organization as an entity which seeks to provide service to the public and much effort is put into the organization. Open systems are also Social organizations because of their material exchanges with the environment.¹³ In the context of International Relations, Systems are made up of actors and entities (political machinery, attitudes, interests and political

activities) which set goals to the study. These Systems are used to explain behavior and interaction of the units. The units consist of states, which collectively constitute a system of states. Each state either act or reacts in the international community. Their mannerisms are defined by regularities. International systems can be described as a set of interrelated and interdependent interactions among states (actors) and international agencies such as UN, AU, ECOWAS which is the supra-national actor. With regards to illicit drug trafficking, the Systems theory in International Relations provides explanations as to why international organizations formulate policy interventions to fight illicit drug trafficking. The activities of the states are directed towards the preservation of their national interest in the international community.

Participation in the international community therefore, promotes friendly relations among state actors which encourages information sharing and creation of rules and policies. The Systems theory is apparate for the study because it helps to explain organizations within a system and reasons why countries join such organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and more. An example is the ECOWAS member countries projecting the Regional Action Plan which was as a result of the growing number of West Africa's participation in the drug trade worldwide.

1.7.2 Social Network Theory

George Simmel adopted the early Social Network theory to explain the dynamics of triads and “web of group affiliations”.¹⁴ This was followed by Jacob Moreno in the 1930s who was also credited with developing sociogram which was a graphic representation of social links that a person has. Social Network analysis is currently the common paradigms used in most fields.¹⁵ It refers to the mechanisms and processes that interplay with network structures for a particular outcome for individuals and groups.¹⁶ There is evidence to show

that most of the activities of the Organized crime syndicates take place within network structures. According to Sutherland's study, "expert thieves" there is mostly informal and inter-personal network among criminals who share a common ideology, language and knowledge. In the mist of the growing displeasure, with regards to the use of structural functional analysis in 1950, the study of Social Network is stated as an edifice for studying multifaceted societies.¹⁷ Structural-functional analysis projects societies as immobile and views social changes as dysfunctional which becomes a limitation when studying rapidly changing, modern and complex societies.¹⁸

Social Network models characterize Organized crime as a network of private and social affinity between several individuals.¹⁹ This can be noted in Chambliss analysis of Organized crime in Seattle found that Organized crime was a "coalition" of politicians, law-enforcement officers, extortioners, union leaders and businessmen.²⁰ Also, a study by Block in New York, explains that Organized crime is mostly characterized by incessant recurrence of the linkage between legitimate businesses, professional criminals and politicians.²¹ These criminals gain more favours by engaging in social network for the provision of narcotic substances.²² For instance high profile politicians have been arrested in connection with illicit drug trafficking.

Kleemans & De Poot further assert that social relations clear doubt and strengthens alliance between criminals because of their investment in the affinity.²³ This is usual for criminal peril where a high phase of combined trust is needed particularly in issuing out activities with high criminal and financial risk. The Social Network theory is relevant for this study because it explains the extent to which crime networks operates around the world. Hence, for security wise, the routine in most drug market is that dealing with strangers are to be eschewed.²⁴ The theory further elaborates on how Social Networks among international organizations result in positive outcomes. For instance, the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan

against Illicit Drug Trafficking is a plan of action by the ECOWAS but most of its operations and monitoring is carried out by UNODC and this is due to the relationship that exist among these two organizations in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

1.8 Literature Review

This chapter presents the review of related literature. The essence is to identify the gap that exist in the literature and then provide a theoretical framework to understand the relationships that exist among the key variables of the study.

1.8.1 Definition of Drug Trafficking.

The illicit drug trade has become an established industry that has attained global patronage with an amount of \$500 billion per year²⁵. Drug trafficking according to UNODC is a worldwide illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.

1.8.2 Social, cultural, economic and vulnerability Factors influencing drug trafficking

Theories from the field of Sociology explains some motives that encourage people to traffic illicit drugs. Merton's Anomie theory in 1938 explains the separation between goals and means of increasing deviance²⁶. His hypothesis of invention as a form of adjustment is practical to drug trafficking. Using his ideology, an individual may persist to attain goals but would reject the usual means of achieving them because it is aberrant.

A similar theory is Differential Opportunity which states that individuals have diverse ways in achieving their goals be it legal or illegal means.²⁷ The urge to continue the drug trade is due to various reasons. The arrests of drug lords are uncommon as a result of unavailability of logistics to carry out effective investigation and surveillance by police.²⁸ Other theories such as the Social Learning theory implies that the pleasure one undergoes in drug activities

makes them repeat the behaviors continuously. Through operand activity, the euphoria and acceptance with one's social class and status achieved in engaging in drugs, serve as a good reinforcement to remain in the drug selling habit. Regardless of the nature of the drug menace, it remains a lucrative practice for all. It is a complex crime (especially at the international smuggling level) requiring much thought, planning, organization, and social connectedness. The emergence of the crack markets in the 1980s, have been an extant research on drug selling²⁹.

Reuter and Greenfield rated that global narcotic trade appreciated between \$20-25 billion annually³⁰. The market price shows return acquired to the final consumer and thus, the rate of drug increases as it descends the supply chain.³¹ In defiance of these interpretations, one can hardly contest that the proceeds acquired from drug trafficking serve as the main engine for Organized crime groups. The above scholarly works has contributed and corroborated on the topic under study.

1.8.3 The Global Menace of Drug Trafficking

Bruce Bagley, in his article "The Evolution of Drug Trafficking and Organized crime in Latin America" talks about the growth of drug market in the Americas over the past two decades. He contends that if the population of America consume less quantity of narcotic substances, Latin America and the Caribbean will neither produce and export market for these drugs.³² He noted that the United States remain the largest single consumer market for illicit drugs and that its use is not uniquely "American" disease. However, Cocaine users in European countries doubled from 1998 through 2006³³.

He further states that Cocaine use has skyrocketed in other continents such as Africa and Latin America. For instance, Latin American countries consume 200 metric tons of Cocaine in 2010. In 2009, Cocaine users were recorded between 940.000 and 4.42 million

in Africa.³⁴ The global Heroin production has also gone up for the past decade, Afghanistan lead the world in Heroin production with 83%, Myanmar 5% and Mexico 9%.³⁵

He estimated that most of the world Heroin is consumed in Central and Western Europe.³⁶

A study by Robles, Calderon, & Magaloni, titled “The Economic Consequences of Drug Trafficking Violence in Mexico,” evaluated the economic costs of drug related violence.

They reveal that the level of violence in Mexico was measured by homicides in 2006.

This is due to the increased number of drug lords to the extent of associating officers with these cartels³⁷.

Countries encounter security challenges in relation to the drug situation in and around borders. According to Robles, Calderon, & Magaloni drug lords have distinguished their criminal cells and portfolios of activities which entails kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking and oil theft among other crimes to increase citizens’ concerns.³⁸ Singer, M (2008) on the other hand, denoted that illicit drug trade operates in three ways. These include: production, trans-shipment and consumption.³⁹ Most Latin American countries act as producers, while West African countries serve as transits points and the United States and Europe are the destination points.⁴⁰ However some of these areas play multiple roles in the drug trade.

Akyeampong also pointed out that the critical and lucrative stage in the illicit drug trade is the transportation of the drugs (trafficking or transiting). With regards to Cocaine, there are two main trafficking routes. The most used one is from South America through Central America to the United States and the alternative is from South America through Africa to Europe.⁴¹ Heroin is also trafficked to North America from South East Asia through Africa, China, Malaysia and Thailand.⁴² The alternate route to Europe is through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the Balkan route.

One major factor which encourages illicit drug trafficking is that starting a criminal business is much easier since less investment is needed.⁴³ Since the emergence of the crack markets in the 1980s, there has been extant research on drug selling⁴⁴ and more recently female involvement in drug sale activity. Drug trafficking generates more profit than any other form of trafficking and therefore, continues to be a lucrative criminal enterprise for Organized crime syndicates.⁴⁵

It is estimated that the world narcotics trade is valued at approximately \$20-25 billion annually.⁴⁶ The retail price indicates revenue obtained from the point at which drugs reach the final consumer and thus, the value of drugs increases as it moves down the supply chain.⁴⁷ Despite these variations, it is hardly in dispute that the profits generated from drug trafficking serve as a primary motivator for organize crime syndicates.

1.8.4 Drug Trafficking in West Africa

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has raised concerns over increased drug trafficking in West African states.⁴⁸ Since the mid-1990s, in Central and West Africa, trafficking in hard drugs has become a booming business.⁴⁹ The introduction of hard drugs such as Heroin and Cocaine for transshipment from outside the region has brought about serious side effects.

