

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. Cheickh 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).



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Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa
Réseau inter-agence de recouvrement des actifs pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest
Rése inter-agences de recuperación de bienes para África Occidental



UNODC
Office des Nations Unies
contre la drogue et le crime

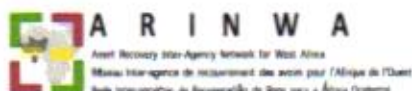


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21. The Permanent Secretary reported that some activities under strategic objective 1 have not been completed, namely, a) Initiating official contact with the authorities of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); exploring the issue 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:



25. **1. development of an integrated and complete information system linked to the secretariat.** This integrated and comprehensive information system exists and is installed on the ARINWA website at www.arinwa.net.
26. **2. development of communication tools.** ARINWA presentation flyers were designed and distributed at the 9th Annual General Meeting.
27. **3. establishment of platforms for information exchange and sharing.** In addition to the above-mentioned multilingual website, the Focal Points are part of a WhatsApp group created on May 13, 2021, which currently has thirty-nine (39) members. In addition, the Network subscribes annually to a Zoom subscription which is a videoconferencing service allowing virtual meetings between people. These platforms allow communication, on the one hand, between the organs of the Network and the Focal Points and, on the other hand, with other ARINs.
28. **4. Initiation of consultation frameworks with other ARIN-type organizations on topics of mutual interest and best practices.** ARINWA participates in a GIZ initiative called ARIN Talk. It is a forum for exchange and sharing inside ARINs. When needed, other entities sharing the same interests as the networks participate in ARIN Talk. During this year 2022, the Network took part in three ARIN Talk sessions on March 15, August 2, and November 15 respectively. Four networks and other organizations took part: CARIN (Europe), ARINEA (East Africa), RRAG (Latin America), ARINWA (West Africa), GIZ, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and financial intelligence units. Topics discussed included: secure information exchange platforms, cross-border crime, international cooperation, Focal Point profile and training, virtual asset recovery, and practical statistics and tools.
29. **5. obtaining observer status with other ARINs.** ARINWA has observer status with CARIN, ARINEA and ARINSA.
30. **6. participation in plenary and thematic meetings of ARINs where ARINWA has an observer status.** ARINWA took part in the 8th Meeting of the Regional Inter-Agency Asset Recovery Networks, and in the Annual General Meeting of CARIN.
31. The 8th Meeting of the Regional Asset Recovery Networks was held on June 22-23, 2022 in The Hague, Netherlands. The meeting was attended by the Secretariats of ARINAP, ARINSA, ARINWA, ARINWCA, ARINCARIB, CARIN, RRAG, the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC), FATF, the European Commission, Asset Reality and GIZ. During this meeting, the President of ARINWA made a brief presentation of the Network and announced the date and place of the next AGM. She then spoke about the entry of possible new members and the challenges of the Network.



This was followed by an exchange of best practices in asset management and challenges. Partners such as GIZ presented their activities and projects for the networks, particularly in terms of training.

32. The Annual General Meeting of CARIN was held on October 19-20, 2022 at the Hotel El Escorial in Madrid, Spain. The following ARINs were present at this meeting: RRAG (South America), ARIN-AP (Asia Pacific), ARINSA (Southern Africa), ARIN-EA (East Africa), ARINWA (West Africa), ARIN-WCA (West and Central Asia) and ARIN-CARIB (the Caribbean). Several work panels were conducted under the following topics: best practices in asset management, asset recovery and the fight against corruption, and asset recovery in response to international aggression and strengthening ARINs. During the meeting, each ARIN network shared the main challenges it faces and the support needed, including operational support, to address them. This sharing helped to identify geographic areas not yet covered by an ARIN, to learn about common problems and challenges faced by each network, and to learn how to share knowledge and training materials.

33. **Under Strategic Objective 3: “Focusing on the growth of ARINWA network”.** The training of Focal Points on the main aspects of asset recovery, upon their appointment, could not be carried out because they were not appointed in time.

34. **Under Strategic Objective 4: “Influencing politics to help member countries set up legislation and institutions to undertake asset recovery in accordance with international standards”.** This activity was carried out by the bodies of the Network who paid courtesy, awareness, and advocacy visits to eight (08) Ivorian administrative and judicial authorities from November 30 to December 02, 2022, namely: The President of the High Authority for Good Governance, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the Minister of Economy and Finance, the Minister of the Promotion of Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption, the First President of the Court of Appeal of Abidjan, the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Abidjan, the Public Prosecutor at the Economic and Financial Criminal Pole and the President of the National Financial Information Processing Unit.

