



Co-operating to Disarm

May - July 2010 Activity Report

EU Project Seminar for RECSA Region

On 21st and 22nd May, RECSA brought together stakeholders under the continent-wide project funded by the European Union.

The meeting brought together representatives from the following organisations: the African Union Commission, the East Africa Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), INTERPOL, Africa Peace Forum (APFO), the Amani Forum, Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), the Eastern Africa Action Network on Small Arms (EAANSA), Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and IKV Pax Christi.

The meeting discussed the EU-funded project and identified priority areas of interventions for the RECSA region for Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), parliamentarians and civil society. A schedule for identified priorities was drawn up as a road map for implementing identified activities.

This was the first regional seminar to be held under the continent-wide EU-funded project that is to run for three years. Similar seminars are to be held in the Southern, Central and West African regions to enable these regions to prioritise interventions in the area of small arms.

Development of Customised Software

Development of the customised recordkeeping database for the RECSA region is ongoing.

The first of the four modules to be developed for the software was completed by the end of June and underwent discussion at a validation meeting to be held in Dar es Salaam on 1st and 2nd July. Representatives from RECSA Member States got an opportunity to input into the software as developed so far. The other three modules will be finalised in the coming months.

The electronic database is being developed in line with the requirements of the Nairobi Protocol and the Best Practice Guidelines on the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol.

The first module developed so far (the marking module) communicates directly with the Couth MC 2000 marking machine being used to mark arms in the RECSA region. The marking module allows instantaneous capture of data during the marking exercise.

RECSA at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS4)

The Regional Centre on Small Arms was represented at BMS4 held in New York between 14th and 18th June 2010.

On Wednesday 16th June, RECSA made a statement outlining progress in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on Small Arms. The statement touched on arms marking, record keeping, regional and international cooperation, public awareness, among other key areas of implementation of the Plan of Action. For the full statement visit <http://www.recsasec.org/Executive%20Secretary%27s%20Statement%20at%20BMS4,%2016th%20June%202010.pdf>

In addition, the Secretariat participated at a preparatory meeting to discuss the proposed Arms Trade Treaty in New York in July. The next committee will be held for one week in February 28 – March 4 2011 to negotiate the critical aspects of the proposed scope, parameters and implementation elements. RECSA will endeavour to participate in UNIDIR-organised regional dialogue forums to agree on common positions in preparation for the next stages of the ATT.

Arms Marking Training

Between June 24th and 27th, RECSA conducted an arms marking training in Juba, Southern Sudan. The training was highly welcomed by the Government of Southern Sudan. It was carried out in collaboration with Advanced Marking Systems of South Africa, which demonstrated the use of the Couth MC 2000 machine. Two of these machines have been donated by RECSA to Southern Sudan for use by the Police and the Army in marking state-owned weapons.

Country Updates

- ***Burundi***

The destruction of collected arms and the marking of SALW were high on the agenda in May – June in order to reinforce security in the country during the elections period. The National Focal Point organized for the transportation of recovered stockpiles to the Capital, Bujumbura, for maximum security prior to destruction. A sensitization campaign was carried out around the election period to dissuade the public from engaging in armed violence during the campaigns. Arms marking began in the country at the end of May and is on course.

- ***Tanzania***

In July, RECSA supported the country to undertake arms destruction in Morogoro. This exercise was undertaken with funding from the Japan Government under a regional project on practical disarmament being coordinated by the Secretariat. A total of 5,660 arms were destroyed. In August, RECSA will provide support for the destruction of additional arms.

- ***Uganda***

In May, Uganda destroyed 300 tonnes of obsolete ammunition and ordnances at the Nakasongola Military Base with financial and technical support from RECSA. The RECSA Executive Secretary, Dr Francis K. Sang, attended the arms destruction ceremony. He took the opportunity while in Uganda to pay a courtesy call on the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Hon. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Regional Cooperation) respectively, to brief them on current developments in the RECSA region.

Between 10th and 16th May, the Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms collaborated with civil society in activities to mark "Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence". This year's theme was "Towards a Society Free of Gun Violence in Uganda". The Rt. Hon. Third Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs, Hon. Kirunda Kivejinja officiated the opening ceremony of the Week of Action at the Ministry Headquarters in Kampala. Activities carried out during the week included a Public Dialogue on gun violence with the Inspector General of Police being the Chief Discussant, a Seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty by two civil society organisations (EASSI and CECORE) and a visit to victims of gun-violence at Mulago Hospital.

In May, the Uganda NFP attended the IGAD/CEWARN meeting on the Rapid Response Fund in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Under the Conflict Early Warning and Response, an Operational Guidelines Validation Meeting was Held in Mbale District, Uganda in June. In the same month, the UNFP/SALW was represented at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States in New York.

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