The level of trafficking has increased dramatically over the past decade, especially the past five years. The situation is appalling in a way that policymakers and academics are talking about a drug epidemic in West Africa.⁵⁰ Between 2004 and 2007, at least two distinct transshipment hubs emerged in West Africa: one centered on Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, and the other centered in the Bight of Benin, which spans from Ghana to Nigeria.⁵¹

Babangida's article on Drug Abuse and Trafficking in Nigeria explains the early abuse of Cannabis. He affirms that the quest for people to optimize their energy in some parts of Nigeria use various local herbs. For instance, Guskolo in the middle belt, Kaikai in Eastern

and Western belt and Zakamin in the Northern belt.⁵² There are traders of these drugs at the local level, but the movement of narcotic substances to other countries was unknown in the 1920s and 1930s. Migration, portability and travel were key in trafficking in Cannabis during the colonial period.⁵³

Borrofica also averred that Cannabis was introduced to Nigeria and other West African countries by soldiers and sailors returning from India after World War II.⁵⁴ Thereafter, Nigeria and other parts of the West African soil became a fertile ground for the growth of Cannabis particularly in the equatorial region.⁵⁵ Sierra Leone primarily cultivated Cannabis while other West African countries subsequently followed.⁵⁶ In 1920, the production, possession and consumption of Cannabis was added to a list of narcotic drugs which was barred under the 1913 Opium Ordinance is punishable by law since 1920. Statistics for arrest of Cannabis and conviction in 1926 for instance shows a pattern of gradual increase 9 prosecutions with 7 convictions in 1926 and 19 prosecutions with 16 Conviction in 1927⁵⁷. In the early 1960s, most West Africans were arrested in the United Kingdom for trafficking Cannabis. Data collected a Nigeria's involvement in international drug trafficking shows that between 1979 and 1988 there has been 14,833 and 4,574 convictions in foreign countries. Undoubtedly, most Nigerian traffickers dragged their business to Ghana in the late 1980s.⁵⁸ The improvement in security in Europe and North American entry points made Heroin traffickers from Afghanistan and Cocaine traffickers from Latin American countries use West Africa for their activities.

A study by Aning showed that about a third of traffickers arrested in Germany and Switzerland are from West Africa. The challenges in security checks can be associated with the interest in consumer countries in policies that serve their benefits than that of the transit countries.⁵⁹ More so, leaders in African countries believe that these drugs only pass through

their territories and may not have significant impacts on their countries. Notwithstanding, the West African sub-region has begun to experience the side effects of drug trafficking. There has been an increase in the consumption of Cocaine and Heroin in addition to the locally produced Cannabis which was not the case.

Even though the above scholarly works have provided much knowledge on some historical background of drug trafficking in West Africa, there is more study to be done to identify the role of the Regional Action Plan within the sub region.

1.8.5 Security and drug trafficking in West Africa.

Aning and Pokoo, research article “Understanding the Nature and Threats of Drug Trafficking to National and Regional Security in West Africa,”

The regional body is a classic topographical choice for illicit drug trade and poses security threats to several states in the region.⁶⁰ They clarified that West African sub-region is no longer a transit point for illicit drugs destined for Europe and America, but also, serve as a final destination. Additionally, policies adopted by West African countries towards drug users are mostly centered on punitive measures such as prison sentence. However, this should not be the case, rather, they must be referred to rehabilitation centers where they can have access to public health treatment instead of incarceration.⁶¹ Again, physical and social factors such as political patronage, bribery and corruption, porous borders, inadequate logistics, inadequate security personnel at the entry points enable traffickers acquire easy access into the country.

Lacher’s paper “Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara region” asserts that in order to understand the crisis and growing instability in the West Africa sub-region, especially northern Mali, one has to go beyond the role of Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Ansar Eddine, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement of Tawid also in West Africa.⁶² He says that organized crime occur in the region because of the rivalries

having access to smuggling routes and the state official's intake of criminal activities by political associates pave way for the extremist to thrive. The engagement of government officials and the inclination of western governments to always pay money fuels abduction of the industry in the region.⁶³

The above scholarly works have provided a detailed knowledge on some security threats associated with drug trafficking and Organized crime in the West African sub-region. However, there is the need for more study to identify the role of the Regional Action Plan within the sub-region.

1.9 Methodology of the Study

1.9.1 Sources of data

Primary and Secondary data sources were used to attain the objective of the research. The study relied on In-depth interview to generate detailed data on experiences and perceptions of the respondents and secondary data was also sourced from books, articles, journals, etc.

1.9.2 Research design

This refers to the general idea that the researcher intends to assimilate. The various model of a research in a rational and logical way in order to obtain answers to a research question.⁶⁴

The study designed for the research is qualitative research approach. According to Susan, a Qualitative Research helps one to comprehend the underlying opinions, reasons and motivations.⁶⁵ This study therefore employed qualitative research approach in order to unearth a detailed understanding of the respondent's knowledge on drug trafficking and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan.

1.9.3 Sampling Technique

A total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with officers from Narcotics Control Board, Ghana Police Service and Ghana Immigration Service. These comprised of five respondents from NACOB, two from Ghana Police Service, two from Ghana Immigration Service and one personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. These ten government officials were selected purposely for the key in-depth interview. This was largely informed by their rank and years of service in the security agencies.

1.9.4 Data Analysis

Transcript audio-recorded interviews were referenced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of participants. Codes were developed into themes underpinning the objectives of the study. Data were analysed using manual coding, it was used to generate group codes into themes. Coding required identification of decalogue and tasking numerical values to each variable to mean a particular response. Quotations were used to underscore some findings and give clarity to statements which needed empirical comprehension.

1.9.5 Researcher's Positionality

Positionality refers to the researcher's opinion of the study. The position adopted by a researcher affects every phase of the research process, be it objectives of the study, research questions, other opinions and conclusion. Researcher positionality may touch on every aspect of the study. Foote and Bartell emphasized that researchers may be affected by their choice of processes and their interpretation outcomes.⁶⁶

In some situations, where the phenomena researched are sensitive, the quality of data collected and depth of insight given are mostly contingent on the characteristics of the researcher such as gender, age, socio cultural and ideological background; that is if he/she is to be treated as personnel within an organization or as a foreigner. In that case, the

researcher works with Narcotics Control Board as an officer by respondents, therefore respondents were forthcoming with responses.⁶⁷

1.9.6 Ethical Considerations

With the delicate nature of the research, the various heads of the security agencies were contacted and permission obtained before interviewing participants and additional consent of the various participants was obtained before the questionnaire survey and interviews were conducted. Ethical clearances were also sought from the university before proceeding with data collection. In order to protect the anonymity of respondents selected for the interview, pseudonyms were used, this encouraged participants to bring out detailed information on some of the sensitive topics of the research.

1.10 Organization of the study

In exploring some achievements made since the administration of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan. The study is organized into four chapters:

Chapter One introduces the work, detailing the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, conceptual framework, literature review, research methodology, theoretical underpinnings and the organization of the study.

Chapter two talks about the overview of drug trafficking trends across the globe and West Africa.

Chapter three delves into analysis and discussion of the proposed Regional Action Plan and Chapter Four talks about findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO
OVERVIEW OF DRUG TRAFFICKING TRENDS ACROSS
THE GLOBE AND WEST AFRICA.

2.0 Introduction.

The chapter unravels drug trafficking trends across the globe, with particular emphasis on West Africa. The essence is to highlight on global trends of illicit drug trafficking around the world.

2.1 Global Trend of drug trafficking

The law of market forces says that if one needs an item, another person must be willing to provide, whether through legal or illegal means. This notion has been the trademark in the drug trade. Hence, the supply of illicit drugs has become a booming business since the mid 1990s. Heroin, which is said to be one of the main drugs of concern is cultivated in two areas: The Golden Triangle (Thailand, Burma, and Laos) and the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan). Mexico is also a producer of Opium. The end product of Opium, which is Heroin is trafficked to North America from South East Asia through Africa, China, Malaysia and Thailand.¹ The alternate route to Europe is through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the Balkan route.

According to the UNODC Report 2008, world Opium yield augmented by 65% from 2016 to 2017 with 10,500 tons. Although a huge percentage of Heroin evolves from Myanmar and Laos, most Heroin originates from the Afghanistan Opium market.

It is assessed that it produced 6,900 Opium in 2009, which are mostly trafficked to all major regions around the world.² In relation of Heroin consumption, the UNODC report 2011 estimated that majority of the world Heroin is consumed in Western and Central Europe. Seventy metric tons of Heroin was consumed in 2009.

