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**AMBASSADOR FRANCISCO CAETANO MADEIRA**

**Address at the Seventh Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,**

I feel immensely honored to address this Sixth Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards. I want to thank the ICAO Secretary General and his collaborators for having, as we mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11, created a space for us to exchange views and look into how effective we have been in strengthening border control and surveillance, preventing and combating terrorism and related trans border crimes through MRTDs and links with aviation security.

It goes without saying that terrorism and related crimes remain some of the most serious threats to international peace and security nowadays. Recent terrorist attacks across the world remind us of the actuality of this fact and of the urgent need for us to continue revisiting, perfecting and strengthening our security mechanisms and methods of work, sharpening our security focus and tightening our ranks in order to prevail in the global fight against Terrorism and its associated scourges

The African Union, as the main coordinating body of the regional effort against terrorism, is very conscious of its critical role in the world complex and interconnected security system. The African Continent was amongst the first to wake up to the need for a global and coordinated answer to the threat of terrorism: Confronted with different forms of extremism, including religious extremism and intolerance, witnessing the threat that terrorism posed to the survival of fragile democratic regimes on the continent, faced with the massive loss of life and property in the 1988 terrorist attacks of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, our organization recognized, very early, the destructive effects of terrorism and the obstacle it poses to development and stability on the continent. It reaffirmed its unequivocal rejection of terrorism and, in July 1999, long before the events of 9/11, it adopted a continentally binding Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. This was followed by other binding instruments to reinforce its counter-terrorism strategy, including resolutions, declarations, the 2002 plan of action and the 2004 Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

To ensure the operationalization of the objectives contained in these instruments, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

(ACSRT) was established as a structure of the AU Commission and the Peace and Security Council with the responsibility of centralizing counter terrorism information and sharing it with member states, carrying out studies, research and analyses on terrorism and terrorist groups and related activities, and enhancing the scientific, technical and operational capacity of member states through training programs, symposia and seminars.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa remains one of the most vulnerable continents to terrorism and other types of organized criminality, and the least equipped to confront them successfully. The same applies in relation to civil aviation security.

Endemic poverty, underdevelopment, massive unemployment, social exclusion, institutional weaknesses, porous borders, problematic distribution of wealth, questionable governance, and the inability of states to control their vast territories, are natural ingredients for insecurity, lawlessness, extremism, alienation and radicalization. These factors are making of our continent an irresistible attraction for Alqaida Central, Aqmi, Alshabaab, Boko Haram, and important drug cartels of Latin America who are ruthlessly exploiting them to their advantage.

Most of these problems are structural and profoundly interrelated. To address them properly, there is a need to strike a balance between activities aimed at reinforcing security and those directed to development.

Effective counter terrorism action aims at eliminating the causes of terrorism as well as at preventing terrorists from successfully carrying out their activities and, in case they may do so, the ability to limit the damage after an attack has occurred. This requires considerable resources and the convergence of likeminded institutions specialized in different aspect of the counter-terrorism action. In such a situation, cohesion, harmonization, coordination and cooperation among all these institutions and networks become indispensable. This is best assured by a central coordination structure which sees to it that the activity of each player remains within the framework and strategic vision adopted at the outset, ensures coherence between intelligence, policy and operation and provides direction to all parties involved. This is the approach that informs member states and the Regional Economic Communities' action on the counter- terrorism front in the African Continent as they try, with many

difficulties, to make true their primary responsibility for the practical implementation of the African Union Counter-terrorism strategy. The Commission's role is to galvanize the implementation process by ensuring direction, coordination, coherence and monitoring, providing support, expertise and training; advocacy, information, studies, research, and a platform for counter-terrorism intellectual debate.

In this context, the AU Commission has been urging member states and regional economic Communities to adopt, as a matter of urgency, comprehensive national and regional counter terrorism strategies and implementation mechanisms based on the 1999 OAU convention, the protocol there to, the 2002 Plan of Action and relevant UN counterterrorism instruments including the UN Global counter terrorism strategy;

Among the mechanisms to be put in place it is strongly recommended that at the national and regional levels, structures in the form of fusion centers be set up to ensure coordination and coherence and the sharing of knowledge and much needed operational information among national institutions involved, bilaterally between neighboring countries and at the regional level.

Some countries and regions have already put these structures in place and the results are very encouraging.

To enhance counter terrorism co-ordination, cohesion and co-operation, the AU chairperson has appointed a Special Representative for counter terrorism cooperation who is also the director of the ACSRT. This position allows for the harnessing of synergies in the counterterrorism effort and a greater interaction with different stakeholders, providing a stronger platform for cooperation and collaboration in partnership building, the launching and implementation of joint initiatives with relevant national and regional entities, and the promotion of comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses, to terrorism.

To provide member states with a harmonized counter terrorism legal framework, the AUC has adopted a Counter terrorism Model Law. The main purpose of the African Counter -Terrorism Model Law is to promote national implementation of the continental and international instruments for the enhancement of global security, prevention and combating of terrorism. It is supposed to serve as a template that guides Member States in developing, strengthening and updating their existing national laws to better meet their

security needs and their international and regional obligations on counter terrorism matters.

