



***OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HON. LOIDE KASINGO, MP AT THE WORKSHOP ON THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS, 7-8 MARCH, 2013, PARLIAMENT OF NAMIBIA, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA***

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES,*

*HONOURABLE LAMINE M. THIAM MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM SENEGAL, MEMBER OF ECOWAS PARLIAMENT, CONVENOR OF PGAS PEACE & DEMOCRACY PROGRAMME,*

*HONOURABLE MEMBERS FROM THE PARLIAMENTS OF COTE D'IVOIRE, LIBERIA, MALAWI, GHANA, SOUTH AFRICA, TOGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, MAURITANIA, SIERRA LEONE, UGANDA AND FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF TANZANIA,*

*HON. MEMBERS FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF NAMIBIA,*

*YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. ONNO HUCKMANN, AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY TO NAMIBIA,*

*OFFICIALS FROM THE PGA SECRETARIAT AND FROM OUR OWN PARLIAMENT,*

*MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA,*

*LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,*

*IT GIVES ME PLEASURE TO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL PARTICIPANTS TO THIS VERY IMPORTANT WORKSHOP ON THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS, THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS. I AM ALSO PLEASED THAT, THE SECRETARIAT OF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION HAD CHOSEN OUR PARLIAMENT TO HOST THIS WORKSHOP AND ALSO GLAD THAT SOME MPS FROM COUNTRIES THAT PRODUCE SMALL AND LIGHT WEAPONS INCLUDING THE MANUFACTURING OF AMMUNITIONS ARE HERE WITH US AT THIS WORKSHOP.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONY AND FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*THIS WORKSHOP COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A BETTER OPPORTUNITY, AS IT IS BEING HELD RIGHT ON THE HEELS OF OR IS PRECEDING THE 'LAST' UNITED NATION CONFERENCE ON THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS, TO BE HELD AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, IN NEW YORK, FROM 18-28 MARCH 2013.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONY, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A NUMBER OF CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETING HAD BEEN HELD BEFORE THIS ONE. ALL OF THEM HAVE SO FAR NOT PRODUCED THE REQUIRED AGREEMENT. NAMIBIA IS EQUALLY CONCERN, WITH THE IMPACT, THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS, LIGHT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION HAS ON THE SOCIETIES OF NON-PRODUCING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS SUCH AS, HEALTH, EDUCATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, SECURITY, ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN AMONGST MANY OTHERS.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONY, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*ARTICLE 96 OF THE NAMIBIAN CONSTITUTION COMMITS THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE TO THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. NAMIBIA IS CONVINCED THAT POOR REGULATION IN THE GLOBAL TRADE IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS AND AMMUNITION, FUELS CONFLICTS IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD, LEADING TO POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONY, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*THEREFORE, THE EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS AS ENVISAGED IN AN ARMS TRADE TREATY, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION AND SUSTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. NAMIBIA THEREFORE ENVISAGES A TREATY THAT IS OF GLOBAL REACH, LEGALLY BINDING, AND COMPREHENSIVE IN ITS SCOPE AND CRITERIA. THESE ELEMENTS ARE ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL FOR AN EFFECTIVE ARMS TRADE TREATY.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*THE PROGRAMME FOR THE WORKSHOP HAS BEEN DESIGNED SO AS TO PROVIDE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERACTIVE AND FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS SPREAD OVER FOUR SESSIONS. THE HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTS GATHERED HERE, HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE REALIZATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE ARMS TRADE TREATY THAT TAKES AND ADDRESSES THE INTERESTS OF ALL STATE BIG AND SMALL, YOUNG AND OLD, DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED AND INDUSTRIALIZED AND UNINDUSTRIALIZED.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*AS MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR PEOPLE, WE HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN OVERSEEING THE*

*ENACTMENT AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION LEGISLATION THAT WILL PREVENT AND COMBAT THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS. WE ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ALL AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS THAT WILL BE ADOPTED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOMESTICATED IN ORDER TO THEM A LOCAL CONTENT.*

*DIRECTOR OF CEREMONY, FELLOW PARTICIPANTS,*

*WE AS, MPS KNOWING VERY WELL THE UNTOLD SUFFERINGS OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH CAUSED BY THESE SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS, WHEN IN WRONG HANDS, WILL HAVE TO MAKE SURE TO LOBBY OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS I.E. LOCAL SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL CONTINENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL. WE SHOULD AND MUST CONTINUOUSLY INFORM AND EDUCATE THE MASSES OF OUR PEOPLE ABOUT DANGER POSED BY ILLEGAL TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AS THEY ARE THE VICTIMS. WE SHOULD AND MUST MAKE SURE THAT PUNITIVE MEASURES ARE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE, WHO MAKE THEMSELVES OF VIOLATING THE TREATY ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS ONCE IT HAS BEEN ADOPTED, RATIFIED AND DOMESTICATED INTO OUR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL LAWS.*

*HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND YOUR EXCELLENCIES,*

*THOUGH FORMAL AGREED CONCLUSIONS ARE NOT AN OBJECTIVE FOR THIS WORKSHOP, I HOPE THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL MAKE THE MOST OF THIS INFORMAL BUT INCLUSIVE SETTING FOR A FREE AND FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND CROSS FERTILIZATION OF IDEAS.*

*A WARM WELCOME AND HAPPY STAY IN WINDHOEK. ENJOY THE OPEN BLUE SKY.*

*IT IS NOW MY SINGLE HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THIS  
WORKSHOP OFFICIALLY OPEN*

*I THANK YOU!*