



Cooperating to Disarm

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

11th and 12th December 2008

Sports View Hotel, Kampala

Opening Remarks

By

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

Our Guest of Honour, Hon. Matia Kasaija, Minister of State for Internal Affairs;
Officials from the Uganda National Focal Point on small arms;
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 Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms.

Particularly, I wish to thank our Chief Guest, Hon. Matia Kasaija, 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 Uganda 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.

Through the same support, two officers from Uganda's law enforcement agencies attended a one-week training on the use of the electronic machine in Pretoria, South Africa. These officers will be key in conducting further provincial trainings on arms marking around the country.

This is a landmark gathering as RECSA is the first regional body in Africa to hold arms marking workshops in the continent 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 Uganda, 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 Uganda 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 Uganda in implementing the various provisions of the Nairobi Protocol. Uganda was among the first countries in the RECSA region to develop a National Action Plan on small arms control and management which is now being implemented.

Among the main tenets of the Plan is the control and management of existing stockpiles. Marking of state-owned and legally held civilian-owned arms for easy traceability and

identification contributes greatly to effective management and control of stockpiles.

Uganda has been marking its arms manually. The new electronic machine provided by RECSA will go a long way in supporting this process as the country aspires to mark all its state owned arms in conformity with regional and international instruments.

Our Guest of Honour,

This arms workshop is held in Uganda in recognition of and provides technical support to the country's commitment to mark its state owned arms. The electronic marking machine provided by RECSA will contribute to and speed up this process. RECSA is in the process of procuring another machine to be donated to the Government of Uganda in 2009 for arms marking by the military through financial support from the USA Government.

RECSA wishes to thank the Government of Uganda 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 Uganda 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 Uganda 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 Uganda Government for its continued support to the Secretariat.

I thank you.