

## The Eastern Africa Police Chiefs' Conference (EAPCCO),

Bwawani hotel Zanzibar on the 19th August, 2002

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Opening speech by hon. Shamsi Vuai Nahodha,  
chief minister of the revolutionary government of Zanzibar

Honourable Mohammed Seif Khatib, Minister for Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania,  
Honourable Frank Mugambage, Commissioner General of Rwanda Police and the Outgoing Chairman of the EAPCCO,  
Honourable Grace Oyebola Adetula Fracan Union - Addis Ababa,  
Honourable Reycharad Abdool, Expert from UNDCP - Demand Reduction,  
Honourable Lt. Col. (Rtd) Jan Kamenju from Security Research and Information Center - Nairobi,  
Honourable Virginia Gamba, Director Safer Africa-Pretoria,  
Distinguished Delegates from EAPCCO member states,  
Invited Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

**Mr. Chairman**, May I take this opportunity, first of all, to extend my heartfelt gratitude and a sense of appreciation, to the organizers of this august gathering for inviting me to officiate at the opening ceremony of this meeting here in Zanzibar.

Secondly, may I take this opportunity as well, on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government and the people of Zanzibar, to extend our warm welcome to you especially for those who come to Zanzibar for the first time.

**Mr. Chairman**, May I also take this opportunity to register my sincere thanks to the conference organizers for choosing Zanzibar as venue for 5th annual meeting. The choice of Zanzibar as the venue of your meeting will give you an opportunity to learn the culture and history of the Islands. Therefore, I would request you during your own leisure time, to take a walk around and explore the beauty of these Spice Islands and enjoy the hospitality of the Zanzibaris. It is my belief that the authorities and people of Zanzibar will be very much pleased to meet all of you and extend helping hands to you.

**Mr. Chairman**, I am informed that this conference has drawn participants from a cross section of distinguished personalities from, within and outside the Eastern Africa Region. In due respect therefore, I believe that in your three days meeting here, you will deliberate on serious issues pertaining to security, development and welfare of the people of our region.

The importance of this meeting cannot be over emphasized. We are well aware that Transnational Organized Crimes or cross-border Crimes, as they are commonly known, pose a threat to the security of the region. Wars and civil strifes in the world, and more particularly in the Africa continent, have compounded a hostile and violent environment. These conflicts have led to the loss of lives of innocent people, the destruction of property and infrastructure. Consequently, Africa and Eastern Africa Region have been left with a countless number of orphans, hungry people and poor infrastructure. In this regard, therefore, our region has become unsafe place for foreign investment.

For so long some governments in our region have been using our meager resources to purchase lethal weapons instead of improving the living standard of our people. At the global level, various efforts have been made by government leaders, Religious leaders and Institutions, non-governmental organizations and peace loving individuals to redress the situation. But, in order to address this problem effectively, there must be a political will to maintain peace and stability.

This forum indeed comprises personalities who have this political will to sacrifice themselves for the sake of peace of our region. In this respect, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of your respective governments, institutions and all peace-loving people to congratulate you for your efforts to preserve peace and security in our region.

**Mr. Chairman**, it is important to note that criminality has developed into an international phenomenon just as globalisation has. This in turn, creates a big challenge for us to fight the threat of peace. Given the nature and magnitude of criminality our governments should work jointly to contain it because we can no longer afford to face our common enemy.

To specific let us take a look at what the European Countries are doing. It is an open secret that these countries are far better than we are in terms of resources and technology. However, they are trying to maintain their security collectively. If the stronger are joining forces to fight their common enemy what should the weak nations do? As the English proverb goes; **'If gold rusts what will iron do?'**

I know all our countries share similar problems in our endeavours. We all lack skilled manpower, modern equipments to cope with new techniques of criminal offences. Thus, it is only through our joint and collaborated efforts we could fight our common enemy. From that angle, it is also easy to convince donor countries to support our collective efforts rather than expecting them to direct their resources in helping individual nations for the same thing.

**Mr. Chairman**, I am further informed that, your three days meeting will deliberate on various ways and means of fighting transnational organized crimes in our region. I am highly encouraged that you have decided to take this item in board. Your decision to discuss the crime issues in our region brings, once again, a sense of hope and confidence from our people whose lives and safety of their properties depend on your effectiveness.

I believe that the most important thing is not the discussion of your agenda but rather it is the resolutions of your previous meetings and those emanating from today's conference. Let's remember that unimplemented resolutions, which remain on bookshelves, would always render the whole purpose of our meeting useless. I therefore, strongly urge you to assess and review your past resolution, with a view to identify any gaps and weaknesses that prevail before embarking on the new ones.

**Mr. Chairman**, Our region has been a victim of endless wars and civil strives for some decades now. These have resulted into our present predicament of underdevelopment. We have seen refugees moving from one country to another looting and committing all sorts of crime on their way. The people who live along our borders are the witnesses of our environment degradation caused by reckless felling of trees in refugees camps. In this connection I would also request you to honestly and freely discuss in detail refugees related problems, in this part of Africa and come up with workable recommendations to resolve them. You have to support all initiatives taken by the African Union heads of states whose purpose was to create a smooth working environment for various agencies like this one, to work jointly to promote development of our people.

**Mr. Chairman**, the refugees problem is not the only challenge facing our regional peace and security. We have other disturbing issues such as illicit narcotics and small arms trafficking, forgery of travelling documents, the counterfeit of currencies, computer frauds, smuggling of crops like cloves and spices, cattle rustling, motor vehicle thefts, piracy and other forms of banditry activities committed inside our enormous borders. These erode the confidence of our people towards their law enforcement organs and at times, against their governments. Our people are made to live under great fear, helplessness and

insecurity. As a result they are some times forced to abandon their production activities and hence increase poverty and backwardness.

It is my sincere belief that, you will seriously examine the trends of organized crimes and come up with new strategies on how best to combat them. Our people's eyes and ears are bestowed on you, and they are very optimistic that at the end of your deliberations here, you will come up with coherent strategies on how best to tackle this problem and improve the situation not only in Tanzania but also throughout the Region. On behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and on my own behalf, I wish to promise you of our relentless support in all your endeavours and deliberations.

**Mr. Chairman**, Once again, |I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of this important meeting for inviting me to officiate at its opening and avail me an opportunity to share my views and experiences with you. I wish you stimulating and fruitful discussions.

With these remarks Mr. Chairman, I now have the honour of declare this meeting officially opened.

Thank you very much for listening.