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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session
06 - 07 February 2020
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

EX.CL/1213(XXXVI) Add.2

Original : English

**STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR EFFECTIVE
MANAGEMENT OF WEAPON STOCKPILES**
(Item proposed by the Republic of The Gambia)

CONCEPT NOTE
PROPOSAL BY THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE
AGENDA OF THE 33RD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS
OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
“STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT
OF WEAPON STOCKPILES”

A. CONTEXT:

1. The 2020 African Union Theme of the Year “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development” fundamentally embodies the commitment to thrust at the forefront of Continental discourse the issues that are inimical to sustainable peace and development. Such commitment is also underpinned by the inclination to undertake a holistic introspection, spur the implementation of the initiatives that are pivotal to the promotion of sustainable peace and security on the Continent and further accentuate the natural nexus between sustainable peace and security and sustainable socio-economic transformation and development.
2. The success of the Continental Initiatives in Silencing the Guns is critically imperative to the attainment of the aspirations of Agenda2063. An African continent that is peaceful, prosperous and integrated cannot be actualized on the backdrop of protracted political polarizations and, the easy occurrences of armed confrontations between competing parties.
3. The effective coordination between the preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution mechanisms of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) as envisioned through the ongoing Reform process, therefore needs to be further propelled by viable strategies and institutional mechanisms aimed at addressing the national regulatory loopholes and capacity deficiencies that have led to the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) on the Continent.
4. Weak management systems to control Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) have long been identified as one of the main drivers of conflict in Africa as it perpetuates the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Empirical evidences have demonstrated that amongst the myriad of problems resulting from such circumstances are heightened instability and the further retardation of national and human security. As a consequence therefore, addressing the issues germane to strengthening of the capacities of African Union Member States to manage their national weapon stockpiles will also be indispensable to the realization of the primal objective of Silencing the Guns in Africa, as envisaged amongst others, in the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa, adopted in 2016 in Lusaka, Republic of Zambia.
5. Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.719/(XXXII) had, inter alia, observed the slow pace of implementation of the Lusaka Roadmap and called for concerted and inclusive processes, taking cognizance of the conscientious work being done by Women and Youth Groups and other participatory Non-Governmental Organizations,

to strengthen national capacities in order to geometrically and effectively implement the African Union Flagship Project on Silencing the Guns.

6. The issues pertinent to the effective mitigation of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are also being gradually addressed through a prism of a comprehensive and well-coordinated approach. The annual Amnesty Month provides the basis to further support the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) on the Continent. However, the sustainability of this important initiative is predicated on the existence of effective national capacities to manage and effectively dispose of the surrendered weapons.

7. The adoption of the African Union Policy on Management of Recovered Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Peace Support Operations by the 12th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) held on 19th December, 2019 in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt and its subsequent validation and adoption by the relevant Policy Organs of the Union, will add a new paradigm through which the African Union Commission with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and African Union Member States can continue to accelerate the efforts to sustainably address the challenges being faced in the management of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

8. Efforts have been made at international, regional and national levels to develop the requisite national legal frameworks and capacities through management training, coordination measures, resource mobilization and technical support to national projects to systematically address the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have continued to play important and concomitant roles in both the conceptualization and implementation of the initiatives focused on addressing the phenomenon.

9. However, it remains that lack of resources and technical competences still impede the success of the operational capacities in both the effective management of national weapon stockpiles and the mitigation of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Consequently, the African Union Commission, in accordance with the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the Lusaka Roadmap needs to optimize the momentum to be generated from the implementation of the 2020 Theme of the Year by continuing to provide additional technical and other complementary support packages to assist Member States in effectively managing their weapon stockpiles on the basis of needs assessments and their requests for support from the African Union Commission.

B. PROPOSAL:

10. The African Union Commission will be requested to:

- a. Provide institutional support to Member States in strengthening their national capacities through training, awareness and the building of regulatory frameworks to effectively manage their weapon stockpiles.
- b. Provide technical support to the development and deployment of technological systems to support Member States' effective monitoring and tracking Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).
- c. Assist in mobilizing resources from International and African Partners to support Member States with capacity deficiencies to construct standard infrastructure for the safe storage, physical security and disposal of their Small Arms and Light Weapons.

C. CONCLUSION:

11. Developments in some theatres of armed conflicts on the Continent continue to validate the correlation between weak national capacities to manage weapon stockpiles, illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), protracted armed conflicts and the deterioration of human security. As a result, in consolidating the nexus between Silencing the Guns and sustainable socio-economic transformation and development, it is essential that critical national capacities are strengthened particularly on managing national weapon stockpiles.

D. DRAFT DECISIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

- (1) **Recalls** the pledge made in the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration of the OAU/AU not to bequeath the burden of wars to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa by the year 2020 and, the commitments made in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa on mitigating the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW);
- (2) **Also recalls** Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.719(XXXII) in which the Commission was directed to intensify its support to the Member States for the effective implementation of the Lusaka Roadmap.
- (3) **Further recalls** the request made by the Peace and Security Council through the Communiqué PSC/PR/Comm.(DCCCXXXII) for the Commission to continue to promote collaborative synergies with the Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) to effectively address the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).
- (4) **Reiterates** the commitment of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to sustainably address the conditions leading to illicit proliferation, circulation, trafficking and destructive use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

- (5) **Commits** to support the initiatives critical in the strengthening of the capacities of Member States to manage their weapon stockpiles as a mean of mitigating the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).
- (6) **Directs** the Commission:
- (i) To provide more support, within the broader spectrum of implementing the 2020 Theme of the Year, to Member States including training, awareness and the building of technical capabilities and regulatory frameworks to strengthen the management of national weapon stockpiles.
 - (ii) To harness the institutional and technical partnerships of the African Union to support and deploy technological systems to assist Member States in monitoring and tracking Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).
 - (iii) To assist with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in mobilizing resources from International and African Partners to support Member States with capacity deficiencies to construct standard infrastructure for the safe storage, physical security and disposal of their Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- (7) **Urges** Member States with comparative technical advantages and successful national experiences to assist the Member States with capacity deficiencies in the management of their weapon stockpiles.

2020-02-07

Strengthening National Capacities for Effective Management of Weapon Stockpiles (Item proposed by the Republic of The Gambia)

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