



## **Seminar on Counter-Terrorism in Central Africa 26-28 May 2008 Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo**

The African Centre of Studies and of Research on the Terrorism (ACSRT) held a three-day seminar, on 26 - 28 May 2008 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo under the theme "Counter-Terrorism in Central Africa".

The seminar brought together ACSRT Focal Points in Central African countries, Regional Economic Communities, Economic Community of Central Africa states (ECCAS) and the Common Market for Eastern, Southern Africa (COMESA), African experts from the Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gabon and Nigeria as well experts from the Kingdom of Belgium and the Commission of the European Union.

The seminar was an occasion to discuss threats and vulnerabilities of the terrorism phenomenon in the sub-region of Central Africa and also to examine ways to reinforce its capacity of counter terrorism in the context of the African Union Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (2002).

The opening ceremony was presided over by:

General of Division / Yvon Jacques NDOLOU, Minister to the Presidency, responsible for the National Defence, Former Fighters and the Mutilated of the War in Republic of the Congo;

Mr. Egidio De SOUSA SANTOS, Assistant of the General Secretary of ECCAS, Ambassador Boubacar GAOUSSOU DIARRA, Director of ACSRT.

General NDOLOU congratulated the initiative taken by the ACSRT for opportunely organizing this seminar, he prased as well the countries of the sub-region who have eventually confronted the terrorism challenge through putting in application several measures on the local and regional levels.

He also recalled the constant and indefectible engagement of His Excellency Mr. Denis SASSOU NGUESSO, President of the Republic of the Congo for a stable and secure Africa

Recognizing the numerous difficulties of counter terrorism which due especially to the multi-dimensional and cross-border character of terrorism; Mr. Egidio DA SOUSA expressed the wish for the quick achievement for a global adapted and coordinated response to overcome terrorism. He also underlined the necessity to respect human rights while fight against terrorism, particularly to conciliate the said issue with the peoples' aspiration to the freely circulate in the space of ECCAS.

The Director of the ACSRT, after briefing the characterisation of the essence of terrorism and its different manifestations, pointed out the specificity of the African approach regarding the definition of terrorist act and criminal activities, which distinguishes them from the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces. *In this regard, he pled for such dimension should be taken into account as a major security challenge in the preoccupations of African States.*

He presented the mandate of the ACSRT and its mission stressing on its role in the Architecture of Peace and Security of the African Union, as a tool of excellence and expertise, in charge of following the implementation of the AU Plan Action (2002).

The Director of the ACSRT stated the Republic of the Congo as an example of consistency and firmness in researching for solutions to the security problems facing the African Continent. Referring to the challenges faced by the latter during its passage, heading the African Union in 1986 and in 2006, the adoption to its initiative of "African Union non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact", and its participation to many Peace keeping operations including the ongoing "Force Multinationale en Centreafrique - FOMUC", are among other examples worth to be mentioned.

The Director of the CAERT also pled for strengthening the African cooperation on the sub-regional level and among neighbouring sub-regional communities in preventing and combating the terrorism.

The Director of the CAERT clarified the role of the focal points and experts in this seminar urging them to put their efforts together in order to find out convergent views regarding the perception of the terrorism threats.

During the seminar the African and international experts examined the nature of terrorism threats in Central Africa, the capacity of the Central African countries

in combating terrorism and their needs for technical assistance to strength that capacity.

Participants also investigated topics related to the armed conflicts, armed insurrections, banditism, cattle robbery, smuggling of natural resources and other criminal activities that characterize this sub-region.

The discussion groups listed the necessary recommendations to strengthen the capacities of the African States in combating terrorism in accordance with the Plan of Action (2002).

This seminar was organized in the framework of the evaluation and assessment process of the threats and vulnerabilities in the different African sub-regions, expertise and experience of member States in the matter of combating terrorism, capacity to face the terrorism phenomenon existing in member States and their need for technical assistance. This seminar was the last one of a series of seminaries held earlier in the other sub-regions of the African Continent. All of these seminars allowed to constitute a global overview of the situation of terrorism on the Continent and to define the capacity of the African Union member States in countering terrorism.