



Co-operating to Disarm

February 2010 Activity Report

Joint African Union-European Union Commission- RECSA Mission

From 4th to 5th February 2010, a joint delegation from the African Union (AU), European Union Commission (EU-COM) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) conducted a working visit to the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria. A meeting between the three organisations discussed issues of common interest relating to efforts to control the illicit circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Africa.

The AU – EU – RECSA delegation had an in-depth working session with the ECOWAS Small Arms Division staff. The discussions focused on:

- The pan-African project on small arms funded by the EU titled “The fight against the illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms in Africa”
- Key issues arising from the AU/Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Steering Committee on SALW

RECSA briefed the meeting about the continent-wide project and the role to be played by the different RECs and regional bodies with SALW mandate. The EU has identified RECSA to coordinate and manage the three-year project in full co-ordination and co-operation with RECs and relevant Regional Mechanisms.

During the meeting, the EU Commission noted that the pan-African project is a pilot, whose lessons will guide further projects in the future.

Implementation of the Rwanda SALW National Action Plan

Last year the Rwanda Government approved a National Action Plan on Small Arms Control and Management developed for the country with the support of RECSA.

Implementation has commenced with the training of Provincial Task Forces to build their capacity to implement the small arms strategy at the community level. The training is creating awareness among the task forces about the Nairobi Protocol, the new firearms law recently enacted in Rwanda and the role of the task forces in implementing the NAP in their regions.

RECSA at Disarmament Workshop

The Secretariat was represented at a workshop in Geneva organised by UNIDIR, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) to discuss issues of disarmament.

The meeting brought together experts on the proliferation and disarmament of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Discussions from the meeting highlighted the inter-connectedness between the two areas and the need for experts in each to work together. In addition, experts in SALW and WMD require the assistance and knowledge of the customs and immigration departments to succeed in their endeavours.

The meeting noted the low engagement of African countries on issues of WMD due to lack of information and therefore the need for more engagement between the West and Africa in this respect.

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Country Highlights

Burundi

The Burundi National Focal Point organised a meeting to present to donors a report on the country's progress in the fight against the proliferation of SALW. The NFP also presented its work plan during the meeting.

RECSA was represented by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Francis SANG, at celebrations to recognise the Burundi President's efforts to fight against the proliferation of SALW in the country. RECSA was specially invited at the event to hand over an award to the President, H. E. Pierre Nkurunziza. The award was received on behalf of the President by the Minister of Public Security, Hon. Alain Guillaume BUNYONI, also the immediate former RECSA Council of Ministers' Chairman.

Public awareness activities were organised around the celebrations including a football match and a march in the streets of Bujumbura. The march was graced by senior Government officials and civil society; its slogan was "Marching for peaceful elections, without armed violence".

During his visit to Burundi, Dr. Sang toured the sight where the armouries are being constructed for the Burundi Police with support from the Mine Advisory Group. The armouries will improve stockpile security in the Government.

The BNFP, in collaboration with Mine Advisory Group, destroyed 633 explosives and 42,451 pieces of ammunition in Bubanza province.

Uganda

During the month stocktaking, verification and marking of Uganda Police firearms continued in the Mobile Police Patrol Unit (MPPU). In addition, destruction of expired ammunition, explosives and ordnances from the Uganda Prisons Service was undertaken; 118 pieces of expired ordnances were destroyed at Fort Portal Police Station in Western Uganda. In Kilembe District in Western Uganda, a number of expired commercial explosives were destroyed. The NFP was also involved in programmes under the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Programme and a number of initiatives to promote peace in the country.

Regional Centre on Small Arms