



*Co-operating to Disarm*

## **November 2009 – January 2010 Report**

### **Arms Marking Training Continues**

In November, RECSA conducted additional arms marking trainings in Seychelles, Djibouti, DRC and Sudan with support from the US Government. This is in accordance with the Nairobi Protocol under which countries in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States committed themselves to mark their state-owned weapons for ease of tracing and accountability of firearms.

RECSA will undertake monitoring visits in the first quarter of 2010 to assess progress by the various countries in the marking exercise.

### **Brokering Software under Development**

RECSA is working closely with UNREC to develop software to capture information on small arms brokers in the Member States. In November, a joint meeting was held between officials of the two organisations to review the software developed according to provisions in RECSA's Best Practice Guidelines for the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

When finalised, the software will initially be rolled out in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi before moving on to the rest of the countries. National consultants have been contracted to gather information on small arms brokers in the said countries. The information will be inputted in the software.

Development of the software is intended to enhance transparency and accountability in small arms transfers.

### **ITF Visit to RECSA**

In early November, RECSA hosted a team from Slovenia comprising two small arms experts from the Ministry of Interior and two senior management staff from the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF).

In addition to holding a meeting with RECSA, the team met officials from the Kenya and Burundi National Focal Points on Small Arms. In Kenya, additional meetings were held with a representative of the Commissioner of Police and the Director of the Criminal Investigation Department. In Burundi, the team also met senior Government officials from the Ministry of Internal Security.

The aim of the ITF visit to the region was to hold consultations with RECSA and the Kenya and Burundi NFPs to pursue possibilities for future funding of small arms programmes. The Fund is a humanitarian, non-profit organization devoted to eradication of landmines in South-Eastern Europe and the world.

### **RECSA at UNODC Meeting**

In November, the Centre was represented at a two-day regional ministerial conference organised by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The conference considered a regional programme developed by UNODC aimed at promoting the rule of law and human security in Eastern Africa. The programme is expected to run from 2009 to 2012 and has three components: Countering illicit trafficking, organized crime and terrorism; fighting corruption and promoting justice and integrity; and Improving health and human development. Countries represented at the meeting signed a political declaration supporting the programme.

### **RECSA at UNIDIR Meeting**

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is implementing a project to promote discussions on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The Institute has held a number of regional meetings to gather views from various parts of the world on the proposed treaty that will control the trade in conventional weapons.

RECSA was invited to participate in the project's fifth and final regional seminar. The meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December brought together countries in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Centre got an opportunity to make a presentation on human security, SALW and the ATT, and gave an overview of the efforts and activities of the organisation to combat illicit SALW trafficking and proliferation and improve human security in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

A final meeting bringing together all the regions is scheduled for February 2010 in Austria. The concluding seminar will present to the international community the discussions, recommendations and ideas on the ATT process that have emerged from the regional seminars. It will be an opportunity to learn from the outcomes of the project and will allow for a further exchange of views on issues brought up in the regional seminars.

### **RECSA Develops Policy on Gender and Small Arms**

A Ministerial Declaration during the 3rd Council of Ministers' meeting held in June 2005, directed RECSA to develop a policy to guide gender mainstreaming in small arms programmes and institutional frameworks. This was in recognition of the fact that small arms and light weapons (SALW) have different effects on men, women, boys and girls. These differences need to be taken into consideration in the project life cycle to improve the effectiveness of interventions to address the problems posed by SALW.

In December, RECSA finalized a draft gender policy to be implemented in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. A regional meeting bringing together RECSA's 13 member states, AU, partners from Regional Intergovernmental Organisations, civil society, experts and other partners was held to validate the draft. Views from participants were gathered and incorporated in the final policy document.

### **Joint RECSA/ICGLR Mission to Zambia**

In pursuit of the implementation of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Project on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons, a delegation from the ICGLR Secretariat and the RECSA Secretariat carried out a mission to Lusaka, Zambia from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

The purpose of the meeting was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between RECSA and the Government of Zambia to facilitate the implementation of Small Arms and Light Weapons programme activities in Zambia by RECSA. ICGLR and RECSA met with senior Government officials, civil society organisations and other stakeholders working on Small Arms issues in Zambia. RECSA took the opportunity to officially hand over a firearms marking machine it has purchased for the Government of Zambia with funds from the US Government.

The Regional Centre plans to hold a sensitisation and arms marking training workshops in Lusaka in early 2010.

### **Regional Strategy on Small Arms Developed**

The AU Steering Committee on Small Arms met in Bamako, Mali from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> December to review a draft small arms strategy developed for the region. The meeting drew participants from regional economic commissions and intergovernmental bodies in Africa. A consultant contracted to develop the regional small arms strategy collected views from the various regions for incorporation in the final document.

During the meeting, representatives of economic commissions and intergovernmental bodies made presentations on the small arms work their organisations are undertaking. This provided an opportunity for identifying areas in which the various stakeholders can cooperate in addressing the problem of small arms in the continent.

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### **Country Briefs**

#### ***Burundi***

An information and sensitization campaign conducted by the Burundi National Focal Point (BNFP) in 17 provinces in October resulted in the collection of 15,992 arms and more than 160,000 pieces of ammunition. Between November and December, the BNFP distributed cell phones, building materials, bikes and other items to volunteers who handed over their weapons. RECSA supported the programme by donating 130 bicycles.

The Focal Point, in collaboration with the Mine Advisory Group, destroyed 506 grenades on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 549 additional grenades on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

#### ***Kenya***

In November the Kenya National Focal Point conducted training for its Steering Committee and Secretariat. The training covered issues of small arms and cattle rustling.

Kenyan law enforcement agencies continued to recover assortments of illicit small arms and light weapons under an on-going disarmament exercise in the country.

Commendable progress is being made in marking firearms owned by the Kenya Police. A request has been made to RECSA to conduct training for the Military to enable commencement of marking of firearms in its possession.

### **Rwanda**

In January, the Rwanda National Focal Point coordinated the development of a training module for Provincial and District task forces. The module will be validated in early February.

Task forces have been put in place in the provinces and districts to take a lead in addressing problems posed by small arms in the country.

### **Uganda**

In November and December, the Uganda Police Force continued with arms marking and stocktaking of firearms in its possession. In collaboration with the East African Community Small Arms Desk, the Uganda NFP conducted workshop for armoury officers from the Uganda People's Defence Forces, Police, Prisons and Uganda Wildlife Authority.

Under the Nairobi Protocol, countries in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States committed themselves to review their legislation to introduce stricter controls of SALW. In response to this commitment, the Uganda Government plans to repeal the current Firearms Act of 1970 and replace it with more current legislation. Towards this end, a legal drafting committee has been formed to coordinate the drafting of a Bill. The Committee held two preparatory meetings in January to plan the way forward for the process.

In early January, the Uganda NFP attended a Steering Committee meeting of the National Conflict and Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWERU) to adopt CEWERU Operational Guidelines and Work Plan. This was followed by a workshop later in the month organised to develop Operational Guidelines for Uganda.

**ENDS**