



**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING FOR THE AU-GERMANY PROJECT ON ENHANCED SALW CONTROL
AND PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT IN THE GREATER SAHEL REGION**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
16 OCTOBER 2015**

Conclusions

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1. The High-Level Meeting for the African Union (AU) – Germany Project on Enhanced Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control and Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) in the Greater Sahel Region was held on 16 October 2015 at the Headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2. The meeting was attended by:
 - Member States: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Tunisia.

 - Members of the G7: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

 - Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs) and Regional Bodies with a Small Arms Mandate: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the North African Regional Capability (NARC) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA).

 - United Nations, International and Non-Governmental Organizations: Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Sahel, UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Office to the AU (UNOAU), European Union and Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

3. The meeting was held in follow up to the preparatory meeting and experts meeting held on 15 May 2015 and 3-4 September 2015, respectively, in Addis Ababa. In this regard, the objective of the meeting was to consider the report and recommendations developed by the experts meeting to enhance coordination of efforts to address illicit SALW Control and PSSM being undertaken by Member States, donors and implementing agencies, particularly through the establishment of a Coordination Platform under the auspices of the AU.

4. The meeting was opened jointly by Ambassador Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Ambassador Susanne Baumann, Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control of the German Federal Foreign Office. In his opening statement, Ambassador Chergui highlighted that insecurity and instability in the Sahel region has been greatly enabled by the widespread of SALW and their ammunition which originate from various sources, including circulation of arms from other conflicts on the continent, regional and international trafficking networks as well as arms diverted from government held stockpiles, which has allowed rebels, criminals and terrorists to significantly boost and expand their power.

5. On her part, Ambassador Baumann stressed that the misuse of SALW is not only a regional challenge or confined to a single continent but is a globalized problem where the

sources of illicit weapons most frequently are situated in other countries and regions than the most affected ones. Referring to recent political and security developments in the region, Ambassador Baumann highlighted the threat to peace and stability posed by weak state control of arms and ammunition. She further stressed that eliminating the threat posed by illicit SALW requires approaches that are embedded into a robust concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and a viable institutional framework for rule of law.

6. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, Head of the Defense and Security Division of the AU and Thomas Göbel, Head of Division for Conventional Arms Control at the German Federal Foreign Office. The co-chairs explained the rationale for the project, its objectives, and implementation modalities. The co-chairs also overviewed the steps that have been taken as part of the preparatory process and the deliberations and recommendations of the experts meeting.

7. The subsequent panel discussion highlighted the multiplicity of actors and support providers in the region and the poor coordination among them which leads to the duplication of efforts and undermines the effectiveness of implemented action emphasizing the importance and necessity of the proposed coordination project. The panelists also indicated the existence of a number of regional strategies and coordination mechanisms which should be linked to the Coordination Platform to ensure that illicit SALW control is integrated into the regional security and development agenda.

8. In the plenary discussions session, the participants took note of the report of the experts meeting and endorsed its recommendations, expressing support and commitment to the planned Coordination Platform.

9. The meeting reiterated the critical need to implement PSSM programmes and other illicit SALW control measures in a preventative manner and not only in the aftermath of crises and political instability, recognizing the adverse effect of the proliferation of weapons and diversion of arms from government-held depots on exacerbating conflict and crime. Thus there should be concrete efforts towards addressing the root causes of conflict and the motivations for illicit SALW possession and its integration into wider conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

10. The meeting noted the focus of the project on PSSM aspects considering it an area in which effective coordination can have a significantly positive impact on controlling the illicit circulation and trafficking in SALW and their ammunition. The meeting encouraged the future expansion of the scope of the project to include other key aspects of illicit SALW control such as arms marking, record keeping and tracing as well as arms control legislation, including by building on the success and lessons learned from the Coordination Platform.

11. The meeting stressed that the Coordination Platform should aim to achieve a common understanding of the gaps and needs, promote the joint identification of priority interventions and the optimal allocation of resources. It should also promote the sustainability of the support being provided by donors and implementing agencies, including

through integrating best practices such as support to institutional building, the effective transfer of expertise and capacities as well as facilitating operational and technical cooperation among Member States.

12. Regarding the modalities of the Coordination Platform, the meeting took note that the coordination meetings will be held on an annual basis with the participation of donors, RECs, RMs and Regional Bodies, Member States, the United Nations, and implementing agencies. The annual meeting will provide a forum to share information about ongoing and future projects; discuss gaps, needs and developments on the ground affecting implementation; and agree on a set of measures to enhance synergies and joint action.

13. The annual coordination meeting will take place wherever possible alongside other existing meetings. This event will be prepared by coordination meetings both at the regional and at the donor level. On the regional side this could take place alongside existing bodies such as the Steering Committee on SALW and DDR. As to the donor coordination, the meeting took note that the Federal Foreign Office is preparing already for an initial meeting early 2016 in Berlin. In order to facilitate exchange, a representative of the AU will take part in the preparatory donor meeting and a representative of the Federal Foreign Office will participate in the regional preparatory meeting. The activities and reports of the Coordination Platform should be coordinated to the extent possible with other established coordination mechanisms.