



Statement by *Gladice Pickering, Deputy Executive Director – Ministry of Justice, Republic of Namibia,*

UNCAC Conference of States Parties, Abu Dhabi, 16 December 2019

Mr. President,

Firstly, Namibia would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and other officers on your election for this 8th session of the Conference of States Parties. We would further like to appreciate the United Arab Emirates, particularly the city of Abu Dhabi, for their warm hospitality and the efficiency with which they have dealt with the conference modalities, especially the visa services.

Mr. President,

Namibia reiterates its support for the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. We are particularly supportive of the objectives of the Convention insofar as *prevention* of corruption is concerned. There is ample evidence that, whilst corruption can be prosecuted after the fact, it is paramount that States focus on preventive measures first and foremost. Namibia also acknowledges that our positive duties as a State Party include ensuring that our public services are subject to safeguards that promote efficiency, transparency and recruitment based on merit. We further acknowledge that it is our duty to ensure that those who are occupy positions of trust should have unblemished reputations, and retain public confidence in relation to their suitability to exercise public powers.

Mr. President,

Whilst implementation of the Convention Against Corruption remains a very high priority for Namibia, it is true that we, like many countries present here, continue to struggle with the Convention's substantive realization domestically.

Namibia has passed Whistle Blower Protection as well as Witness Protection legislation in 2017 and we are now in the process of progressively putting structures in place to operationalize this legislation. We have also passed significant amendments to our International Cooperation in Criminal Matters Act, as well as our Extradition Act, which aims to enhance our ability to cooperate with other states. In light of this, we value the implementation review process and have consistently participated to ensure the success of this process. We will continue to do so and look forward to our next review as a State.

Mr. President,

It would be remiss if we failed to address the recent uncovering of a deplorable, high profile corruption case in the Namibian fishing industry. Plundering of our national wealth has been revealed and alleged to have been perpetrated through collusion between politicians and well-connected business people from within and outside Namibia. This ongoing case has led to the biggest corruption and money laundering investigation that Namibia has witnessed since Independence; this case will certainly test our abilities and indeed our determination in fighting corruption. However, Namibia has in place well functioning systems, processes and institutions, and remains steadfast in rooting out corruption. We have confidence in the strength and independence of our judiciary, anti-corruption commission, Financial Intelligence Centre and prosecutorial service; we know that Namibia will emerge stronger and wiser from this devastating tragedy. Our resources are desperately needed to enhance the socio-economic living conditions of our people. Namibia remains determined to ensure that our population, especially those most affected by poverty, righteously and equitably benefit from our rich mineral and marine resources. We have the proven political will and intention to work against the diversion of public resources into private hands. Namibia calls upon Multinational Companies to refrain from becoming involved in the looting of our national resources, and in giving bribes with the intention of increasing their own profits from such resources.

Mr. President,

In this regard, Namibia extends gratitude to those States and institutions that are willing to work with us to get to the bottom of the case to allow the criminal process to be completed. Namibia also appreciates the UNODC and other friendly States and institutions for their unwavering support in creating networks and building bridges. It is with your support and assistance that Namibia will eradicate the scourge of corruption.

We look forward to the discussions and sharing of information during this week and wish this esteemed Conference success.

I thank you.