

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 & LIGHT WEAPONS IN ITS ALL ASPECTS (UNPoA)

30th June 2006

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, USA

Intervention on International Cooperation and Assistance by Mr. Francis K. Sang, Executive Secretary,

Mr. Chairman,

The responsibility for solving the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects still rest with the States. However, the complex nature and dynamics of SALW necessitates involvement of all sectors of society as well as international community, since it will greatly assist the UNPoA implementation process particularly in the countries seriously affected by armed conflicts such as the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

While twelve member States signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol namely : Burundi, Djibouti, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia , Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda appreciate the substantial financial support provided to the implementation of UNPoA for the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa Region , a general observation is that there is no coordination of efforts and harmonization of activities hence duplication of efforts are experienced more often.

Member States of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa therefore would like to recommend that for a proper coordination of the international assistance, an arrangement should be agreed upon on how funds to assist in the implementation of UNPoA and other regional initiatives should be channeled.

On the elements of Marking, tracing and record keeping, the Nairobi Protocol as well as the Best Practice Guidelines addresses exhaustively these issues. Member States agreed that by the year 2008, they will have completed the marking of their respective State owned arms stocks.

However, this calls for financial and technical support for the implementation of these guidelines, since the Best Practice Guidelines for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol recommends that "all small arms and light weapons under the jurisdiction or control of signatory States, including those for use by members of armed and security forces be marked using the ISO 3166-1 country codes."

Concerning the mechanisms for information exchange, transparency should be encouraged with the creation of national databases so that reliable information on the overall dynamics of illicit arms dealing is properly addressed.

RECSA member States support the creation of national and regional database on SALW. Article 12 (d) of the Nairobi Protocol provides for the Member States to undertake the establishment of national databases to facilitate the exchange of information on small arms and light weapons import, export and transfers.

RECSA Secretariat is closely working with Interpol Sub – Regional Bureau to undertake the development of a project which aims at collecting, exchanging and analyzing relevant data on major active illicit arms traffickers and networks, including their modus operandi and financing.

Further, action oriented research is paramount in the fight against proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Member States signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol have identified and approved nine research topics on small arms proliferation in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

RECSA has only commissioned one research topic due to lack of financial support. This is where international assistance is still required.

Mr. Chairman,

The Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa has been able to implement most of the provisions of the UNPoA despite lack of sufficient funds to implement the planned activities. RECSA strongly appeals to the international community to further support the five year RECSA work Plan, in order to speed up the implementation process urgently needed in this most affected region by the proliferation and the easy availability of small arms and light weapons.

For the implementation, the UK Government provided significant financial support to date for the implementation of the Coordinated Agenda for Action in the Region. This support has enabled the RECSA Secretariat and member States signatory to the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol to implement a broad range of UNPoA provisions.

The Royal Government of the Netherlands since 2005 has also provided financial support on some areas on the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol. In order to sustain funding, RECSA has initiated talks with potential donors including the Group of Friends of the Nairobi Declaration as provided by the member States for the support for the implementation of its Five Years Work Plan 2006 – 2011.

Finally, it is encouraging to note that for the sustainability and ownership of RECSA, each member States pledged to contribute US \$ 70,000 yearly to supplement donor's efforts and assistance. This agreement was reached during the Extraordinary Council of Ministers held in Kampala, in April 2006.

I thank you