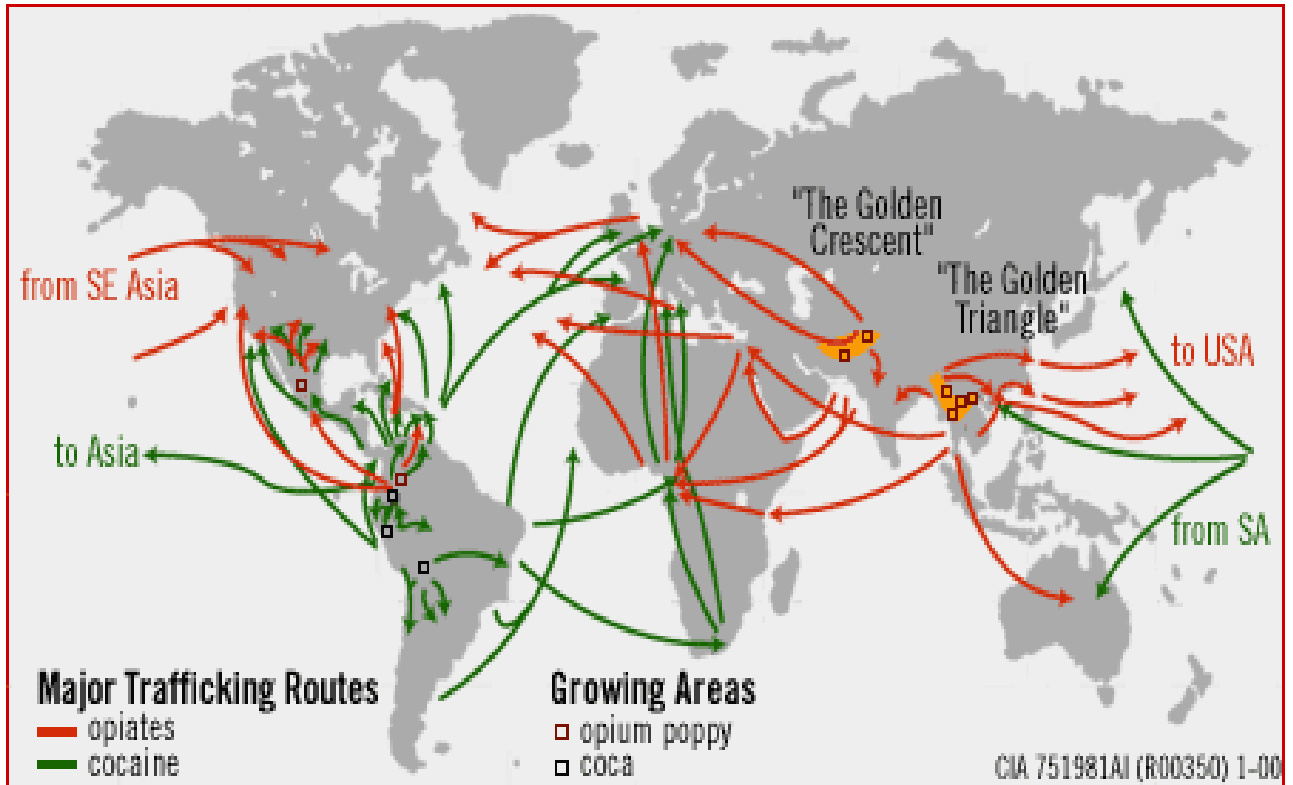
Most Heroin consumed in the United States comes from either Colombia, which produces about 2% world supply or Mexico which also produce about 1.5% of the World Heroin. Most African Heroin users get their supplies from Afghanistan and studies show that Heroin consumption on the Africa continent is on rise.³ According to Akyeampong, the production of Coca, from which Cocaine is produced has a long history which is known as one of the primary crops to be grown locally in the western hemisphere.⁴ Latin America and South American (Peru, Bolivia, Colombia) countries leads in the cultivation of Coca plant for the manufacturing of Cocaine. Brazil and Mexico are one of the leading distributors of Cocaine around the world.⁵ With regards to Cocaine there are two main trafficking routes. The first is from the South America through Central America to the United States and the alternative is from the South America (Argentina and Brazil) through Africa to Europe. The final points of these drugs are Europe and the United States. However, recent studies have shown that the United States remains the largest single consumer of Cocaine.⁶ UNODC report estimated that there are about 900,000 Cocaine users in Brazil, making it the premier consumers in South America. It is also estimated that Asia has between 400,000 to 2.3 million users and that Eastern and South- Eastern Europe had less Cocaine users in 2009.⁷

The widespread of Marijuana (Cannabis) has yielded to an industry of 6 billion dollar per annum and remains a common drug produced and consumed illegally.⁸ According to the 2010 report by the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), African countries were responsible for most of the Cannabis seized worldwide.

Southern and Western African countries such as Mozambique, Ghana and Nigeria are the major sites for Cannabis production.⁹ Moroccan Cannabis resin production which is considered to be one of the world's largest, was rated by UNODC to be 877 tons in 2008.

It is estimated that one third of Moroccan Cannabis resin transits through the Sahel- region and sent to Europe via the Balkans or dispatched to Israel and Egypt. The Arabian Peninsula receives its supply via Chad through Sudan.¹⁰

Figure 2.1: Major Trafficking routes



Source: UNODC

Another illegal drug which is widely produced and consumed is Methamphetamine. According to United States National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), there are no conclusive worldwide Methamphetamine production estimates.

However, data on laboratory seizure suggest a boost in production in the United States, Mexico and Southeast Asia.¹¹ The African continent is no longer a transit point for Methamphetamine trafficking as law enforcement officers in most countries have discovered laboratory use in Methamphetamine production which is destined for East Asia and to lesser extent, South Africa.

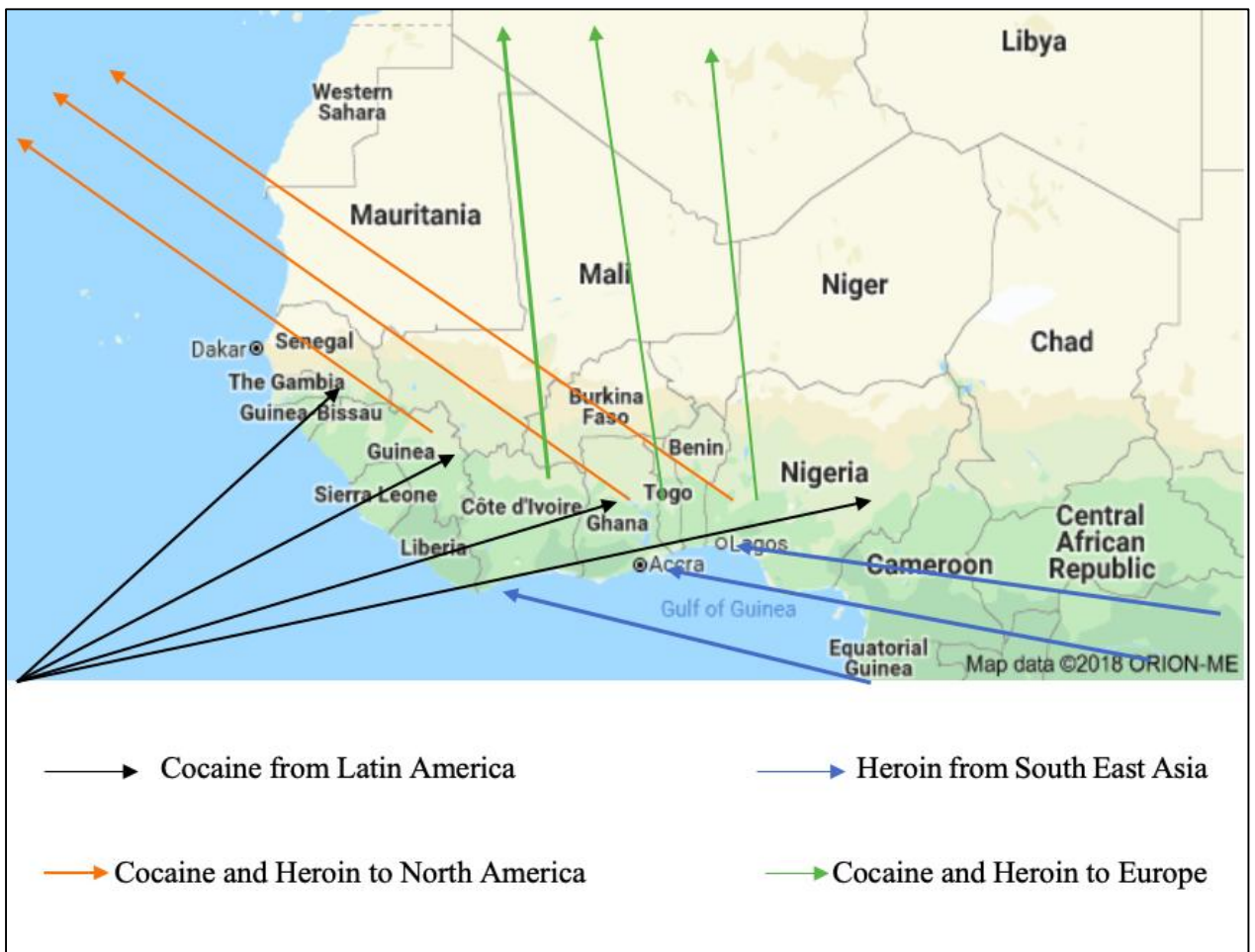
2.2 Drug Trafficking Trends in West Africa

With regards to the free flow persons and goods throughout the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) region, drugs may either enter or exit any West African country, without passing through border controls. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report on West Africa indicated that the past the region was divided to three main hubs for illicit drug trade.¹²

- The Northern hub, radiating from Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia and Senegal.
- The Southern hub, centered on Nigeria, including Benin, Togo and Ghana.
- The Eastern hub, encompassing Mali and parts of Mauritania.

The sub-region has been tagged with the drug menace for years. West Africa is far from new with reference to drug trafficking. The region is now a main transit point and repackaging locus for illicit drug trafficking from Latin America and Asia due to the rapidly growing European market and the robust anti – narcotics law enforcement in Europe and the United States.¹³ According to Bruce, trading in Cocaine from South America to Europe via West Africa rapidly increased in 2005 and stabilized in 2007.¹⁴ In 2008, UNODC estimated that about 14% of Cocaine from Europe measuring to a broad value of one billion dollars is dispatched through West Africa, while several drugs first crossed the coastal ports of Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Benin, Guinea, Ghana and Nigeria which is either transferred by air or boats.¹⁵

Figure 2.2: Drug Trafficking Trends in West Africa



Source: Author's construct

One of the major factors which led to the accessibility of the regional borders is continuous demand for hard drugs (Cocaine and Heroin) around the world. For instance, in 2006, there was about 3.5 million Cocaine users in Europe, which raised to 5.5 million in 2008 till date.¹⁶ Bruce also affirms that the pinnacle of drug trafficking in Africa was as a result of high demand in Europe from users of 4.5 million.¹⁷

This has given traffickers an opportunity to be deeply involved as they are not perturbed by the evolving technologies but rather, creating new avenues for the growing drug market. This new trend of an increase in European drug market has made drug traffickers focus on the Euro rather than the dollar by the confiscation of a huge amount of euro from Cocaine traffickers by law enforcement officers around the world.¹⁸ West Africa also serve as an

ideal geographical choice for the drug market. Countries in the sub region that have access to high sea routes to drug source countries have captured drug traffickers. These countries are: Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Cape-Verde, Ghana, Nigeria among others. Most of its multiple abandoned islands and archipelagos makes scouting difficult, hence, drug traffickers have utilized these routes to their advantage.¹⁹ West African sub-region is regarded as a third world country. For instance, Guinea-Bissau which was also a drug trafficking country, continued to drop in extreme poverty since its independence from Portugal in 1974.

