**SPEECH BY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER
GEOFF TOOTH**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE AFP CRIME SCENE EXAMINER’S COURSE, AT THE KENYA POLICE CID HEADQUARTERS**

**NAIROBI, 4 JUNE 2012**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen

Senior Deputy Commissioner of Kenyan Police, Mr Ndegwa Muhoro

Director of Interpol East Africa Bureau Francis Rwego

Australian Federal Police African Liaison Agent Richard Stanford

Australian Trainers and most importantly course participants from 12 States from across Africa

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today, in my capacity as Australian High Commissioner, to open this Australian Federal Police supported course for Crime Scene Examiners.

This is a very important course.  There is no doubt that law and order is central to economic and human development in any country.  Enhancing the security of citizens gives society a better chance to develop:  economies grow faster, health and education levels improve and there is less corruption.

This is where you come in and why the work you will undertake over the next few days is so important. Crime investigators, such as yourselves, play a central role in protecting the rights of citizens and preserving the key pillars of the justice system.

Not only do your investigations lead to arrests, but the ability of a police and judicial system to catch, try and incarcerate guilty offender’s acts as a strong deterrent.

I spent much of the last week in Istanbul discussing one of the most intractable problems of our time – Somalia. In Somalia the central pillars of the law and order system do not operate effectively. They have been allowed to deteriorate by the international community and a failed central government with the ultimate victims being the citizens of Somalia and its neighbors. The people of Somalia have lost confidence in their police and their government because they can’t protect them and can’t guarantee justice when they suffer a crime. It has cost many billions of dollars to start the process of recovery and rehabilitation. It will cost many billions more to finish the job.

I am delighted, as Australia’s Ambassador to both countries, that we have a participant from Somalia on this course as well as from the world’s newest country, South Sudan. Gentlemen you are in a strong position to bring best practice right at the start of a nation building process.

Ladies and gentlemen, In 2009, the Australian Government committed more than $17 million over four years to work collaboratively with African partner countries and regional organisations to strengthen law and justice frameworks. Richard Stanford and his predecessor in the position of African Liaison officer for the AFP have done a great job in turning this funding into effective and practical training and cooperation.

The AFP has also recently sponsored the *Investigating Sexual Violence* and *African Network of Forensic Medicine Forum* in March in Uganda.

And last year, AFP organised a forensics workshop in Tanzania for participants from throughout the region.  This culminated in the donation of forensic kits to the police forces of those countries that participated.

Ladies and gentleman, you have extremely important, vital jobs. It is your efforts, your skills and your expertise that will ultimately determine whether a victim of crime receives justice; whether a perpetrator of crime is imprisoned.

It is a huge responsibility and Australia wants to help you fulfill it.

Australia is a committed and long-term partner of the police forces of East Africa. It is my sincere hope that everything you learn during this course helps you carry out this responsibility to your fullest potential.  We will continue to look at ways we can help you.

Let me finish my sending a quick word of thanks to the Australian trainers here today for their very significant contribution to our relations with Africa. Jemma, Stephen and Ben, we have seen the number of Australian courses, workshops and development programs in Africa increase significantly in recent times. Our contribution is much more than funding and experience and skill set you bring to the course. Australians work well in Africa because we are practical, direct and simpatico with the local people. As ambassadors for Australia can I ask you to leave a little bit of our country behind in the form of friendships and an ongoing commitment to help these countries develop.

Ladies and gentlemen. Thank you again for the honor of opening this course and I wish you all the best for the rest of the workshop.