



## High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs: State of Implementation of Various Commitments, Challenges and the Way Forward"

22 September 2008

### Summary Report Side Events

**Title:** "CRIME AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: BEST PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES"

**Date and Venue:** 22 September 2008, 8:00-9:45am, IPI, Trygve Lie Center for Peace, Security & Development, 777 United Nations Plaza, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor (corner of 44<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue)

**Organizers:** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Peace Institute (IPI)

**Chair (s):** Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Under-Secretary General, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, President, International Peace Institute

#### 1. Introduction (Background and Context)

Local and transnational crime in Africa represent both the causes and the consequences of violence, corruption and poor governance. High levels of income inequality, a high share of youth in population, high rates of urbanization, low levels of criminal justice resources, firearms proliferation, wars and civil conflicts as well as weak controls over criminal activities leave Africa vulnerable to organized crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, money laundering and corruption. Crime, in a broad sense, inhibits development in Africa by destroying human and social capital, drives away business and investments, and undermines the ability of the State to promote development.

As United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan asserted in his March 2005 report, In larger freedom: "...we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed." Speakers on the panel highlighted the fact that in a number of African countries, drugs, crime and corruption are undermining development efforts, and presented some solutions to these challenges.

#### 2. Organization (Chair, Paneists, Presenters and Participants)

Co-Chairs: Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Under-Secretary General, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, President, International Peace Institute

Speaker 1: Ambassador Amina Ali, Permanent Representative of the African Union Mission to the United States of America, Washington D.C.

Speaker 2: Ambassador Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa

Discussant: Mr. Patrick Hayford, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations

### **3. Summary Discussions**

#### Removing crime as an impediment to security and development in Africa

In his opening remarks Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, highlighted main findings of a recent UNODC report entitled “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau)” (December 2007) which indicates that West Africa is under attack by narco-traffickers from Andean countries exploring new transit routes to Europe. The street value of this cocaine – worth almost \$2 billion in Europe – exceeds the national incomes of many of these poor countries, like Guinea Bissau. As a result, these states – already at the bottom of the human development index – are becoming even less developed and unstable.

This pattern is observed elsewhere. In countries ravaged by crime and corruption, and where governments can not live up their side of the social contract (where they can not deliver their core functions), the poor suffer the most, and the services provided to them get delayed, or never arrive. This most vulnerable group on the planet – what Paul Collier calls the “bottom billion” – has no access to justice, health and education and faces rising food prices. They are also most often the victims of crime.

Mr. Costa then elaborated on the causes of vulnerability of the African continent. UNODC studies have identified a number of social factors as causes of this vulnerability: income inequality; youth unemployment; rapid urbanization; corruption; lack of access to justice; proliferation of firearms. Unfortunately, these factors – not unique to Africa – are prevalent in many parts of the continent. Combined with political instability and conflict, vulnerability to crime increases. As a result, for instance, West Africa is under attack from cocaine traffickers; natural resources like diamonds and timber are exploited by criminal groups in the heart of Africa; failing neighbourhoods of some major African cities are overrun by criminal gangs; and terrorists and criminal groups link up in parts of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

#### African Union’s response to the problem

Ambassador Amina Ali also echoed the concern that in a number of African countries, drugs, crime and corruption are undermining development efforts. Crime, in a broad sense, inhibits development in Africa by destroying human and social capital, drives away business and investments, and undermines the ability of the State to promote development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing the negative influences caused by these criminal activities.

The need for a comprehensive approach to the problems of drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism as impediments to development in Africa is fully recognized by the African Union in the AU’s 2007-2012 Plan of Action on drug control and crime prevention. The Plan of Action was endorsed by the African Union Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in Dec 2007 in Addis Ababa, and one month later was adopted by the AU Heads of State Summit.

The approach of the plan is to integrate within national legal and institutional frameworks, drug control issues together with crime prevention policies. In addition to the emphasis put on a political commitment, the Plan of Action is intended to be an operationally-oriented strategic reference or framework for coordination and harmonization of related policies and programmes on the Continent.

The primary goal of this Plan of Action is to reverse the current trends of drug abuse and trafficking, organized crime, corruption, terrorism and related challenges to socio-economic development and human security and to achieve tangible improvement in the social and personal well-being of the people of Africa and their communities. The seven key priority areas of this Plan of Action are as follows:

- 1) Effective continental, regional and national policy formulation and coordination in the domains of drug control and crime prevention;
- 2) Enhancing collaboration, shared responsibility and harmonized action to address drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, terrorism, small arms related violence and crimes within the community;
- 3) Building institutional capacity for the law enforcement, criminal justice and forensic service systems on drug control and crime prevention;
- 4) Mainstreaming drug and crime concerns into development strategies;
- 5) Regional and National capacity building and training to enhance prevention and care of substance abuse and related HIV and AIDS;
- 6) Enhancing understanding of the dynamics of drugs and crime for policy -making purposes;
- 7) Broad based responsibility for the promotion of sport and culture in the service of social development to combat drugs and crime.

