



Co-operating to Disarm

**REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF FIREARMS DESTRUCTION
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
21st NOVEMBER 2016**

**BY
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RECSA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

The Chief Guest today.....

Members of the Diplomatic corps

Senior Government Officials

Invited Guests

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to begin by thanking the chief guest and all of you who are here for finding time to grace this occasion. We are gathered here to witness the execution of yet another important obligation agreed upon by states parties in the Nairobi Protocol and other international SALW Instruments.

Realizing the negative effects caused by the proliferation of illicit SALW, Member States in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa and bordering states agreed on a legally binding instrument in April, 2004 known as the Nairobi Protocol. RECSA was established in June 2005, by 12 Member States to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. It is an inter-governmental organization and it is hosted in Republic of Kenya.

To-date the membership of RECSA is comprised of Republic of Burundi, Republic of Djibouti, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, State of Eritrea, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of South Sudan, Federal Republic of Somalia, and Republic of the Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Uganda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The proliferation of SALW is one of the biggest challenges facing many countries in Africa. The conflicts in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Eastern DRC, and Somalia among others are fueled by presence of illicit SALW. The scourge of abuse of small arms and light weapons is not limited to certain regions but is a global problem. You are all aware of what is happening in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya.

That is why the RECSA region member States are committed to destruction of seized or obsolete firearms among other interventions.

I want at this point to commend Republic of Uganda for the consistent destruction of weapons over the past years. Since 2002, Uganda has destroyed over 100,000 firearms. RECSA has previously supported similar activities for example in 2011 it supported the destruction of 31,272 firearms at Magamaga. Destruction of firearms and UXOs is done to reduce the risks of diversion and un intended explosions.

However, Inspite of the above achievements, the government needs to prioritize the following:

- Finalization of the SALW bill to lay a consolidated and harmonized legal framework for tackling SALW proliferation in the country.
- Upgrading the office of the National Focal Point Co-ordinator to a full directorate in line with the Dar es Salaam Council of ministers resolution. This will facilitate giving it more financial and human resources commensurate to the task of tackling SALW proliferation in the country.
- Supporting the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, allow me to thank US Government for funding this destruction exercise 100% through its bureau of Political Military/ Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA). The US Government is one of the consistent partners that have been supporting RECSA since 2006. Notably, the US Government has been at the helm of supporting the arms marking exercises and PSSM trainings in selected RECSA member States of which Republic of Uganda has been a beneficiary.

We are also grateful to other development partners that have financed RECSA and the Republic of Uganda to implement SALW interventions.

Our Chief Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again thank you for witnessing this destruction exercise.

I thank you for your attention.