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WAPIS

NEWSLETTER



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Head of the WAPIS Programme

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The execution period for the current phase of the WAPIS Programme which we refer to as "WAPIS 3EDF" running from November 2017 until June 2022 has been extended by an additional 17 months. This is to enable us to achieve the expected outcomes and reach the goals of the Programme. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission for their continued faith and commitment to the WAPIS Programme.

We have 17 more months ahead of us - this may seem a long time but will certainly pass quickly given the number of challenges which remain to be addressed. The WAPIS team and beneficiary countries need to step up our commitment and determination to implement the requisite measures to ensure that the WAPIS system is an effective tool for use by law enforcement on a daily basis.

The Data Collection and Registration Centres (DACORE) are already up and running in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo; only four more countries have yet to put them into operation: Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia.

In the new phase which is starting, we will be directing our efforts in particular towards extending the system in the countries beyond the DACOREs and handling change management. I would now like to focus on the quality of data in the WAPIS system for a moment. In addition to having a system in place, it is important for it to be a reliable instrument acknowledged by all the various users. To ensure this is the case, data entry clerks, data validators, IT administrators and DACORE managers must all play their role in compliance with the law and in line with the Guide and WAPIS quality management procedures. The heads of law enforcement agencies who oversee the operation and use of the system should ensure they keep this in mind every day.

We shall continue to support the countries by organizing training sessions on data quality, the writing and application of instruction manuals.

—○—○— The Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) project which is a component of the WAPIS Programme has been launched to keep up the momentum of capacity building for law enforcement in West African countries and support them in their fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism. The first phase - country assessment - was conducted by our project partner CIVIPOL.

I would like to thank all the countries for their support and welcome during these visits. The assessment report for each country was submitted and discussed at the first Project Steering Committee meeting held via video conferencing on 21 July 2022. The conclusions will shortly be published.

LEAD STORIES

The inauguration of the Togo Police Information Centre (CIPT): an important asset in addressing the challenges of transnational organized crime and terrorism

The Togo Police Information Centre was inaugurated by the Government of Togo in the person of its Minister of Security and Civil Defence, General Damehane Yark, on Friday, 29 April 2022. The centre is located next to the Ministry.

The ceremony was attended by the Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union, Mr Hugo Van Tilborg, the ECOWAS Resident Representative in Togo, His Excellency Barros Bacar Banjai, INTERPOL's Director of Operational Support and Analysis Mr Cyril Gout, the Head of the WAPIS Programme, Mr Richard Gotwe together with various ambassadors based in Lomé and heads of Togo law enforcement agencies.

The CIPT is the national police data collection and registration centre which will be in charge of managing WAPIS at national level. This centre will

act as a catalyst for strengthening security and harnessing synergy between law enforcement agencies in the country, by involving them in the process of collecting, storing and sharing criminal data at national, regional and global levels via INTERPOL's I-24/7 secure communications channel. The centre will thus make it easier for front-line agents to conduct their day-to-day work on criminal investigations, as well as to handle the movement of people and goods at border crossing points.

The Lomé CIPT is the 9th national data centre to be put into operation under WAPIS in West Africa following on from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria.



The Minister of Security and Civil Protection cutting the ribbon on the occasion of the inauguration of the CIPT, Lomé, Togo, 29 April 2022

Senegal consolidates its security architecture by setting up the CREDIPOL

The WAPIS Programme has crossed a major milestone with the inauguration of the Data and Police Information Collection and Registration Centre (CREDIPOL) in Dakar on 17 May 2022.

This ceremony, presided over by the Chief of Staff of the Minister of the Interior was attended by the Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union, the Director General of the Senegal Police Force, the Head of the WAPIS Programme as well as several heads of law enforcement agencies and ambassadors of ECOWAS member states based in Senegal.

Concluding the series of speeches during the ceremony, the Chief of Staff of the Minister of the Interior noted that the WAPIS programme was a godsend for the country, because it will considerably strengthen regional and global co-operation efforts in terms of security. He went on to underline the importance of the Programme for his ministry and by extension, Senegal as a whole.

The inauguration ceremony was followed by the first meeting of the WAPIS national committee convened to discuss the action plan for implementing the Programme.



The Head of Cabinet of the Ministry of the Interior cutting the ribbon to mark the inauguration of CREDIPOL, Dakar, Senegal, 17 May 2022

The Dakar CREDIPOL is the 10th national data centre to be put into operation under WAPIS following on from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.

The 1st AFIS Project Steering and Coordination committee meeting makes crucial decisions regarding the implementation of its activities

The first meeting of the AFIS Project Steering and Coordination Committee was held on 21 July 2022 via video conferencing.

The meeting was co-chaired by the representatives of the European Union and ECOWAS Commission and attended by INTERPOL and CIVIPOL representatives.

Discussions revolved around the feasibility study conducted by CIVIPOL, recommendations for implementation in each country and the next steps of the AFIS Project. Recommendations were issued at the end of the meeting regarding, in particular, the selection of the three (3) pilot countries for AFIS implementation based on predefined criteria.