African nations, development professionals, aid agencies, and business need to engage in an ongoing dialogue around the ways crime may be impacting progress in Africa. In the end, creating crime awareness in development planning is primarily about shifting mindsets. It is a matter of breaking through the artificial barriers that conceptually separate economic development from other aspects of life. By recognising that freedom from crime is important, and that crime is a contributing factor to poverty, a whole cluster of mutually reinforcing “unfreedoms” can be addressed at once.

### Focus on West Africa

Ambassador Said Djinnit focused his presentation on drug and crime issues in the West African region and elaborated on the devastating effects of these problems in the poorest region of the poorest continent. Through illustrative examples (e.g., recent events in Guinea Bissau) he demonstrated links between social and economic crisis, security and drug problems and drug and corruption in that region. He listed drug trafficking, human trafficking, corruption illegal migrants, internet fraud and contraband and counterfeit goods as major crime challenges in the region. But there have been positive developments in the region and coordinated action is being taken to curb cross-border organized crime in West Africa.

### African solutions and international assistance

Mr. Patrick Hayford joined other speakers in deploring the tragic impact of crime and drug trafficking in Africa. After referring to the low contribution of Africa to international trade, Mr. Hayford noted that unfortunately globalization has succeeded in area of crime in Africa. He highlighted the importance of NEPAD and AU Plan of Action and commitments at highest levels in Africa to accept responsibility and address the current situation, and referred to the role of

international community (including through United Nations system and UNODC as well as Interpol) in partnering with Africa to tackle problems of drugs and crime.

The successful and sustained implementation and monitoring of this Plan of Action requires broad partnerships at Member State, Sub-Regional, Regional, Continental, and International level. In particular, each Member State is encouraged to forge and sustain partnerships with the Media, and Civil Society Organizations such as non-Governmental Organizations, Faith-based Organizations and Community Based Organizations, and the private sector. Recent international events have demonstrated that no part of the world is safe if any part of the world is neglected. Cooperation in developing Africa is thus in our collective self-interest. Ultimately, the security and prosperity of the world is contingent on Africa becoming a safer place.

Mr. Hayford finished his comments on a positive note by referring to examples of successful African role models (e.g. Nelson Mandela and Wangari Muta Maathai) in addressing African challenges.

During questions and answers period participants elaborated on different types of crime and drug issues in the region as well as role of different international and regional bodies, including regional initiatives by Interpol.

#### **4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Follow-up Actions**

Speakers drew on their experiences at regional (African Union) and sub-regional (focusing on Western Africa) levels to present examples of the negative impact of crime on development and initiatives to tackle the problem.

The panel was unanimous that sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing the negative influences caused by these criminal activities. In order to promote sustainable development and human security, and achieve tangible improvements, it is essential to mainstream crime prevention and drug control, and more broadly, rule of law assistance, into African development strategies. It is therefore important to focus, not just on the delivery of aid designed to provide infrastructure to Africa, i.e., hospitals, schools, factories, roads dams, and the like, but also on support for undertakings that aim to eliminate crime and corruption across the continent.

There are a number of possible low-cost ways that crime can be addressed as part of the development process. Making crime prevention part of development planning is a matter of sensitization to issues that might be otherwise overlooked. On a practical level, this can manifest itself in several ways:

- By generating knowledge as a first step – Only when crime data are seen as development indicators will the consolidation of knowledge in this area become a priority; tailoring interventions to African conditions requires a detailed understanding of the nature of crime on the continent.
- By helping governments deliver security, efficiency and integrity – African countries have demonstrated the will to adhere to international standards in the fight against drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption, but need further international assistance in translating policy into effective interventions.
- By breaking the crime/conflict continuum – If criminal and political violence lie along a continuum, crime and conflict prevention should be integrated; the establishment of the rule of law and efforts to promote post-conflict recovery should be complimentary to one another.

- By including crime prevention in grassroots interventions – Nearly every form of development work is impacted by crime and can be adapted to address it.
- By making corporate business part of the solution – While international business has exacerbated the plight of the African people, the potential for partnership in this area is immense.

Participants expressed hope that discussions in the HLM on Africa's Development Needs reinvigorate and strengthen the global partnership for Africa, mobilizing the human, financial and technological resources required to address the vicious circle of crime and under-development in the continent. The rule of law has to be regarded not only as an end in itself, but as a means for promoting security and unleashing development.

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**Annexes: Concept Note, Opening Statement by Mr. Costa**