



Co-operating to Disarm

**LAUNCH OF THE RECSA POLICY DOCUMENTS AND STUDY
REPORTS PRODUCED UNDER AfDB-RECSA CAPACITY
BUILDING PROJECT**

**CROWNE PLAZA, HOTEL
NAIROBI, KENYA**

15th NOVEMBER 2016

OPENING REMARKS

BY

**MR THÉONESTE MUTSINDASHYAKA
RECSA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present;

Mr. Gabriel Negatu, the Regional Director of the Eastern Africa Regional Centre for the African Development Bank,

Representative of the World Bank,

Representatives of UN agencies,

Kenya National Focal Point Coordinator,

Representatives from the Private Sector,

Representatives of Civil Society,

Representatives of the Media,

RECSA Colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me take this opportunity to welcome all of you to this meeting where we are launching RECSA Policy documents and study reports produced with funding from the Project entitled "***Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Project to RECSA to Enhance Regional and States Stability through Reduction of Proliferation of Small Arms.***" This project was funded by the African Development Bank.

The proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is a big issue in today's development agenda because it presents a direct threat to the development in all its aspects. The RECSA region and indeed the African continent at large is the most affected by the negative effects. The easy availability of SALW continues

to escalate armed conflict, sustain poaching, cattle rustling, and abet terrorism and other serious crimes. To date, eight of the 15 RECSA Member States are classified as fragile.

In the developing world conflicts are dominant. In RECSA Member States Examples are Republic of South Sudan, Central African Republic, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo. Ninety percent of the victims of gun violence are civilians, many of them are women and children, but mostly young men in their twenties, predominate both as killers and as victims.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To contribute to addressing the negative effects of SALW proliferation, RECSA Secretariat approached the African Development Bank for financial support. The Bank extended a grant of UA 1 Million to RECSA in December, 2014 through a project entitled Technical Assistance and Capacity building project. The major objective of the project was to enhance regional and states stability through reduction of proliferation of small arms. The project had 2 main components namely institution strengthening and capacity building for RECSA and operationalization of the Nairobi Protocol in selected fragile and non-fragile member states.

Using some of the proceeds of the grant, RECSA commissioned the following studies:

- I. Study on the nexus between small arms and light weapons proliferation and fragility situation in Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and South Sudan
- II. Study on the nexus among SALW proliferation, cattle rustling and development in border regions of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda
- III. Study on harmonization of SALW legislation for Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Central African Republic in relation to regional and international small arms and light weapons (SALW) instruments
- IV. Study on the nexus between SALW proliferation and wildlife poaching in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Uganda, Republic of Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania
- V. Study on analysis on armed crimes in East African Community Countries (Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)

In addition, the Secretariat also produced three policy documents namely RECSA Strategic Plan (2016-2020), RECSA monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (2016-2020) and RECSA Resource Mobilization Strategy (2016-2020) and guidelines for establishment of national Institutions responsible for SALW management and control.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to report that today we are gathered here to launch the three RECSA policy documents and five study reports. As provided for on the

programme, we shall have chance to hear the major findings of the studies on the nexus between small arms and light weapons proliferation and fragility, poaching and cattle rustling highlighting the manifestations, drivers and effects of each.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank African Development Bank for funding this pilot project and we hope phase two of the project will be funded by the Bank to further consolidate the achievements of phase one both at RECSA Secretariat and Member states level.

In addition, the study reports have major intervention recommendations to build Member States resilience from fragile situations and SALW proliferation. RECSA has designed three year National Projects arising out of the recommendations of the fragility study for Central African Republic (US\$ 26.7 Millions), Democratic Republic of Congo (US\$ 16.1 Millions), Republic of Burundi (US\$ 12.9 Millions), Republic of South Sudan (US\$ 14.3 Millions) and Federal Republic of Somalia (US\$8.8 Millions).

The National Projects are designed based on the broader theme of Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation through capacity building and weapons management. The specific interventions cover the following areas:

- i. Strengthening the capacity of National Institutions responsible for small arms management where they exist and establishment of the same where they do not exist.

