Opening Address

By

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Minister of Safety and Security

At the

Opening of the Regional Workshop

On the

Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism in Southern Africa

Windhoek Country Club & Resorts

Khomass Region

05 October 2011
Good Morning,

I am greatly honoured and deeply pleased to have been invited to deliver a keynote address at the opening of this SADC Regional Workshop. On behalf of the Ministry of Safety and Security, the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Anti-Terrorism Legislation and indeed on my own behalf, I would like to extend a warm Namibian welcome to all of you and thank you for having accepted our invitation to attend this important and timely Workshop on the Regional Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Southern Africa.

From the onset, I would like to inform you that this workshop was organised by the United Nation’s Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office (CTITF) in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Namibia.
You are here because terrorism remains a major threat worldwide. No matter what its origins or what form it takes, terrorism threatens not only the very fabric of society and national security, but also the human security and human rights and freedoms of every individual. Since new-age terrorism is increasingly networked, and its drivers in terms of motivations ever more complex; its security consequences traverses the economic, cultural, political and psychological terrain. More recently, terrorist activities have become more amorphous, less predictable, with fewer constraints on the terrorist’s operations and targets. Maritime terrorism, in the form of piracy, has for example, become a growing threat along the Somali coastline and beyond, while cyber terrorism and discontent on the part of local non-state actors, have given new salience for a global response to it.

In light of our collective desire to prepare ourselves against the challenge of terrorism in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), this workshop has brought together, amongst others, government officials, academics, practitioners, members of civil society, experts from regionally-based international organizations and representatives from various countries to discuss possible practical implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in our region.

It is also worth mentioning that, historically, the threat posed by domestic or international terrorism within our region has been low despite notable exceptions, and as such the development and implementation of national and regional counter-terrorism legislative instruments, and the practical measures aimed at
strengthening inter-agency and inter-state cooperation has not received the required prioritization that it deserves by all member countries.

Nonetheless, as it has been demonstrated by recent high profile cases, Southern Africa is not immune to terrorist activities. It is my fervent wish that the region should not be allowed to become a safe haven for terrorist groups from where they can plan attacks on other countries and from where the financing of terrorist activities can be organised. We must ensure that the region is not regarded as one of the soft targets that can easily be used as a centre of terrorist operations as this, in turn, may pose serious national security and developmental challenges to our countries.

In this regard, I am pleased to observe that within regional context, Namibia has Joint Permanent Commissions on Defense Public Security and State Security with all our neighbouring countries which meet on yearly basis. This certainly offers opportunity for interaction and consultation on matters of common concern. Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has made significant progress in consolidating our collective response to the threats posed by terrorism and the financing of terrorism. Most recently, the Ministry of Safety and Security in close collaboration with the Financial Intelligence Centre, Bank of Namibia (BoN), and other stakeholders completed a Draft Counter-Terrorism and the Financing of Terrorism Policy (CTFTP) that provides an integrated and coherent framework in support of the existing National Anti-Money Laundering Framework which was adopted by the Anti-Money Laundering Advisory Council (AMLAC). I am also
pleased to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through Parliament, recently approved a revised Defence Policy that includes terrorism as one of its articulated threats in the strategic environment that faces Namibia, the SADC-region and the wider international society. Also, under the leadership of the Office of the President, a Draft National Security Policy Framework (NSPF) has been crafted for finalization later this month.

From the above policy development work initiated by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, it is evident that Namibia takes her national, regional, and international obligations on the combating of terrorism and the financing of terrorism very seriously. Namibia has key elements of a counter-terrorism and the financing of terrorism regime in place, and the Government is committed to putting in place the outstanding elements for a coordinated and cooperative response to the evils of terrorism and the financing thereof. Namibia’s commitment to work with international organizations such as the United Nations and its Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), and regional bodies such as the Eastern and Southern African Anti-Money laundering Group (ESAAMLG), of which Namibia is a member, is unwavering.

**Director of Ceremonies;**
**Dear Participants;**
**Ladies and Gentlemen**

In response to the growing threat of terrorism in the world, the international community has taken various significant steps in developing long term strategic responses to this scourge. As a
result, in 2006 all UN member States had unanimously adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which as previously mentioned provides for a holistic response to terrorist acts and includes a concrete Plan of Action which rests on four pillars.

It is imperative to note that the existing Strategy was re-examined in 2008 and 2010 respectively, whereby member States had committed themselves to strengthen their political support for the implementation thereof. It therefore, remains the agreed framework for counter-terrorism approaches and cooperation among States.

