



Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations New York

REMARKS BY MR. NEBIL SAID REGARDING RULE OF LAW AND STRENGTHENING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to recognize the skillful manner in which you are steering the work of the CCPCJ.

The people of Eritrea, who fought thirty-years of war for justice and self-determination, are this week celebrating their 24th anniversary of independence. Since its independence the Eritrean government has diligently been working to put in place proper legal instruments and institutions to strengthen criminal justice system, including:

1. Increasing people's access to the national justice system. In 2003, the Eritrean government enacted a proclamation to establish 'community courts' to: (a) enable greater participation of communities in the judicial process, make judicial process accessible to the larger communities particular to the poor, and allow communities to elect judges, one of whom must be a women; (b) integrate the customary dispute resolution mechanisms in the national legal system; and (c) alleviate the burden from the higher courts. Today, hundreds of community courts are giving services.
2. Reforming of the legal system. Last week, Eritrea launched new Penal and Civil Codes and their related procedures. The drafting and the deliberation process of these Codes took more than eight years of public consultations; examination of more than 80,000 customary laws from all over the country was part of the exercise. International and universal human rights issues were also taken into consideration. To ensure wider understanding of these laws by all sectors of the society today extensive and concerted sensitization campaign has been launched to civil society. These timely legal documents are already translated into Tigrinya, Arabic and English.
3. Building human and institutional capacity. The Ministry of Justice and law enforcement and implementing bodies in cooperation with international partners are fully engaged in enhancing the institutional and human capacity of the judiciary organs as well as police and other law enforcement agencies.

While hailing the achievements in the areas of strengthening the criminal justice system, The Eritrean government is mindful that penal codes and procedures and rule of law are evolutionary processes that require sustained involvement of every sector of society and stakeholder.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.