



Co-operating to Disarm

5th RECSA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sun Safari Club Hotel, Bujumbura

19th – 20th January 2009

Opening Remarks

By

**DR. FRANCIS K. SANG, CBS
(Executive Secretary, RECSA)**

Our Guest of Honour, Honourable Alain Bunyoni, Minister of Public Security Security of the Republic of Burundi and the Chairman of the RECSA Council of Ministers;
General Mbazumutima Onésphore, Chairman of RECSA's Technical Advisory Committee and the Coordinator of Burundi National Focal Point;
Lt. Col. Omar Hassan, Deputy Chair of RECSA's Technical Advisory Committee and Coordinator of Djibouti National Focal Point;
Members of the Technical Advisory Committee Members from RECSA Member States;
Senior Burundi Government Officials;
Representatives of Civil Society Organizations;
Members of the Media;
Distinguished Participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa (RECSA), and on my own behalf, to express deep appreciation to the Government of Burundi for hosting the 5th Ordinary meeting of the RECSA Technical Advisory Committee.

Let me also take this earliest opportunity to express sincere thanks to our esteemed Guest of Honour for sparing time out of his busy schedule to grace the opening ceremony of this occasion and to welcome all distinguished Participants to the meeting.

I wish to further thank the Chief Guest for the support and advise he has continuously given to the Secretariat and his physical presence during visits to the Member States to brief the respective Governments on the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and their contributions to RECSA.

The presence here of all Member of the Technical Advisory Committee is a clear indication of the great importance and the priority our respective governments attach to the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol.

The Technical Advisory Committee is one of the 3 organs of RECSA, established by agreement creating the Regional Centre on Small Arms in 2005 with the important responsibility of providing technical direction to the organisation in the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol.

Guest of Honour,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I must underscore that the issues for consideration by this meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee are of particular importance as they dictate the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol. I have no doubt however that the TAC Members will give the relevant issues due attention.

I would like to observe that since the last Ordinary meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee held in Kampala in April 2007 and the last Technical Advisory Committee Meeting held in September 2007 prior to the 2nd Extra Ordinary Council of Ministers Meeting held in October 2007 in Nairobi Kenya, the RECSA Secretariat has carried out implementation of various activities relevant to efforts to fight the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons.

RECSA has continued to support Member States to develop National Action Plans on small arms control and management; stockpile management; capacity building of law enforcement officers and NFP officials among other areas as will be shared during the presentation of the progress report later in this meeting. During the reporting period, functional analyses were carried in six NFP offices. The exercise identified areas needing intervention to boost the capacity of the Focal Points to make them more effective in implementing small arms projects.

Over the last two years, RECSA has engaged in extensive collaboration with regional and international bodies in addressing the problems of illegal small arms. More on this will be presented in the progress report.

Guest of Honour,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The modest success that RECSA has recorded so far is due to moral and political good will accorded the Secretariat by Member States across the region. Implementation has to a large extent been hampered by a shortage of financial resources. Most RECSA Member States have failed to honour their financial obligations to the organisation. Many donors have therefore shied away from funding RECSA activities.

To many donors, the level of fulfilment by member states of their financial commitments to the organisation is a reflection of their commitment to the process of implementing the Nairobi Protocol. This commitment to implementation has been difficult to demonstrate due to failure of the member States to meet their financial obligations to RECSA. With donors holding back, this has affected implementation of work plans and will continue to do so. The implementation of work plan 2009-2010 and RECSA's five-year strategy which will be presented before this meeting is therefore at stake.

This gathering will give participants the opportunity to analyze these and other challenges to the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi protocol with a view to recommending workable solutions.

Finally, let me assure you that whereas RECSA staff is prepared to continue working tirelessly to achieve its regional goals, Member States must fulfil their commitment to support RECSA by honouring their financial pledges and strengthening their National Focal Points so that through RECSA, the Region can benefit from existing international goodwill in order to draw maximum support for implementing projects on small arms and light weapons.

Lastly, on behalf of the Regional Centre on Small Arms I wish to thank the following donors for their support to the implementation of small arms programmes: USA, Germany (through the EAC/GTZ collaboration, Norway,

Netherlands and UK. I also wish to appreciate our partners EAANSA, UNDP, MAG, SaferWorld, ISS, IC/GLR and others with whom we continue to collaborate on issues of small arms and light weapons.

I thank you.