a) Other ARINWA Activities

35. They include the management of requests, meetings, training of Focal Points, and the preparatory work for the Annual General Meeting.
36. Regarding the management of requests, eleven (11) requests were received from the following requested States: Benin (03), Mali (02), Senegal (01), Côte d'Ivoire (01), Liberia (01), Nigeria (01) and Sierra Leone (01). One (01) request was sent by Mauritania to ARINWA for membership. The applicants are France (05), Korea (01), Czech Republic (01), Belgium (01), Switzerland



(01), and Luxemburg (01). These requests were processed by immediate transmission by the Permanent Secretariat, followed by periodic reminders. It was noted, however, that ARINWA countries make little use of international cooperation in investigations targeting assets, or in the tracing or identification of assets linked to identified illicit activities. The Meeting noted that this situation could expose these countries to the measures of the International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG). That is one of the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) mechanisms for identifying and responding to countries with AML/CFT deficiencies that pose a risk to the international financial system and hamper efforts to combat these threats. One of the specific measures of the ICRG is the inclusion of countries with AML/CFT deficiencies on the FATF's grey lists.

37. As meetings are concerned, ARINWA attended the **Workshop on Stakeholder Collaboration for the Implementation of the African Common Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR)**. It was held on 19-22 September 2022 in Dakar, Senegal, with representatives of the African Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (ARIN) and the West African Central Authority and Prosecutors' Network (WACAP) as participants. The meeting aimed to create a platform of key stakeholders to dialogue and discuss effective strategies for the implementation of CAPAR.
38. Under the training of Focal Points, a session was held on December 5-06, 2022, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The topic of that session was: **"Establishment and implementation of an Asset Recovery Agency (ARA) in ARINWA Member States"**. Mainly intended for the Focal Points of ARINWA Member States, the training was open to all those who expressed an interest, including the Malagasy Delegation and the Ivorian operational authorities. The objectives assigned to this training session were to: 1) provide Member States that do not have a collection agency with guidance on how to set up one, 2) encourage those in the process of setting up one to complete their project, and 3) provide existing AROs with additional knowledge to enhance their performance. The sub-topics addressed were related to the legal framework and institutional structures of recovery bodies, tracking and tracing criminal assets at the national and international level, judicial and police cooperation, seizure and confiscation, and asset management. The training was given by Mrs. Patricia MATHYS, Functional Divisional Commander, Head of the Criminal Assets Identification Platform (France), and Mr. Francis MARDONAO, Specialized Assistant, Criminal Seizures - International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters at the Judicial Court of Paris - Investigation Economic and Financial Unit (France), Pascal ROBION, Referent Investigators, Head of the branch of the Agency for the Management and Recovery of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AGRASC) of Marseille (France) and Mor N'DIAYE, Chief Officer of the National Office for the Recovery of Criminal Assets (Senegal)
39. With respect to the preparatory work for the 9th Annual General Meeting, a series of activities were carried out by ARINWA bodies, in collaboration with



the Technical and Financial Partners. These included interactions between the Focal Points and ARINWA, the preparation of working documents (the concept note, invitation letters, the information note, list of participants, etc.),

meetings to agree on the agenda of the AGM, and funding by UNODC and GIZ of the Focal Points' travel and subsistence expenses respectively.

40. Following Mrs. SANGARE's presentation, Mr. Franck KOUADIO, IT specialist at the Permanent Secretariat, presented to the participants an improved version of the network's website which now offers users spaces dedicated to the legislative texts of the Member States, to the posting of documents online, to the list of requests received and/or issued with a section for reporting the said requests to the Permanent Secretariat.
41. At the end of these two presentations, the General Meeting expressed concerns about the low level of cooperation between states, which is reflected both in the total absence of recourse to the Network and in the recurrent failure to respond to the requests received. On this latter point, the Meeting advocates the establishment of mechanisms to encourage Member States to cooperate effectively.
42. In addition, to ensure that the Permanent Secretariat's statistics are kept up to date, the Meeting recommends that requests and applications for cooperation be notified to the Meeting for information purposes.
43. Focal Points were encouraged to enhance the website to facilitate the sharing of information. Those who encounter difficulties in accessing the website are invited to contact the Permanent Secretariat at the following email address: secretariat@arinwa.net

D. Country Presentations on the Level of Implementation of Asset Recovery Offices (AROs) and Asset Management Offices (AMOs)

44. The participating delegations presented information on the existence or not of an asset recovery body in their country, the legal framework, statistics on assets recovered, and international cooperation. It emerged from these presentations that a very small number of countries have an effectively operational recovery body. These include Cabo Verde, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria.
45. In the second category of countries, the creation of the collection agency is very recent so it is not yet operational; they are Benin and Guinea.



