

OPENING REMARKS
BY
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ON THE OCASSION OF THE ISS NAIROBI OFFICE LAUNCH
BRAESIDE GARDENS, NAIROBI
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Mr. Francis Kimemia, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, Republic of Kenya

The Distinguished Members of Parliament present here today

Members of the disciplined forces

Members of the diplomatic corps

Members of the civil society

ISS staff from our offices in Nairobi and Addis Ababa

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to this, the official launch of the ISS new and expanded Nairobi office. As Kenneth has mentioned, the actual presence of the Institute in Nairobi can be traced to 2005. Originally we had our offices within those of the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) in Upper Hill, we then moved to the Landmark Plaza opposition the Nairobi hospital, and today we are eventually, five years later, located here in Lavington in a separate building that we have tailored to our requirements.

Many of you here today graced the occasion some years ago when we first launched the ISS office in Nairobi. There are also many new friends. So this is indeed an important occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to talk a little bit about the Institute in general to put this launch into perspective.

The ISS was established in 1991 as the 'Institute for Defense Policy' to introduce concepts on constitutional control and professionalism in the armed forces during the South African transition period. The inspiration really came from engagements between Comrade Chris Hani and myself in Zambia in 1990. Chris was then the head of the armed wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and was subsequently murdered in cold blood in his driveway on 10th April 1993 – an event that almost overturned the entire South African settlement process.

Our roots and origin is therefore the transition in South Africa and we have continued our work towards a peaceful and secure Africa since then.

In 1996, the Institute became the 'Institute for Security Studies (ISS)' and our work increasingly of a regional nature. We also expanded the scope of our work steadily over the years. The first additions to our work related to the control of small arms, then we engaged in the control of anti-personnel landmines, corruption, organized crime and crime and justice issues.

Today the ISS has offices in Pretoria, Cape Town, Addis Ababa and Nairobi. We hope to open a small office in Dakar later this year.

While we started as a South African organization we are today one of the largest independent thinktanks in Africa and pan-African in our work. Amongst our total complement of around 150 staff we draw personnel from 17 African countries. As such our Head Office is composed of a variety of staff from various countries and our regional offices, such as the one here in Nairobi, draws its entire staff complement from the greater Horn of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Through years of applied policy research, peer reviewed analysis and implementation support-the Institute has come to be recognized as a leading African think tank on sustainable human security and international affairs for that matter.

It is our conviction that it is necessary to conceptualize the debate on sustainable human security in Africa through pragmatic and results oriented policy research and implementation support. The ISS realizes this vision by: Undertaking applied research, training and capacity building; Working collaboratively with others; Facilitating and supporting policy formulation; Monitoring trends and policy implementation; Collecting, interpreting and disseminating information; and Networking on national, regional and international levels.

As a result we work closely with many partners in the larger Horn of Africa. Allow me to mention the most important. These would include the African Union, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSEA), the Africa Peace Forum, the Foreign Service Institute, the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism (EASBRICOM), the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region secretariate (ICGLR), the East Africa Community (EAC), the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace – Amani Forum, the Centre for Minority Rights and Development (CEMI RIDE), the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) and COMESA. Possibly our most important partner is the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) and the regional bureau of Interpol with which we have substantial co-operation.

Many of our partner organizations are here today and I would like to extend our appreciation for their sustained support and engagement.

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the heart of the Institute's vision is what we refer to as 'sustainable human security' and is actualized through our work in; Arms control and disarmament; Children and security; Civil society and democracy; Conflict prevention and analysis; Peacekeeping and conflict management; Corruption and governance; Crime, justice, private security & the rule of law; Demobilization disarmament and repatriation; Security sector reform and post conflict reconstruction;

Gender and security; Human rights, democracy & elections; International justice including terrorism; African futures; the impact of climate change and more.

The ISS is guided by an International Advisory Council made up of Men and women who have championed the pursuit of greater African security and stability in their respective fields. I am glad to mention a few and especially from Kenya and the region who have contributed a great deal towards ISS's vision. The President of the Council is Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, former secretary general of the OAU and Prime Minister of Tanzania. There is Kenya's very own Lt General Lazarus Sumbeiywo who helped broker peace for the Sudan as IGAD's and Kenya's Special Envoy. There is also Professor Judy Wahkundu who is the Executive Director of the African Centre for Technology Studies who has done ground breaking work through her organization on scarcity and surfeit and ecological and livelihood security.

The Head Office, which is based in Pretoria and where I work, coordinates the work of the other offices. These cuts across issues of; strategic direction and management of the Institute; organizational development, financial management, human resource management; knowledge management and information technology support; publications production and policy compliance and internal audit. In addition to this, the Pretoria, Cape Town, Nairobi and Addis Ababa offices all have an Office Director who manages the office and in overall coordinates the work of their respective office research programmes in addition to other administrative management concerns. I would like to pay tribute to Kenneth Mpyisi, the director of our office here in Nairobi for his dedication and commitment – but more than anything thank the staff of the Institute for their loyalty, hard work and cheerful support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Certainly, the ISS has been growing in a fast pace. Apart from the establishment of an office in Dakar, I would like to briefly mention two important new initiatives. The first is the roll-out of our African Conflict Prevention System and the second the establishment of the ISS Peace Academy. The ACPS will eventually consist of four regional hubs in Addis Ababa, Pretoria, Nairobi and Dakar to track and analyze conflict across Africa.

In this manner we hope to complement and support the work of the CEWS and that done at intergovernmental and other levels with a particular African focus on sustainable human security.

For the next two days the ACPS will be hosting a closed expert meeting on regional security in the Horn of Africa at the Jacaranda Hotel here in Nairobi.

The proposed ISS Peace Academy (ISS PA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will offer high-level courses that are policy-oriented, practical and inter-active to build capacity for non-traditional security issues such as the impact of climate change and globalization. The ISS PA's core activity will be the provision of expert training at the conceptual and strategic level in African peace and security for mid-career diplomats, military officers, and civil servants from African foreign, defence, and other relevant ministries, as well as from international organizations and non-governmental organizations engaged with African issues. Participants in ISS

Ladies and Gentlemen

Before concluding please allow me also to thank our international development partners, in particular the members of the ISS Partnership Forum. These are partners who provide substantial support to the Institute and whom we engage on an ongoing basis in discussing progress, challenges and results. Current membership is composed of the Governments of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands and the Open Society Foundation, South Africa. The Partnership Forum meets twice a year and our next meeting is actually next week at our Head Office in Pretoria. These are effectively the core partners to the ISS.

The Institute also cooperates extensively with other partners here in Nairobi such as the Hanss Seidel Foundation, UK Government, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and so on.

It is with this few words that I would like to welcome the Permanent Secretary in charge of Kenya's Internal Security portfolio and whose presence today goes a long way in providing the ISS with the necessary collaborative support towards work on sustainable human security in the region.

With these words I invite Mr. Francis T Kimemia CBS to launch the new offices.

Thank you.

