

**13th Commonwealth Regional Conference for Heads of Anti-Corruption
Agencies in Africa**

**Remarks by Dr Roger Koranteng, Head, Public Sector Governance,
Commonwealth Secretariat, UK**

Victoria, Seychelles

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Your Excellency, President Wavel Ramkalawan, The President of the Republic of Seychelles, Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, May De Silva, Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission Seychelles Ministers, Mr. Naadir Hassan, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Trade, Seychelles, Hon Ministers and senior Government Officials, Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, our partners - International Organisations, Distinguished Invited Guests, the press corps, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning.

Thank you all for honouring our invitation to be here with us today, and a deepest appreciation to the Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland, KC, Commonwealth Secretary-General, for managing against all odds to be with us and her team; Suresh Yadav, Deputy Head of Office, Secretary-General Office; and Amy Coles, Communication Officer, Media and Public Affairs, commonwealth Secretariat, United Kingdom.

It is always a joy to visit Seychelles, an archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean, It's home to numerous beaches, coral reefs and nature reserves, as well as rare animals such as giant Aldabra tortoises.

I can recall exactly 13 years ago when I sent invitation letters to all Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, inviting them to our very first conference at Phakalane Golf Estate Hotel in Gaborone, Botswana. That conference gave birth to our Association - the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, which inaugurated by the then President

of Botswana, H. E. Seretse Khama Ian Khama. Interestingly, the host of this first conference held in 2011, is the then Director-General of Botswana's Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime, Rose Nuhu Seretse who is here with us today.

The Commonwealth Secretariat over the past 13 years has taken the Association conferences to interesting places on the Continent, from Gaborone in Botswana, Livingstone, Victoria falls in Zambia, Port Louis in Mauritius, Accra in Ghana, Dar es Salam in Tanzania, Swakopmund in Namibia, Mangochi, Lake Malawi in Malawi, Federal Capital City Abuja in Nigeria, Kampala in Uganda, Kigali in Rwanda and presently we are in Seychelles. This indicates how far we how we have travelled, as a vibrant association which enabled to explore our own continent, even as we share experiences, best practices, and solutions in the fight against corruption.

It is instructive to note that, just as we started with President of Botswana opening our first conference, in almost all our conferences, we have been honoured to have the Presidents our countries to open our conferences. And therefore, we are again honoured to have HE the President of the Republic of Seychelles to be us this morning.

A significant part of the commonwealth's mandate is to help member countries face up to corruption and tackle its destructive impact. And here I quote, CHOGM 2015 Mandate which states that "Corruption is a significant challenge facing the world today. We agreed to work together to strengthen international, regional and national responses to corruption including through enhanced transparency and collaboration among Anti-Corruption Agencies. The Commonwealth Secretariat is doing important work to address corruption, and this should be strengthened in the future".

Our determination to build a long-standing support to our member countries led to the establishment of the regional network linking national agencies across Commonwealth Africa member countries. - the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa. The focus of the strategy is regional. since more can be achieved, and impact sustained, by working together.

Since the creation of the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa in 2011, the Association has provided a unique platform for sharing emerging practices and country innovations in the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance in Commonwealth Africa.

The Association has promoted collaboration and learning by brokering the exchange of best practices and helping to benchmark agencies' capabilities, while also facilitating peer reviews and secondments between members.

The regional network, or the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies, is built on the unquestioned Commonwealth comparative advantage in the development sphere – our convening power, the Commonwealth Secretariat's ability to bring people and countries together to share developmental experience and identify “best fit” solutions is the Commonwealth unique niche.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has worked to provide targeted assistance to Commonwealth nations. The Secretariat have been active in [providing practical training and development support](#) for national anti-corruption agencies.

This capacity building role was complimented and enhanced when on 25 February 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat, partnered the Government

of Botswana and established the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana, which reaffirms the Commonwealth's commitment to support members countries to fight corruption.

This week's conference offers an experience-sharing opportunity for all Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa to share innovative experience, and best practices and to learn from each other.

The general objective of the conference is to bring together Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, relevant international organisations, and partners to share and learn lessons for the fight against corruption.

To achieve this end, every Head of Anti-Corruption Agency has to present to the Conference an Innovative Project done in the fight against Corruption (success stories).

