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PRESS RELEASE

EXPERTS MEETING ON ENHANCING SMALL ARMS PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL REGION CONCLUDES TODAY IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 4 September 2015: The experts meeting on enhanced Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control and physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) in the greater Sahel region held its deliberations at the AU Headquarters from 3 to 4 September 2015. The meeting was held within the framework of the joint project launched by the AU in collaboration with the Government of Germany and the support of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (bicc).

The meeting was attended by experts and practitioners of Member States of the greater Sahel region, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Bodies with a small arms mandate, International Organizations, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, research groups and academics. The experts discussed openly and constructively their experiences in designing and implementing PSSM projects highlighting the successes, challenges and lessons learned. The meeting was opened by Dr Tarek A. Sharif, Head of the Defense and Security Division of the AU Commission and Dr Thomas Göbel, Head of Division for Conventional Arms Control of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

The meeting provided a forum to assess the effectiveness of interventions and programmes in the area of small arms and ammunition physical security and stockpile management which aim to mitigate the risk of diversion, misuse and mismanagement, as well as accidents and explosions at munitions sites. The experts discussed proposals and recommendations on how to enhance coordination among the various national, regional and international stakeholders and actors. They emphasized the need for shared understanding of the needs, gaps and priorities of the countries of the region, collectively and individually, as well as the need for sustainable interventions that are nationally owned and led and which support institutional capacity building and the effective transfer of expertise and capacities to the national stakeholders.

The recommendations and proposals for enhanced coordination made by the experts will be considered by a high-level meeting that will take place in October 2015.

