TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES OF AFRICA (CISSA)
1-8 MAY 2013
HARARE, ZIMBABWE

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR RAMTANE LAMAMRA
AU COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
- President Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe,
- Honorable Ministers and Senior Officials of the Republic of Zimbabwe,
- Outgoing and incoming CISSA Chairpersons,
- Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa,
- Members of the Panel of Experts,
- Executive Secretary of CISSA and members of the Secretariat,
- Ambassadors,
- Dear Guests from Africa's friends and partners,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to convey to President Robert Mugabe the warm greetings of Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as well as AU's deep appreciation for his longstanding commitment to Pan-Africanism and the objectives of our Union. Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma deeply regrets that pressing commitments prevented her from being among us today. Indeed, as we gather here, she is briefing the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand on the state of our Union. She wishes to congratulate CISSA on the achievements recorded since its establishment, close to a decade ago, and encourages your Committee to pursue and deepen cooperation among the members of the African intelligence community, in support of the continent's efforts towards sustainable peace, security and stability.

The presence of President Mugabe at this opening ceremony is yet another clear demonstration of the commitment of the highest Zimbabwean authorities to cooperation endeavors in all areas of interest for our continent. As CISSA looks forward to the years ahead and ponders on how best it can contribute to the continent's quest of security in a rapidly changing environment, continued and enhanced support by all African governments will remain crucial.

I would like to congratulate the incoming Chairman of CISSA, Major-General Happyton Bonyongwe, Director-General of the Central Intelligence Organization of Zimbabwe. We, at the AU Commission, look forward to enhanced cooperation with CISSA during his tenure, within the framework of relevant AU policies. I wish to commend the outgoing Chairman of CISSA, Gen. Rachid Lallali, for the vision and strong leadership he has demonstrated over the past year, including the steps taken to strengthen collaboration with the AU Commission.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting is taking place amidst continued peace and security challenges on the continent. As Africa prepares itself to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, we need to take stock of what has been achieved over the past half a century, in order to chart the best way forward towards our stated objective of a conflict-free continent. In so doing, we have to be guided by the resolve, courage and sense of sacrifice that drove those African
leaders and martyrs who fought to free the continent from the yoke of colonialism and racial discrimination. Let me say here how indebted we are to President Mugabe, who made an outstanding contribution to the liberation of the continent.

Undoubtedly, significant progress has been recorded over the past two decades in the area of peace and security. Commendable strides have been made in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture. We have at our disposal a set of instruments relating to democracy, governance, human rights, disarmament and other issues upon which we can build to further structural conflict prevention and sustain peace where it has been achieved. On the ground, Africa is showing greater pro-activeness in dealing with conflict and crisis situations, with encouraging results.

Yet, we continue to face daunting challenges. For one, the progress made remains fragile, always at a risk of reversal, as illustrated by recent developments in Madagascar and in the disputed Territory of Abyei between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, among other examples. Conflict remains a painful reality in some parts of the continent. Africa continues to face the threat of unconstitutional changes of Government, the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims, and other threats, including terrorism, transnational organized crime, piracy and mercenary activities.

Our capacity to respond to urgent situations on the ground remains limited. The inability of the continent to intervene in Mali, in mid-January of this year, when the armed, terrorist and criminal groups launched an offensive against the Malian army, is quite symptomatic of our limitations. We had to rely on the French military intervention to head-off the then looming disaster. We all felt that this operation should and could have been undertaken by African troops.

This feeling was clearly expressed during the January summit of the AU. Our leaders thus requested the Commission to look at ways and means of expediting the operationalization of the African Standby Force, especially its Rapid Deployment Capability. Last week, the Commission submitted to the Ministers of Defense a report in which it proposed the establishment, as a transitional arrangement, of an African Immediate Response Capacity to Crises. We look forward to the urgent consideration of this proposal by member States and action-oriented decisions on the matter, where one can clearly see an important role to be played by CISSA.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen

The theme of this gathering - “The Nexus Between Africa’s Natural Resources, Development and Security” - is both relevant and timely. The interrelationship between natural resources, security and development has manifested itself in different ways over the past years.
Sovereignty over natural resources is an inalienable right of states and their peoples and, as such, must be harnessed in the interest of national development. It is an undeniable fact that these resources, if properly used, can contribute to making the 21st century Africa’s Century, especially given that our our continent is on the rise.

Regrettably, however, natural resources have been both a cause and fuel of violent conflict. Resources such as water and grazing land have and continue to cause inter-communal conflict. Similarly, real or perceived unequal distribution of natural resources has, in some instances, led to violent rebellions.

Mineral resources worth billions of dollars have fueled some of Africa’s most devastating and protracted wars, led to external interventions, enriched warlords, and paid for countless arms and ammunition that continue to circulate within the continent, claiming many more lives even long after these wars have ended. The horrific images of death and destruction of wars fueled by blood diamonds in West Africa are forever seared in our memories.

It is important to highlight that the challenges at hand also include timber and wildlife, which are negatively affected as a result of illegal logging and poaching, leading to deforestation and loss of biodiversity. Elephant populations in Africa, for example, continue to be under serious threat as the illegal trade in ivory grows. Fisheries also are under great strain as a result of overfishing by illegal foreign trawlers.

The problems relating to the illegal trade in wildlife and overfishing reflect how, in recent years and due to the growing forces of globalization, the nexus between natural resources and security has taken on a new dimension. Transnational organized criminal networks are becoming increasingly active in the illegal exploitation of our continent’s natural resources.

The environmental, humanitarian and socio-economic impact of illegal and unsustainable exploitation of all these natural resources, both during conflicts and in times of peace, has far-reaching consequences for the stability of entire parts of our continent.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenge here, which is not insurmountable, is how to ensure that our people benefit fully from the continent’s natural resources, and how to ensure that these resources enhance Africa's security.

These concerns are at the core of the Common African Defense and Security Policy, adopted by the Assembly of the Union, at an extraordinary session held in Libya, in 2004. The Policy recognizes that security is an indispensable condition for stability and development. It advances a definition of security that encompasses non-traditional threats and emphasizes human security.
Over the years, the continent has developed solid legal and political frameworks to ensure the sustainable and responsible exploitation of natural resources. Member States are also parties to international frameworks that aim to regulate and establish best practices in this regard.

In a spirit of shared responsibility and in recognition of the fact that the security of one state is inextricably linked to that of the other, we must spare no efforts to collectively address the problems related to the nexus between security, development and natural resources. We must address in earnest the challenges encountered in the implementation of commitments entered into by our member States. We must pool our efforts together, making full use of existing cooperative arrangements. We must build partnership with other members of the international community to further our agenda and the interests of our people.

The intelligence community has an important role to play in this regard. Indeed, it is well positioned to help in assessing the scope of the problem through effective information sharing, to raise awareness, and to mobilize Member States to effectively deal with the challenges associated with this phenomenon. I would like to take this opportunity to commend CISSA on the important work it is doing in exploring and addressing the linkage between natural resources, development and security in all contexts, in particular in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In conclusion, I would like to, once again, thank the Government, President and people of Zimbabwe for hosting this important gathering and for the warm welcome extended to us, in a true spirit of African hospitality and brotherhood.

While looking forward to President Mugabe's address to the meeting, I wish you every success in your deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.