The conference will be enhanced the sharing of country, regional and international experiences by International Organisations and experts working in Africa and beyond. And, to offer Anti-Corruption Agencies opportunity for international collaboration and cooperation. There is no gainsaying that an effective approach to make institutions effective is to establish community of practice, build professional networks and create such opportunities for members to exchange best fit solutions.

In terms of the Conference overview, the conference programme is three parts - these are the opening ceremony. 3-day technical sessions, AGM, and of course the sight-seeing.

The opening ceremony set the tone for the conference as we receive a welcome message from our host, the Commissioner, Seychelles' Anti-Corruption Commission, The conference special guest address will be delivered by the Rt Hon. Secretary-General the Commonwealth. The

highlight of the conference will be the keynote address and declaration of the opening of the conference by H.E. President of the Republic of Seychelles. After which Executive Director, Economic and Organised Crimes Office, Ghana will honour us with the vote thanks.

The technical sessions will take 3 and half days, where the conference business will be conducted. These comprise of the country and expert presentations, questions and answer sessions, and networking during in and out of sessions. The topic to be presented include:

1. "Returning stolen assets to Seychelles and the government support in fighting corruption through ACCS funding.
2. "Best Practices in the Global Anti-Corruption Efforts: Lessons from the World Bank".
3. "International Asset Recovery: Challenges and Solutions"
4. Partnerships and the importance of long-term engagements
5. "The Central Bank's role as a regulator in identifying suspicious activity and ensuring the international standards in tackling money laundering are met".
6. "Role of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Managing Corruption"
7. "Eroding Public Trust and Confidence: Australian perspectives on corruption as a driver of democratic decline.
8. "Transnational Anti-Corruption Partnership with partner agencies in Africa".
9. The UK approach to investigating and prosecuting serious corruption.
10. Cybersecurity within ACCS and what our partners should do to protect themselves from cyber-attacks.
11. "Collaboration between forensic and insolvency practitioners in the cross-border fight against corruption
12. "Strategic Programming for ACAs to achieve measurable success"
13. "Transparency Initiative project in Fisheries off the east coast of Africa"
14. Due Diligence- A Tool for Corruption Prevention

15. "IACCC and how it can assist Commonwealth partners on international cooperation on Grand corruption investigations.

There will be individual country Anti-Corruption reports to complete the technical sessions.

Half of Day 4 is devoted to sightseeing and relaxation after week's hard work. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy, so there will be half day reserved for sight-seeing to explore the pristine beauty of Seychelles. Which I am enthusiastically looking forward to.

Day 5 will be the AGM. The AGM is the final part of the Conference programme where the Heads of ACAs will discuss issues of interest to Association, select the country to host the next conference. And issue the conference Communique.

At this juncture, I have the honour to thank you, Your Excellency, President Wavel Ramkalawan, The President of the Republic of Seychelles for finding time out your very busy schedule to open this Commonwealth regional conference this morning. Thanks for coming Sir.

The presence of Commonwealth Secretary-General at this meeting reaffirms her commitment to support member countries anti-corruption effort to root out systemic corruption at both national and international levels. She has never missed our annual conferences, no matter how tight her schedule is. She is keen and committed to assist the Anti-Corruption Agencies to achieve meaningful and long-lasting effort to combat corruption and to enhance good governance on the continent. SG on behalf of the ACAs, I thank you your dedication, commitment and continued support to Anti-Corruption effort in Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commissioner of ACC Seychelles May De Silva for your leadership and hands on approach to pull this conference off in most outstanding manner. Thank you, May, for being the driving force behind this conference.

I cannot conclude without acknowledging the efficient and effective work put together by the indefatigable team of Denise, Mark and Aurestina for leading the organisation of this conference. Right from last year's conference in Rwanda when Seychelles was tasked the possibility of hosting this year's conference, this dream team has worked with me day and night to deliver this conference. Aurestina, sorry for putting you under intense pressure sometimes. Your calm personality and composure is a blessing, I promised you I won't fight you again. Claudia, Lucy and Annah thank your for assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank you the Heads of ACAs, who have travelled from far and near to be here and have worked together to build this formidable community of practice in Africa. Our conference format is unique because I make sure every ACA do a presentation and chair sessions, everyone Agency is an active participant in our conferences and therefore the Association and its conferences ownership is unquestionable. My hope and prayer is that the Association will continue to grow from strength to strength as we strive to control and reduce corruption on our dear continent.

I look forward to an exciting conference.

I thank you.