

**COUNTRY REPORT TO THE
11^T UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS
ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

18 – 25 April 2005

Mr. President, I feel greatly honored to be afforded an opportunity to address this 11th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to preside over this session. May I also take this opportunity to thank the Thai Government for its warm welcome and hospitality. I would also like to thank the United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] in particular for the work it has put in, in preparing and organizing this Congress.

This Congress comes at a very important time when, worldwide, we have witnessed an increase in the commission of criminal activities of such serious nature that threaten the economic development of our countries.

The Congress therefore offers a most welcome forum for the exchange of important information on ways to combat and prevent crime. Zimbabwe welcomes the Congress as it provides an opportunity to reflect on what has been happening in the criminal justice sphere.

Mr. President, Zimbabwe fully appreciates the importance of international cooperation in fighting transnational organized crimes which will lead to a safe, secure and just, world for us all. Such cooperation must be built at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Recognizing the seriousness of transnational organized crimes, illicit drugs, money laundering, and arms trafficking, Zimbabwe has enacted laws that are aimed at combating and preventing these kinds of criminal activities and these are: -

- The Bank Use and Money Laundering Act [Chapter 24:24]
- Prevention of Corruption Act [Chapter 9:16]
- Criminal Matters (Mutual Assistance) Act [Chapter 9:06]
- Serious Offences (Confiscation of Profits) Act [Chapter 9:17] and
- The Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act [Chapter 9:07].

The offence of Money Laundering was created by section 63 of the Serious Offences (Confiscation of Profits) Act of 1990. The Act lays down two ways in which the offence may be committed. The first involves the transfer, directly or indirectly, to and from the country, of the proceeds of crime in whatever form. The second involves the acquiring, holding or dealing in tainted property. The last category of offences comprises serious narcotics offences.

On the issue of corruption Mr. President, Zimbabwe has put in place a Ministry of Anti-Corruption that deals specifically with all matters pertaining to corruption. Located within this Ministry is the Anti-Corruption Commission that can invoke wide-ranging powers of access and search in respect of matters falling under its jurisdiction.

The Anti-Corruption Commission's powers override bank secrecy or other grounds of non-disclosure. In addition, the Commission has the residual capacity to 'smoke out' those suspected of surviving on ill-gotten gains.

At the regional level, Mr. President, Zimbabwe as a member of the Southern African Development Cooperation has signed formal letters with member states to strengthen their coordination and partnership.

Zimbabwe has signed bilateral and multilateral agreements with other SADC countries in the fields of joint or multi cross border operations, extradition of offenders, and repatriation of exhibits, among others. Zimbabwe supports and promotes the harmonization of laws which deal with all serious crimes in the region.

The internationalization of terrorism shows that cooperation on a global level is a necessity. Mr. President, Zimbabwe reaffirms once again its willingness to intensify cooperation with all countries in the fight against terrorism. Information on the activities of the mercenaries was exchanged among different countries which include South Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe, leading to the arrest of the mercenaries in Harare (Zimbabwe).

Currently, we are proceeding with the drafting of relevant legislation known as the Suppression of Terrorism Bill of 2004, to cater for terrorist acts and to comply with the requirements of the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

Zimbabwe signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 12 December 2002.

May I inform you Mr. President, that Zimbabwe is also an active member of Interpol [in fact, the organization's sub-regional bureau is in Harare] and participates in all related Interpol activities.

In the criminal justice sphere, Zimbabwe has introduced a number of measures aimed at improving conditions in prison and introducing alternatives to custody.

Zimbabwe has since introduced a community service programme which has contributed significantly to the reduction of our prison population and has enhanced efforts aimed at achieving restorative justice.

The community service scheme has been very successful and I may mention that various community service programmes have been introduced in various countries using the scheme as a model. There is now consensus that the

programme facilitates a constant link between the prisoner and his or her family, thereby reducing stigmatization and family disintegration.

On access to justice, Zimbabwe has introduced legal aid to assist indigent offenders. In courts, accused persons have a right to **pro deo** representation. Further measures to ensure access to justice are being looked at.

The issue of victims of crime and juvenile justice is being attended to in the context of restorative justice. There is now realization that unless the interests of the victim are taken into account, justice can never be done in the true sense of the word.

In conclusion, Zimbabwe stands ready to play its part and cooperate in the fight against transnational organized crime. Zimbabwe will certainly be considering the possible ratification of all relevant conventions and protocols in this regard.

I THANK YOU.