Meeting of the AFIS Project Committee, 21 July 2022

Those ECOWAS countries not selected and Mauritania will be entitled to technical support to enhance or update their existing AFIS or make preparations for the installation of an AFIS in the near future.

Strategic missions conducted jointly by the EU-INTERPOL-ECOWAS to lay the foundations of AFIS implementation will be carried out in the pilot countries in the coming weeks.

The AFIS Project, which benefits from European Union funding (EUR 15 M), was launched on 1 March 2022:

- It is a pluriannual project (2022-2024) intended to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement in West African countries in the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism.
- AFIS is an INTERPOL and CIVIPOL Project implemented with political and strategic support from ECOWAS.
- The scope of Project AFIS covers all the ECOWAS members and Mauritania.
- INTERPOL, in line with its goal of connecting police for a safer world, will be providing support to the countries with a view to ensuring more effective exchange of biometric data at national and international level.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Members of the criminal justice system in Niger come on board and benefit from training in the use of WAPIS.

The first training session for magistrates and judicial staff on the use of the WAPIS system was one of the highlights of a WAPIS Programme mission to Niger from 20 to 24 June.

The trainees were five clerks of the court from the Niamey Regional Court, a sub attorney-general from Niamey, an investigating judge, a magistrate working in the Human Trafficking Unit and a magistrate from the Directorate of Criminal Affairs and Pardons. WAPIS will play an important role in expediting information exchange between the members of the criminal justice system to ensure justice is dispensed and the rule of law upheld.

Parallel meetings were held with the UNDP with a view to boosting synergy with other programmes and international organizations. The UNDP is keen to support an extension of



Magistrates following WAPIS training, Niamey, Niger, 24 February 2022

the WAPIS system to the Ministry of Justice. Support will also be provided by the IOM as part of the initiative to connect border points.

The WAPIS Programme high on the agenda for the ECOWAS Commission

The 36th Ordinary Meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council at the Ambassadorial level was held on 24 June 2022 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Rashid Bawa, High Commissioner of



36th meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, Abuja, Nigeria, 24 June 2022

Ghana to Nigeria and ECOWAS, and Chair of the Mediation and Security Council at the Ambassadorial level. This meeting was attended by the Ambassadors accredited to the ECOWAS Commission or their duly mandated representatives from the ECOWAS Member States.

The 48th Ordinary Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council Meeting at the Ministerial Level was held on 29 June 2022 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister of Foreign Affairs and

Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana and Chair of the Mediation and Security Council at the Ministerial Level. This meeting was also attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security of the ECOWAS Member States.

The purpose of the meetings was to review the political and security situation in the region. The implementation of the West African Police Information System WAPIS Programme was a key point on the agenda.

Mr. Richard Gotwe was represented by the WAPIS Programme Coordinator at the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohamed Yansaneh. Following the initial presentations and discussions, the Council

commended the Member States and INTERPOL for effectively collaborating in the implementation of the Programme and the European Union for providing the funding, and made recommendations to the different stakeholders:

The ECOWAS Commission, Member States and INTERPOL:

- I. Extend WAPIS beyond the capital areas to all the air, sea and official land border control posts of ECOWAS Member States, and work closely together to identify and secure alternative funding instruments to support said extension;
- II. Continue to involve ECOWAS representatives in the beneficiary countries, especially during strategic visits, and include the WAPIS Programme on the agendas of meetings concerning security and the judicial system whenever possible;
- III. Take all the necessary measures to assess the legal, operational and technical prerequisites involved in setting up a regional data sharing mechanism; these should include organizing a dedicated workshop with support from INTERPOL and drafting the required regulatory framework with a view to its adoption by ECOWAS Member States.

The ECOWAS Commission:

- IV. Urge participating countries to honour their commitments regarding the sustainability of the WAPIS System.

The Member States:

- V. Adopt the appropriate legal and operational framework, including the data protection law;
- VI. Appoint, deploy and retain competent staff at the national level;
- VII. Allocate a budget line for running the system at the national level.

The INTERPOL African Regional Conference endorsed WAPIS and acclaimed the progress achieved

The 25th INTERPOL African Regional Conference took place in Cotonou, Benin from 28 to 30 June 2022. Attended by INTERPOL Secretary General Mr Jürgen Stock, it addressed a panel of African security experts.

Addressing the current and evolving challenges facing Africa, delegates discussed a range of law enforcement issues including terrorism, cybercrime, financial crime and corruption as well as human trafficking and maritime piracy.

The role of WAPIS in facilitating information sharing and enhancing the performance of operational activities to fight transnational organized crime and terrorism was acclaimed by the attendees and was held up as a model for replication in other regions of Africa to ensure better security coverage of the continent. This point of view was reflected in the recommendations adopted by the conference delegates.

Key measures approved by the conference included:

- Increasing the use of INTERPOL's global network, I-24/7 and other capabilities, to share information on transnational financial crime cases;
- Designing and developing a regional coordination framework to enhance the interoperability of the cyber law enforcement community and strengthen cooperation for joint operations against cybercrime;
- Expanding access to INTERPOL's network beyond the National Central Bureaus (NCBs) to better support African Union programmes.

