



Co-operating to Disarm

March 2009 Activity Report

EAC/RECSA Collaboration in Project and Policy Development

RECSA is a major partner of the East African Community in small arms projects under the EAC/GTZ funding. On 2nd and 3rd March, the Secretariat participated at a project steering committee meeting also attended by representatives from National Focal Points from the five East African countries and civil society.

Implementation partners presented their project reports for 2008 and proposed activities for 2009 to be funded under EAC/GTZ and the EAC/EU projects. Under the EAC/EU funding, RECSA will receive 500,000 Euros. The Secretariat will sign a formal funding contract directly with EU Dar-es-Salaam.

The EAC has developed a small arms policy for the sub-region to harmonise their small arms management and control practices and systems. Between 4th and 6th March, representatives from the five member countries met in Mombasa, Kenya to give their input to the draft. A number of recommendations were given for the enhancement of the Policy to better address the specific issues of small arms in the sub-region.

RECSA's Five Year Strategy

RECSA has finalised its five year strategy and drawn up an implementation plan and a five year budget. Before the strategy is presented for approval to the Council of Ministers, it is to be shared with donors during a meeting scheduled for early April for their input. Development of the Strategy was funded by the UK Government.

Funding for RECSA Work in IC/GLR Countries

RECSA has been mandated by the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region to implement small arms projects in four of its countries that are not members of RECSA. These are Central Africa Republic, Angola, Zambia and Republic of Congo.

Following the partners meeting held in February, RECSA submitted a proposal to the IC/GLR Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development. The funding will enable the Secretariat to commence work in the four countries.

9th Anniversary of the Signing of the Nairobi Declaration Marked

The Nairobi Declaration Day is marked every year on 15th March in RECSA Member States to commemorate the signing of the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons which was signed in 2000.

Events organised to mark the Day are used as forums to raise public awareness on issues of small arms in the RECSA Member States. This year a number of countries used the media to raise awareness about the Day. Newspaper supplements were published to highlight the significance of the Nairobi Declaration to the war against illicit weapons in the region.

In addition, Kenya undertook an arms destruction of 2,490 weapons as the landmark event to mark the day. In attendance were top police officers, senior Government officials, media, civil society representatives and RECSA.

The climax regional celebrations were held in Djibouti with a street march with posters, banners, t-shirts and caps displaying advocacy messages. In attendance were Djibouti NFP officials, Police, media, civil society, school children, members of the public, academicians, IGAD, representatives from embassies of RECSA Member States, donors, and UN agencies (including UNDP which provided funds for the various activities). A symbolic arms destruction of 100 weapons was undertaken and broadcast by electronic and print media.

Djibouti is taking over Chairmanship of RECSA's Technical Advisory Committee and the Council of Ministers in April 2009. The outgoing Chair is Burundi which has served its two year term.

Rwanda and Burundi NAP

A draft National Action Plan (NAP) on small arms control and management in Rwanda has been forwarded to the Minister of Internal Security for submission to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Findings of a national survey informed the strategy by pointing out the main issues to be addressed. Three priority areas were identified – institutional strengthening (of the National Focal Point and other relevant institutions), stockpile management (arms marking, recordkeeping and related issues) and information generation through research and public awareness activities.

Drafting of the Burundi NAP is at an advanced stage and is being undertaken by a team of experts facilitated by RECSA.

The processes in Rwanda and Burundi were made possible through funding from the Netherlands Government.

Research Manual

The Co-ordinated 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 identified research as a priority and core component in the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and the Nairobi Declaration. It provides updated information on the situation pertaining at any given time which informs programme design to ensure they respond to current needs.

Member States committed themselves to build regional and national research capacities in the area of small arms and related issues. RECSA and the NFPs have the responsibility of coordinating and facilitating research. However, there is a lack of capacity to undertake studies on small arms in the region.

RECSA has embarked on a process of developing a research manual on the best methodologies for training researchers in Member States. In addition, the manual will be a guide for researchers as they undertake studies on small arms. During the month, a meeting was held to review the draft. Consultants will finalise the manual by incorporating agreed recommendations that came up during the meeting.

This process to enhance research capacity in the region has been funded by the Netherlands Government.

Arms marking machines

With funding from the US Government, RECSA has acquired 19 additional electronic marking machines for its Member States. The equipment will be used by the military to mark their arms in accordance with the Nairobi Protocol.

An initial machine is already with the Police in all Member States with the exception of Somalia where the situation remains volatile. Marking of state-owned arms under the

Police is in progress in countries where national trainings on the use of the machine have been held – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

A monitoring and evaluation visit to Kenya Police revealed that over 4,000 arms had been marked by the end of February.

The four machines allocated to Angola, Central African Republic, Zambia and Republic of Congo (IC/GLR countries) were received in March and are still at the Secretariat as formal contacts are being established in those countries.

First Session of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG)

The working group met at the beginning of the month at the UN Headquarters to consider the development of a legally binding instrument on the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

The meeting was well attended by most of the UN Member States, including three RECSA countries. The 1st session consisted of debates between states supporting and those opposing the legal instrument. A 2nd session will take place in July 2009, during which countries will be called upon to make concrete suggestions and agree on a way forward.

Developing a Regional Security Architecture

The Africa Peace Forum (APFO) and the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) ran a workshop to explore the formation of a regional security architecture for the Horn of Africa. The meeting considered various responses to human security in the region and challenges faced in the implementation of programmes on conflict prevention.

Participants included SALW researchers from universities within East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The publication *Human Security: Setting the Agenda for the Horn of Africa* by Africa Peace Forum was launched with a call to researchers to contribute to the next publication.

Kenya/Uganda Inter-Parliamentary Dialogue

Legislation is recognised as one of the cornerstones of effective measures against the problem of small arms. Countries in the region therefore need to strengthen existing laws to serve as deterrents for those handling illegal arms.

In recognition of its lead role in the sub-region in addressing issues of small arms, RECSA participated in a cross-border dialogue between Kenya and Uganda. The meeting was organised by the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace (Amani Forum). It aimed at strengthening the capacity of parliamentarians to improve on legislation and oversight on conflict issues along the common border between the two countries.

The meeting brought together members of parliament from pastoral and affected regions from both sides, government officials and civil society.

Participants undertook a conflict analysis of the most affected areas with a view to identifying causes of the conflicts and working out the best strategies to address the problem. By the end of the meeting there was a better understanding of the role of leaders in Kenya and Uganda in promoting peace and security. In addition links were developed between MPs and Government officials to develop sustainable interventions in trouble zones.

Strengthening Legislative Oversight Policy in Sudan

The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly held a two day workshop on small arms and light weapons control policy. The meeting was convened by the Standing Specialised Committee for Peace and Reconciliation and aimed at strengthening existing policy.

RECSA made a presentation on the Nairobi Protocol, Nairobi Declaration and the Best Practice Guidelines on the implementation of the two instruments. This collaboration aimed at inducting South Sudan members of parliament on sub-regional SALW

processes to enable them to better address related legislative issues from an informed position.

Regional Centre on Small Arms