



Cooperating to Disarm

**STATEMENT BY THE REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS
(RECSA) ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, ASSISTANCE
AND NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING**

PRESENTED BY

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Allow me Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the States Parties signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol and also on behalf of the Hon. Alain Guillaume BUNYONI the Minister of Public Security in Burundi who also the Chair of the Council of Ministers of RECSA 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 and All Its Aspects.

Mr. Chairman I make this statement on the crucial and important issue of international cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building. Under the UNPoA, States undertook to cooperate and to ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy in efforts to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. These efforts are to be undertaken at the global, regional and sub-regional and national levels.

Mr. Chairman,

The Nairobi Protocol on the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States which was signed in April 2004 is a regional response to the problem of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons are among the main factors which have sustained armed conflict and armed

crime, degraded the environment, and fuelled the illegal exploitation of natural resources, abetted terrorism and other serious crimes in our region. The Nairobi Protocol was preceded by the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of Illicit Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa signed in March 2000.

The Member States signatory to the Nairobi Protocol are; Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The Regional Centre on Small Arms is mandated to oversee the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol. RECSA comprises of a Council of Ministers, Technical Advisory Committee and a Secretariat which is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

The implementation strategy for the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol is spelt out in a coordinated agenda for action which was adopted by Member States in November 2000. It calls upon RECSA to co-ordinate international support for the implementation of the coordinated agenda for action. Furthermore State Parties are called upon to provide funds to support their respective National Focal Points and the Secretariat.

However the Secretariat was also mandated to solicit funds from the international community to support the institutional framework and the implementation of the coordinated agenda for action.

Mr. Chairman,

As you may be aware, Member States of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol fall within the bracket of developing countries and therefore have low levels of funds and technical capacity to adequately address the important issue of small arms and light weapons. It is for this reason that international assistance and cooperation is sought.

Mr. Chairman,

RECSA requires funding to support amongst others to the building of a strong institutional framework for small arms and light weapons in its region, building of the capacity of law enforcement agencies especially in new and emerging issues relating to small arms and light weapons, information exchange, procurement of equipment for marking equipment and development of databases for managing small arms and light weapons in the possession of the state and civilians.

Mr. Chairman,

RECSA has sought assistance from the international community to bridge the funding gap that exists in the implementation of

the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol. However I wish to report that the assistance has been uncoordinated and made in piece meal, often late and generally inadequate. The funding periods have been too short to create the necessary impact as envisaged programmes under the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol. There is an urgent need therefore for the donor community to pool resources together to avoid duplication of efforts. RECSA welcomes the development of a web- based information tool for the programme of Action to be launched by the United Nations office of Disarmament Affairs at the BMS3 meeting. It is anticipated that the electronic access will provide information exchange on international cooperation and assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States Signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol have recorded notable milestones in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons. The achievements thus far, will be presented on Wednesday by the Chairman of the RECSA Council of Ministers Hon Alain G. BUNYONI.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I wish to sincerely thank the governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and United States of America along with UNDP-BCPR for funding programmes on Small Arms in the RECSA region.

We further request other donors to likewise fund other programmes specifically dedicated to addressing the issues of small arms and light weapons in our region.

I thank you Mr. Chairman