In order to accelerate efforts in giving practical effect to the Strategy at regional and national levels, not least to facilitate the full realisation of its strategic potentials, the General Assembly has institutionalised the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to ensure the coordination of and coherence in counter-terrorism efforts within the UN system. In this regard, 31 UN system entities and relevant international organisations such as INTERPOL and World Customs Organisation (WCO) form part of CTITF.

This two-day Workshop will focus on a number of Public International Law matters of direct concern to the States and Governments of Southern Africa. These include, but are not limited to, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the constitutive mechanisms for ensuring inter-agency coordination and robust implementation in the Southern African region. The focus of the Workshop also falls starkly on the prevention of terrorism through research and information-
sharing, the primacy of financial intelligence (particularly in combating the financing of terrorism), police and law enforcement capacity at both the national and trans-national levels, the role and functions of the criminal justice system (more especially in safeguarding the construct of the rule of law and the protection of human rights while countering terrorism) and the challenge of countering the financing of terrorism in Southern Africa.

The different foci of the Workshop are supported by an emphasis on building capacity in key agencies mandated to counter terrorism and the financing thereof, by the primacy of close inter-agency cooperation and the need for timely and effective action based on credible research and verifiable information and intelligence.

Therefore, as members of INTERPOL, we must recognise that in the 21st century, the security of an individual country may not be guaranteed, unless police capacity and respect for the rule of law in the country concerned can sustain those gains. For this reason, we must move away from the predominately military-led approach to fighting terrorism to an approach that employs all components with equal vigour with strong emphasis on systems integration and we must ensure that international law enforcement cooperation is enhanced worldwide as a core component of our efforts.

Director of Ceremonies, any major international terrorist attack against our member countries can push us into a global economic recession and therefore SADC Member Countries should try and expand their margins of safety and security by
adopting a new mindset on how best to counter terrorist activities globally.

Director of Ceremonies;
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the continental level, I would like to point out that the African Union (AU) has adopted a broad-based continental framework to combat terrorism. It has developed a number of anti-terrorism treaty instruments such as the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its Protocol, which was adopted in 2004 and the AU Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. It has also adopted its Plan of Action in 2002 that embodies the roadmap for the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism strategies. I pause here to emphasise that the AU has rejected all forms of extremism and terrorism no matter in which form; be it under the pretext of sectarianism, tribalism, ethnicity or religion.

All AU measures have the common objective of supporting the implementation of coherent and effective counter-terrorism norms and practices within the continent.

Director of Ceremonies;
Ladies and Gentlemen

As we all may know, terrorism is a complex and ever-changing phenomenon in terms of its motivation, financing and support mechanism, methods of attack and choice of targets.
This makes it more difficult for any one strategy to counter terrorism effectively.

Since the perpetration of terrorist attacks by al Qaeda against the US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya in 1998, coupled with terrorist attacks in Uganda during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there has been an increased focus within the UN system and elsewhere on how to prevent terrorism financing through the creation of sanctions aimed at the Taliban and al Qaeda.

Since then, the issue of terrorism financing became prominent and posed a big threat to international peace and security; particularly after the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 in the United States.

Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Namibia views the Workshop as an opportunity for collective learning, the sharing of contextual experience, and the impetus for further policy development and knowledge exchange in a policy domain of global importance. We have high expectations of the Workshop and commit ourselves to ensure that the Workshop meets its objectives. Our participation in this Workshop signals to the Southern African region and to the world that the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the people of this country are committed to maintaining and deepening the peace and security that prevail here. Collectively, we take the guiding principles and values of our Democracy, National Reconciliation Policy and Foreign Policy, as embedded in the Constitution, as our road map for the present and the future.
Director of Ceremonies, there remains a lot to be done in terms of strengthening our regional counter-terrorism legal framework and I therefore urge member countries to cooperate in this regard.

Globally, we should denounce terrorism as a murderous ideology and focus on universal human rights and the rule of law, creating favourable conditions of peace and harmony for future generations to live in.

Director of Ceremonies;
Dear Participants;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the News Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen

We should admit that the future is uncertain and that it is still possible to be exploited by extremists. However, if we are united and committed in the fight against terrorism, peace and security in the African continent and beyond will be secured. I therefore, urge this workshop to meticulously focus on the development of adequate legislative frameworks that complements international instruments and to assist us in meeting our international and regional obligations in our counter-terrorism efforts, as expected.

It is now my distinct honour and pleasure to declare the Regional Workshop of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Southern Africa officially open.

I thank you!