



Co-operating to Disarm

October Report

Legal Instrument for the Control of SALW in Central Africa

RECSA was invited to give input into a drafting process aimed at developing a legal instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. The meeting organised by United Nations Standing Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) was held in Lome, Togo. Dr Francis Sang (the RECSA Executive Secretary), who represented the Secretariat, shared experiences around the development of the Nairobi Protocol and the Best Practice Guidelines for its implementation. Views arising from the meeting will be incorporated in the draft Instrument to be presented for discussion at the 29th UNSAC Ministerial meeting in Ndjamena, Chad in November 2009.

RECSA at the UN First Committee on Disarmament

Dr Francis Sang represented the Secretariat at the 64th Session of the General Assembly held in New York. As a UN Observer, RECSA got an opportunity to issue a statement during the First Committee meeting on Disarmament. Dr Sang highlighted regional disarmament efforts in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. The meeting was informed of RECSA's collaboration with other regional bodies in efforts to control the problem posed by the proliferation of illegal arms.

RECSA at Southern Africa Capacity Building Meeting

The Secretariat was invited to participate at a meeting organised by the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) in Namibia. RECSA is considered a key resource in building the capacity of other regional bodies to tackle small arms and light weapons proliferation.

The forum brought together senior civilian and military experts from Southern Africa, international experts, and European and American government officials. Discussions revolved around the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons to peace and security in the sub-region. Multi-faceted strategies were explored to look at better

ways to enhance sub-regional and national capacity building to better tackle the small arms problem.

RECSA shared its lessons learned and best practices in the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. Mechanisms to tackle SALW proliferation in the Southern Africa region were agreed on.

Senior Government Consultation on Disarmament in Kenya

RECSA participated at a senior Kenya Government officials' meeting to discuss current problems posed by the proliferation of illegal arms. Participants took stock of the successes and challenges of a 2006/7 disarmament exercise. RECSA participated in crafting an enhanced strategy for a planned new round of disarmament to be undertaken in the North Rift and Upper Eastern regions of Kenya. The high number of arms in the wrong hands pose a serious threat peace and security in the country.

Conference on Peace and Security in Africa

As the Secretariat for the AU Continental Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, RECSA was invited to attend a conference on the implementation of the New Africa-EU partnership. Its main aim was to take stock of the Joint Africa- EU Strategy adopted at the Lisbon Summit in December 2007. The conference focused on the opportunities and challenges in efforts to promote peace and security. Participants recognised the need to ensure that all interventions on the continent to promote peace and security are harmonized and feed effectively into the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

RECSA in Various Meetings in Zambia

- During the month RECSA participated in the 4th SADC Regional Coordination Committee (SADC-RCC) on Small Arms and Light Weapons meeting. The Secretariat made a presentation on the RECSA-EU Small Arms project in Africa. Under this project, RECSA will partner with the African Union (AU) and the European Commission (EC) to implement a continent-wide SALW project under the Instrument for Stability (IFS). RECSA will be the Implementing Agency with the sub-regional bodies acting as implementing partners through their small arms desks. It is within this context that RECSA was invited by SADC-RCC to make a presentation on what the project entails. SADC is enthusiastic to work with RECSA under the project. SADC-RCC is the small arms coordinating mechanism within SARPCCO (the agency implementing the Southern Africa Protocol on small arms).
- The Secretariat has made contact with Zambia Government officials to brief them on the work that RECSA intends to commence in that country under the RECSA-ICGLR agreement. RECSA plans to have an initial workshop to sensitise senior Government officials on small arms issues and the country's obligations under the Nairobi Protocol. This will be followed by training in arms marking to enable the

Government to commence marking state-owned weapons with a machine purchased for the country by RECSA. Arms marking is one of the requirements that Member States committed themselves to under the Nairobi Protocol.

- RECSA is in discussions with the Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) about a pending Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. Many COMESA Member States are also members of RECSA. This provides an opportunity for the two bodies to work closely together to coordinate country efforts to control the problem of small arms.
- RECSA participated in a Project Steering Committee meeting under the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (CPMR) project for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region. The project is funded by the EU under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) arrangement. The implementing partners are the East African Community (EAC), COMESA and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). RECSA's involvement in the meeting was as a recipient of a separate direct grant from the EU. The Secretariat has received the funds on the strength of being the only regional body whose mandate is solely small arms control. The funds to RECSA will be utilized in its non-EAC Member countries and in COMESA countries that are not members of RECSA.

