



*Cooperating to Disarm*

## **5th REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

**MÖVENPICK HOTEL, DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA,  
28 - 29 SEPTEMBER 2009**

### **SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DELIBERATIONS, AND THE WAY FORWARD**

From 27 to 28 September 2009, the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) hosted the 5th Regional Civil Society Forum.

The meeting which took place in Dar-es-Salaam, Republic of Tanzania, brought together participants from 12 Member States, i.e. Burundi, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Member States were represented by National Focal Point Coordinators on SALW or their representatives and one representative from a civil society organization dealing with issues of SALW. Intergovernmental bodies and regional civil society organizations were in attendance to share their experiences.

#### **Objectives of the Seminar**

The Seminar had the following objectives:

- 1- Interaction and exchange of information between civil society, National Focal Points (NFPs) and RECSA on the activities taking place to address proliferation of illicit SALW in the region
- 2- To exchange information on the current trends affecting SALW work in the region
- 3- To explore the opportunities that exist to the enhancement of civil society-Government collaboration in small arms work
- 4- To promote this collaboration through dialogue

Presentations were made by RECSA, NFP coordinators, intergovernmental bodies and Civil Society and highlighted the following:

## **1- Overview of workshop – Angela Baiya-Wadeyua, RECSA**

The workshop began with a presentation on the background to the civil society forums coordinated by RECSA.

The presentation noted the importance of civil society in supporting Governments in their efforts to control small arms and light weapons. Participants were informed that Ministers from the RECSA region while reviewing the Declaration in April 2004, felt there was need to concretise the civil society – Government partnership by holding regular dialogue forums.

Four such meetings have been held so far. The objectives of the 5<sup>th</sup> RECSA-NFP-Civil Society forum were outlined and participants informed about the methodology that would be used during the meeting. The presentation further highlighted the deliberations of the fourth civil society forum held in 2007 in Rwanda and the way forward agreed in that meeting.

## **2- Brief on RECSA-CSO collaboration - Barbara Munube, RECSA**

The contribution of CSOs to the development of relevant SALW Instruments and guidelines at the international, regional and national levels was noted. RECSA recognized the importance of partnering with CSOs in SALW interventions, given their position and influence at the grass-root level. CSOs have been continuously attending the meetings held by RECSA at the sub-regional and regional level. RECSA Secretariat has engaged in formal partnerships through the signing of MoU with some CSOs and has tried to promote the cooperation between CSOs and NFPs, by recommending the inclusion/participation of CSO representatives to NFP and Legal Drafting Committees that have been established.

## **3- The highlights of the RECSA Five Year Strategy – Godfrey Bagonza, RECSA**

RECSA five-year strategy was developed through a consultative process that involved not only NFPs but also partners and donors. The RECSA Council of Minister adopted the Strategy in April 2009.

As a result of a focus put on results instead of activities, RECSA Strategy is now based on three pillars: Institutional Development, Effective Stockpile Management, Effective Provision of Information. Under these three pillars are broad activities whose implementation should contribute to the achievement of the outcomes and then to the overall goal, namely the eradication of the proliferation of illicit SALW. Six key enablers were identified as crucial in operationalizing the strategy, i.e. the building of political will, financial resource mobilization, empowerment of NFPs, Monitoring & Evaluation, enhanced financial management in Member States and effective communication on issues of SALW to various stakeholders.

Cooperation between RECSA and other stakeholders is considered of primary importance but hampered by the mistrust and lack of coordination between Member States, stakeholders and donors. The lack of coordination and information exchange between the various actors was highlighted as a cause of the duplication of activities and the lack of measurable and tangible results.

#### **4- An overview of current SALW realities in the region - James Ndung'u, Saferworld**

Progress has been made in the establishment of mechanisms to fight the proliferation of illicit SALW in the region. Among the major achievements can be cited the signing of regional and international instruments on SALW by the States of the GLR/HA, the establishment of RECSA as a coordinating body on SALW and the active role of States and various stakeholders in the process.

However, States continue to face challenges in the fulfilment of their commitments. For example, the processes of harmonization of legislation in the GLR/HA and the adoption of the ATT have progressed slowly, and the efficiency of regional initiatives is yet to be measured.