It was ranked 176 out of 184 poorest countries by the UN Development Programmes 2013 human development report. Most countries are at this stage as a result of internal conflicts or wars, exploitation and depletion of its natural resources by imperialist masters.²⁰

According to Akeampong, most West Africa countries including Ghana and Nigeria turned their attention to drug trafficking during the 1980s, when Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a means of economic constriction which occurred in most West African countries experiencing economic recession due to reduction in public spending which led to employees being laid-off by both public and private sector.²¹ It was these conditions that created hopeless plights in their inhabitants and left them open to exploitation by international drug trafficking syndicates in collaboration with domestic ones. Corruption has also contributed to the stage at which West Africa finds its self when it comes to illicit drug trafficking. Aning and Pokoo alleged that influential and wealth Organized crime syndicates corrupt and intimidate public officials who facilitate drug trade in the sub-region.²²

Rawlings has stated that West Africa does not only play the role of transit, warehouse and hub for the transfer of hard drugs from producing countries to America and Europe but the current pattern has turned the sub-region to production, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs²³. Also, the former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon noted: West Africa is no

longer a cross road for drug trafficking but an end point with a population of more than one people estimated to be using illicit drugs.²⁴

United Nations drug office report in 2009 indicated that they were alerted by authorities in Guinea Conakry of the prevalence of complex laboratories in manufacturing Methamphetamine. Large volumes of precursor chemicals could be assumed for the manufacture of Ecstasy drug and Cocaine.²⁵ According to Nigeria's Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP), the production of Methamphetamine in Nigeria for export is expanding, thus, it is becoming a growing concern to the production of banned substances such as Methamphetamine and Ephedrine which has been added to the illicit drug phenomenon calculus in the country.²⁶ The local consumption of illicit drugs in West Africa is rising and this is as a result of the backlash from businesses. Most times international illicit drug traffickers pay for drug service with drugs instead of cash to their local counterparts which they must sort for buyers to sell and convert to cash.²⁷

In March 2014, the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs held a briefing where the executive director of UNODC, Yury Fedotov, expressed worry on the emergence of Crack cocaine, Heroin and Amphetamine-type stimulants, which he says is becoming an issue for public health and safety as there has been an up-rise in the number of new HIV infections characterized by injecting drug use.²⁸

According to the National Epidemiological on Drug Use (NENDU), between January and December 2015, 1,044 patients were diagnosed for treatment in Nigeria in the eleven medical centers.²⁹ This situation is not limited to Nigeria, even though treatment for drug addiction across West Africa is generally under-resourced and under-funded, most countries in the sub-region still records high numbers of drug addiction.

2.3 Countering / Managing Drug Trafficking in West Africa

Fighting the drug trade is an international agenda. A single state would not be able to eradicate it completely. It is, therefore, imperative for countries to collaborate in tackling this menace. Lack of appreciable collaboration and communication is one of the negative elements that has given drug traffickers an advantage to create cells across the sub-region and wander along the West African corridor with relative exemption. This was due to lack of trust among member states and financial constraints to help with communication.

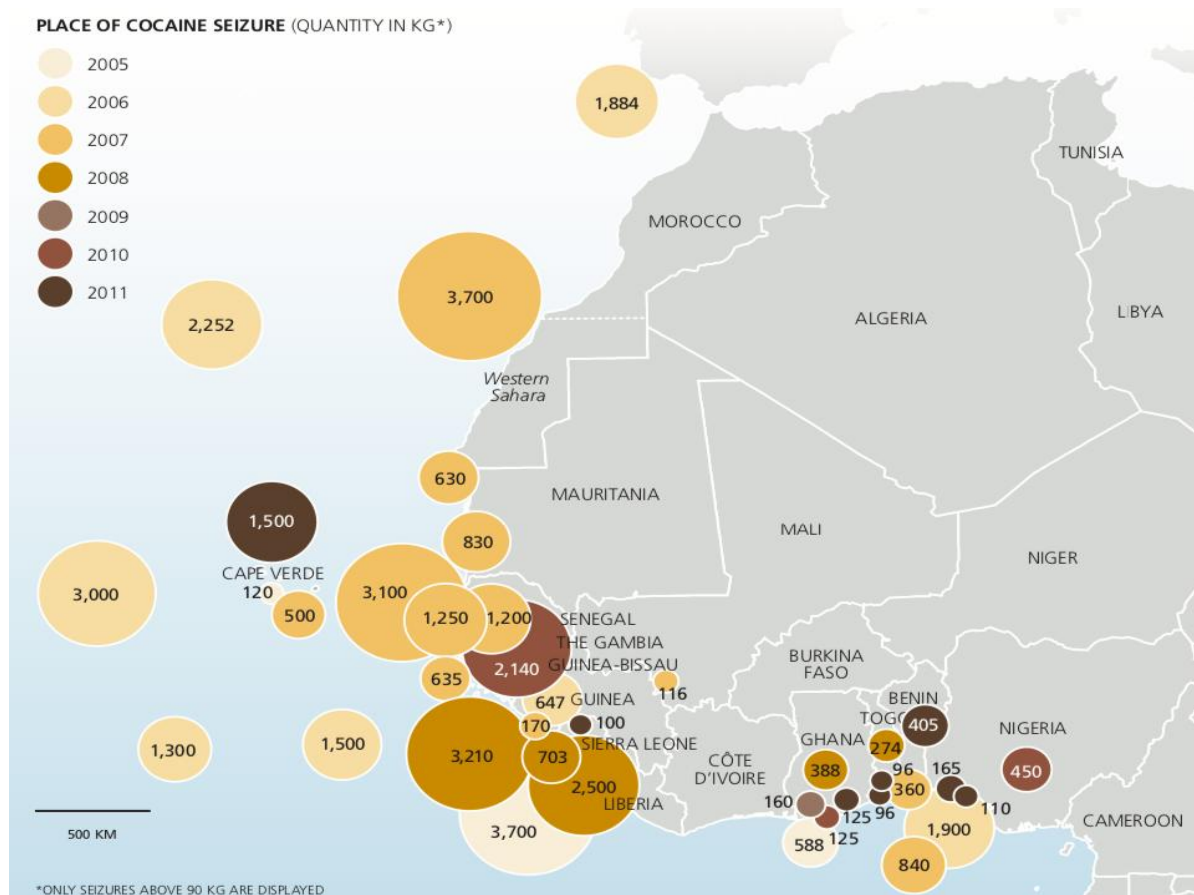
The situation has been reversal especially in some countries. According to Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) between 2012 and 2015, 34,499 persons were arrested of drug related offenses across the thirty-six States of the Federation and Abuja.³⁰

Official report from Gambia Drug law enforcement agency, the Gambia (DLEAG) released figures at the meeting indicating that apart from 330Kg, 525 grams and 536 milligrams of different types of drugs impounded last year, some 722Kg, 394grams and 893 milligrams were seized between January and March 2018 in the West Coast Region alone. In Dakar, security officials apprehended more than 2 metric tons of Cocaine on a yacht sliding off the coast and in a safe-house at a resort south of the city.³¹

In September 2012, 1.5 tons of Cannabis valued at 4.3 million pounds was intercepted in United Kingdom from Ghana which resulted in the arrest of five Ghanaian security officers.³² Guinea Bissau has also recorded several arrest connected to illicit drug trafficking, for example, 674 kilograms and one for over 300 kilograms with several arrest made was recorded for the past years.³³ Persons transporting hard drugs have been arrested in Burkina Faso, Niger, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria most part of the West Africa sub-region on a regular basis.

The worrying trend in this situation is that about 10% to 12% of products are intercepted worldwide and one can say that less than 5% of these products is in Africa, which shows that industrial quantities of illicit drugs are transferred through the sub-region with almost total exemption.³⁴

Figure 2.3: Major cocaine seizures in West Africa (2005-2011)



Source: UNODC Individual Drug Seizure database (IDS) and UNODC Field Offices in the region.

Drug trafficking in West Africa continued to be of great concern to the international and the West African regional community. That this why the regional body has to add its voice in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the West Africa sub-region.

On the international scene, the United Nation had three conventions to address the issue of drug trafficking. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and finally the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. The three major United Nations drug control conventions are commonly supportive and correlative. The main aim of the first two conventions is to classify internationally applicable control measures in order to facilitate the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific use and to prevent their distraction into illicit channels. They also include general provisions on trafficking and drug abuse.

