

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE.BABOUCARR JATTA
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE INTERIOR &
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
ELEVENTH UN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL
JUSTICE
BANGKOK, THAILAND
18TH - 25TH APRIL 2005**

**Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen**

On the outset I wish to congratulate you and through you the UNODC and the Government and people of the kingdom of Thailand for the excellent preparations and conduct of this Congress.

I also wish to register with the Government and people of Thailand my delegation's profound thanks and appreciation of the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful country.

This Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice could not have come at a better time, when the stakes are higher and the calls for concerted effort and closer cooperation keep echoing along the corridors of power across the world.

Mr. President

The Gambia's position on the fight against Transnational Organized Crime and Corruption in all their forms remains steadfast and unwavering. Accordingly, we join the voices of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China in respect of their positions on theme of this Congress.

Mr. President

The Gambia has signed and ratified all the relevant United Nations Conventions and Protocols. We have signed and ratified the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air Ports; and the Protocol against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking of Firearms.

Equally, The Gambia has undertaken recent interventions and initiatives in respect of the the war on Transnational Organized Crime and Corruption and their attendant consequences.

In keeping with its resolve to combat Corruption, Economic and Financial Crimes, the Gambia Government issued ten years earlier, the Economic Crimes (specified Offences) Decree of 1994 which is a legislative measure to combat corruption in both public and private offices. Many people have been tried and convicted under this decree including very prominent people in Government and the Private Sector.

Recognising the close relationship between organised crime, drugs, corruption and terrorism, the Gambia enacted the Drug Control Act in 2003. A National Drug Enforcement Agency was established as the lead agency to address narcotics drugs use and its illicit trafficking. Significant siezures have been effected since the establishment of this Agency.

Similarly, the Gambia criminalised money-laundering, given its close relationship with terrorism, organised crime and drugs. A Money-laundering Act was passed in the National Assembly in 2002 to ensure that the Gambia is not a safe haven for money-laundering and drug barons.

Mr. President

Some provisions of the optional Protocols against Trafficking in Persons have been incorporated into the Children's Bill, which is in an advanced preparatory stage of enactment into Law.

Similarly, provisions of the Transnational Organized Crime Convention are also incorporated in the Drug Control Act of 2003 and the Money-Laundering Act of 2002 in compliance with Articles 5, 6 and 7 of this UN Convention.

In pursuance of its commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms, shapes and attributes, The Gambia enacted the Anti-terrorism Act of 2003 which is mainly a legislation against financing of terrorism. The said Act incorporates some of the terrorism offences set forth in the 12 Universal Legal Instruments of the United Nations.

Last year, the Gambia Government set up an Anti-Corruption Commission with a view to investigate the conduct, activities and life styles of public officials who may likely abuse or misuse their public offices for personal gains.

A total number of 137 public officials were investigated and all those found to have abused their offices in one way or the other, were ordered to pay back to Government the monies involved or in default, have their assets and properties forfeited to the State in addition to long term jail sentences.

Consequently, significant recoveries were made in terms of Assets and Properties, monies and other valuables. The Commission in itself serves as a deterrent against unscrupulous activities by public officials.

Furthermore, provisions in the Gambia Criminal Code, the main Penal Statute also address corruption in both the Public and Private Sectors.

In conclusion Mr. President, I am pleased to re-affirm the Gambia Government's commitment, support and cooperation in the global fight against Transnational Organized Crimes and Corruption and their attendant consequences.

In this regard, The Gambia calls for concerted efforts and closer cooperation among and between member states in this common and noble endeavor.

Thank you, Mr. President.
