



Cooperating to Disarm

**REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
AND RWANDA NATIONAL FOCAL POINT ON SMALL ARMS
NATIONAL ARMS MARKING WORKSHOP**

Police Headquarters, Kacyiru

4th – 5th December 2008

Opening Remarks

By

**Dr. Francis K. Sang, CBS
(Executive Secretary, RECSA)**

Our Guest of Honour, Hon. Sheikh Mussa Fazil

HARERIMANA; Minister for Internal Security

Mr Eric Kayiranga, the Rwanda National Focal Point Coordinator;

National Focal Point Officers;

Senior Police and Military Officers and other Government officials;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), and on my own behalf, to welcome you all to this two day national training on arms marking hosted by RECSA and the Rwanda National Focal Point on Small Arms.

Particularly, I wish to thank our Chief Guest, **Hon. Sheikh Mussa Fazil HARERIMANA** for finding time out of his very busy schedule to officially open this workshop and to receive an electronic arms marking machine purchased for the Rwanda Government by the Regional Centre on Small Arms.

This workshop is one in a series of similar workshops being held in the five Eastern African countries with the financial support of GTZ through the RECSA-EAC collaboration mechanism.

This is a landmark gathering as RECSA is the first regional body to hold arms marking workshops in Africa in the ongoing efforts to address the menace of proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons.

Our Guest of Honour,

The requirement of RECSA Member States to mark arms in state possession and to keep effective records is in line with the Nairobi Protocol, the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI).

Discussions on the progress of implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI by UN Member Countries was the centre of focus during the Third Biennial meeting of States held in New York in July this year where RECSA Member States, including Rwanda, also participated.

The Arms Marking workshop will demonstrate the use of the MC Couth 2000 electronic arms marking machine, review progress of harmonising legislation in Rwanda in line with the provisions of the Nairobi Protocol on small arms as well as the Best Practice Guidelines on the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, specifically the guidelines stipulating marking of each firearm with a unique mark in line with International Standards.

RECSA wishes to recognize the commendable progress made by Rwanda in revising its small arms legislation. This draft revised legislation now only awaits the President's signature to become law. The country has demonstrated commitment to addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons, and the law is eagerly awaited by law enforcement agencies to begin implementation in earnest.

Our Guest of Honour,

This arms workshop is held in Rwanda is in recognition of and provide technical support to the country's commitment to marking its state owned arms. The process of marking arms had already begun in the country using manual means in conformity with the Best Practice Guidelines. The electronic marking machine provided by RECSA will therefore contribute to faster

marking and speed up this process. RECSA is in the process of procuring another machine to be donated to the Government of Rwanda in 2009 for arms marking by the military through financial support from the USA Government.

RECSA wishes to thank the Government of Rwanda for providing firearms for use during this two day workshop to practically demonstrate the use of the MC Couth 2000 electronic marking machine on small arms.

The aim of marking arms as provided in regional and international instruments on small arms is for easy tracing and identification of firearms. This will further ease the process of identifying illegal arms in ongoing efforts to address the proliferation of these arms among members of the public. Tracing in addition enables State authorities to detect illicit manufacture and trafficking of small arms and light weapons within their borders.

This national arms marking training and demonstration is a contribution by RECSA towards building the capacity of the Rwanda National Focal Point and law enforcement officers to effectively implement related elements of the Nairobi Protocol

for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

Our Guest of Honour,

The acceptance by Rwanda to host and run this workshop is a demonstration of the country's commitment to implement the International Tracing Instrument that, among other things, emphasises on 'marking' for easy traceability and identification of arms.

Finally, RECSA wishes to thank the Rwanda Government for its continued support to the Secretariat, including its commitment to make its financial contribution towards the operations of the Secretariat.

I thank you for your attention.