



Co-operating to Disarm

PRESS RELEASE

KENYA PRAISED FOR EXEMPLARY PROGRESS IN MARKING OF FIREARMS

NAIROBI, 28th AUGUST 2017: The Republic of Kenya has today been commended for making exemplary progress in marking firearms owned by the government.

Speaking during a workshop on misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the region, the Director of the Kenya National focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons (KNFP/SALW) Mr. Marcus Ochola said the government has marked 98% of all firearms held by security officers in the country. Arms Marking and electronic record keeping assists in identification and tracing especially when investigating crime. Kenya has also consistently held destruction exercises for obsolete/unserviceable arsenal; recently being the destruction of 15,000 firearms and ammunition in July 2017. Mr. Ochola was speaking on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of Government Dr. Fred Matiang'i.

Marking of firearms is one of the deliverables for the 15 Member States to the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and Bordering States. The marking and destruction of firearms is among Arms control exercises supported by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA); which is the secretariat of the Nairobi Protocol.

Kenya's neighbor, Uganda, was also noted as a success case-study on civilian disarmament with reference to the Karamoja disarmament program, which was complemented by the provision of alternative livelihood, education and enhancement of State Security. The RECSA Executive Secretary Mr. Théoneste Mutsindashyaka urged regional States to adopt the Uganda model on their responses towards curbing cattle rustling which has been turned from a cultural affair to a commercial and political issue owing to the easy availability of firearms especially the AK47 and SMG. AfDB Senior Policy adviser Dr. Olofunso Somorin and the European Union Representative Mr. Jean-Pierre Bardoul reiterated their support for RECSA interventions on controlling proliferation of arms, noting that their institutions were cognizant of the indivisibility of development and security.





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Stakeholders also deliberated the issue of poaching, which has plummeted over the last 10 years, as terrorists, militias and criminal groups sell rhino and elephant trophies to fund their activities. Notably so, notorious groupings in the region including *Al Shabaab*, *Mai Mai*, *M23*, *Lord's Resistance Army*, *Seleka* and *anti-balaka* have turned to poaching and cattle rustling to raise money.

The deliberations were part of a regional workshop on the, "Dissemination of Study Findings on the nexus between SALW proliferation and Cattle Rustling/Poaching/Fragility" hosted by RECSA. The event sought to build synergy for cooperative, multi-faced approaches towards reducing the illegal accumulation, trafficking and misuse of firearms. The meeting also served to build momentum for the integration of security interventions as a critical aspect of Human/socio-economic Development in line with the Sustainable Development Goal No. 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Workshop was attended by National Focal Points on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) from the RECSA region: Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Seychelles, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The meeting was also attended by representatives of Embassies, United Nations agencies and the civil society.

The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) is an intergovernmental body charged with coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. RECSA's interventions include: 1) Strengthening national institutions on SALW; 2) Adaptive Research, Public Education and Awareness; 3) Mainstreaming Monitoring & Evaluation and Special Interests Groups in SALW Interventions; and 4) Enhancing Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) by: Providing Arms Marking Machines, Facilitating Digital record keeping, Providing Safe Storage for weapons including armoury construction & refurbishment, Training on Physical Arms and Weapons Management for Law Enforcement Agencies, Supporting Civilian Disarmament and Facilitating the Destruction obsolete weapons, UXOs and ammunition.

Attached is the Speech by the RECSA Executive Secretary Théoneste MUTSINDASHYAKA

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Ms. Irene Ndungu.

Email: irenen@recsasec.org ; Mobile: +254 723 028603; Tel:

