



9th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ARINWA

December 05-09, 2022, Pullman Hotel, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

FINAL REPORT

Abidjan, December 9th 2022

I. INTRODUCTION



1. The 9th Annual General Meeting of the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARINWA) was held from December 05 to 09, 2022, at the Pullman Hotel in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.
2. This meeting was organized by the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit-GIZ), through its Global Program to Fight Illicit Financial Flows.
3. The following Member States were represented:
 - the Republic of Benin ;
 - Burkina Faso;
 - Cabo-Verde ;
 - the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the Republic of the Gambia;
 - the Republic of Ghana;
 - the Republic of Guinea
 - the Republic of Guinea-Bissau;
 - the Republic of Liberia;
 - the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
 - the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe
 - the Republic of Senegal;
 - the Republic of Sierra Leone;
 - the Republic of Togo.
4. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following institutions and organizations:
 - the African Union Commission;
 - the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) of the Secretariat of the African Union High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows ;
 - the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA)
 - the Inter-Agency Asset Recovery Network for East Africa (ARINEA);
 - the Asset Recovery Interagency Network for Southern Africa (ARINSA);
 - the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police - France;
 - the Committee for the Safeguarding of Integrity (CSI) - Madagascar;
 - the Anti-corruption Pole (PAC) - Madagascar;
 - the Agency for the Recovery of Illicit Assets (ARAI) - Madagascar;



- the National Office for the Recovery of Criminal Assets (ONRAC) - Senegal;
 - the Agency for Management and Recovery of Criminal Assets (AGRAC) - Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the National Financial Information Processing Unit (CENTIF) - Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the Central office of Customs (DGD) - Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the Central office of Economic and Financial Police (DPEC) - Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the Department of Narcotics and Drugs Police (DPSD) - Côte d'Ivoire;
 - the Department of Criminal Police (DPC) - Côte d'Ivoire.
5. The Republic of Mali and the Republic of Niger were absent.

II. AGENDA

6. The agenda for the Annual General Meeting is attached to this report.

III. THE OPENING CEREMONY

7. It was marked by the welcome address of the President of the Organizing Committee, Mrs. Kadiatou LY SANGARE, Judicial Agent of the Treasury of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Permanent Secretary of ARINWA, the speech of Mrs. Kylly FERNANDES, President of ARINWA, the talk by Mr. Cheikh TOURE, Head of the UNODC Office in Côte d'Ivoire, and the opening speech of the Chief of staff, representing the Minister of Economy and Finance.
8. On behalf of the Network, Mrs. SANGARE welcomed the participants and thanked the authorities of her country for having accepted to host the 9th Annual General Meeting of ARINWA. She was particularly pleased with the presence of the Malagasy delegation and the representatives of ARINEA and ARINSA. Finally, she expressed the wish that these meetings serve to promote and enhance the fight for the Network in Côte d'Ivoire and on the African continent.
9. The President of ARINWA expressed her pleasure to be in Côte d'Ivoire and thanked all the officials present as well as the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Government. Considering the increasing rate of criminal phenomena, she emphasized that asset recovery measures are the solution and, in this respect, networks play a crucial role. However, our sub-region is insufficiently equipped and is not able to recover the proceeds of crime. It is important to send the message that crime does not pay. In this regard, Focal Points, who are at the forefront of this cooperation, should not only be united because, according to Mrs. FERNANDES, **"none of us is as good as all of us together"**, but also be firmly committed to making information available in a timely manner. The President of ARINWA, at the end of her speech,



expressed her satisfaction with the Organizing Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Kadiatou LY SANGARE.

10. The Head of the UNODC Office in Côte d'Ivoire, who also spoke on behalf of GIZ, expressed his gratitude to the Ivorian authorities for having agreed to host this meeting. Noting the unprecedented development of cross-border organized crime, he called for the cooperation that is necessary to control it. Hence the interest in the existence of cooperation networks, such as ARINWA, and the Focal Points that run them. He made a point of acknowledging the efforts of ARINWA, whose advocacy actions have led to the establishment of asset recovery bodies in some countries, and urged prosecuting authorities to make use of them. Finally, he reaffirmed the commitment of his organization to continue assisting ARINWA.
11. The Chief of staff, representing the Minister of Economy and Finance wished, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Alassane OUATTARA, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, a warm welcome to Côte d'Ivoire, to all the delegations coming from various countries of Africa and Europe. At the beginning of her speech, she pointed out that our countries in the West African sub-region are victims of a growing transnational and organized crime with multiple manifestations. However, the expected social reaction against the perpetrators of these crimes is hampered by administrative and procedural constraints when perpetrators operate in several geographical areas. This requires collaboration among prosecuting authorities and gives ARINWA its full justification. She welcomed the results of the Network but found them insufficient because she believes it is important to increase the number of asset recovery bodies in the region, to make them truly operational, and to make them available to the prosecution authorities who should use them in their proceedings. Considering these several challenges, she assured ARINWA of the support of the Ivorian government. Finally, she appreciated the fruitful relations between Côte d'Ivoire and ARINWA's technical and financial partners, namely the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), which are worth the success of such an organization and which should be intensified. On this hopeful note, she declared open the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Inter-Agency Asset Recovery Network for West Africa.

