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AU SILENCING THE GUNS PLAN OF ACTION ON CONTROLLING ILLICIT SALW

The vision of Silencing the Guns was outlined in the solemn declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and the African Union (OAU/AU). In that declaration, African leaders pledged 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. In furtherance of this vision, the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, also known as the *Lusaka Roadmap*, was adopted by the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in January 2017.

The Roadmap aims to address the root causes of conflict, prevent relapse into violence, and create the conditions required for sustainable peace and development across the continent. The Roadmap recognizes that while the causes and factors driving violent conflict in Africa have varied, the wide and devastating use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have remained a common feature. It therefore places particular emphasis on the need to prevent illicit flow of weapons into and within the continent. It recognizes that while several instruments have been developed at the international and regional levels, progress in controlling illicit SALW is often undercut by an implementation deficit caused, in part, by limited human and financial resources, absence of political will, and inadequate coordination among stakeholders.

To address this deficit, in late 2017, the AU Commission embarked on a process to develop a Continental Plan of Action (STG-PoA) which aims to translate the themes and priorities contained within the Roadmap into concrete activities. The STG-PoA's primary objectives are to:

- Provide a framework for action based on a shared analysis of the priorities and gaps among the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Bodies (RBs), Member States and donors;
- Respond to the specific security context in the different regions and their respective countries while ensuring integrated measures to address all components of the UN Program of Action and the respective regional legally-binding instruments;
- Enhance linkages between SALW control initiatives and broader conflict prevention and management interventions;

- Leverage the role of RECs as the primary coordination bodies at the regional level and strengthen their collaboration with implementing partners and donors;
- Provide donors with a consolidated project document to better guide and inform funding decisions in a manner that contributes to effective donor coordination and optimal resource allocation;
- Provide a common framework for monitoring and evaluating action against illicit SALW;

The STG-PoA encompasses a range of component captured in the different instruments, including: marking, record-keeping, and tracing; physical security and stockpile management; craft production; transfer controls; legislative and regulatory frameworks; national coordination mechanisms; criminal justice response; brokering and end-use/r controls; embargo enforcement; registration and voluntary disarmament; cross-border cooperation; arms management in peace support operations; evidence and data collection; and universality and outreach.

The STG-PoA and its regional chapters are being developed and validated through regional consultations with the respective RECs/RBs, Member States and international partners.

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