

STATEMENT

BY

**DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE ON
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (RECSA) IN THE GREAT
LAKES REGION AND HORN OF AFRICA**

DURING THE

Wednesday, 12TH January, 2006
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Please check against delivery

your experience, coupled with the support from the bureau and the secretariat, will ensure the successful conclusion of this meeting.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to make this statement on behalf the member states signatory to Nairobi Protocol. The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa is an inter-governmental organization based in Nairobi Kenya. It is mandated by twelve member states namely, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Tanzania, DRC, Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, Uganda and Somalia, to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol on prevention, control and reduction of SALW in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. The creation of the centre was in conformity with the UNPOA requirement for the establishment of Regional and National institutions.

Mr. Chairman, since the signing of the UNPOA in the year 2001, significant implementation progress has been made in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. The establishment of eleven functional National Focal Points and the development of National Action Plans in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, on the management and control of SALW is laudable progress. The remaining member states are in the process of developing these action plans.

The public destruction of thousands of illicit recovered/surrendered firearms in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Djibouti is a further manifestation by States parties, of their commitment to addressing this problem.

The signing of a legally binding protocol by the twelve member states is a demonstration of their commitment to addressing the problem of proliferation of SALW in a consistent and sustainable manner; stemming from the impact of easy availability of illicit SALW in the region.

Mr. Chairman, in ensuring the operationalisation of the protocol, the states parties have developed a set of best practice guidelines on all the thematic areas outlined in the UNPOA.

I will circulate a copy these guidelines to this conference.

The process of harmonizing legislation in member states, in line with the guidelines has already commenced, with the establishment of legal drafting committees in each state. The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) is working closely with the Parliaments in the Region to collectively support measures that require Parliamentary action.

Mr. Chairman, the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region attaches great importance to measures aimed at reducing demand for SALW. I am happy to report that a series of measures have been implemented by Governments in the region over the last five years to create an enabling environment for peace and stability through sustained conflict resolution efforts. However this may be undermined if reciprocal measures are not taken at global levels to ensure stringent regulation of supplies to the region.

Mr Chairman against this background, it is our expectation that these deliberations will come up with viable and acceptable options necessary to strengthen the implementation of the UNPoA. In this regard special attention should be paid to the need for enhanced international cooperation and support to regions badly affected by the scourge of illicit proliferation of SALW. We also look forward to further elaboration of transfer control measures, already built into our best practice guidelines, to complement the recently concluded instrument on Marking and tracing.

Mr. chairman may I, in conclusion, recognize the collaborative role played by civil society organizations both regionally and internationally in facilitating the implementation of the UNPoA. May I also acknowledge the financial support extended to the Regional Centre for Small Arms by the UK and Dutch Governments, without which some of the activities I have reported above would not have been realized.

Thank you.