IV. WORK SESSIONS

12. Work sessions consisted in setting up the presiding committee followed by the examination of the items on the agenda.

A. Setting up of the Presiding Committee

13. A presiding committee was set up. It was chaired by Mr. METONOU Elonm Mario Pierre Cécil, Special Prosecutor at the Court of Repression of Economic Offences and Terrorism, Focal Point of Benin, assisted, as



Rapporteurs, by Mr. MAWUNOU Kokouvi Placide-Clément, Deputy Prosecutor General at the Court of Appeal, Lomé, Focal Point of Togo, and Mr. JARJUE Lamine, Advocate General, Focal Point of The Gambia.

B. Adoption of the Draft Agenda

14. The draft agenda, as presented, was adopted without reservation.

C. Presentation and Adoption of the 2021 Activity Report

15. The activity report for the year 2021, presented by Mrs. Kadiatou LY SANGARE, Permanent Secretary of ARINWA, was structured around two (02) major axes, namely: the activities resulting from the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026 and the other activities of ARINWA.

a) Activities resulting from the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026

16. These activities were presented under the four (4) strategic objectives of the Action Plan.

17. **Under Strategic Objective 1: « Developing the ARINWA network as a center of excellence »**, the following three (03) activities were carried out:

18. **1. review of the number of focal points per member country.** This review revealed that two (02) countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia had three (03) Focal Points each; six (06) countries, Benin, Cabo Verde, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone had two (02) Focal Points and nine (09) other countries, namely Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome, and Principe, had three (03) Focal Points.

Focal Points and the nine (09) other States which are Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome Principe, and Togo, had only one (01). That is to say, a total of 27 Focal Points for all the 16 countries whereas theoretically, the Regulation allows for fifty (50), at the rate of 03 Focal Points per Member State and 02 for the observer member which is Mauritania. This leaves a deficit of 23 Focal Points.

19. **2. the referral of the various member countries to appoint Focal Points.** The deficit of 23 Focal Points concerned fifteen (15) Member States. All of them were referred to, and then recalled many times, for the appointment of other Focal Points.

20. **3. updating the list of Focal Points.** Following the referral and the responses from the Member States, the Network's Focal Points have reached thirty-nine (39).



21. The Permanent Secretary reported that some activities under strategic objective 1 have not been completed, namely, a) Initiating official contact with the authorities of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); exploring the issue of institutional anchoring, b) Document and submit to the plenary the necessary issue of anchoring the network to ECOWAS, c) Initiating advocacy after the formalization or institutional anchoring of the network to benefit from the donations of Member States, d) Initiating advocacy at the level of the various national and regional authorities so that a percentage of the confiscated assets is allocated to the functioning of the network and the execution of the tasks of the Focal Points, e) Make contact with new partners willing to support the activities of the network and f) Obtain an observer status with GIABA.
22. The justification for this lack of results was that activities a) b) c) and d) were complementary to each other and the non-implementation of the first one compromised the implementation of the others. Indeed, the visit to ECOWAS determined the documentation to be presented to the plenary as well as the advocacy missions to national and regional authorities to solicit funds; the network does not have a legal personality and cannot acquire or own property. It is true that a letter was sent to the President of the ECOWAS Commission, but his replacement at the top management of the institution did not allow him to get to know the content. As for activity e) relating to the search for new partners, a request for an audience with the President of the World Bank representation in Côte d'Ivoire was made after a contact visit by the Permanent Secretariat. But this one remained without follow-up, in spite of multiple reminders. The initiative is therefore on course. Regarding activity f), concerning the obtaining of the observer status of ARINWA with GIABA, although it did not give rise to any formality, it is still being carried out, given that, following a visit by the President of the Network, the Director General of GIABA undertook to have ARINWA participate in the activities of his Group, in particular the meetings of the Technical Commission. In addition, for the past six (06) years, the organization has participated in ARINWA's annual general meetings, sending a representative mandated by the Director General.
23. Regarding the strategy to be adopted to obtain the recognition of ARINWA by the Economic Community of West African States, the General Meeting set up a technical committee which will carry out a consultation mission at the level of the Commission of the said Community. This technical committee is composed of the Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of ARINWA, Mr. Mor N'DIAYE, Director General of the ONRAC of Senegal, Mr. Soumaïla NYAMBA, Judicial Agent of the State of Burkina Faso, Mr. Iréné ACLOMBESSI, Judicial Agent of the State of Benin, the GIZ and the UNODC.
24. **Under strategic objective 2: «strengthening cooperation and ensuring the informal information sharing on asset recovery among ARINWA members»**, the following six (06) activities were carried out: