



REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (RECSA)

REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF DISARMAMENT

AFFAIRS AT

**THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT,
COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT
WEAPONS IN ITS ALL ASPECTS (UNPOA)**

AND THE

**NAIROBI DECLARATION AND THE NAIROBI PROTOCOL FOR THE
PREVENTION , CONTROL AND REDUCTION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT
WEAPONS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION AND THE HORN OF AFRICA**

New York, United Nations Headquarters, June 26th, – July 7th, 2006

(Please check against delivery)

Mr President,

May I start my statement by extending my congratulations to your election as President of the First Review Conference to review the progress made in the implementation of the UNPoA. I am confident that with your vast experience, you will certainly guide this conference to a successful outcome.

One year prior the adoption of the UNPoA in July 2001, under the initiative of the Government of Kenya, ten countries of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa namely:- Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo , Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda met in Nairobi on 15th March 2000 and signed the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn Africa the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. These ten countries were later joined by Seychelles and Somalia in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

The main objective of the Declaration is to provide a comprehensive framework to combat the easy availability of illicit small arms and light weapons which contribute to the prolonged armed conflicts, political instability and armed crime in the region.

Mr President,

The first Ministerial Review Conference held in August 2002 approved the Coordinated Agenda for Action and its implementation Plan. The coordinated agenda for action was to promote the sub – region human security and ensure that all States have in place adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons. This is in line with the concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of the UNPoA at the national and regional level.

Since 2001, the Nairobi Secretariat on small arms and light Weapons (now the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) organised, convened and hosted four ministerial review conferences on the progress of the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration held in August 2002, April 2004, June 2005 and April 2006, respectively.

The milestones of these follow up mechanisms are: firstly , the approval of the coordinated agenda for action and its implementation plan across the region; secondly, the adoption of the Nairobi Protocol for the prevention, control and reduction of small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa in the year 2004 and its subsequent entry into force on the 5th May 2006 as a legally binding instrument on arms management and policies ; thirdly, the transformation of the Nairobi Secretariat on small arms into the Regional Centre on small arms and light weapons as an inter-Governmental legal entity with international juridical personality provides broaden mandate to effectively implement the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol .

I am confident that with the signing of the Headquarters Agreement by the Government of Kenya in May 2006, RECSA will soon be offered a permanent observer status by the African Union and the United Nations.

Further, the adoption by the member States of the RECSA five year Work Plan : 2006 – 2011 and its budget which focus on three thematic areas , namely ; organisation development, policy and research, advocacy and partnerships , calls for the international assistance and cooperation needed to enhance efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, to supplement the member States financial contribution re-affirmed during the just concluded Extraordinary Council of Ministers held in Kampala, Uganda, in April 2006.

Mr President,

With the adoption of the UNPoA in 2001 by United Nations, member States, agreed to undertake a series of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects at national, regional and global levels. The member States of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa greatly affected by this scourge of small arms recognised the importance of the UNPoA and moved very fast in the implementation of these provisions in line with the Nairobi Protocol and the best practice guidelines which has been appreciated by members of the international community as comprehensive and goes beyond the measures to strengthen the implementation process of the UNPoA. The best practice guidelines covers the following key issues: - (i) stockpile management; (ii) import, export and transfer control; (iii) marking, tracing and brokering; (iv) public awareness and destruction; and (v) mutual legal assistance and operational capacity.

The importance of the best practice guidelines is to assist member States in the implementation in general and in the harmonization of national legislations on firearms at national level in particular since an audit on the existing national legislation on firearms has been carried out in all member States. These Member States will incorporate the guidelines in accordance with their respective regulations, administrative and legal procedures. Further national legal drafting committees have been established in almost all member States.

In support of the Nairobi guidelines on arms transfer control, the Extraordinary Council of Ministers meeting held in Uganda in April 2006, recognized the importance of international guidelines on arms transfer control and appealed to the international community to likewise develop international norms on arms transfers, incorporating the comprehensive guidelines proposed by the Member States signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol for the prevention, control

and reduction on small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and bordering States.

