



Cooperating to Disarm

**STATEMENT AT THE THIRD BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES
TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT
AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND
LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

BY

**HON. BUNYONI Alain- Guillaume
MINISTER FOR INTERNAL SECURITY REPUBLIC OF
BURUNDI AND THE CHAIRMAN RECSA COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS.**

NEW YORK, 14 - 18 JULY 2008

Allow me Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the States Parties signatory to the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Lights Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and the Bordering States and indeed my own behalf to congratulate you on your election to the chair of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small arms and Light weapons. We also convey our congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the 2nd Biennial Meeting of States which took place in July 2005, our region has made remarkable achievements in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA).

The Nairobi Protocol came into force on 5th May 2006 after ratification by the required 8 Member States. Other states have continued to ratify the Protocol. This is a clear sign of the regional governments' commitment to pursue the aspirations of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) as regionalized by the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol. The Nairobi Protocol is legally binding to RECSA Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me on behalf of State Parties signatory to the Nairobi Protocol express sincere appreciation for the granting of Observer Status to RECSA by the 62nd United Nations General Assembly in December, 2007 and thank all friends who tirelessly spoke in our favour. The Observer Status gives the region the opportunity to collaborate more effectively with the global community in our collective effort to address illicit SALW.

The development of National Action Plans (NAP) remains central in the drawing of national policies to address the proliferation and management of small arms in our region. As you may recall, three member states (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) had by the last Biennial Assembly completed this process and subsequently commenced with the implementation. The development of National action Plans is at various stages in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda and scheduled to commence later in the year in both Djibouti and Ethiopia. The progress in this aspect has been sponsored by donors and RECSA continues to call on their support to the on-going processes.

Mr. Chairman,

The marking of arms and light weapons is vital in stockpile management. To this end RECSA has purchased one electronic arms marking machine for each of the 12 Member states through grants from the USA Government and the German Government through GTZ under the EAC Small arms Project. This will go a long way in assisting Member States to comply with the regional Best Practice Guidelines that require all member states to have marked their arms by the end of 2008. The marking of the small arms and

light weapons is further in compliance with the International Tracing Instrument.

For the said marking to have impact on the region, we need the manufacturing and exporting parties to ensure that arms destined for our region are marked at the source.

Marking of arms without data base creation may not assist much in the tracing of illicit movement of arms. RECSA under the already mentioned assistance has provided two computers to each Member state to commence data creation and management. Member States are calling on able partners to assist in the development of regional data base creation software that will harmonize record keeping and data management. Training on data creation and management has already been carried out in the region but more is needed to adapt to the new marking technology.

Mr. Chairman,

A lot has been done on small arms in our region but rather little on light weapons. To fill this gap, RECSA organized a seminar on Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) in Nairobi on the 1st -2nd of this month. The seminar (sponsored by the USA Government) deliberated on a regional study on the proliferation of MANPADS in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (funded by the UK Government) and agreed on a way forward. We call on others to take action in this direction in view of the security threats posed by MANPADS to air travel and related economic activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Member States in the region have continued to destroy obsolete, surplus and collected weapons and ammunition in order to prevent their joining the illicit circulation flow. In the last two years over 150,000 small arms and light weapons have been destroyed.

Mr. Chairman

Our region would not have come this far without international assistance and cooperation. I wish to sincerely thank the governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and United States of America along with UNDP-BCPR who have funded RECSA to undertake small arms and light weapons programmes in our region. We are grateful to the Kenya Government for supporting and hosting the Regional Centre on Small arms.

Thank you.