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PRESS RELEASE

THE AU-REGIONS STEERING COMMITTEE ON SALW & DDR CONCLUDES ITS 5TH MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 24 June 2014: The African Union (AU) – Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Lights Weapons (SALW) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) concluded, today, its fifth meeting at the AU Headquarters.

The Steering Committee brings together the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Bodies with a SALW mandate, to enhance synergies in the control of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking in SALW, as well as in DDR initiatives across the continent, through sharing of information, identifying gaps and priorities and exploring avenues and opportunities for enhanced coordination and collaboration in support of Member States' efforts.

The meeting discussed a number of pertinent issues in the area of illicit SALW control. It emphasized the growing need for enhanced efforts in the area of Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) to prevent misuse and diversion of government held stockpiles. The meeting also agreed on the need to integration of arms and explosives management in the mandate of Au-Led Peace Support Operations.

The meeting took note of the status of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in light of the First Conference of States Parties, due to be held in August in Mexico City and welcomed the initiative of the AU Commission to convene the senior government officials meeting on the ATT, expected to be held in Addis Ababa on 25-26 June 2015.

The meeting also reviewed the Action Plan for the implementation of the AU Strategy on the control of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of SALW, adopted by the 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in January 2013. The review exercise enabled the meeting identify priority areas for medium and long term action.

In the area of DDR, the meeting had in-depth discussions on the challenges faced in implementing traditional DDR programmes and called for approaches that integrate DDR into wider stabilization efforts to ensure sustainability and durability, as well as the optimum use of resources in post-conflict, reconstruction and development settings.

As way forward, the meeting agreed on a set of action points and activities to be implemented by the members of the Steering Committee in the areas of illicit SALW control and DDR over the next six months.

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Peace and Security

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