First session
Agenda item
24 March 2018

Synopsis for Rehabilitating Guinea-Bissau, a West African Narco-State

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime the topic synopsis entitled “Rehabilitating Guinea-Bissau, a West African Narco-State” (UNODC/SYN/IIE/01.3).
Rehabilitating Guinea-Bissau, a West African Narco-State

unodc@thhsmun.org

Section I—Introduction

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a branch within the United Nations dedicated to fighting against illicit drugs and international crime. Since its establishment in 1997, it has worked to improve technology across the field to better counteract illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism, while also working with member states to implement international treaties through legislation combating drugs and crime.

Section II—Topic Background

[Map: The flow of cocaine through West Africa]

The nation of Guinea-Bissau has now been called the world’s first “Narco-State” by the United Nations. The small West African nation is ranked 178th out of 188 countries in the UN’s Development Index, and is riddled with political instability. Since its independence in 1974, no leader of Guinea-Bissau has completed a full term of office. Because of this political volatility, this small nation has come under the control of Colombian drug cartels looking to bring their product into Europe. Members of the United nations have stated that Drug Cartels have focused on Guinea-Bissau because of three reasons: effective interdiction along traditional trafficking routes, its convenient location, and its vulnerability to organized crime. The UNODC estimates that 40 tons of cocaine comes through the nation of Guinea-Bissau, with 33,000kg intercepted since 2011. As of now, the UNODC has made several attempts to solve this issue, but the most detailed outline of their plan
comes from a meeting on December 19, 2007. During this meeting the UNODC says they plan to enhance security within the region for the short term and increase developmental assistance for the long term. Unfortunately, these past plans have met with mixed results because this issue still persists to today. Often, the drug trade intertwines with other criminal activities such as human trafficking, murder, and terrorism, making this a critical issue to be addressed.

Section III—Possible Solutions

This issue needs a well rounded solution, not only to save the nation of Guinea-Bissau, but to also help stop the drug trade throughout Europe and Africa. It is clear that investing in developmental assistance into the region does not work without some other plan to supplement it. It is clear that the issue does not only stem from the instability within the country itself, but the drug cartels in Columbia as well. Solutions must address the cartels in South America, the poverty in the country, and finding new ways to provide jobs for citizens forced to work for the cartels in Guinea-Bissau. We must find a solution to this issue because of this issue’s effect on the global community.

Section IV—Bloc Positions

**African Bloc:** West Africa is awash with narcotics funneled through their borders by traffickers from cartels in Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and other Latin American countries. Political instability, civil unrest, religious strife, and corruption have made the drug trade a major concern for the African Bloc.

**Asian Bloc:** Latin American cartels, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel, have found an emerging market in Southeast Asia. With a booming economy comes a corresponding rise in demand and trafficking follows. Some nations, such as the Philippines, are going so far as to put Latin American “Narcotraficantes” like Horacio Hernandez Herrera on trial.

**Latin America Bloc:** Several Nations in the Latin American Bloc struggle with political unrest, corruption and instability due to drug cartels operating in or around their nations. The origin point for much of the narcotics trafficking into Guinea-Bissau, it is imperative to the Latin American Bloc that this issue be settled.

**Middle Eastern Bloc:** While the Middle East does not feel much of the influence of Guinea-Bissau as a narco-state, drug trafficking and abuse are a major problem in the region. Corruption, a hardline stance on drug use and trafficking, and the interdiction of terrorist groups in the drug trade have complicated the issue, as well.

**Western Bloc:** The Western Bloc is a major market for the West African narco-state narcotics trade. It is in the interest of a large portion of the Western Bloc to disrupt the flow of drugs through Guinea-Bissau and restore some form of stability to the region.
Section V—Questions That Should Be Taken Into Consideration

In what ways could the United Nations eliminate the influence of drug cartels from the country?

What job markets should be created in the Guinea-Bissau as an alternative to the drug trade?

To what extent does this issue stem from the South American Drug Trade?

To what extent should outside nations get involved without violating Guinea-Bissau’s sovereignty?

Section VI—Helpful Sites and Resources

Article—The Guardian—How a Tiny West African Country Became the World’s First Narco State
goo.gl/RSz7RZ (shortened URL from www.theguardian.com)

Article—The Guardian—Guinea-Bissau Struggles to End Its Role in Global Drugs Trade
goo.gl/x8vjQz (shortened URL from www.theguardian.com)

Article—UNODC—International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau
goo.gl/BAoaDN (shortened URL from www.unodc.org)

Presentation—UNODC—Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa
goo.gl/AgJo34 (shortened URL from www.unodc.org)

Article—Africa Center for Strategic Studies—
Interdiction Efforts Adapt As Drug Trafficking in Africa Modernizes
goo.gl/DFTvVv (shortened URL from www.africacenter.org)

Possible search terms—West African drug trade, Guinea-Bissau narco-state, drug trafficking in West Africa, Latin American drug cartels in Africa