PRESS RELEASE

AU-Regions Steering Committee meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration ends in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, 21 February 2013: A two-day meeting of the AU-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, took place at the African Union Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, from 20 to 21 February 2013.

The meeting brought together representatives of the Steering Committee including the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of Central African States (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA). Also present were the United Nations Regional Centre on Peace and Disarmament (UNREC), the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the United Nations Department for Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO).

This was the first meeting of the Committee with an expanded mandate that includes Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). The meeting offered its members the opportunity to provide updates on their efforts to combat the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and promote Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. Participants further exchanged views on ways and means of supporting and strengthening each other’s endeavors.

The AU Commission used this opportunity to underscore the need for enhanced coordination of the implementation of SALW and DDR activities in Member States, including mobilizing them to participate in the Final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty that will take place from 18 to 28 March 2013, in New York.

The Committee was briefed on the steps so far taken by the AU Commission towards the establishment of an African Police Coordination mechanism. Committee members renewed their commitment to participate in the Final UN Conference, with a view to strengthening their negotiating positions.

END