PROJECT PSSM IN SAHEL

WILTON PARK CONFERENCE

"TOWARDS BETTER PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT (PSSM) IN THE SAHEL REGION"

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VENUE: HOTEL NOVELA STAR

UNREC OPENING SPEECH BY

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Monsieur le Ministre de la Sécurité et de la Protection civile du Togo,
Monsieur le Chef d'État-major du Togo,
Excellences, Mesdames et messieurs les représentants du corps diplomatique et consulaire accrédités au Togo,
Monsieur les représentant de Wilton Park,
Mesdames et messieurs les délégués des Etats membres du Sahel,
Mesdames et messieurs les présidents et point focaux de la Commission nationale pour la lutte contre la prolifération des ALPC
Mesdames et messieurs les représentants des organisations de la société civile, vouées à la lutte contre la prolifération des ALPC,
Chers partenaires techniques et financiers,
Distingués invités,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le Centre Régional des Nations Unies pour la Paix et le Désarmement en Afrique (UNREC) que j'ai l'honneur de représenter, saisit cette heureuse occasion pour non seulement vous souhaiter la cordiale bienvenue à cette importante rencontre mais également vous remercier pour votre participation active à la réussite du projet **"*PSSM au Sahel* "**conjointement élaboré avec le Bureau des Nations Unies pour les Affaires du désarmement et l'Union européenne, avec l'appui financier de ces derniers. Ce projet a été élaboré au profit de 6 pays du Sahel dûment représentés aujourd'hui, tant par la présence d'officiels de leur gouvernements et forces des défenses et de sécurité, et de leur Commissions nationales, que par la société civile, relais indispensable à la sensibilisation des populations face à cet enjeu sécuritaire.

En effet, les pays de la région du Sahel demeurent vulnérables face aux effets d'une insécurité grandissante résultant des conflits armés, des activités

terroristes et des différents types de trafics illégaux. Les récentes crises en Libye, au Mali, et au Nord du Nigéria en particulier, l'insécurité a conduit au pillage des arsenaux étatiques ainsi qu'à la prolifération illicite des armes légères dans la région.

Au vue de ses 30 années d'expérience dans le domaine, l'UNREC n'a pu que constater que l'un des facteurs majeurs contribuant à la prolifération illicite des armes dans la région du Sahel est la gestion ineffective des stocks. Les stocks non sécurisés et la prolifération illicite favorise le détournement des armes sur le marché illicite, qui ont tendance ensuite à tomber entre de mauvaises mains, notamment celles des groupes terroristes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Given this alarming situation, a 36-month project was developed under the 2001 UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects, and the 2005 European Union Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition. The implementation of the project was given to UNREC with the mission to support six States within the Sahel region in strengthening their Physical Security and Stockpiles Management of small arms and light weapons and ammunition to prevent their diversion by non-state actors. The project, which started in June 2015, will see its technical activities officially launched on the territory of beneficiary countries here present beginning in early April.

In order to address the key challenges that states are facing, namely the lack of adequate national mechanism, the need to strengthen the implementation of regional and international standards, the promotion of multilateral cooperation in fighting illicit trafficking and in the area of border management, the project was designed in 4 different components, the first of which being this Wilton Park

Conference. This Conference will be an opportunity to tackle the challenges of PSSM, and more importantly, the sustainability of the actions to be undertaken at the national level.

As soon as this Conference is over, UNREC will divert its energy towards ensuring the national implementation of the three others components namely: the review of legislation and administrative procedures and consultations on PSSM, Physical Security and Stockpile Management field activities, and setting of national standards in accordance with IATG and ISACS.

UNREC is conscious of the fact that ensuring effective PSSM in the different countries is not an end in itself. It is only one part of the action which needs to be undertaken by States in order to ensure effective arms control and the eradication of illicit trafficking in arms. Other aspects of the arms control which will help to prevent diversion and reduce trafficking include, marking of State owned weapons, tools and mechanisms for tracing and a commitment to the sharing of information between States. Added to these is the need to create a mass sensitization program aimed at Disarming the Mind, especially of the youth who feel that possessing arms is the answer to whatever socio-economic challenges they are facing. The role of the different category of participants at this meeting in creating the necessary synergies at the national level cannot be underestimated. A healthy military-civilian relationship promoted by collaborating with the COMNATs and NGOs will go a long way in ensuring that harmony needed to build trust and confidence between actors at the national level.

This is why UNODA and its Regional Centres are promoting the non-proliferation of all weapons and increasing our contribution to the control of WMD, promoting UNSCR Res 1540, the universalization of the ATT. UNODA is teaming up with other UN agencies, programmes and mechanisms such as

CTBTO, CTED and IAEA to support a nuclear free world as well as action against all forms of terrorism.

As we go through these two intense days of sharing of experiences and best practice, let us keep in mind the need to minimize the impact of the harm done when arms fall into wrong hands by making access difficult for them. The AU's decision to Silence the Guns by 2020 as well as the SDG's goal of reducing the illicit flow of arms by 2030 are ideals that require commitment of all actors at all levels.

I wish to express my gratitude to all our partners who have made the holding of this meeting possible, especially the UE, Germany, our technical partners from the AU, ECOWAS, MAG, UNIDIR, INTERPOL, UNMAS, Itracem G5, UNOWA, UNODC, Conventional Arms Research and Wilton Park.

I also want to thank all the participants for their commitment to our joint effort in eradicating illicit proliferation of arms. I wish to reassure you of the continued commitment and the availability of UNREC to support your efforts in the fight against the proliferation of SALW.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Togo, our host country for their unflinching support in the past 30 years.

I look forward to our open and frank discussions that will make the coming hours very interesting.

Thank you for your attention.

Merci de votre aimable attention.