



PRESS RELEASE

WACI Member States mobilize to better address security challenges

Grand Bassam, 05 December 2017 - The Fourth Meeting of the High Political Committee (POLCOM) of the West African Coast Initiative (WACI) was held on 05 December 2017 in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire. It was chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-general and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

In his speech Mr. Ibn Chambas underlined "the strategic position of the West Africa Coast Initiative as a tool in support of the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan." "Beyond the political commitment, and in order to ensure sustainability, it is imperative for the WACI programmatic structures and the ECOWAS Commission to consolidate their operational links," he said.

WACI Member States, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, are committed to work together to better address the growing security threats in West Africa. The meeting considered the possibility of opening the WACI to other countries in the region to foster a regional response to cross-border organized crime. It noted the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU) to promote WACI ownership at the regional level. It recommended to align the WACI objectives with the ECOWAS 2016-2020 Action Plan for harmonized responses at national, regional and international levels.

WACI POLCOM participants also emphasized the important role played by INTERPOL and noted the need for this organization to strengthen its technical support to States and to organize joint regional operations. They noted the lack of resources that resulted to a limited structure of management programs and reduced support to transnational crime units (TCUs) especially in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Guinea. They encouraged countries to invest in the mobilization of funds through national funding mechanisms for a sustainable operationalization of TCUs.

The meeting recommended a continued commitment of regional actors for the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, and overall, the African Union Action Plan on Drug Control and crime prevention, in cooperation with other partners including the European Union.

This WACI POLCOM meeting was attended by high-level representatives of WACI Member States and WACI partners -ECOWAS, INTERPOL, UNODC, African Union, Mano River Union and Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)-.