The formation of West Africa Joint Operation initiative (WAJO) was one of the early initiatives by the sub-regional body to solve the problem of lack of information sharing in the fight against illicit drug trafficking. It was an initiative by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in collaboration with Nigeria's National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The main purpose of WAJO was to broaden the collective drug law enforcement arena, capacity and effectively improve social security and welfare of the people of the region.³⁵

It should also be noted that ECOWAS Member States are signatories to relevant international strategic and normative instruments, including the three United Nations Drug Conventions, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is advocating an engaging in all major international and regional anti-drug and anti-crime initiatives, strategies and programmes. However, these initiatives still remain weak.

During the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments, members expressed their concerns on how the West Africa sub - region is under siege by international organized crime syndicates.

The ECOWAS Commission then instructed its inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) to come out with an Action Plan on how to assist member states in fighting drug trafficking and organized crime in the sub-region.

In October 2008, a Ministerial meeting held in Praia, Cape Verde with financial from European Union (EU) and UNODC, a Political Declaration and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan was produced and adopted by the Heads of State in December 2008.³⁶

The general objective of the Plan of Action is to promote the limitation of drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime in West Africa. And was also expected to strengthen the ECOWAS Commission Drug advocacy, monitoring and coordination, harmonized information on drug abuse epidemiology and data collection availability, Good practices on drug prevention and treatment are identified and disseminated and Improved law enforcement against transnational organized crime related to drugs.³⁷

An independent project evaluation report from United Nation Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) in September, 2018 which was aim to assessed the extent to which project objectives and outcomes had been achieved and provide guidance for improved implementation of objectives and activities.

Some of the challenges noted and pointed out in their findings include the ambitious nature of the project design considering its scope, operational context, budget and duration.

Additionally, they pointed out the limited attention given to the institutionalization of partnerships and bodies and achievements to sustain results and finally it they also noted that the project liaised mainly with inter-ministerial drug committees as well as different ministries and that project need to sensitize high-level government officials about DDR, epidemiology and drug trafficking in order to get their support for implementation of the Regional Action Plan. The evaluation team also saw the need for the project existence because it is relevant and is in aligned with global and regional instrument, strategies and

policies of the UN, UNODC, The Africa Union, the EU and the ECOWAS Commission. And that the project was contributing and for filling the Regional Actions Plans 2008-2011/2014 and 2016-2020.³⁸ As much has already been than by done by UN, UNODC, ECOWAS and Member States, the picture here still seem gloomy and distressing but all is not lost, there is much to be proud for as much of the situations in most of the countries within the sub-region have least being addressed, if not yet resolved.³⁹ More work needs to be done help curb the bleeding and heal the wounds left for so many years of criminal abuse.

2.3.1 Negative Effect of Drug Trafficking in West Africa

Consumption of illicit drug has become a universal challenge as it is no longer limited to a problem of demand especially in developed countries. The countries that produced but decided not to devour the narcotic substance, exhibits high local consumption. A global estimate of 275 (5.6%) million people between ages 15 to 64 years utilized drugs once a year during 2016.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in 2015, about 450,000 people died as a result of drug use (World Health Organization). Of these deaths, 167,750 were affected with drug use disorders (overdose). Others were characterized by transmitted diseases such HIV and Hepatitis C through unhealthy injection practices.⁴¹

Research have shown the nexus between illicit drug trade and international terrorism. To some extent, international militias are already in existence in West Africa. Some drug dealers in West Africa have been linked to Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb such as in Mali and West Sahara.⁴² The prevalence of the drug trade in West Africa is challenging political peace and threatening existing governments and powers of aristocracy to the fact that drug traffickers associate themselves with outsiders and insiders to create a conflictual relationship with the state. Drug traffickers will enjoy the luxury and while democratic processes and institutional development of the county will be endangered, peace and stability of the country will be strengthened.

According to EU Drug Market Report, drug trafficking meddles with legal economic activity in many different ways.⁴³ The effect is mostly from the direct and indirect impacts of the large amounts of money generated from illicit drug trade, which must be legitimized, but also from the direct impact of losses to legitimate business and corruption associated with the drug trade. The proceeds from the drug trade generally need to be ‘cleaned-up’ to appear legitimate before it is used. Thus, legal business sectors most targeted for washing these ‘dirty’ money are by investing in pubs, hospitality, construction works, retail trade, real estate activities become affected.⁴⁴

2.4 Ghana’s Role in Drug Trafficking

Consumption of illicit drugs in Ghana is now a reality. The difference between supplier and consumer countries is deteriorating. Ghana that used to produce rather than consuming illicit drugs, are showing increased local consumption, more often of modern rather than traditional drugs. Ghana has become part of the drug business in various ways. For instance, an interview by Akyeampong with the Director of the Accra Psychiatric hospital showed that users of illicit drugs are increasing in Ghana, because about 80% of the cases reported in the hospital were drug related⁴⁵. Currently, it will be convenient to note that Ghana is playing three different roles in the drug business. They include

- Production of Cannabis.
- Transiting of cannabis, Heroin and Cocaine.
- Consumption of heroin, Cannabis and Cocaine.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has raised concerns over increased drug trafficking in West African states. Since the mid-1990s, in Ghana, trafficking in hard drugs has become a booming business.⁴⁶ The introduction of hard drugs such as Heroin and Cocaine for transshipment from outside the country has brought about serious side effects. The rate of trafficking has compounded dramatically over the past years.

This terrifying concern has become a social canker in the country. For instance, in 2005 two Venezuelan Cocaine dealers were arrested at East Legon. They were operating under the guise of gold dealership.

Table 2.1: Reported Drug Trafficking Cases in Ghana by the Gender of Drug Traffickers from 2009-2015

Gender	Year						Total
	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Male	31 (83.8%)	28 (66.7%)	38 (86.4%)	22 (75.9%)	29 (96.7%)	41 (87.2%)	189 (82.5%)
Female	6 (16.2%)	14 (33.3%)	6 (13.6%)	7 (24.1%)	1 (3.3%)	6 (12.8%)	40 (17.5%)
Total	37 (100%)	42 (100%)	44 (100%)	29 (100%)	30 (100%)	47 (100%)	229 (100%)

Source: NACOB Annual Report 2009 - 2015

According to Akyeampong, Drug use and sale in Ghana was not known until the 1980's, few Ghanaian knew about drugs such as Heroin and Cocaine. He further asserts that Nigerian dealers extended their operations to Ghana and other parts of the region from the late 1980s.⁴⁷

A study by Aning showed that about a third of traffickers arrested in Germany and Switzerland are from Ghana and Nigeria.⁴⁸ Also, governments in African countries believe that these drugs are just passing through their territories thus may not have significant impacts on their countries. However, as a transit country, Ghana has begun to experience the side effects of drug trafficking. There has been an increase in the consumption of cocaine

and heroin in addition to the locally produce cannabis which was not the case in the past decades.

2.4.1 Interventions to Tackle Drug Trafficking

The government of Ghana has confirmed almost all of United Nations drug and crime convention and is supporting and participating in all major international and regional anti-drug and anti-crime legislation and established several specialized national agencies to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of drug and organized crime control policies.

United Nation Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) has already been very active in Ghana, it has introduced four main projects to help the country fight illicit drug trafficking. This include the Container project (establish at the Tema and Takoradi Ports to monitor global containers); secondly it introduces the Trans- Atlantic intelligence exchange (project law enforcement and intelligence cooperation against cocaine trafficking from Latin America to West Africa); and Law enforcement training.⁴⁹ The U.S Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DEA) and European Union is providing military training and logistics for Law enforcement officers in Ghana to dismantle drug trafficking networks and arrest and prosecute major traffickers based within the sub-region.

Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) Ghana, is the lead Government Security agency legally responsible for the regulation and control of Drug abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and related activities by enforcing the Drug Control Act PNDC Law 233 and supported by other government agencies like the Ghana Police Service (GPS), Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) and Judiciary. In addition to this Ghana is signatory to all the three international conventions ”1961 Single Convention; 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention; 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances; 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.”⁵⁰

In summary, this Chapter looked at the overview of drug trafficking phenomena across the globe, with particular emphasis on West Africa and Ghana.

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CHAPTER THREE

ASSESSMENT OF GHANA'S PERFORMANCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE.

3.1 Introduction

The chapter explores the progress and challenges facing Ghana in the fight against illicit drug trafficking since the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan (2010 – 2018).

3.2 Overview of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.

There has been frequent recurrence of illicit drug trafficking in West Africa over the past few years. This can be attributed to financial constraints and lack of collaboration among member states in the sub-region.¹ It was, therefore, imperative for the regional body to play a leading role in addressing the drug situation in the sub-region. Consequently, in their 32nd Ordinary Session in June 2007, ECOWAS Heads of State and Government expressed concern on the transformation of the sub-region as a drug trafficking hub.² This necessitated the ECOWAS Commission to adopt measures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the sub-region. The Plan was born and adopted by Heads of States of member countries during a ministerial meeting held in Praia, (Cape Verde) on October 2008, which was meant to run through 2011.

