

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATING  
TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISED CRIME**

**STATEMENT BY THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Mr Chairman,

Over the last four days we have heard various interventions in which the increasing danger of organised crime has been emphasised. My delegation is equally aware that with increasing technological advances and globalisation, there is additional urgency to develop effective strategies that will find expression in practical and viable mechanisms to combat organised crime. The need for international cooperation therefore, cannot be over-emphasised. Consequently there is need to look at national and regional institutional arrangements in order to curb corruption and enhance their capacity to fight organised crime.

South Africa believes that international cooperation in combating transnational organised crime, should take place at all levels of cooperation, namely international, regional, bilateral as well as amongst various roleplayers within national jurisdiction.

My delegation is also cognisant of other international instruments that have a bearing on the fight against organised crime, particularly the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. We would encourage States that have not ratified this Convention, to do so, and those which have already ratified to establish appropriate domestic procedures for its implementation. In this regard we also welcome the various regional instruments and initiatives on corruption such as

the OECD Convention on Bribery of Public Officials as well as the recent initiatives in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to develop regional arrangements and instruments on corruption, extradition and mutual legal assistance . In respect of the latter we are convinced that these will make it difficult for criminals to seek shelter in the neighbouring States. We are hopeful that the final adoption of the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime will reinforce this initiative.

We are also of the view that while cooperation needs to be strengthened at the level of extradition and mutual legal assistance, other forms of cooperation need to be given equal emphasis. The exchange of intelligence on organised crime is of crucial importance. This should also include the exchange of technical know-how in the field of communications, electronic surveillance and building of intelligence databases. To effectively combat money-laundering the establishment of financial intelligence centres is indispensable. We also call on the international community to assist the various regional initiatives that are currently taking place to fight organised crime.

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) context we have already reaped the benefits of a regional police cooperation arrangements between eleven Southern African countries particularly in the form of joint investigations and operations. In addition to the SADC Protocol on the Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking initiatives are underway to develop a regional instrument to combat the illicit trafficking of firearms. We have also entered into a number of bilateral agreements some of which are beginning to yield results especially in the area of trafficking in firearms and judicial cooperation.

Mr Chairman, Equal emphasis and attention should be given to domestic efforts to combat organised crime. While States should be encouraged to ratify and adopt appropriate national legislation, it may be necessary to augment national capacities to adequately detect and prosecute crimes. This can only be achieved if national institutions dealing with law enforcement and administration of criminal justice generally are given adequate expertise and the requisite infrastructure to enable them to meet the challenges posed by organised crime.

My delegation is aware of other initiatives that are currently taking place at an international level, more particularly, the current elaboration of the draft United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols. We believe that this is an important and significant development in the collective effort to fight organized crime. At the same time we are of the view that this effort must take cognizance of the inequalities that exist amongst and within States and seek to augment the capacity of all countries to effectively fight organised crime including corruption. We believe that the measures to fight organised crime must also address the social and economic environment which usually encourages the emergence of organised crime. While we accept that some of the crimes cannot be attributed to economic inequalities, there is little doubt that in a number of instances they are related to poverty and social deprivation, it is therefore imperative that social and economic programmes be initiated, not only to monitor the fight against crime, but also to ensure that the root causes that underly organised crime are addressed effectively. However, while there is still considerable work to be done before the finalisation of the Convention and its Protocols, my delegation believes that the urgency to finalise this instrument as a weapon against organised crime is very crucial. In the meantime States should be encouraged to review their domestic and regional institutional arrangements and legal instruments to give effect to the Convention

and its Protocols. Similarly, Mr Chairman, the effect of the fight against organised crime would be significantly enhanced by greater exchange of experience and research.

This high-level segment is a unique feature in the history of the UN Crime Congresses, as it brings together the more senior leadership from Member States. My delegation believes that through this segment we will be able to give political direction and impetus to the current drafting of the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols.

Mr Chairman,

South Africa would be remiss if it did not commend the United Nations Centre for Drug Control and Crime Prevention for its work under the leadership of Prof Arlacchi. I would like to pledge my country's continued support as well as thanking the donor countries for supporting the Centre and to also appeal to all of us to strengthen our efforts to empower the Centre to meet the ever-expanding mandates it has to execute.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, The Political Declaration to be endorsed by this segment offers an opportunity in crafting guidance on the best possible way forward. Through this Declaration, we will be sending a message of resolve to say that as much as the criminals have globalised their efforts we too are determined to strengthen our global efforts against crime. This is a fight we cannot lose, a fight we will not lose.

Mr Chairman, I thank you.