



Co-operating to Disarm

January 2009 Activity Report

Technical Advisory Committee Approves Key Documents

The 5th TAC meeting was held in Bujumbura, Burundi (19th and 20th), focusing on key policy documents to be implemented by the RECSA Secretariat once approved by the Council of Ministers which will meet on 20th and 21st April 2009. The documents considered were:

- Five year strategic plan (2009 – 2014)
- Information, Education and Communications Strategy
- Two year work plan and its budget
- Audit reports for the years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008
- An update report on financial contributions to RECSA by Member States and mobilization of resources
- Draft Guidelines on Arms Marking

The RECSA Executive Secretary, Dr Francis K. Sang, presented for consideration and discussion a progress report on programmes and activities implemented by the organization since the last TAC meeting in April 2007. Recommendations and views extended by the Members of Advisory Committee on the documents and progress report will go a long way in guiding the future of the organization as it implements relevant small arms programmes. The Technical Advisory Committee is the Second highest organ in the RECSA institutional structure after the Council of Ministers. Comprising the National Focal Point Coordinators from the 12 Member States, it provides technical guidance to the Secretariat's implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. The meeting was officially opened by Hon. Alain Bunyoni, RECSA's Chairman of the Council of Ministers. RECSA wishes to thank the UK Government through DFID for financially supporting the TAC and Ministerial meetings.

See <http://www.recsasec.org/index.htm>

Development of National Action Plans

RECSA is providing support to a number of its Member States to develop national action plans to guide small arms control and management. This is in accordance with the **Implementation Plan of the Coordinated Agenda for Action on the Problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa** of November 2000.

Rwanda, Burundi: In 2008, the focus in developing national plans was mainly on Rwanda and Burundi which are at advanced stages in the process. The finalized plans are expected to be launched by March 2009 and implementation to commence soon after. See <http://www.recsasec.org/rwanda.htm> and <http://www.recsasec.org/burundi.htm>

Eritrea: The Secretariat is working with the Eritrea NFP to improve a draft National Action Plan that was developed by national experts after training sessions by the Secretariat. The review of the Plan will entail a national wide collection of data on the current SALW situation, documentation of current government interventions, a review of the status of national legislation on SALW, a survey of stakeholders in the area of small arms and identification of existing gaps in the current NAP. The information gathered will be used to sharpen the current National Action Plan in spelling-out clear interventions, harmonizing them with on-going government interventions and eventually ensuring it meets the regional standards.

The NAP development process in the three countries is being undertaken with financial assistance of the Royal Government of the Netherlands.

UNDP has provided funds to RECSA to undertake a similar exercise in Djibouti during the first year of funding and Ethiopia in the second year of funding.

Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have their plans in place and implementation is underway.

Development of RECSA's Regional Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons

The Secretariat, with financial support from the Government of Norway, is in the process of developing a regional strategy to guide its interventions in the various countries by responding to their specific small arms situations. To this end, researchers have been contracted in the Member States to undertake relevant studies to shed light on various small arms issues in their countries. The studies will be preceded by national workshops with various stakeholders to sensitise them on the development of the regional small arms strategy and to get their support for the national research process. Seychelles was the first country to hold its national stakeholders' workshop on 30th January. Workshops in the other countries will follow in the coming few weeks. At the commencement of the process, RECSA held a regional workshop bringing together the national researchers identified in the 12 Member States. The aim was to agree on the research methodology and approaches to be used in the national surveys.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

Under Article 2 of the Nairobi Protocol, Governments, inter-governmental organisations and civil society commit themselves to cooperate with each other in all matters relating to the illicit trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. To this end, RECSA is actively involved with various stakeholders and participates in many forums to advance the small arms agenda. During the month, the following forums were held with the Secretariat's participation.

- *RECSA at African Heads of State Summit*

The need to cooperate with other stakeholders in the fight against the proliferation of illegal small arms is recognized in regional and international initiatives to address the problem. It is in this spirit that RECSA collaborates with the African Union on issues of small arms. The Secretariat was accredited to the AU in 2008, consequently enjoying Observer Status at key meetings. The RECSA Executive Secretary, Dr Francis K. Sang, recently represented the organisation at the 14th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union. The meeting provided an opportunity to interact with Government officials and other organizations from around the region to discuss areas of cooperation in addressing the problem of small arms experienced in much of the African continent.

- *RECSA at IC/GLR Meeting*

The Secretariat was recently part of a meeting to launch a Regional Disarmament Committee (REDICOM) under an IC/GLR project on Disarmament of Armed Nomadic Pastoralist. Under this project RECSA is assigned to lead the development of Regional Disarmament Standards. RECSA has been tasked by the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region to implement its small arms programmes in its Member countries. An MOU has been signed between the two organisations to this effect. It is based on this agreement that RECSA will be part of the disarmament project.

Donor Briefing

RECSA recently hosted officials from DFID and the UK Ministry of Defence. RECSA staff briefed the two officials on its five-year strategy and two-year work plan and issues of stockpile management. The meeting provided a forum for the exchange of ideas between the Secretariat and DFID on future collaboration between the two organisations.