This was followed by a donor conference held in Vienna on 3rd December, 2009 to raise funds to support the implementation of the Action Plan. The conference resulted in a budget for the project to be funded by the European Union (EU) to a tune of \$14,384,294.³ On February 2013, the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan was extended for additional two years

during the 42nd Ordinary Session of ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire. The Plan again had its 3rd extension to the year 2020 on January, 2016 by member states.⁴

The main objectives of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan were to gradually establish a sustainable sub-regional capacity to monitor, coordinate and harmonize drug policies in West Africa. Also, advocacy should be informed by evidence-based studies, development and sharing of experiences and practices should enable the emergence of specialized expertise in drug prevention and treatment. Finally, the Plan was to improve national institutions, legal frameworks and encourage regional, sub-regional and internal collaboration.⁵

3.2.1 Operationalization of the Regional Action Plan

The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug abuse gives support to ECOWAS member states and Mauritania. The UNODC regional office for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal (ROSEN) and the office of ECOWAS Drug Unit in Abuja, (Nigeria) is responsible for the administration of the Regional Action Plan.⁶ In September 2018, the project management team had three technical staff members in the Abuja office and five in Dakar with support staff.⁷

ROSEN office in Dakar is responsible for implementing three of the objectives of the Regional Action Plan. These include: “Regional policies and advocacy, informed by evidence-based studies.” Secondly, “the development and sharing of practices and experiences to enable the emergence of specialized expertise in drug prevention and treatment in West Africa.” Finally, outcome four talks about “Reformed national institutions, legal frameworks and improved sub-regional, regional and international cooperation.”⁸ The ECOWAS Drug Unit in Abuja was also tasked to cover outcome one of the projects, which is to monitor, coordinate and advocate in the sub-region.⁹

The Regional Action Plan was designed to benefit fifteen member states and Mauritania in the areas within the four Outcomes. The beneficiary countries were selected on basis of ranking of highest needs.¹⁰ For instance the West African Coast Initiative (WACI) which was established from the Regional Action Plan is being implemented in the four post - conflict countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d' Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. The initiative enabled cooperation and intelligence gathering under the Regional Action Plan.¹¹ The establishment of the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP), Global Container Control Programme (CCP), Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITF) have been established in Cape Verde, Togo, Mali and Senegal. The Joint Port Control Unit (JPCU) is also operational in Ghana, Benin, Cape Verde, Togo and Senegal. More so, the establishment of central authorities and prosecutors for the sub-region is operational in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Mauritania.¹²

3.3 Ghana and the Implementation of the Regional Action Plan

The number one priority of every government is its national security, which includes the protection of individuals, society and the state from internal and external aggression. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana Act 83 and 84 and the 1996 Security and Intelligence Service Act 526 placed the nation's security under the National Security Council (NSC). It is responsible for the coordination of all the activities of the security agencies in Ghana charged in protecting the state both internally and externally.¹³

The security institutions which safeguard Ghana National Security include: Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), Ghana Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Ghana Police Service (GPS) and Security and Intelligence agencies such as Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) and the Research Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI).

Ghana is a member of ECOWAS and a signatory to all the relevant international instruments including the United Nations Drug Conventions, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) participates in all major international, regional anti-drug and anti-crime initiatives.

Ghana's membership with ECOWAS, has benefited with administration of the Regional Action Plan through its national institutions tasked to combat illicit drug trafficking and Organized crime. The Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) established under Section 55 of PNDCL 236 is the main coordinating body for eradicating the high incidence of drug trafficking and abuse in the country.¹⁴

With regards to the United Nation's pilot in tackling the drug problem under the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline (CMO), NACOB's main functions includes: Enforcement and Control, aimed at reducing narcotic drugs in the country through arrest and seizure of narcotic substances and prosecution of drug trafficking. The Education and Prevention Department; aimed at educating the general public on the harmful effects of illicit drugs and the dangers inherent in drug abuse.

Furthermore, the Counselling, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Social Re-Integration, provide treatment and counselling therapies for drug abusers. Coordination with government and non-governmental organizations in the fight against illicit drug trafficking are some of the functions of NACOB as a central coordinating body in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana.¹⁵ NACOB also acquire domestic support from government institutions such as Ghana Police Service (GPS), Ghana Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS), Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) and the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI). Ghana has seen some success in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and this was made possible through policy interventions by government such as

the introduction of specialized Units at the country's entry points, improvement in personnel training and international collaborations and expansion of the Narcotics Control Board. The implementation of the Regional Action Plan in Ghana through its national institutions tasked to fight the drug menace has played a significant role in improving the stage at which Ghana finds itself.

3.4 Ghana's Achievement in the Implementation of ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.

Even though the transiting of drugs through West Africa have decreased from 47 tons in 2007 to 18 tons in 2011, there has been a significant change in volume.¹⁶ Fortunately, the region has recorded successes in areas of operations and demand reduction across the region.

3.4.1 Training and Operations

Illicit drug traffickers and Organized crime syndicates operate in a well-organized manner. These syndicates are mostly ahead of the security agencies even in the developed countries. Hence, there is the need for a well trained and equipped security establishment to counter this menace. The implementation of the Regional Action Plan has contributed to the training of security personnel. In a personal interview with an officer from NACOB in connection with the above he reveals that,

The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized crime and Drug Use has been beneficial in relation to drug trafficking in Ghana and the sub-region as a whole. The Action Plan which entails operations and training of personnel, has a regional training center in Ghana, which provide a wide range of training needs for security personnel in the fight against the drug menace. The establishment of the center was done by the United States West African Cooperation and Security Initiative (WACI). WACI is a joint programme in Liberia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d' Ivoire and Sierra Leone.

The officer further asserted that the programme encompasses a detailed set of activities which include capacity building both at the national and regional level in the area of law enforcement, forensics and criminal justice institutions. Programs such as these help in solving the problem of cooperation and information sharing within the sub-region.¹⁷ This assertion was confirmed by another officer from NACOB. He indicates that Ghana witnessed high level of cases of illicit drug trafficking between 2004 and 2008. It was at this period that ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and Drug use was introduced. Through these programmes, law enforcement operations have been organized among the most affected countries.¹⁸

For instance, in 2012 ECOWAS with support from International Police (INTERPOL) under the Regional Action Plan conducted a seven (7) day joint training and operation in the borders between Togo and Ghana. The operation was named "OPERATION ATAKORA." Officers from Ghana, Togo and Benin participated in the exercise. At the end of the operation, more than seventy (70) drug traffickers were arrested and a lot of kilograms of different kind of illicit drugs were seized. These operations organized under the Plan helps in the fight against the drug menace.

The officer further asserts that, most countries in the sub-region including Ghana, demonstrated their devotion to address the drug situation in the region by ratifying international resolutions and protocols in relation to anti-drug trafficking. He prompted that, they are still backward in winning the fight because other countries did not adhere to the right mechanisms described in these resolutions and protocols but the introduction of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized crime and Drug use has helped in streamlining these countries to use the right mechanisms in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.¹⁹

3.4.2 International collaboration and Information Sharing

Recently, the operations of illicit drug syndicates are becoming sophisticated and well organized. In order for anti-drug agencies to counter their operations, they need to collaborate both locally and internationally. West African countries are noted for different political institutions, anti-drug institutions and most of all the illicit drug trafficking trends. These differences reflect in the country's willingness to combat the drug menace, hence, creating the problem of lack of collaboration, language barrier, intelligence and information sharing of security personnel.

In relation to the above, an officer from Ghana Narcotics Control Board reveals that,

*Data collection was one of the challenges faced in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the sub-region. But with the introduction of the Regional Action Plan this problem has been limited. Agencies have been put in charge of the collection of data, analysis and dissemination of drug related information at both national and regional levels in the sub-region. This will help security personnel know some of the highly flexible mode of operations of Organized crime syndicates in the sub-region.*²⁰

The support from the Action Plan to the operations of West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU) in providing a valid and valuable data on drug use from health care institutions in member states.

This will help in creating a reliable database that will indicate the extent of drug addiction at both national and regional level. It can also help extract recommendation for the demand reduction programme.²¹

The implementation of various programmes under the Regional Action Plan in the sub-region such as the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP), Global Container Control Programme (CCP), Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITF) among others will help improve cooperation, information sharing and intelligence gathering.²²

3.4.3 Introduction of Specialist Units at Ghana's Points of Entry

One of the known illicit drugs cultivated in Ghana is Cannabis. Other narcotic substances such as Heroin and Cocaine were introduced into the country by couriers from other parts of the globe through the entry points, which is why it is necessary to strengthen security with adequate logistics and efficient personnel at these points. Ghana, from the implementation of the Regional Action Plan, has established two programmes which includes the AIRCOP and JPCU.²³ An officer from NACOB reveal that, the government of Ghana, together with international partners and agencies such as the United States Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DEA), the United Kingdom government and UNODC under the Regional Action Plan has introduced specialist units such as The Joint Port Container Project (JPCU) located in Tema and Takoradi harbors which is made up of security officers from NACOB, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Customs, Excise and Preventive Service and Bureau of National Investigation. Its main function is to inspect goods coming from source countries.²⁴ He also made mention of the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) at the Kotoka International Airport, which facilitates communication among various airports within the countries.²⁵

3.4.4 Financial and Logistics Support

Security agencies tasked to fight the drug menace in Ghana are besieged by litany of problems such as poor budgeting and logistics. Organizational and logistical assets of drug syndicates in the developing countries are more extensive and sophisticated than those available to anti-drug agencies.²⁶ The enforcement of the Regional Action Plan in Ghana has helped limit the problem of financial constraints and dearth of logistics.

