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## **First Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking and Drug Use in the Western Indian Ocean, 25 April 2024, Mauritius**

Declaration for enhancing regional and international cooperation against drug trafficking and drug use in the Western Indian Ocean

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- 1. We, the Ministers and Representatives of the States and Organisations participating at the First Ministerial Conference on Drug trafficking and Drug use in the Western Indian Ocean held on 25 April 2024, in Balaclava, Republic of Mauritius.**
2. *Underscoring* the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and other relevant international instruments constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control system.
3. *Considering* the Djibouti Code of Conduct / Jeddah Amendment as a regional cooperation mechanism to combat illicit drug trafficking and drug use.
4. Recalling the 2018 Regional Agreements signed by Union of Comoros, Republic of Djibouti, French Republic, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles on (i) the Exchange and Sharing of Information and (ii) the Coordination of Action at Sea that allowed the establishment of a Western Indian Ocean Regional Maritime Security Architecture and its Regional Information Fusion Centre and Regional Coordination Operations Centre with the support of the MASE Programme and International Partners.
5. *Recalling* the decision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security and Safety in the Western Indian Ocean and Conference on Drugs and Substance Abuse held in Mauritius in 2023.
6. *Further recalling* the decision to establish a Regional Operational Cooperation Framework to address drug trafficking and drug use in the Western Indian Ocean region.
7. *Acknowledging* that the Western Indian Ocean region is facing serious challenges in combatting drug trafficking, introduction of new psychoactive substances and an upsurge in the volume of drugs trafficked within the region which is leading to rising consumption of drugs.
8. *Considering* that the drug market in the region is interconnected operating mostly via maritime routes.
9. *Concerned* of the serious social and health consequences of drugs and drug use on individuals, including drug overdose, HIV and AIDS and related deaths, as well as



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the threats from drug trafficking on our societies impacting the security and stability of the WIO States and the Region.

10. *Further concerned* by the proliferation of new psychoactive substances throughout the region, particularly the widespread use of synthetic cannabinoid.
11. *Subscribing* to the overall objective of the African Union Plan of Action (AUPA) on Drug control and crime prevention (2019-2023) and the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem about strengthening international and regional cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.
12. *Emphasising* the need for a holistic, integrated, transversal approach and regional cooperation to effectively address the emerging challenges in combatting drug trafficking and drug use and any other interconnected illicit activities including IUU fishing at national and regional levels.

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13. Acknowledge the active participation to the Conference of 24 states and 12 intergovernmental organisations as well as regional centres, NGOs and other stakeholders.
14. Welcome the initiative to finalise the WIO Strategy Against Drug Trafficking and Drug Use in such a manner that it does not contradict with the internal regulations and strategies of the States and call for the International Partners to support its implementation.
15. *Encourage* the Western Indian Ocean Region States to adopt national gender responsive policies which would provide special attention to children, young persons, vulnerable groups.
16. *Agree* to implement evidence-based drug demand and harm reduction measures, in collaboration with the civil society, through sensitization, training of stakeholders, outreach programs, and early warning systems.
17. *Take* measures to disrupt the supply chain of drugs by targeting drug traffickers, their illicit enrichment and networks in compliance with human rights standards and the rule of law.
18. *Call for* increased exchange of information among police, customs, and other law enforcement agencies and existing regional centres as well as reinforced judicial cooperation at the national and regional level.
19. *Agree* to address the health and social aspects, with exchanges of best practices and development of appropriate treatments, specialised medical care of addictions and training of health and social professionals.



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20. *And further Considering* that the Strategy encourages Research and Development towards addressing the challenges of drug trafficking and use.
  21. *Call on* the international community to enhance assistance to the WIO States in the fight against proceeds of drug related crimes and money laundering.
  22. *Welcome* the setting up of a Regional Drugs Observatory as a valuable resource for the region in collecting and disseminating factual and comparable information concerning drugs and drug addiction in close collaboration with the existing regional centres and *take note* of the offer made by the Republic of Seychelles to host the Observatory.
  23. *Call upon* the International Community to partner and support the implementation of the Strategy, the establishment of the Regional Observatory and the Network of the National Drugs Secretariats.

*Declaration adopted on 25 April 2024 at Balaclava, Republic of Mauritius*