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**TRAINING COURSE FOR THE ECCAS REGION ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING OF SALW
AND THEIR AMMUNITION**

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

27-28 OCTOBER 2015

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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Ms Marie-Pierre Arnold, Deputy Director of UNREC;

Distinguished participants and representatives of AU Member States;

Distinguished representative of the ECCAS Secretariat;

Distinguished facilitators from the United Nations and Conflict Armament Research;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to this training course on the identification and tracing of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their ammunition, developed for the ECCAS region.

On behalf of the African Union and on my own behalf, I would like to sincerely thank UNREC for partnering with the AU on this important initiative and for the technical expertise and support provided in putting this event together. I would also like to extend our gratitude to the ECCAS Secretariat, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Conflict Armament Research for offering their expertise and knowledge in facilitating this training course.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

The International Tracing Instrument, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005, defines small arms tracing as ‘the systematic tracking of illicit small arms and light weapons found or seized on the territory of a State from the point of

manufacture or the point of importation through the lines of supply to the point at which they became illicit'. Arms tracing involves close cooperation among law enforcement, customs and border control agencies internationally, and is a key aspect of the regional and international framework. The three pillars of marking, record-keeping, and cooperation are essential to successful tracing.

In this regard, the fundamental and first step in any tracing operation is to uniquely identify the weapon on the basis of its physical characteristics and markings. Accurate firearm identification significantly increases the chances of determining the origin, source and ownership history.

Therefore, the objective of this training course, is to develop skills and build knowledge among national practitioners from the different bodies, including the police, military, customs and small arms commissions, in the identification of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition. Such knowledge and skills remain vital for integrated national efforts to address illicit small arms, including identifying trafficking trends and routes, and investigating small arms used in criminal activities.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Central Africa region has experienced first-hand the devastating impact of illicit small arms trafficking and circulation. The re-emergence of conflicts in the region are primarily fueled by small arms.

The 2010 Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, Parts and Components, that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair or Assembly, also known as the Kinshasa Convention, aims at addressing these problems by regulating small arms and light weapons and combating their illicit trade and trafficking. The aspects which are of focus of this training course are also comprehensively addressed in article 14 on arms marking and tracing and articles 20 to 22 on record keeping.

Although the Kinshasa Convention is yet to enter into force, members of ECCAS are still bound by the international and regional instruments including the 2000 Bamako Declaration, the 2001 UN Programme of Action and the 2005 International Tracing Instrument.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union has remained strongly committed to regional and international efforts to address illicit small arms. In fact, as early as 2000, the AU adopted the Bamako Declaration and more recently, following the adoption, in 2013, of the AU Strategy on the Control of the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and its Action Plan, which was developed through a series of consultations with Member States' experts and Regional Economic Communities.

The AU Strategy and its Action Plan outlines the roles of the AU, the Regional Economic Communities, Regional Bodies with a Small Arms mandate, and the

Member States to work together in a coordinated and reinforcing manner towards a continental, sustainable and effective approach to addressing illicit small arms issues.

Indeed, capacity building and training for Member States, in the various aspects of illicit small arms control is one of the key components of the Plan of Action and training courses such as this contributes to realizing its objectives.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

I hope that you find this training course beneficial and urge you to apply and share the skills and knowledge that you will acquire with your colleagues and the practitioners in the relevant national agencies.

I also urge you to take advantage of this forum to share your own experiences and the challenges that you have faced in regards to arms identification and tracing and the particularities of your region and how they can be collectively overcome.

On our part, the AU will focus on organizing more specialized trainings in the future including Training of Trainers to ensure sustained expertise. The AU will also promote and support the institutionalization of arms identification and tracing in the training curricula of the concerned national bodies.

In concluding, I wish you all a rich learning experience.

Thank you for your attention.