Some 120 senior police officials from 29 countries attended the event.

The 26th INTERPOL African Regional Conference will be held in Angola.



Presentation of the WAPIS Programme during the Conference, Cotonou, Benin, 29 June 2022

THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE SYSTEM

Senegal joined the WAPIS Programme during its third phase in November 2017. It signed a memorandum of understanding and took the necessary action to deploy the system at national level. Mr Modou Bop, Head of the Data and Police Information Collection and Registration Centre (CREDIPOL) shares his views on the excellent collaboration between our two bodies in this issue of the newsletter.



Police Superintendent, Modou Bop, Data and Police Information Collection and Registration Centre (CREDIPOL)

1. Can you introduce yourself? How long have you been working on the implementation of WAPIS?

My name is Modou Bop. I am a Superintendent in the Senegal National Police Directorate (DGPN). I was appointed Head of the Senegal Data and Police Information Collection and Registration Centre (CREDIPOL) on 12 January 2022 by the Minister of the Interior who was quick to realize the pertinence and importance of WAPIS as an effective instrument to fight transnational organized crime and terrorism. This was ratified by decree no. 2022-78 dated 12 January 2022. Prior to this, I occupied the post of Special Police Commissioner at Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIDB) in Diass. Since my appointment, I have had the honour to closely follow the implementation and application of the WAPIS Programme. The success of the Programme in Senegal will obviously depend on the political determination of the authorities but also the self-sacrifice of all the stakeholders (heads of law enforcement agencies, specialist staff including the national focal point, local and INTERPOL legal and technical experts) who did their utmost to ensure the implementation of this new tool as part of the country's security architecture.

2. What was the starting point and different stages in implementing the WAPIS programme in Senegal?

A number of initiatives have been taken since the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of Senegal and INTERPOL on 19 June 2019 to govern the implementation of WAPIS in our country:

- > The appointment of a WAPIS focal point, IT expert and legal expert;
- > The deliberation of the personal data protection commission regarding the creation of a WAPIS national committee, the CREDIPOL and an automated police information database on 15 January 2021;
- > The creation of the Data and Police Information Collection and Registration Centre (CREDIPOL/DACORE) as well as an automated database for this information laid down by decree 2021-1213 dated 29 September 2021;
- > The signature of an order defining the composition, organization and running of the WAPIS National Supervision Committee on 12 October 2021;

- > The appointment by decree no. 2022-78 dated 12 January 2022 of the Head of the DACORE;
- > The organization of the first DACORE staff training session on the use of the West African Police Information System from 7 to 18 March 2022;
- > The dispensing of a second DACORE staff training session in the form of a WAPIS train the trainers course taking place from 28 March to 8 April 2022;
- > The secondment of police officers and gendarmes to the DACOREs in line with a ruling made by the Ministers of the Interior and of the Armed Forces;
- > The presentation of the WAPIS Programme to members of the judiciary on 10 March 2022;
- > The signature on 8 April 2022 of an interconnectivity agreement between the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Senegal and the DACORE securing direct access to the INTERPOL information system;
- > The deployment of staff to the WAPIS Senegal head office located at SICAP foire, on 8 April 2022;
- > The visit of WAPIS IT experts between 3 and 6 May 2022;
- > The inauguration of the Senegal DACORE (together with its automated police information database) created by virtue of decree no. 2021-1213 dated 29 September 2021 on 17 May 2022.

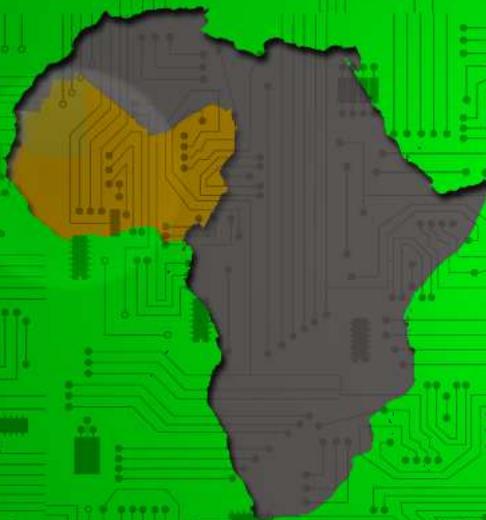
3. What does WAPIS represent in Senegal's security architecture?

WAPIS occupies a significant place in Senegal's security architecture since it can immediately provide investigators with useful information on the criminal record of any accused person, and can be used to locate wanted persons, weapons, vehicles, and other items of interest. WAPIS will also allow the competent authorities to take appropriate measures based on the crime statistics it contains.

4. What advice would you give to other countries participating in the WAPIS Programme?

I recommend that the other countries make the WAPIS Programme a priority in their security architecture as it is an excellent instrument for addressing rising crime rates in areas such as migrant smuggling, drug trafficking and international terrorism. No repressive strategy can be effective in tackling these threats without an efficient exchange of police information within the region and worldwide.

I could not conclude without sincerely thanking my superiors for having chosen my humble self to head this highly strategic centre. I would like to thank the European Union, ECOWAS and all the partners involved in creating this vital programme.



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