Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to share with you this third Edition of the AU Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) newsletter.

As we usher in the New Year, the African Union DDR Capacity Program commences its third year of implementation. This issue begins to draw your attention towards the future of AU support to DDR activities in Africa and also highlights recent events undertaken by the AUC and its partners.

Against the backdrop of a series of consultations, two salient issues have been raised; i) Enhancing a better understanding of how to approach or engage with non-state armed groups in advancing stabilization, DDR, border security and development interventions on the African continent and ii) Improving coordination to establish synergies with partners (UN, WB and others) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention (RMs). Such an understanding will not only help to consolidate the nascent peace, democratic and economic transformation on the Africa continent, but it will help to generate knowledge products and support legal and coherent policy development and engagement strategies.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to our partners the World Bank Transitional Demobilization & Reintegration Program (TDRP); Social, Urban, Rural & Resilience Global Practice; the European Union (EU); the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and United Nations Office for the African Union (UNOAU); United Nations Children’s Fund Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNICEF-ESARO); and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Special recognition also goes to the AU Liaison Offices and RECs/RMs, for their continuous and sustained support to the implementation of the AU DDRCP.

I sincerely hope that you our reader will enjoy this third edition and that you find the information captured both insightful and informative.

Best Wishes,

H.E. Amb. Smail Chergui
Commissioner, Peace and Security,
African Union Commission
Follow-up Meeting with Sudan DDR Commission

21-22 October 2014
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The AU and partners held a follow up meeting with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization & Reintegration Commission (SDDRC), from 21-22 October 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This meeting developed a draft implementation matrix aimed at serving as a tool to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations made by the Joint Assessment Team following the DDR mission to Khartoum 15-17 April 2014. This is part of the Commission’s efforts to help coordinate and support the implementation of the DDR Programme being run by the Government of the Sudan.
A delegation from the Federal Government of Somalia Ministry of National Security, National Programme on Disengaged Combatants visited Kigali, Rwanda from November 3 to 7, 2014, to meet with their counterparts from the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) in a South-South knowledge and experience exchange study tour.

The delegation also included participants from United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). A team of World Bank/Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) staff facilitated the workshop and made joint presentations with RDRC on a number of thematic areas.

This study tour was part of the follow-up activities that were recommended during the joint consultation mission on DDR that took place in Nairobi on 24 - 29 June 2013. The Study Tour consisted of two activities:

i. A five day workshop, including joint presentations by RDRC and TDRP on thematic areas, and roundtable discussions;

ii. Site visits to RDRC projects and DDR centers.

Continues on page 4

Mr. Abderrahim Fraiji, TDRP Manager makes a contribution during the South-South Knowledge and Experience Exchange on Disarmament and Reintegration.
The event was mainly organised to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience by the Rwanda DDR Commission to Somalia DDR officials & AMISOM to develop and streamline effective DDR policies, procedures, and guidelines. Specifically, the objective was to provide actionable know-how that will help Somalia.

The meeting discussed all the key elements of a DDR process and showcased the various elements of a DDR program; provided a space for detailed exchange of ideas and thoughts on the challenges faced by the Somali counterparts; and conducted site visits that allowed close contact and deeper understanding of how the process is managed.

“*The study tour is part of the follow-up activities that was put forward as recommendations after the joint consultation mission on DDR in Nairobi.*”
A consultation meeting was held between the AU and the UN on 5 December 2014 to discuss an improved implementation coordination and collaboration mechanism with the AU DDR Capacity Program and World Bank. The meeting also discussed DDR programmatic components and identified ways of improving partner coordination and engagement.

The meeting also discussed the following salient issues:

i. Increasing difficulty in conducting traditional DDR processes amidst the presence of active conflict. This includes how to address the Non State Armed Groups in advancing the DDR and stabilization issues and how this has posed an immense challenge in supporting Member States, as there are no adequate conditions to support DDR efforts.

ii. The absence of Peace Agreements with conflict situations resulting in the need for robust reinforcement from partners in fulfilling the mandates of the UN Security Council;

iii. Availability of a wide range of expertise and experience from various countries across the continent, which needs to be documented in the DDR compendium.

The meeting discussed DDR programmatic components and identified ways of improving partner coordination and engagement.
The 4th meeting of the AU-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 8-9 December 2014, with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) as host. The Steering Committee comprises the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), intergovernmental bodies with a SALW mandate, and a representative of African Civil Society involved in the fight against the proliferation of illicit SALW, as members. The meeting provided opportunity for the members to share experiences in the implementation of the various activities through the year, considering successes and challenges in the process, and consider lessons learned. This provided opportunity to discuss cooperation and synergy between the members to enhance in the course of implementation of the various activities in the fight against illicit SALW and in DDR.

Participants considered planned activities for 2015. The discussions in this regard focused on how best to ensure effective cooperation and coordination in their implementation to strengthen assistance to Member States. Participants adopted recommendations to strengthen and expand interventions in the area of SALW and in DDR.