Research is a critical issue and of paramount importance in understanding and addressing SALW issues in the region. However, research capacities specifically in SALW issues are still limited in the region. Few organizations are carrying out research. The porosity of borders, the alternatives to forced disarmament, the way to involve communities in disarmament and arms collection, the issue of non-state actors and terrorists, are some topical issues that should be researched on to provide information and data on the extent and nature of the SALW issue in the region and the States of the region.

Political, economic, cultural and social background of States hampers also progress that could be made. In particular, the governance challenges, such as the changing political contexts, the conflicts in the region or reforms of the security sector affect progress.

Ultimately, the role of CSOs needs to be further clarified. Although acknowledged, the role and the contribution of CSOs to the success of SALW interventions are yet to be measured. There is no clear view on the impact of the activities undertaken by Civil Society, the extent to which CSOs have influenced Governments on security matters or the critical areas of support to the government that Civil Society could address. In addition, the weakness of Civil Society networks, the duplication of actions and the lack of funds hamper the outputs Civil Society could offer in addressing SALW problems.

#### **5- Country Presentations**

Member States highlighted the areas of cooperation with Civil Society. They acknowledged the crucial role of CSOs in the success of SALW interventions and the progress made in collaborating on these issues.

In **Burundi**, representatives from both NFP and Civil Society praised the close cooperation and the good working relationship in SALW interventions. Civil Society is represented both in the CDCPA and in the 17 Provincial Offices. The terms of the collaboration are contained in the Presidential decree that established the CDCPA. Civil Society has been involved in arms collection programs, public awareness campaigns, campaigns to encourage voluntary surrender of weapons and identification of incentives for those who voluntarily surrender arms, as well as in arms destruction events. Civil Society has further been actively involved in the development of the country's National Action Plan and in the review and drafting of the new law on firearms adopted in July 2009 and promulgated by the President in August 2009.

In the **Republic of Congo**, Civil Society is involved in all the areas of State intervention. In regards to the SALW issue, Civil Society has been involved in the implementation of DDR programs through the High Commission for Former Combatants. Since RoC has recently been integrated in RECSA, the current priority is the establishment of the RoC NFP that will include all stakeholders: police, military, paramilitary agencies (customs and water and forest), Gendarmerie, Justice, Health, and NGOs, among others. Civil Society, while acknowledging the actual partnership with Government Agencies, is insisting on the need to establish a formal collaboration. The absence of a SALW national network was noted, but reference was made to the existing Human Rights Network. As most of the NGOs dealing with SALW related issues are Human Rights Organisations, the objective is to enhance this platform.

In **Djibouti**, Civil Society has been involved in all the activities undertaken by the Djibouti NFP. Civil Society has actively participated to symbolic arms destructions, awareness campaigns, sensitization of senior state level officers, and the development of the NAP, including the population attitude survey.

In **RDC**, Civil Society participation is given prominence into the activity plan of the CNC-ALPC and is regarded as a crucial partner. The Commission is identifying the actors it could collaborate with and has started providing identification cards to these partners to better monitor their activities. It has organized awareness raising and training of state- and non-state actors on the partnership and networking strategy on SALW control and armed violence reduction. In general, the CNC-ALPC has continuously involved various inter-governmental organisations, international and national NGOs and research organizations in the design and implementation of SALW interventions.

In **Ethiopia**, Civil Society mostly covers issues of women and child rights and provides support to these two groups. Civil Society is represented in the Advisory Committee. Ethiopia NFP recognizes the potential role of Civil Society in awareness raising, especially in changing attitudes, and to this end, Ethiopia is working towards strengthening the partnership between CSO and the Government.

In **Kenya**, Civil Society has been working closely with the KNFP, since its inception. Civil Society has been involved in SALW interventions ranging from arms collection and destruction to cross-border dialogue. Civil Society Organizations contributed to development of the National Action Plan on SALW control and management, in carrying out the national assessment on the SALW situation in Kenya and in supporting its implementation.