In relation to the above, a personal interview with an officer from Narcotics Control Board reveals that,

Through the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, most security agencies in Ghana, tasked to fight illicit drug trafficking have received much assistance in a form of logistics. For instance, last year, NACOB received programmed computers which are used to train personnel on airport interdiction. In addition, NACOB has benefited from training and operations organized and financed by the Regional Action Plan which may have incurred a cost for Ghana government.²⁷

The officer further disclosed that the inability of security agencies to function effectively to bring the drug menace under control is as a result of insufficient funds to cater for the work force. Thus, the agencies rely on foreign countries for assistance and because of this, they formulate rules for us which seeks to service their interest. However, the introduction of the Regional Action Plan has helped curb our relies on these countries and most of the help that come from the sub-region through the Action Plan do not come with options.²⁸

3.4.5 Improvement in the Judicial System

According to Jeremiah John Rawlings, most West African countries are made up of weak states. A weak state is one where formal rules are applied in a relaxed manner and individual behavior and government laws are easily evaded, such behaviors become part of the social norms.²⁹

Due to the well - organized nature of illicit drug syndicates operation, any country that falls within this category of weak states become a conducive ground for all manner of Organized crime.

During an interactive session with a security official, he expressed disdain about the Judicial System of Ghana. According to him, defaulters of the law are not given the due punishment they deserve, rather, they are made to pay a settlement fee for their act.

In some cases, the defaulters are linked to a higher protocol of the country and this limits the power and respect for security agencies in the country. Due to this, officials are not obliged to execute their work to expectation.³⁰ Another officer from NACOB reveals that the present law (PNDC Law 236) limits NACOB in its operations. He explains that the law do not allow NACOB to prosecute illicit drug offenders, which means that when arrest is made by NACOB officials, they need to hand over the suspect to officers from Ghana Police Service to continue with investigation and prosecution.³¹ He further commented that these problems will be resolved when the new bill prepared by the organization is passed by Ghana's parliament. There are laws against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana but if they are not effectively operational and well structured, the difficulties in the fight against this menace will continue to exist. For this reason, the Regional Action Plan has provided solutions to address the problem of prosecution in relation to illicit drug trafficking. The establishment of a network of central authorities and prosecutors for West African countries under the Plan has helped train prosecutors for member countries.

3.5 Challenges in the Implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in Ghana.

The declaration of distraction by Organized crime syndicates including illicit drug traffickers in Ghana and West Africa as a whole is threatening all efforts to stabilize and develop the political and social institutions in the region.

In order to counter this aggression, Ghana needs to coordinate with other countries in the sub-region. However, these efforts suffer from lack of coordination, language barriers, absence of contact point, technical communication means and rivalries between countries. Hence, there is a need for the ECOWAS Commission to introduce the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan as a model for member states to follow in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

3.5.1 Lack of Sensitization

Information on the Regional Action Plan among high-level government officials and security personnel tasked to fight the drug menace is on the low and this has precipitated in the delay of implementation of the Action Plan in Ghana. In relation to this, an interview with an officer from Ghana Police Service reveals that,

The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and Drug Use continue to be relevant though more needed to be done. He explained that a quantitative survey must be carried out among security personnel in Ghana whether they have knowledge of the Plan or not. The result will be negative as most people including high level government officials have no idea what the whole project is about. So it is important to sensitize the public especially the high level government officials on the aims and objectives of the project to get their support on its implementation and also the security personnel responsible for the fight against illicit drug trafficking and Organized crime to know that the regional body is putting up its effort in the fight against this menace.³²

In a personal interview with an officer from NACOB in connection with the above, unveils that, operations and training programmes have been organized under the Regional Action Plan but the objectives of the Plan are mostly not communicated to participating members. Hence the need for sensitization on the objectives of the Regional Action Plan is paramount.³³

3.5.2 Sustainability

The Regional Action Plan does not have a strategy for sustenance. Most of its budget is funded by the European Union (EU).³⁴ There are no right strategies for fund-raising to sustain the projects at the long-term if European Union (EU) terminates its funding for the Plan. Also, projects under the Plan that have limited or no funding from donor's face challenges in their implementation.³⁵ An officer from Ghana Police Service reveals,

*The effects of the ECOWAS Action Plan against illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and drug use has been a positive one. The training and operations organized under the project was worthwhile though they are not enough. Only two or three operations are organized yearly under the project. Security officers from African countries only get to collaborate through these programmes. Such excesses are expensive for our member countries to organize so they mostly depend on the international organizations to carry out this exercise.*³⁶

The above interview portrays some challenges faced with the implementation of the Regional Action Plan. The need to invest more resources in training programmes, logistics and personnel.

3.5.3 Project Design

The Regional Action Plan was designed to provide support to ECOWAS member states and Mauritania,³⁷ making the project design over ambitious as all member states and Mauritania must benefit in spite of the limited budget and duration. An interview with an officer from Ghana Police Service reveals that,

*The scope of the Plan was over ambitious as this project must cover more than fifteen countries with limited funds which was a consequence of the Plan not adequately defining the rational for the selection of countries for some of the programmes. These may lead to member countries receiving projects that may not be beneficial, whereas others may be giving wrong projects.*³⁸

Though the overall objective of the Regional Action Plan is to reduce drug abuse, Organized crime and illicit drug trafficking in West Africa,³⁹ the above challenge was also encountered during the implementation of the Plan. .

3.6 Measures to improve ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.

The adaptation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan was for member states in the sub-region to have a common strategic framework as guidance in contending with illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and drug abuse in the region.⁴⁰ Interactive session with security personnel suggested measures that can be adopted to amend the Plan. He inferred that the management team need to readdress and design a scope for the project. This will help in the selection process of countries for programme establishment as this was not defined in the design.⁴¹ In addition, a comprehensive sustainable strategy should also be outlined to strengthen the activities under the Action Plan. These should include plans for fund raising to aid these programmes especially one that lacks funding from donors.⁴² When right sustainable strategies are formulated, it will improve the rate at which programmes are organized under the Action Plan. In a personal interview with an officer from NACOB in connection with the above he reveals,

*The four main outcomes of the Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse can be adequately achieved when project management team increases its sensitization agenda. There should be a sustainable high-level engagement and advocacy at the international, regional and national levels on the main outcomes of the Regional Action Plan. This is important because when the aims and objectives of the Plan is made known, it is received by high level government official. This makes its implementation easy as institution will get the right support of the government.*⁴³

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the dangers of illicit drug trafficking to human security as well as the challenges faced by law enforcement institutions tasked to combat the drug menace. Some of these challenges include insufficient government commitment, financial constraints/dearth of logistics, personnel constraints, corruption, lack of collaboration among security institutions and ineffectiveness of the law. Government has put in much effort particularly the expansion of Ghana Narcotics Control Board which is the leading agency in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana. There is development in the area of demand reduction, the introduction of specialist units, training of personnel and international collaboration. This chapter also examined some achievements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan designed to spearhead the fight against illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and Drug abuse.

Finally, the chapter suggested measures needed to improve on the operations of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against illicit drug trafficking, Organized crime and Drug abuse.

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¹⁶ *ECOWAS Commission, (2018) ECOWAS Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organize Crime and Drug use. See: www.ecowas.int*

¹⁷ Put interviewee infor

¹⁸ Interreference here

¹⁹ *Interview with Ms. Mavis, Officer from Ghana Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on 20 May, 2019 at 1:00pm*

²⁰ *Interview with Ms. Mavis, Officer from Ghana Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on 20 May, 2019 at 1:00pm*

²¹ *Interview with Ms. Mavis, Officer from Ghana Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on 20 May, 2019 at 1:00pm*

²² *Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30*

²³ UNODC, (2013). *Advocacy work by UNODC in support of Africa development*

²⁴ *Interview with Mr. John from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 5, 2019*

²⁵ *Interview with Mr. John from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 5, 2019*

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- ²⁶ Rawlings, A. (2014). *The risk factors of West Africa illicit drug trade. International journal of scientific and research publication. Vol.2*
- ²⁷ Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30
- ²⁸ Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30
- ²⁹ Rawlings, A. (2014). *The risk factors of West Africa illicit drug trade. International journal of scientific and research publication. Vol.2*
- ³⁰ Interview with Mr. Philip from Ghana Police Service on May 28,2019 at 1:30 pm
- ³¹ Interview with Mr. John from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 5, 2019 at 12:30 pm
- ³² Interview with Mr. John from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 5, 2019 at 12:30 pm
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- ³⁸ Interview with Mr. Philip from Ghana Police Service on May 28,2019 at 1:30 pm
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- ⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30
- ⁴² Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30
- ⁴³ Interview with Mr. Kofi from Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) on June 20, 2019 at 12:30

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study's key findings in relation to the objectives and provides a conclusion based on the discovery of the study.

4.2 Summary of Key Findings

This study examined ECOWAS' Regional Action Plan 2010-2018 and the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana. It specifically examined the various challenges that confront law enforcement agencies in combating illicit drug trafficking in Ghana and some of the policy interventions implemented by the government to deal with drug trafficking in Ghana. It measures some of the achievements of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana, strategies which need to be put in place to improve the ECOWAS Action Plan and finally offer suggestions for improving ECOWAS' counter drug trafficking in West Africa. Using the case of security personnel from Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), the Ghana Police Service (GPS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI), the qualitative research approach was used to conduct personnel interviews with Drug Enforcement Officers. The key findings of this study are further discussed.

The study shows that, illicit drug trafficking has become a global challenge, which needs a collective action and effort to combat it. For instance, countries such as Bolivia, Columbia and Peru in South America are well noted for the cultivation of the Coca plant used for the production of Cocaine. Also, the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent, which include countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and other countries from South East Asia are well known for the production of Heroin.