RECSA at EAC 10th Anniversary Commemoration

The Secretariat participated in the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the East African Community (EAC). Among the planned activities was a regional peace and security conference. The meeting explored the various security challenges hampering integration efforts between the five EAC countries.

The conference culminated in a public destruction of 3,500 arms by host Uganda. The RECSA Deputy Executive Secretary, Amb. Tharcisse Midonzi, made a statement on the efforts of RECSA member states to control the proliferation of illegal arms through regular collection and destruction of illicit arms, and surplus and obsolete Government stocks.

Arms Marking Project

During the month national arms marking trainings were conducted in Ethiopia and Burundi. This constitutes the second round of national trainings and is being supported by the US Government. In November, similar exercises will be undertaken in Seychelles, Djibouti, DRC and Sudan.

Initial trainings had been conducted in December 2008 in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi with funding from the German Government through the EAC/GTZ/RECSA collaboration.

RECSA to collaborate with South Sudan in Small Arms Work

The Secretariat was invited by the South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSSAC) to a meeting bringing together partners working with the Bureau. RECSA made a presentation on the implementation of small arms programmes. The presentation created awareness among participants about RECSA and its ongoing work in the region under the Nairobi Protocol. The forum further provided an opportunity for the Secretariat and the Bureau to identify possible areas of future collaboration.

The immediate activity to be undertaken in Southern Sudan is training on the use of electronic machines to mark state-owned arms in the South. Two machines have been purchased by RECSA and will be officially handed over to the Government of Southern Sudan in due course.

CSSAC is the focal point on small arms control and management for Southern Sudan. Northern Sudan has an independent national focal point based in Khartoum. The Bureau is receiving support from UNDP, Saferworld and other partners.

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Country Briefs

Burundi

A country-wide awareness raising campaign that was flagged off in April by the Burundi President, H.E. Pierre Nkurunziza, came to an end in October.

Under the campaign, the Burundi National Focal Point produced radio and television spots urging the public to voluntarily hand over weapons. These were aired on 11 radio stations and 3 televisions. Leaflets and t-shirts with relevant messages to sensitize communities were distributed through the support of 12 local civil society associations.

RECSA boosted the awareness creation effort by purchasing 130 bicycles to facilitate mobility during sensitisation exercises.

From 19th to 28th October, the BNFP conducted a special information and sensitization campaign in all the provinces of the country. This was aimed at informing and sensitizing the population about the new law on small arms and light weapons promulgated by The Head of State on 28th August. The campaign was carried out hand in hand with civilian disarmament. Members of the public who voluntarily handed in illegally held weapons benefitted by receiving gifts such as cell phones, building materials, bicycles, among other items.

On 23rd October the BNFP in collaboration with Mine Advisory Group destroyed 391 explosives in Bubanza Province.

Kenya

As part of awareness creation, the Kenya National Focal Point participated in the annual Public Service Week. The NFP had an exhibition stand to show-case its work, disseminate communication materials and respond to queries.

The NFP has maintained awareness creation on the dangers of small arms through the media. This has resulted in the President urging citizens to surrender illegally held arms. His Excellency Mwai Kibaki further directed law enforcement agencies to disarm citizens who ignore the Government amnesty to return illegal arms.

During the month, the KNFP conducted an arms assessment and awareness creation in seven districts in the North Rift Valley. The report is expected to be released soon.

In addition, efforts have been stepped up in the re-establishment of Provincial task forces. These will be the channels through which the work of the national focal point will be cascaded to the community level. Four task forces have so far been set up again; the remaining four are expected to be in place by the end of November.

Uganda

On 5th October, in commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the East African Community, Uganda destroyed 3,400 recovered illicit SALW. The President of Uganda officiated at the function.

From 26th to 31st October 2009 the NFP conducted verification and stocktaking of Uganda Police Force firearms in the Southern, South Western, Western and Mid-Western regions. This covered a total of 24 districts. The exercise will continue until the entire country is covered.

The Uganda NFP is actively involved in in-country conflict-resolution efforts under the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response mechanism. During the month, the NFP participated in forums under the mechanism.

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