An important innovation in the model Law is the criminalization of the payment of ransom as a way to deny terrorists an important source of funding and reduce the appeal of kidnapping for ransom.

In our continued effort to enhance the Africa's legal framework and judicial capacity, the Commission is working on developing a list of terrorist individuals, groups and entities in addition to the elaboration of an African Arrest Warrant and Model Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Agreements.

Your Excellencies,

The African Center for the Study and research on terrorism has, over the past six months, visited and audited a number of African countries most affected by active terrorism and held substantial, frank and very fruitful discussions at the technical and political levels with the government authorities in these countries. The center was able to witness in practice the unreserved commitment and the unqualified effort these countries are making to get better organized, to set up recommended structures and mechanisms and to effectively prevent and combat terrorism and transnational organized crime within their national borders, regionally and internationally. They have all signed and ratified all AU and most universal counter terrorism instruments, the Chicago Convention and those directed to fighting drug trafficking, hijacking, money laundering and other organized crimes. They have all adhered to the UN global counter- terrorism strategy. They consider it their strategy and are committed to its success. They are fully aware that, when it comes to civil aviation, the level of security worldwide is directly related to the corresponding level of security in their regions and in each one of their respective countries. They know that they are responsible and accountable for security in their individual territories and are judiciously using their meager resources to fulfill their obligations. They are very aware of their limitations and believe that they and the African continent, can best contribute to raising the level of security in the continent and around the world by cooperating in identifying common problems and establishing common goals. They are of the view that effectiveness is in direct relation to the scope and depth of regional and international cooperation and cohesiveness.

It was at the implementation level that we encountered major challenges: With very few exceptions, these countries' action to counter-terrorism, organized

crime and ensure the strict implementation of ICAO's standards and recommendations in civil aviation security is faced with serious underfunding problems and general lack of resources, blatant shortage of equipment and tools and an acute shortage of qualified and skilled personnel, particularly in the critical sectors of "enhancing awareness to counter radicalization and extremism", "de-radicalization", "intelligence collection, analysis and evaluation", drug trafficking, money laundering "protection of strategic installations, sensitive sites and the VIPs"; "border security and management"; "detection and neutralization of explosives"; "law enforcement; the judiciary" respect of human rights for all, the rule of law and in the establishment of "properly functioning intervention units.

The lack of equipment, human and financial resources, makes the result of their effort quite inadequate. Most of them are unable to acquire and maintain technologically advanced security and surveillance systems. Most African states can't afford advanced security technologies and intelligence databases necessary to avert terrorist infiltration and action within their borders. It simply means that these countries are not in a position to meet the challenges posed by new and emerging threats to civilian aviation.

Capacitating Africans to competently and capably carry out the responsibility of fighting terrorism and strictly comply with the ICAO standards and recommendation practices in their own continent and countries, is the most efficient and proper way to enhance the implementation of the Global counterterrorism Strategy. This calls for a concerted, robust, customized, workable, and result oriented response to the above mentioned challenges.

Together with the provision of resources and equipment the following activities could also be jointly envisaged:

- The promotion and facilitation of cooperation among existing aviation training centers
- The development of a framework for closer cooperation and harmonization of training requirements; as well as standardization and quality assurance;
- The formation of a working group of training experts to define a master plan for harmonization of training in Africa;

- Development of ability to work together to overcome the deficiency in the availability of properly trained and qualified aviation personnel in Africa including the ability to attract recruits and retain qualified personnel;
- The need to streamline capacity building programs with the objective of minimizing redundancies and rationalizing donor funds .This could be better achieved through better coordination between ICAO, the African Union and the African Civil Aviation Commission in liaison and collaboration with CTED and Interpol. This collaboration should also be able to enhance information exchange on security matters in order to allow an early detection and dissemination of information on security threats to civil aviation;

On the international context the African Union aims to systematically strengthen its collaboration with ICAO in the promotion of the goals contained in a number of African declarations concerning Civil aviation Safety by:

- Promoting Joint activities at the regional and international levels to support the development of institutional capacity for civil aviation security;
- Undertaking significant and coordinated outreach actions with the states which are party to the Chicago Convention to improve security measures, methods and security frameworks;
- Promoting effective application of ICAO Standards and recommended practices and the development of capacity to correct identified deficiencies;
- Developing a framework to enable the sharing of information among concerned stakeholders, on the evaluations and audits undertaken.

Clearly, the role of Africa's Regional and sub-Regional Organizations in rendering more effective aviation security mechanisms and enhancing international counter terrorism cooperation is fundamental and the need for them to be properly supported remains paramount. Properly skilled and better equipped, our Regional Organization and its individual member states can ensure that whatever is being done in civil aviation on the ground at the sub-regional and member state levels in Africa, results in an effective application of

ICAO Standards and recommended practices and that capacity is available to correct deficiencies whenever these are identified Thank you.