Furthermore, the study delves into ECOWAS policy of free movement of goods and persons which has resulted in the continuous demand for hard drugs around the world. This occurred as a result of open and direct high sea routes to drug sourced countries which has made West Africa an ideal geographical choice for drug market.

The study further identifies that, West Africa currently plays three major roles in the drug business. These include:

- The production of Cannabis and Methamphetamine.
- Transit and repackaging of hard drugs (Heroin and Cocaine).
- Consumption of hard drugs and Cannabis.

The study shows that, the West African regional body (ECOWAS) is concerned about the current situation of illicit drugs and Organized crime in the sub-region. Hence, the introduction of the West African Joint Operation initiative (WAJO), which was the regional body's early initiative to counter illicit drug trade and Organized crime.

The continuous growth of Organized crime and illicit drug trade in the sub-region necessitated the introduction of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Use on October 2008 in Cape Verde.

In addition, the research pointed out some of Ghana's National security dimensions which includes Ghana Police Service, Customs, Excise and Preventive Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Armed Forces and Security and Intelligence agencies such as the Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI). Most of the security agencies are placed under the National Security Council (NSC) and it is the 1992 constitution of Ghana Articles 83, 84 and the Security and Intelligence Service 1996 Act 526 that empowers the NSC.

In addition to the above, the research reveals that, NACOB is the central coordinating body for the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the country and was established by the

PNDCL 236 Section 55 with the following functions: Enforcement and Control of illicit drug trafficking, Education and Prevention, Counselling, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Social Re-Integration and Precursor and Forensic Examination Unit.

The study also emphasized that the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan was established to the fact that the West African sub-region was becoming a breeding ground for drug traffickers to establish cells. Thus, the main objective of the Regional Action Plan is to gradually establish a sustainable sub-regional capacity to be able to monitor, coordinate and harmonize drug policies in West Africa. Under the operationalization of the Regional Action Plan, the UNODC regional office for West and Central Africa (Dakar-Senegal) and the office of ECOWAS Drug Unit in Nigeria are responsible for the implementation of the Plan. Two offices in Dakar and Abuja were responsible for achieving the four main outcomes of the Regional Action Plan. It also elaborated on the geographical scope of the Regional Action Plan which include the fifteen ECOWAS member states and Mauritania. Some of the programmes introduced by the Regional Action Plan which benefited member states include: West African Coast Initiative (WACI), Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP), Global Container Control Programme (CCP), Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITF) and Joint Port Control Unit (JPCU)

The study also highlighted on Specialist Units under the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan such as the Joint Port Container Project (JPCU) at Tema and Takoradi harbors and the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) at the Kotoka International Airport. This has been one of the achievements of the Regional Action Plan in Ghana.

Also, it unveils the fact that, collaboration among member states through programmes organized under the Regional Action Plan has led to the improvement in information sharing among member states. More so, the introduction of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized crime and Drug Use in the sub-region has

been beneficial in terms of organizing operations and training exercises for security personnel in the West African sub-region which has led to positive outcomes such as increase in the number of seizures and arrest throughout the sub-region.

The research further touched on the creation of a central data collection point to collect data related on the drug menace in the sub-region through the Action Plan as one of its greatest achievements as this was one of the obstacles which hinders growth and development in West Africa.

In addition to the above, the research also portrayed the commitment shown by member states in the fight against illicit drug trafficking by ratifying most international resolution and protocol in relation to anti-drug trafficking. It emphasized that though the introduction of the Regional Action Plan has recorded positive stories, areas such as sensitization of the project need to be improved. High level government officials in their various countries need to be educated on the aims and objectives of the project in order to render their support to achieve these goals.

Nevertheless, despite these goals, the challenges involved in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan, will lack sustainable strategy if the EU terminates its support for the project. Another challenge is the insufficient training programmes organized for security agencies and the need for other international agencies to collaborate and share information. The study highlighted on the project design being a useful tool for all fifteen member states and Mauritania, though it was over ambitious with its limited budget, and also gave suggestions to some challenges in the implementation of the Action Plan.

4.3 Conclusion

Evidence obtained from the findings of the study made the researcher deduce the following conclusions; Even though strict measures have been adapted by member states in conjunction with other international bodies in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and Organized crime, it still persists as a menace in the sub-region as it is perceived as a drug transit, repackaging and user region.

One also concludes that the West African sub-region has become an ideal geographical location for illicit drugs and Organized crime syndicates due to lack of coordination, language barrier, absence of contact point, technical communication means and rivalries between countries. It also explains the fact that security organizations tasked to fight against the menace face challenges such as lack of political will from government, financial and personnel constraints, pervasive corruption, lack of collaboration among security institutions and lastly ineffectiveness of laws in the country to counter the drug menace.

The findings of the study further depict that, policy interventions introduced by the government of Ghana such as the expansion of NACOB which is the leading organization in the fight against illicit drug trafficking, the introduction of the policy of demand reduction, establishment of specialist units stationed at Ghana's entry points and lastly the collaboration with international organizations in training its law enforcement personnel is yielding positive results in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in Ghana.

Furthermore, the research concluded that the introduction of ECOWAS Regional Action Plan Against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and drug use has recorded some achievements such as the introduction of centralized data collection point for the collection of data in relation to illicit drug trafficking. The establishment of a network of central authorities and prosecutors for West African countries under the Plan has helped train prosecutors for member countries which in the long run will improve the judicial system in

member states. More so, Organizations of training programs and operations under the Action Plan among member states have recorded successes in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and aided in information sharing among security institution within the sub-region. In addition, the provision of logistical support for security institutions in the sub-region under the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan has also been recorded as an achievement. This enabled security institutions tasked to fight illicit drug trafficking become equipped for the task. Finally, it is deduced that the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Use can achieve its aims and objectives if sensitization excises and the intensification of training of security personnel and top government officials are organized within the sub-region. This will go long way to ensure security and protection within the sub-region.

4.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and suggestions made by respondents during interviews, the following recommendations are made:

4.4.1 Recommendation to the Government of Ghana.

More training excises should be organized for security personnel tasked to fight the drug menace to equip them for the task ahead. More so, the conditions of service of law enforcement agencies tasked to curb drug trafficking should be improved, giving the fact that drug syndicates controls billions of dollar businesses and are capable of luring these personnel. Furthermore, laws formulated to fight illicit drug trafficking needs to be strengthened to include all levels of government officials. The Judiciary services which most drug syndicates tend to exploit should also be strengthened by introducing special independent court or prosecutor to investigate and prosecute drug syndicates and high-level government officials in the country who engage in drug trafficking. Additionally, NACOB

as the lead agency of drug law enforcement should collaborate with international agencies tasked to fight the drug menace as this will benefit these agencies in the country through training and sharing of information in relation with illicit drug trafficking.

4.4.2 Recommendations to West African Regional Body (ECOWAS)

First and foremost, the formulation of legal framework to fight illicit drug trafficking without sensitizing government officials and agencies to enforce these laws leads to an ineffective implementation. Thus, there is the need to sensitize more security agencies on the aims and objectives of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan.

Secondly, the Regional body should encourage academic research on future legal frameworks by ECOWAS which will unravel the dynamics and impact of illicit drug trafficking in the sub-region by offering scholarship and financial grants for organizations and institutions.

Thirdly, the level of illicit drug trafficking in the sub-region in recent times need to be confronted in a proactive manner such as organizing training excises and cross border operations for security personnel in the sub-region. Again, data collection centers should be encouraged in member states to channel their data with the Action Plan to facilitate information sharing. Furthermore, it is crucial to enforce strict laws in countering illicit drug trafficking in the sub-region. This can be made possible through the provision of adequate logistics, adequate personnel especially in the area of demand reduction which include educating the public on the drug menace and also Counselling, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Social Re-Integration of substance users should be encouraged and implemented by the regional body.

Henceforth, ECOWAS needs to formulate legal-frameworks toward poverty alleviation in the sub-region to enable member states provide job opportunities for the youth.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY
(LECIAD)**

I am a student from Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana, Legon. I am conducting a study on **ECOWAS Regional Action Plan 2010-2018 and the Fight against Illicit Drug Trafficking: The Case of Ghana**. As part of my research towards the award of Master of Arts degree, I humbly request you to grant me an interview lasting for an hour. Your participation is very crucial for the success of this project. If at any point you do not understand any of the questions, kindly alert me for clarification. Be assured that this interview is solely for academic purposes and will be treated confidentially. No information provided will be passed on to a third party.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION A

**KNOWLEDGE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION
PLAN 2010-2018 AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING
IN GHANA.**

1. What do you understand by Drug Trafficking?
2. What is the state of Drug Trafficking in Ghana?
3. Why do you think people engage in Drug Trafficking?
4. Do you have any knowledge of the ECOWAS Action Plan?
5. Do you think Foreign Nationals from Africa and other parts of the world are likely to engage in Drug Trafficking in the country?

SECTION B

POLICY INTERVENTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2010-2018.

1. What is the impact of Drug Trafficking in Ghana?
2. Does Ghana has the right strategies to combat drug trafficking? Probe:
3. What are some of the strategies introduced by the government?
4. What are the challenges faced in Ghana in the fight against illicit Drug Trafficking?
5. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan?
6. How are these challenges supposed to be addressed?
7. Any recommendations?