- ii. Fast tracking the review of SALW legislation in accordance with the international and regional SALW instruments to create stiffer harmonized penalties for offences related to illicit proliferation.
- iii. Review of SALW National Action Plans (NAPS) where they exist and development where they do not exist. This is intended to offer strategic direction for implementation of SALW interventions, assessing results and for resource mobilization at the national level.
- iv. Firearms marking and electronic record keeping to facilitate identification and tracing in a timely and reliable manner. On this note allow me to congratulate the Police and military in the EAC region for the job well-done except for Tanzania and Burundi Military who are yet to start firearms marking and electronic record keeping.
- v. Safe storage to curb diversion and un-intended explosions. All firearms begin their life as legal firearms and only become illegal when they are diverted hence the need for safe storage. This is an expensive venture but we have to meet the international standards of securing stockpiles.
- vi. Regular training of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) still remains a critical area that needs support. It is important that LEA and the military are trained in International standards in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM).
- vii. Destruction of obsolete, seized and or surplus stocks. This should be a continuous exercise given that most of our member states have a history of political unrest. Important to note that today his Excellency the President of Kenya is gracing the occasion of destroying 5,250 illegal firearms seized from the civilian populations.

- viii. Support to civilian disarmament. In most pastoral communities in Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia many civilians are armed. We need to prioritize civilian disarmament especially in post conflict situations like in CAR, DRC, South Sudan and Somalia as we address the demand factors that drive those communities to be armed.
- ix. Finally, public awareness, and building the capacity of the media, CSO and education institutions are crucial in the intervention of heart and mind disarmament.

x. Ladies and gentlemen,

Poaching is the illegal hunting or killing of wildlife in contravention of national or international law. In Africa it is currently at a crisis level with more elephants being poached and the risk of extinction more eminent. It is estimated that close to 30,000 elephants, get poached every year in Africa. If no comprehensive and coordinated action is taken, elephants could soon be extinct. Wildlife decimation represents not only the depletion of a precious and irreplaceable national resource, but is also a profound threat to development (tourism, livelihoods and national security), as well as to ecosystems (flora and fauna).

According to the study we commissioned, poaching is a major issue of concern in the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In the last five years poaching has risen exponentially mainly due to the increasing demand for wildlife products particularly elephant ivory and rhino horns. RECSA has thus developed a project entitled "*Promoting wildlife conservation through anti-poaching interventions and small arms control*". The target member states are Central African Republic,

Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania. Major intervention areas focus on:

- a) Wildlife legislation review
- b) Enforcement and strengthening field operations
- c) Community involvement
- d) Awareness Creation
- e) Inter-agency Co-operation
- f) Cross border Co-operation

I am hereby appealing to various organizations here present to support the efforts towards combating SALW proliferation through implementation of the designed projects and Promoting wildlife conservation through anti-poaching interventions and small arms control since most poaching is done using illegal firearms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, once again I take this opportunity to thank the African Development Bank for the grant extended to RECSA. This grant has enabled the production of policy and study reports that you have all been provided with.

I also at this point wish to thank the consultants who undertook the various studies and their teams. Dr. Elias Opongo and your team Dr. Susan Mwangi Dr. Kifle Wansamo, Prof. Omoka Wanakayi, Dr. Toussaint Kafarhire for the studies on fragility, poaching and cattle rustling; Mr. Peter Edopu for the study on legal harmonization; Mr. Leonard Kyalo for the analysis of armed crime rates report; Mr. Mwachofi Singo and RECSA Technical staff for the guidelines on

establishment of National Institutions responsible for SALW management and control. RECSA appreciates your commitment throughout the journey that has seen us publish the policy documents and study reports today.

RECSA will engage and partner with donor agencies in mobilization of resources to implement the RECSA strategic plan for tangible results in order to create a safe environment for sustainable development. RECSA will also build the capacity of National Institutions responsible for small arms management and control at member states level.

Thank you for your kind attention. I thank you all.