Pursuant to the UNPoA provision on the establishment and designation of the national coordination agencies or bodies, eleven NFPs namely, Burundi, Djibouti, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda have been established and are fully operational.

In addition to the establishment of national focal points in all member States, three countries namely Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya have developed their respective national arms management policies and adopted the National Action Plans (NAPs) which are being implemented. The NAPs provide a five year strategic framework by the governments on practical and realistic steps and their sequencing to establish an effective national system on SALW control.

The development of National Action Plans has created interest in the remaining Member States in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa who have not developed NAPs. RECSA is coordinating the development of National Action Plans in the remaining countries. It is paramount that National Action Plans on arms management and policy should integrate small arms issues into development strategies such as poverty reduction.

This move will ensure that budgets are allocated for issues integrating small arms and light weapons into development. Therefore, efforts need to be made by states to engage with ministries of planning and finance which are the key ministries in development plans to ensure that concerns of small arms and light weapons are addressed in these plans.

In building broader support in the implementation of the UNPoA, the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol, RECSA in collaboration with European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), AMANI Parliamentary Forum for the Great Lakes Region and Saferworld, organized a workshop in December 2005, in Kenya to sensitise members of Parliaments from the sub-region on their important role on public

awareness, oversight and technical input while enacting national legislations on firearms.

The Parliamentary Forum brought together delegations of African Parliamentarians from Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo , Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Sudan, Somalia as well the East African Legislative Assembly.

Mr President,

In order to remove from circulation, the destruction of all seized, confiscated, and surrendered firearms is very critical as provided for by the UNPoA. In this regard, member States signatory to the Nairobi Protocol have destroyed over 100,000 thousands firearms and thousands of tonnes of ammunition.

In addition, other member States have earmarked illicit arms for destruction. In this effort, RECSA Secretariat has contacted some member States of the international community to support the arms destruction, stockpile management and security in the region.

On law enforcement training and capacity building , RECSA Secretariat and National Focal Points together with SaferAfrica, Saferworld, Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) and Interpol Sub –regional Bureau ,Nairobi, in line with the UNPoA and the coordinated agenda for action of the Nairobi Declaration have developed a Training Curriculum and manual for the law enforcement agencies , senior management, and civil society officials.

The sub – region recognises the importance of research on the dynamics of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its effects on human security, and the need to promote cooperation in this area among the various stakeholders. In this context, RECSA in consultation with member States from the region identified nine research topics on common areas of interest. In this line, a research topic on "the role of approved state agencies to assist with law enforcement and security" has

been commissioned and funded by the Royal Netherlands government. I call upon international community to support the funding of the remaining research topics.

Concerning the partnership with civil society, in accordance with the UNPoA and the Coordinated Agenda for Action of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol, RECSA works closely with regional and international civil society organisations involved in the fight against the proliferation of illicit small arms.

So far three Civil Society / NFP Annual sub – regional dialogue forum have been organized and hosted by RECSA in 2003, 2004 and 2006, respectively. These dialogue forums have considerably increased the level of civil society commitment and understanding of their role in the war against the menace of illicit small arms.

I wish to take this opportunity to express RECSA appreciation for the effective partnership between governments and civil society organisations of the member States in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa without which current achievements could not have been possible. A special mention of consistent and continued effective partnership should be attributed to SaferAfrica, Saferworld, Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), Africa Peace Forum (APFO), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Oxfam GB, and the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum for Peace (AMANI Forum).

Further, it is paramount to mention that I wish to commend and encourage the increasing fruitful collaboration and trust between RECSA and the Eastern Africa Action Network on Small Arms (EAANSA).

The Centre is grateful to the Government of the United Kingdom through DFID for their significant and sustained financial and technical support since the signing of the Nairobi Declaration in March 2000. Member States also greatly appreciate the Government of the Royal Netherlands for their financial support. RECSA Secretariat acknowledges the continued support provided by the Government of Kenya

including the hosting of RECSA headquarters. Finally, RECSA appreciate the political good will and commitment to contribute for the sustainability of RECSA by member States of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

I thank you for your kind attention