46. Finally, the third category includes countries that do not yet have a collection agency. These are The Gambia, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, and Togo.
47. Following these talks, the participants recalled the importance of financial investigations in the processing of cases of financial crimes and offenses, the need to strengthen the capacities of the stakeholders of the criminal chain in terms of patrimonial investigation, the provision by Focal Points of the legislative and regulatory texts of their countries before the end of the AGM and the setting up of a Committee in charge of checking the conformity of the said texts with international standards, i.e., to verify if the said laws effectively consider all the aspects related to the recovery, management, and confiscation of assets.
48. **Experience Sharing on the Organization and Functioning of an Inter -Agency Asset Recovery Network (ARIN)**
49. These moments of sharing were facilitated via video conference by Ms. Arita HADZIEVA, representative of the Balkan Asset Management Interagency Network (BAMIN), and Ms. Marcella Van BERKEL, a specialist in asset recovery at the Secretariat of Camden Asset Recovery Interagency Network (CARIN), located in The Hague, Netherlands.
50. The representative of BAMIN presented her Network as being informal and acting in the field of criminal asset management. The network includes the Balkan States but is open to members with observer status. BAMIN is managed by a Steering Committee and has a Secretariat. Each country is free to choose the body that will represent it within the network, but the bodies that cooperate with BAMIN are generally government agencies in charge of asset recovery. The objective of the network is to increase the efficiency of the stakeholders to enhance the value of seizures and confiscations. Ms. HADZIEVA said that for effective recovery, it is important that assets are managed in a way that preserves their optimal value for subsequent confiscation. She pointed out that while seizures initially focused on bank accounts and real estate, they have become complex with the advent of crypto-currencies. The network also provides general information on asset recovery, facilitates the sharing of best practices, and organizes training. It receives financial support from GIZ.
51. With regard to CARIN, its representative began her presentation by expressing the Network's readiness to provide its expertise to ARINWA Member States with a view to setting up an asset recovery agency. She indicated that the appropriate legal framework should consider all aspects of asset recovery. She stressed the need to define mechanisms for early detection



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of proceeds of crime and to plan seizures. The outcome of the whole process of asset recovery is to allow the financing of social projects and the compensation of victims. Ms. BERKEL also addressed the issue of cooperation, which is crucial in asset recovery, and the necessary training of the stakeholders. She indicated that only nine (09) of the twenty-seven (27) States of the European Union have an asset recovery body. CARIN has issued recommendations to guide States in the area of asset recovery.

52. In response to the concerns of her listeners, Ms. VAN BERKEL indicated that it is possible for a non-European country to join CARIN. Therefore, CARIN includes non-European countries, but the membership process starts with a preliminary period where the candidate country has first the status of observer. CARIN's recommendations will be made available to ARINWA. On the question of how to deal with assets illicitly removed from Africa and held in accounts abroad, she advised that legal proceedings should be initiated to recover them. Finally, regarding the role of focal points, she said that they issue requests and provide support to other members and those of other networks. As for the CARIN Secretariat, it is mainly in charge of drafting the minutes of the meetings, analyzing statistics, centralizing the requests from other ARINs, and preparing General Meetings.

E. Amendments to ARINWA Regulations

53. This agenda item was amended by the General Meeting, which chose to reflect on the proposed amendments rather than to make the actual amendments; these will be made at the next Meeting when all the Focal Points will have had a thorough knowledge of the Regulations. Reflections made during the present meeting will, consequently, be ratified later. They dealt with the status of the Focal Point, the membership, and the funding of the Network.
54. On the status of the Focal Point, the Meeting considered the following three (03) questions: Is the function of the Focal Point performed by a person or an institution? How is a Focal Point replaced? Is it possible for the Focal Point to be supported by his or her respective State for his or her participation in ARINWA activities? With regard to the function of the Focal Point, opinions remained divided on whether it should be a person or an institution and the Meeting did not decide in favor of either of these options. However, it did consider the proposal to appoint a main Focal Point, which could be a person or an institution, represented in the latter case by its head, with a deputy. With regard to the substitution of the Focal Point, the Meeting agreed that the Network should be officially informed of the change and the identity of the substitute. The Meeting was not in favor of the Focal Point being supported by his or her home country.
55. With regard to membership of the Network, the question was raised as to whether a State outside the Economic Community of West African States



(ECOWAS) zone could be admitted as a full member. In response, the Meeting expressed reservations and decided to grant observer status to States wishing to join ARINWA.

56. On the funding of the Network by the Member States, the rationale for the reform lies in ARINWA's desire to implement the use of voluntary contributions from member countries as set out in the Regulations as a source of funding, in addition to the hosting of meetings by volunteer member countries and the support of technical partners. The Meeting considered the proposal early and recommended that the status quo be maintained on the matter. However, time should be used to raise awareness among the authorities and prepare their minds for this eventuality.

