Nambia hands over SARPCCO chair with a smile

In this year's August, Nambia handed over the chairmanship of the Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs’ Cooperation Organization, SARPCCO, to South Africa. In this exclusive interview, Asst Commissioner of Nambia Today met one-on-one with Inspector General of the Namibian Police, Lt General Sebastian Ndelungia, who spoke about the successes, setbacks and challenges registered over the last year.

Question: What will your regard as your main achievements as outgoing Chairperson of SARPCCO?

Answer: For the first time SARPCCO has complied with all the resolutions that were passed at the 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) when Nambia took over the Chairmanship of SARPCCO in February. This is also a time that a chairperson has visited all the member states of SARPCCO. The purpose of visiting all the member states was to ensure the implementation of all resolution which were adopted at the AGM. We have set a high standard for all SARPCCO member countries. Many member countries will not match us on what we have done over the last year. We have put in place high standards, and there should be no drop in the standards we have set.

We have also ensured that SARPCCO has aligned itself with the structures of the Southern Africa Development Community, SADC.

This issue has taken several years to materialize. Our Heads of State and line ministers have been asking us to do what the delay actually was about. When I took over, I went to the SADC Secretariat to push the matter through. I had better words with the officials who were dealing with this issue. As we talk now, the necessary amendments to the SADC protocols and SARPCCO Constitution have been effected. These amendments have been pending for years, but they do not materialize. Our Heads of State will meet one-on-one to discuss high profile cases, intelligence, UN missions and so on.

Question: What were the challenges which you had to deal with as Chairperson of SARPCCO?

Answer: When I took over, there was a trend of increasing drug-related cases, drug-trafficking, child trafficking and money laundering. In the SADC region, our task is to investigate high profile cases, intelligence, UN missions and so on.

Question: Where is the market for stolen copper wires and scrap metals?

Answer: The market is in South Africa. We are busy working out strategies with our SARPCCO counterparts to ensure that our borders are not used as a transit for such organized crimes. We have warned our citizens not to buy stolen properties. We know that all stolen copper wires are for the South African market.

Question: SARPCCO is big, but it is little known by members of the public. What campaigns are you launching to make sure that it is known because people can only cooperate with you if they know what this body is all about?

Answer: You are right. During our tenure of office, we launched some sensitization campaigns to tell members of the public what SARPCCO is all about, what its role is and what its objectives are. It is too late now. Those who are now heading SARPCCO, and we as a member of the Troika, can still launch such campaigns.

The world is becoming a global village where crimes that span international borders. How do we ensure that we have a police or law enforcement mechanism that facilitates the arrest of those who are involved in the stealing of copper and scrap metals? There are some of the challenges which SARPCCO faces.

When we are in meetings, some people say that member states should emulate or imitate what SARPCCO and Botswana have done. There was a lot of recovery but we still have a lot of work to do to harmonize our laws in the region.

Question: What is your message to the criminals in SADC?

Answer: You should know by now that SARPCCO is allergic to theft. In SARPCCO, we only know success. He should lead SARPCCO to greater heights. He should ensure that there is no drop in the operation and management standards we have set. We are ready to assist him.

Question: What is your message to the criminals in SADC?

Answer: You have to think two times what this body is all about.

Question: What is your message to the police in SADC?

Answer: You should think twice about what you do. It is a crime-free region.

Question: As outgoing Chairperson of SARPCCO, is there something which you think you could have done differently?

Answer: You are right. During our tenure of office, we could have launched some sensitization campaigns to tell members of the public what SARPCCO is all about, what its role is and what its objectives are. It is too late now. Those who are now heading SARPCCO, and we as a member of the Troika, can still launch such campaigns.

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