Regarding the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that was to enter into force on 24 December 2014, it was noted that only 6 AU Member States had ratified the treaty by then, and that the RECs needed to strengthen efforts to encourage their Member States to sign and ratify the treaty in order to strengthen Africa’s participation at the first conference of States Parties that will take place in Mexico in August 2015.

Meeting of the AU-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

8–9 December 2014
Lusaka, Zambia

From left: Mr. Chilufya Wanchinga, Chair of the Zambia National Commission on SALW; Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, Head DSD; Mr. Brian Chigawa, Director, Legal and Institutional Affairs, COMESA.
As part of the AU Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Capacity program, a training workshop on the AU DDR Guidance documents and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Reception and handover of Children Separated from Armed Groups was held in Somalia, from 11 to 12 December 2014, in Addis Ababa. This training was attended by AUC staff and AU liaison offices, IGAD, AMISOM and Somali Officials.

The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to be oriented on the AU DDR Guidance documents (Children in DDR, Detention and National Frameworks) as well as to assess the implementation of the SOP for the Reception and handover of Children Separated from Armed Groups in Somalia, as they plan/ implement a program for disengaged fighters that also caters for children. Participants identified the existing challenges and opportunities at various levels, primarily national ownership, capacity constraints and coordination of the government ministries. Subsequently, key activities to support were proposed to unravel issues of coordination (Government, partners and bi-laterals), knowledge management of governance arrangements regarding DDR; capacity and institutional building, establishing linkages with National Program for Disengaged Fighters including DDR and developing child sensitive procedures.
AUC supports Ethiopian Government towards the Establishment of National Focal Point Coordination Bureau for Small Arms and Light Weapons

Nazareth, Ethiopia 24 December 2014

On the request by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the African Union (AU) Commission, in collaboration with the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), supported a three-day consultative meeting on the establishment of the National Focal Point Coordination Bureau (NFP) for Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) for Ethiopia from 22-24 December 2014.

The meeting brought together several government officials, particularly senior officers from the Federal Police Headquarters, Police Commissioners from the Regional States, and Chiefs of the Regional Administration and Security Sector of the Regional States. Also present were officials from the AU Commission and the RECSA Secretariat.

The meeting was opened by Hon. Mulugeta Wuletaw, State Minister for Federal Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

In his statement, the Minister highlighted the scourge of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and emphasized the renewed commitment of the Ethiopian government in the fight against illicit small arms. He expressed appreciation to the AU Commission for the support rendered towards holding the meeting, and the RECSA Secretariat for being part of the efforts towards the establishment and operationalization of the NFP for Ethiopia. The Minister called for continued support by the AU and RECSA in taking forward the process for the full operationalization of the NFP.

The meeting received presentations from the AU Commission and from the representative of the RECSA Secretariat, which highlighted the global small arms problem and its regional dimensions. Participants also received presentations of the national and regional dimensions of the small arms problem. During the deliberations, participants noted the challenges and dynamics associated with small arms proliferation and their illicit trafficking, and appreciated the urgent need for the establishment of the NFP. The meeting made suggestions on the structure, composition, and mode of operation for the NFP, and also proposed its areas of focus, roles and responsibilities.

The AU Commission, in collaboration with the RECSA Secretariat, will continue to work with the Ethiopian government on the next steps to support the establishment of a functional NFP for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in line with it proclamation Number 429/2004 related to the coordination and implementation of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.
Regional Economic Communities Activities in DDR; The Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS)

The ECOWAS Commission, led by the Department of Peacekeeping Regional Security continues to implement Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR) activities in the region.

This is based on the five-year Priority Activity Plan which is the implementation framework for the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The focus has remained on continued Sensitization and Capacity Building in Border Control, Management of the Exemption Procedure, Harmonization of Legislation, Marking of Weapons and Resource Mobilization.

The Commission has recorded a number of successes in the process and they include the direct sensitization of hundreds of persons including the media who in turn keep on sensitizing millions of citizens on the need to control the illicit proliferation of SALW as well as the training of scores of personnel in areas related to DDR. Another key achievement is the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the reflection of the region's position in it. This was possible through the technical support and financial resources mobilized by the ECOWAS Commission for Member States which enabled them to engage in the global negotiations that led to its adoption. The most important of this is the inclusion of SALW as the eighth in the categories of Conventional Arms. In addition, the proactive interventions of Member States during negotiations boosted the profile and goodwill of ECOWAS Member States and the Commission.

Further to this, six Member States (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Senegal) are among the fifty four ratifications that have enabled the entry into force of the ATT on 24 December 2014.

In order to deepen the campaign against the illicit proliferation of SALW, the commission, in partnership with the EU developed a new pilot arms-for-development project in Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Niger which was launched by the President of the Commission, H.E Kadre Desire Ouedraogo in August 2014.

Working with partners, the Commission has also included DDR in Security Sector Governance and Reform that is going on in its two peacekeeping missions in Guinea Bissau and in Mali.