

Fahad Bin Abdullah Al-Mubarak: Combatting money laundering and terrorism financing

Speech by H E Dr Fahad Bin Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency and Chairman of Anti-Money Laundering Permanent Committee, to the 51th Plenary Meeting of Middle East & North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), Jeddah, 28 April 2012.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also gives me pleasure to meet you all in this important regional meeting which is the 51th Meeting of MENAFATF. The meeting encompasses many essential and important issues of common interest and ways that would, in turn, promote cooperation to better levels. All peoples count on the unique role played by your Task Force to protect countries of this region against repercussions of money laundering and financing terrorism crimes. I wish your meeting all success and wish you all a good stay in Jeddah.

Dear Audience,

Increasing attention has been paid to anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems over the past years. This has been due to the great progress witnessed in financial and banking systems, diversity of communication means, simplicity of money movement and advanced payment systems. However, the speed factor in conducting commercial transactions, existence of indirect financial operations and unreal existence of dealers have led to great risks. Some of these risks are: potential abuse of these developments in performing illegal objectives. Combating money laundering crimes and countering terrorism financing are among the priorities that the international society is seeking to achieve to protect the global financial system and counter risks that might obstruct the course of secure commercial transactions among countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are pleased to host this meeting in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in pursuance of the Kingdom's plans of sponsoring and supporting international and regional efforts in this area. The efforts, which were initiated at the early 09s, are promising to combat such risks by issuing laws and setting up measures and regulations that ensure monitoring activities and early detection and prevention of financial crimes and taking actions against perpetrators. This is clear evidence of the Kingdom's compliance with the international community's requirements in this respect. The Kingdom spares no effort in combating money laundering and terrorism financing, boosting the role and effectiveness of national agencies concerned with the systems related to combating such financial crimes to cope with international developments, and increase the level and effectiveness of appropriate agencies working in this field.

It is worth mentioning here the approval by the Council of Ministers of updating the AML Law to fully comply with international requirements, especially with the assessment team's recommendations stated in the Assessment Report on the Kingdom. This is a clear sign of the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' attention paid to compliance with combating money laundering and terrorism financing in line with international standards in this regards.

Dear Audience,

The international, regional and national combined efforts to combat money laundering and terrorism financing are stringent evidence of combating those crimes and the consequent

economic, social and security risks they may cause. Accordingly, the Kingdom has supported efforts aimed at developing international frameworks capable of monitoring the global financial system to detect such offenses. The Kingdom is one of the countries that participated in and called for the creation of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force. It is still supporting all the efforts of the FATF and MENAFATF, whether through its permanent participation in work teams and supporting activities that enhance the work of the two entities or through its commitment to raise the level of its government organs, financial and non-financial institutions and making sure that its related laws are in line with the international requirements. In addition, it supports the IMF's Technical Assistance Fund.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To achieve our objective, we should work together to promote awareness of the gravity of such crimes and protect all segments of the society, its government organizations, and financial and non-financial institutions. In this aspect, I would like to refer to the recent FATF's recommendations issued to strengthen the international efforts in the fight against this global scourge and make necessary adjustments to the systems and techniques of their detection and combating. On this occasion, I would like make reference to the results achieved by FATF, after reviewing and revising the recommendations. There is no doubt that the updated recommendations will enhance the level and methods of protection of the economic system against such type of crimes threatening it.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for your respected group for its achievements accomplished during its short life, wishing you continued success. I thank the organizers for their efforts. I also welcome you again in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and I hope that your meetings in this session will be a success.