In **Rwanda**, Civil Society Organizations are considered as a major actor in the effort to curb illicit SALW proliferation. They are members of the NFP Steering Committee that oversees the planning for activities on small arms. Civil Society actively participated in many processes and contributed to the development of the National Action Plan (including the mapping process and validation of results) and sensitization on the new law on SALW. Through collaboration with the NFP, awareness raising activities have been conducted in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and Kigali in order to sensitize on the problem of illicit firearms, to enhance voluntary surrender, and strengthen partnerships with communities in combating the SALW problem. These activities have been mostly conducted at the rural level, stressing the significance of the partnership with Civil Society. The strategy of Civil Society in Rwanda is also to mainstream development into SALW interventions, taking into account the importance of addressing economic development in efforts to control the problem of illicit SALW. However, challenges remain regarding the mobilization of funds, the low capacities of stakeholders to efficiently carry out SALW activities, the lack of research activities on SALW issues, or the porosity of borders that limit the impact of SALW interventions.

In **Seychelles**, Civil Society tries to engage the Government on SALW issues. From 2005 to 2007, the two sides used to collaborate closely. Since then, the lack of adequate capacity at the NFP and the low prioritisation of SALW issues in Seychelles has limited SALW related activities and the cooperation between civil society and the national focal point.

The current conflict in **Somalia** does not allow the actual and successful participation of Civil Society in Government initiatives on SALW. However, some activities of sensitization of the public have been undertaken.

In **Sudan**, Civil Society is engaged in post-conflict programmes and interventions. More particularly, the NFP has recognized the importance of research to better design and implement programs and is working towards the enhancement of this area of cooperation with civil society.

In **Tanzania**, close collaboration between Civil Society and the government characterizes the implementation of SALW initiatives. In 2002, AMAD organized a workshop to inform Civil Society of the magnitude and the impact of SALW proliferation in Tanzania and in the neighbouring States. A coordinator for the Civil Society Network was appointed to facilitate the collaboration between AMAD and CSOs. Civil Society highly supported the establishment of the NFP office through provision of computers, furniture and other materials. In addition CSOs provided support in the establishment of the necessary institutional framework and networks at the National, Regional and District levels, and in the organisation of zonal workshops.

Civil Society played a significant role in the development of the NAP and participated in the mapping exercise. Civil society is currently active in the implementation of the NAP, including organizing awareness campaigns to facilitate the implementation of the Plan, among others. However, the lack of coordination, communication and dissemination of information in the TANANSA network, the lack of funding, and the low regard for NGOs by law enforcement agencies hampers a fully effective and efficient cooperation between Civil Society and Tanzania Government.

In **Uganda**, Civil Society has been an integral part of the NFP since its inception. The key areas of cooperation comprise advocacy, sensitization and public awareness. Other areas of collaboration are the provision of support during destruction activities, organization of workshops, among others. Civil Society was also involved in the drafting of the policy on SALW and the establishment of community policing in Uganda. However, although recognized as a crucial partnership, the collaboration between CSOs and Government Agencies does not have any legal backing. In addition, the lack of funds and the need to better adapt advocacy materials to overcome the language barrier among communities hampers the impact of the activities carried out.

## **6- Opportunities, success and challenges for Civil Society collaborating with Government agencies in addressing the problem of small arms in Africa – Joseph Dube, IANSA**

Civil Society dealing with SALW-related issues is organized through IANSA and its regional and national chapters in order to gain more visibility, coordination and force in addressing SALW problems. This is the case in Africa at the continental, regional, sub-regional and national levels.

However, CSOs in Africa are still facing major challenges that limit their collaboration with Government agencies. The lack of indigenous research capacity, the limited visibility, the small number of information providers and resources, and the refusal of the African Union to work with CSOs, hinder their involvement in SALW interventions and their influence on the SALW agenda. Most of the research is carried out by International Organizations based outside Africa. In addition, Governments give preference to international NGOs instead of working with local ones.

CSOs have the opportunity to play a greater role in SALW interventions in Africa and should, for this purpose, enhance their role as data providers. It was for example proposed that they establish think tanks, at the national and regional levels, to inform government policies and interventions on SALW. In addition they should develop tools for evaluation of implementation of various instruments on SALW in order to get an accurate picture of the existing needs and opportunities.

