

OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (ODA)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2007 to June 2008

Cooperation with the African Union

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) continued to maintain active collaboration with the African Union (AU) Commission in the area of peace, security and disarmament. In this context, the Commission sought the UNREC's views on matters relating to the establishment and functioning of the AU Small Arms Unit and related disarmament matters. The Centre contributed to the review of background documents on the AU border programme and participated in the three experts workshops organised by the AU Commission on the implementation of its border program respectively in Bamako, Mali on 8-9 March 2007, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia on 4-7 June 2007 and Djibouti, Djibouti on 1-2 December 2007.

Cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States

UNREC has continued its collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission. It provided technical advice on issues of practical disarmament, such as the establishment of a mechanism and measures to prevent illicit arms brokering activities in the subregion; the establishment of the subregional database and register on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and peace operations; the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, and the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in 2006.

ECOWAS designated the Regional Centre as a resource institution for the elaboration of the Standard Operational Procedures of the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP). It also designated the Regional Centre, as a member of the ECOSAP Regional Technical Committee for reviewing and approving project proposals submitted by National Commissions and other entities. In this context, the Centre participated in the First Regional Technical Committee Meeting held in Bamako in May 2007.

Furthermore, the Regional Centre continued to provide technical support to National Commissions for the Fight against the Proliferation of SALW which were set up at the request of ECOWAS. The Regional Centre provided such support for the formulation of the Programme of Action for the National Commission of Togo and in the organisation of Arms destruction ceremony and two capacity building workshops: (i) The Management of SALW Stockpile; and (ii) The Problems of SALW in Togo.

Cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States

The Regional Centre maintained its cooperation with Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), particularly within the context of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the ECCAS General Secretariat and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. The two institutions consulted intensively on the implementation of the

Sao Tome Initiative which called for the adoption of a legally binding instrument of the control of SALW and of the adoption of a Code of Conduct for Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa. The ECCAS Secretariat further participated and made presentations at the 25th and 26th Ministerial Meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa held respectively, in Sao Tome in May 2007 and Yaoundé in September 2007. Issues discussed during these two meetings included, among others, the security and political situations in some Central African countries like, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad.

In addition, at the request of the ECCAS Secretariat, in June 2007, the Regional Centre hosted an ECCAS delegation. Discussions between the two institutions centred mainly on the Regional Centre's provision of technical assistance to ECCAS for the strengthening of the civil society organisations in the area of peace and disarmament in Central Africa.

Cooperation with civil society organizations

With financial support from SIDA, and in collaboration with Oxfam GB and the Government of Togo, the Regional Centre organized a sub regional training of trainers workshop aimed at building the capacity of grass-root and civil society organizations in practical disarmament and peace building skills, by equipping them with the necessary technical tools to enable them to complement their Governments' efforts in the areas of disarmament and peace-building, in West Africa. The workshop was held in Lome, Togo. Participants to this event included, primarily, representatives of NGOs from the 16 West African States, UN agencies such as the UNDP and the HCHR, as well as relevant research organizations such as the Group de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP) and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC).

Assistance to the Government of Guinea-Bissau

In addition to the assistance rendered by the Regional Centre, on May 2007, an inter-agency mission composed of UNODA, DESA and UNODC was dispatched to Guinea-Bissau with the aim to discuss the modalities of implementation of a three-year project to support the country's National Commission against the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. The mission was joined by the project manager of the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP). The project envisages a number of activities aimed, inter alia, at: enabling the National Commission to functioning on a continuous basis; enhancing the capacity of the National Commission to design and recommend policies to address the problem posed by the widespread availability of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Guinea-Bissau; reviewing the country's SALW legislation; raising awareness of the problem; facilitating the involvement of civil society organizations in the efforts to resolve the problem, including their active participation in the activities of the national Commission; assisting the National Commission in carrying out a national survey and a mapping of the SALW situation; and conducting a pilot voluntary weapons collection in selected areas of Bissau. The project, which is funded by the Government of Japan, will be implemented in coordination with ECOSAP.