STATEMENT

BY

THE HONOURABLE
NENEH MACDOUALL GAYE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE THIRTEENTH (13TH) UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

12th-14th April 2015 Doha, Qatar
Madam Chairperson
Your Excellencies
Distinguished delegates

Please allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the government of the State of Qatar for extending an invitation to me and my delegation to attend this important Congress and also to thank them for the hospitality accorded to us. May I take this opportunity to congratulate His Royal Highness H E Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani for his election as Congress President.

Indeed, today the rate of crime and crime related activities is unprecedented and this is attributable to a number of reasons hence the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) taking the lead to ensure an effective and efficient criminal justice system and respect for the rule of law as guaranteed by our respective legislations. The respect for the rule of law is a precondition to socio economic development as it strengthens human rights and promotes democracy.

The 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held in Doha this year will no doubt be a major milestone in fostering cooperation amongst states in their drive towards a more comprehensive and dynamic criminal justice system and crime prevention mechanism.

The Gambia for her part has adopted successful crime prevention and criminal justice policies and strategies geared towards promoting the
rule of law and in accordance with the laws of the country. As part of our strategies towards crime prevention nationally, the government of The Gambia has introduced community policing in which members of the community are invited to give information to security agencies particularly the police and this has proved to be very effective in the detection and swift apprehension of offenders.

The government of The Gambia would like to reiterate its commitment to creating a vibrant criminal justice system through the courts established under the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia.

Madam Chairperson

In recent times human trafficking, a transnational crime has been very high on many nations agenda and the Gambia decisively continuing its fight against human trafficking, inter alia, enacted the Trafficking in Persons Act in 2007, by virtue of its membership in the PALERMO Protocol and thereby further supplementing the efforts of United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime which is meant to prevent, suppress and punish traffickers.

Also, the Trafficking in Persons Act of the Gambia is a comprehensive piece of legislation and provides for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of offenders. It also provides for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims back to society. Indeed we all do realize that trafficking in persons being a transnational organized crime calls for the collaborative efforts among countries in the area of information sharing, investigation and prosecution in order to combat the menace.
In recognition of this fact, the government of The Gambia through the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons has signed memoranda of understanding with some countries within the region. Negotiations are also ongoing with other countries beyond the African region for the signing of bilateral agreements in the fields of cooperation and information sharing to combat transnational organized crime.

In December 2001, the authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS issued a political declaration against trafficking in persons within the region and also adopted an initial plan of action further calling on member states to put in place specific measures to combat the menace of human trafficking. Similarly in 2009, a regional policy on protection and assistance to victims of trafficking in West Africa was adopted by Ministers of ECOWAS member countries.

Madam Chairperson

Your Excellencies

International drug crimes, terrorism and other ills of society require strong partnerships, collaboration and cooperation if the battle is to be won.

Recently, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had proposed a memorandum of understanding with the Gambia’s security institutions on the establishment of a real time operational communication between international airports in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.
This agreement aims to address drug crimes in said international airports. The selected airports are all transatlantic cocaine trafficking networks.

I must emphasize that partnership collaboration and cooperation are central to my government’s commitment to combat these ills. The transnational character of these crimes demands that all nations work together in an aggressive effort to not only counter but to prevent these barbaric assaults against human rights and human dignity. Without peace and security there can be no development which we owe to ourselves and our future generation.

In conclusion therefore we hope that this forum will serve to strengthen cooperation in combating transnational organized crimes.

Thank you for your kind attention