

**STATEMENT BY MR. FRANCIS K. SANG, DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR,
REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (RECSA)
AT THE SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO CONSIDER THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF
ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE
IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS
– 11TH TO 15TH JULY, 2005 – NEW YORK, USA**

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the States Parties signatories to the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and indeed on my own behalf, to congratulate you on your election to the Chair of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We also convey our congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election. Mr. Chairman, I wish to inform you that this report is in line with the earlier report presented by the distinguished delegate from Nigeria on the African common position and progress on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of action (UNPoA).

Mr. Chairman,

Since the First Biennial Meeting of States in July 2003, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa has made remarkable achievements in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA). This has primarily been executed through the implementation of the Coordinated Agenda for Action adopted in November, 2000, the Nairobi Declaration on the problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons as well as the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The Second Ministerial Review Conference on the Nairobi Declaration was held in Nairobi, Kenya on 20th to 21st April, 2004. During the Conference, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa was signed.

The defining characteristics of the Nairobi Protocol is that unlike the Nairobi Declaration of 2000 which is essentially a political commitment, when it comes into force will be a legally binding instrument on the Member States. So far, six Member States have ratified the Protocol while the others are in various advanced stages of its ratification. It is expected that the Protocol will come into force towards the end of this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Third Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration was held on 20th and 21st June, 2005 also in Nairobi, Kenya. All eleven Member States signatories to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol were represented. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia though not a member attended the conference and was admitted as the twelfth member of the sub-regional initiative. During the conference, the Ministers and other Plenipotentiaries discussed and approved the following documents:-

Agreement on the establishment of the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa with an expanded mandate to succeed the Nairobi Secretariat.

The Ministerial Declaration for practical implementation of small arms action in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The Best Practice Guidelines and Minimum Common Standards on key issues in the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol such as:-

- Stockpile Management,
- Import, Export and Transit,
- Marking, Tracing and Brokering,
- Public Awareness raising, collection, disposal and destruction and
- Mutual Legal Assistance and operational capacity

It is expected that these Best Practice Guidelines will be domesticated into the National legislations of Member States by the end of April next year according to the approved implementation plan on the harmonization of legislation for the Member States. On capacity building, the Regional Centre with the technical support from civil society partners has developed a training curriculum for Law Enforcement Agencies, civil society and senior management. This training Curriculum has been pre-tested in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya and found workable. The same will be presented to the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) for their approval during the Annual General Meeting to be held in August this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Regional Centre on small arms has continued to work closely with national, sub-regional and international civil society organizations as stipulated in the UNPoA, the Bamako Declaration and the Nairobi Declaration as well as the Nairobi Protocol.

So far, the Regional Centre has organized two Civil Society Dialogue Forums with representatives from all Signatory States which facilitated the exchange of information and lessons learnt as well as the engagement of civil society organizations and Member States National Focal Points Coordinators.

Mr. Chairman,

Our region is now in the forefront of the combating the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. In this regard, I am happy to note that States Parties Signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol subscribe to the twin principles of ownership and partnership in the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol. They have moved beyond the state of debate of the issues to the development of road maps not only on the concrete but practical actions to combat the scourge of illicit small arms and light weapons in our region. This has been possible thanks to the tremendous political goodwill of the Member States.

Lastly, it is important to note that the Third Ministerial Review Conference of June, 2005 also welcomed the International Workshop on Global Principle for Arms transfers held in Dar-es-Salalaam in February, 2005, the progress made towards creating consensus on the need for global principles for arms transfer controls and the agreement on the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, which are consistent with the principles of the proposed Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank all our donors, especially the Government of the United Kingdom through the Department for the International Development (DFID), the Royal Netherlands Government and the Federal Republic of Germany through (GTZ) for their continued support to the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration through funding extended to the Regional Centre and States Parties engaged in National Action Plans on arms management. We are also indebted to the Kenya Government for material and financial support that it has extended to the Regional Centre on Small Arms since the signing of the Nairobi Declaration in 2000.

I would also like to express our appreciation to civil society partners, particularly Saferworld, SaferAfrica and Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) for their technical support to the Regional centre as well as to Member States National Focal Points. We also appreciate the support that has been extended by the Institute of Security Studies (ISS).

With these remarks Mr. Chairman, I once again thank and wish you all the best in the entire deliberations. The full report has been availed to the Secretariat for circulation to the distinguished delegates.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.