

RECSA signs Funding Agreement for Small Arms Work with the European Union

The European Union is providing a grant of EUR 500,000 to the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) to coordinate a project aimed at enhancing the role of civil society and national efforts in the prevention, control and reduction of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). This grant is in addition to the EUR 3.3 million provided to RECSA in March 2010 for the 1st Pan-African Project on SALW funded by the European Union, aimed at supporting the Africa-EU strategic partnership in the fight against illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms and explosive materials.



From left to right: Mr Leonard Onyonyi (East African Community), Amb. Tim Clarke (European Union) and Dr Francis K. SANG (RECSA) during the signing ceremony in Dar es Salaam

A ceremony to mark the signing of a Contribution Agreement between the EU and RECSA was held at the EU offices in Umoja House in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday 26 October, 2010. The EU head of Delegation, Ambassador Tim Clarke and RECSA's Executive Secretary, Dr. Francis K. Sang officiated at the ceremony.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the effective reduction of illicit SALW proliferation in the Eastern and Southern Africa region by supporting civil society initiatives and national efforts.

The activities are part of a regional comprehensive programme, the Conflict Prevention and Management Resolution Programme (CPMR). This programme supports the framework for three regional organisations to work together, namely, the East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). RECSA is an intergovernmental organization charged with the responsibility of coordinating regional efforts and programmes to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

At the signing ceremony, Ambassador Clarke stated that *"the signature of the RECSA grant today is yet another demonstration of the EU's commitment to eradicate the illicit trade in arms and light weapons in this region. I am particularly pleased that the key focus of this programme is civil society as they play a key and often unrecognised role. By empowering civil society within the region, we can tackle the problem at its roots."*

Dr Sang added that *"RECSA appreciates the continuous support we have received from the EU and the collaboration with the EAC. The funding will also strengthen the institutional development of RECSA and National Focal Points as well as promote public awareness programmes on small arms and light weapons."*