Among the successes of CSO-Government collaboration are the successful organisation of the Week of Action Against Gun Violence, successful organisation of various fora to debate the ATT, establishment of good working relations with the public, and representation of Government in international fora.

## **7- Enhancing collaboration between NFPs and Civil Society in SALW work: the EAC Experience – Richard Mugisha, EAANSA**

Mr Mugisha made the presentation on behalf of the East African Community as the official expected to attend the meeting from the EAC was unable to make it.

The EAC/GTZ project on SALW began in 2007 and has been renewed in 2009. The project brings together RECSA, NFPs from the East African Community, and civil society organisations that are under the umbrella of EAANSA. National Focal Points and Civil Society are involved in the implementation of the project in EAC Member States under RECSA's coordination.

Each of the EAC countries benefited from this program, with activities ranging from awareness raising to destruction of SALW. The success of the program provided evidence of the importance of the partnership between Civil Society and Governmental agencies in SALW work.

However, one critical problem that arose during the implementation period was the lack of capacity among the NFPs and CSOs in project management, impeding the effectiveness of the programme. The problem was addressed through the training of NFPs and CSOs in project management, which improved the efficiency of the program thereafter.

## **8- Integrating cross-cutting issues in SALW work - Nathan Byamukama, IC/GLR**

Cross-cutting issues and their impact vary depending on the nature of the project. However, IC/GLR acknowledged the need to mainstream or integrate specific cross-cutting issues in all projects. These cross-cutting issues are HIV/AIDS, Youth, Gender, Environment, Human Settlement and Human Rights.

In Peace and Security projects, mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues was recognized to be of particular importance to enable a shift from focusing only on the concept of State security to addressing the broader issue of human security. In addition, mainstreaming of additional issues in the projects was in response to the realization that inclusion of cross-cutting issues in projects was essential to their success.

RECSA, as the implementing partner of the IC/GLR project on SALW, should integrate these cross-cutting issues in its work, as well as cooperate closely with specialized Civil Society in the implementation of programs.

## **9- Presentation on the proposed RECSA/UNREC/EAANSA programme with civil society “Civil Society Training on Practical Disarmament and Peace Building in Eastern Africa” - Rodger Glokpor, UNREC**

The proposed programme borrows from a programme developed and implemented by UNREC in Western Africa.

In realization of the importance of an efficient partnership between Governmental agencies and Civil Society to the success of projects, the programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of Civil Society in practical disarmament and peace building. The main outcomes in Western Africa were the building of a strong, dynamic and fully capacitated Civil Society, organized through the West African Action Network on Small Arms and the West African Action Network on Peace Building. WAANSA is now the main implementing partner of ECOWAS and is in charge of monitoring the ratification process of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW.

The Western Africa project will be replicated in Eastern Africa and is expected to result in a stronger, more visible, and effective EAANSA network. The project is in recognition of the fact that a lot of CSOs are unequipped with the technical knowledge and substantive know-how on disarmament issues. In addition there is a growing need for civil society organizations to play an active role in advancing peace-building and conflict prevention initiatives

## **10. The Way Forward**

After deliberations, the seminar participants agreed on the following recommendations and way forward:-

- i. Reporting by RECSA Secretariat, NFPs and CSOs through their existing channels of communication**  
The existing channels of communication should be utilised by the RECSA Secretariat, NFPs and CSOs to exchange information through regular reporting.
- ii. Resource Mobilization for the 5 year RECSA Secretariat Strategy**  
Encourage partners to identify areas of intervention within their mandate in the 5 Year RECSA Secretariat Strategy and to mobilize funds for the identified programs.
- iii. CSOs to continue to closely collaborate with NFPs, on the basis of a formal cooperation, in the implementation of SALW interventions within their mandate at the national level.**

**iv. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)**

The Meeting recognized the importance of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) in enhancing collaboration between RECSA and CSOs. Nonetheless the initiation of these MoU should be based on measurable targets and be closely monitored to assess their effectiveness.

**v. RECSA and all partners to integrate cross-cutting issues of HIV/AIDS, Youth, Gender and Human Rights when designing SALW programs**

**vi. Build capacity of indigenous researchers and encourage government support to fund indigenous research on SALW in the region.**