



Co-operating to Disarm

**STATEMENT DURING THE CEREMONY TO MARK THE OPENING FOR
SIGNATURE OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY**

BY

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Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join other delegations at this ceremony to mark the opening of the Arms Trade Treaty for signature. I am pleased to make my maiden speech at the United Nations as the New Executive Secretary of The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSEA).

Allow me, Madam chair to first extend my congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Peter Woolcott, for successfully presiding over and steering the processes that culminated in the ATT's adoption by the General Assembly on 2nd April 2013.

Africa is greatly affected by the problem of proliferation small arms and light weapons. These arms are illegally trafficked across borders, landing unlawfully in the hands of unscrupulous civilians and groups who use them to commit violent transnational organized crimes. The result is an immense cost on the Continent in the form of human suffering, disabilities, deaths, and retarded development.

RECSA, therefore, joins the international and regional community in welcoming the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty that provides robust standards for responsible transfers of conventional weapons. If fully implemented and adhered to, the Treaty will regulate the destabilizing flow of small arms, light weapons and other conventional weapons and hence foster peace, security and sustainable development in Africa.

RECSA and its Member States actively participated in the process of developing the ATT during the United Nations Preparatory Committee Meetings and Negotiation Conferences, and sub-regional Meetings in Africa.

We thank the European Union and the Australia Government for supporting the participation of the RECSA Secretariat and Member States during the process.

Finally Madam Chair, while congratulating those among its 15 Member States that have signed the Treaty during this landmark signing ceremony, RECSA calls on the rest of its Member States to speed up the signing and ratification of the Instrument. RECSA remains committed to working together

with other stakeholders in providing the required expertise to support this process.

RECSA, therefore, takes this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to supporting the entering into force of this Treaty in the shortest time possible. We recognize that the aspirations of the ATT are in line with those of the *Nairobi Protocol on the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons* upon which RECSA's mandate is anchored.

We are committed to working with our Member States in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, development partners and civil society to implement the ATT as we pursue the achievement of our Vision of a safe and secure sub-region in a peaceful continent free from arms proliferation.

I thank you.