F. Presentation and Adoption of the Activities for ARINWA's 2023 year

57. The Permanent Secretariat presented the activities to be undertaken during the year 2023, which essentially derive from the Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026, and are structured around the four (04) strategic objectives.

58. **Under Strategic Objective 1: « Developing ARINWA network as a center of excellence »**, the following activities are planned:

- Updating the list of focal points every year;
- Developing a focal point guide (definition, mode of appointment, assignment, basic obligations, etc. of the focal point);
- Equipping the permanent secretariat with a translation/interpretation service and an IT service (web management, software, communication, networks, etc.);
- Strengthening the capacity of the secretariat and the chair of ARINWA in management and leadership;
- Strengthening the capacity of ARINWA Secretariat and Chair in English language communication;
- Initiating official contact with ECOWAS authorities to explore the issue of institutional anchoring;
- Establishing collaboration axes with GIABA;
- Initiating meetings in support of the focal points of the Member States with the national authorities for better collaboration;
- Establishing contact with new partners willing to support the network's activities.

59. **Under Strategic Objective 2: "Strengthening cooperation and ensuring informal information sharing on asset recovery among ARINWA members"**, the following activities are planned:

- Developing an integrated and comprehensive information system linked to the Permanent Secretariat;
- Training the network's bodies and focal points in data protection;
- Set up a secure platform for information sharing within the network;



- Initiating consultation frameworks with other ARIN-type organizations on matters of mutual interest and best practices;
- Obtaining reciprocal observer status with other ARINs;
- Attending plenary and topical meetings of ARINs where ARINWA has observer status.

60. **Under Strategic Objective 3: "Focusing on expanding ARINWA network",** the following activities are planned:

- Establishing partnerships with civil society organizations (investigative journalists, NGOs, etc.) and academia;
- Training focal points on key aspects of asset recovery as soon as they are appointed;
- Organizing ongoing training sessions ("thematic or specific modules);
- Organizing four annual webinars on topics of mutual interest;
- Developing an asset management and recovery guide that reflects current realities in the African sub-region.

61. **Under Strategic Objective 4: « Influencing the politics to help member countries develop legislation and institutions to undertake asset recovery in accordance with international standards»,** the following activity is planned:

- Conducting advocacy and outreach missions by the Presidency and Permanent Secretariat to all Member States (raising awareness of Member States on the role and importance of the network, advocacy for establishing asset recovery bodies, visibility and improved cooperation with national authorities, raising awareness of Member Countries for voluntary contributions, etc.).

62. The above-listed activities stemming from the four strategic objectives of the ARINWA Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026 were adopted.

G. Renewal of the ARINWA Chairmanship Bodies

- 63. The two (02) year term of office of the Presidency and the Vice Presidency having expired, the Meeting renewed them.
- 64. Following consultations, Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau, represented respectively by Mrs. Killy FERNANDES and Mr. Graciano Da Silva MANGO, were reappointed as Chairpersons for a second term of two (02) years, expiring at the end of the year 2024.

H. Selection of the Host Country for the 10th Annual General Meeting



65. In accordance with the Resolution of the 5th Annual General Meeting held on November 20-23, 2018 in Cotonou, Benin, which agreed to organize the Annual General Meetings of the Network by the Member States according to the principle of passing in alphabetical order, the country succeeding Côte d'Ivoire is The Gambia. Questioned on the issue, the representatives of this State confirmed the availability of their State to host the 10th Annual General Meeting. To this end, they requested that an official letter of information be sent to the Gambian authorities.

I. Presentation and Adoption of the Final Report of the 9th Annual General Meeting of ARINWA

66. The Final Report of the 9th Annual General Meeting of ARINWA was adopted.

J. Closing Ceremony

67. The closing ceremony of the 9th Annual General Meeting of ARINWA was highlighted by an address by Mr. Adama COULIBALY, Minister of Economy and Finance, represented by Mr. Vassogbo BAMBA, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Minister. He thanked the participants for their attendance which allowed the General Meeting to reach its objectives. He also addressed his warm congratulations to Mrs. Kyly FERNANDES and Mr. Graciano da Silva MANGO, for their reappointment at the head of the Network, as President and Vice-President, on behalf of their respective States, Cabo-Verde and Guinea-Bissau. He once again gave the assurance of the support of the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the activities of ARINWA and expressed, to all the participants, his wishes for excellent health and strength, to give our network a new breath of dynamism and a capital of confidence to recover criminal assets. The representative of the Minister of Economy and Finance ended his speech by declaring closed the works of the 9th Annual General Meeting of ARINWA.

Done in Abidjan this 9th Day of December 2022

SANGARE LY Kadiatou

Permanent Secretary of ARINWA
9th Annual General Meeting

