Indeed, it is in the Democratic Republic of Congo that the ability of the United Nations to assist reform, together with its many partners—Congolese authorities, the European Union, the World Bank, and an array of bilateral actors (including South Africa, the United States, France, Belgium, Angola, and China)—has been most severely tested. In October 2004, the revised mandate of the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) included establishing a joint SSR commission with the Congolese government. The 2008 mandate, moreover, clearly articulated the mentoring and training of the national police and the Forces Armées du République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) by MONUC, thus reinforcing norms of international humanitarian law, and stressed the need for coordination with the two EU security sector reform operations in the DRC.23 This enhanced mandate established MONUC, with nearly 30,000 military and police personnel, as not only the main provider of public security in the country, but also a primary component of the effort to build the DRC’s security forces. It also called for MONUC to support the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law in coordination with the UN’s Country Team and Congolese authorities. But coordination among disparate international justice and security sector actors in the DRC remains limited without a common strategic vision to drive donor engagement.

The SSR process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (covered in more detail in this year’s DRC Mission Review) has lacked genuine engagement by national political and military leadership, for whom reform of the security and justice sectors threatens their power and encroaches on sources of income. The result has

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**Box 1.1 West Africa Coast Initiative**

The West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) was launched on 9 July 2009 as part of a broader initiative by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the “Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime, and Drug Abuse in West Africa for 2008–2011.” WACI coincided with the release of a UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report, “Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment,” which identified the numerous areas of illicit activities in the region and their broader impact. The report revealed that progress toward regional stability was severely undermined by smuggling of oil, arms, toxic waste, diamonds, people, and drugs, combined with rampant corruption and weak state institutions.

WACI is a joint technical assistance program aimed at helping states address criminal networks and illicit activities by strengthening national and regional capacities in rule of law. It incorporates the collective expertise of regional actors and contributing partners with the expertise of national actors as a way of mitigating and diminishing the threat of organized crime in the region and globally. The initiative is a unique collaboration between ECOWAS, UNODC, the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) through its peacekeeping operations in the region (UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire [UNOCI], UN Mission in Liberia [UNMIL]), the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

The broad initiative proposes to strengthen national rule of law capacities by implementing capacity-building programs in four postconflict countries—Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire—with the possibility of adding Guinea as a fifth. In these countries, WACI teams will establish transnational crime units (TCUs), a model based on previous successes and lessons learned from the UNODC’s activities in other regions. TCUs will help build and develop national intelligence bodies, international coordination, surveillance, and investigation with five other programs operating separately yet in coordination with the TCUs. These programs will focus on specific components of the rule of law system: judiciary and prosecution, forensics, law enforcement and capacity building, border management, and money laundering.

Ultimately, WACI’s effectiveness will be measured by its ability to adequately enhance state institutions in practice. The initiative is ambitious in terms of the level of coordination required from the multitude of actors involved. Nevertheless, the implications for leaving these threats to regional stability unaddressed could have severe global impacts.