NATIONAL REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN PROGRAMME
OF ACTION ON ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND
LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
JUNE 2005
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INTRODUCTION

The widespread proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has contributed significantly to the lethal nature of the prevailing conflicts in Africa. The situation has been exacerbated in West Africa by persistent struggle to control political power and economic resources, diamonds being the most enviable. These factors coupled with the high rate of youth unemployment are responsible for the flourishing mercenary business and prolongation of conflicts in the region. The problem of border porosity is of no less in significance as a factor contributing to the regional nature of hostilities, mainly in the area of enhancing trafficking and mercenary movement. Within the Mano River Basin, it became evident that dissident groups were training in each other's territory; one of the major reasons why the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia nearlygot Guinea to be involved. In Sierra Leone the problem of small arms became endemic with the outbreak of the war in Liberia in 1989 which easily spilled over into the country about two years later. The Sierra Leone conflict lasted for 11 years and all areas of the country were greatly affected.

A) NATIONAL LEVEL

1. National Coordination Agency

In fulfilment of its international obligations and in line with two of its Foreign Policy objectives, enshrined in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991, Sierra Leone has for the past three years engaged in a number of programmes on SALW. These programmes aimed at dealing with the problems created by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons since the end of the war. The problem of SALW was viewed not only as a national problem but also as a sub-regional one which made our Government committed to the ECOWAS Moratorium on the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, signed by the Heads of State in Abuja in 1998.

Within the framework of the ECOWAS Moratorium and the support provided by the Programme of Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), Sierra Leone established a National Focal Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons with a view to implementing the provisions of the Moratorium. The National Focal Committee is also mandated to implement the UN Programme of Action and the Focal Point is located at the Office of National Security (ONS) in the Office of the President. The Office of National Security is the coordinating body of the security sector and secretariat to the National Security Council (NSC). It has the responsibility of coordinating the work of the Small Arms Focal Committee that has membership drawn from the following Government Institutions and Departments, civil society organisations and UNDP:

1. The Ministry of Defence
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. The Ministry of Internal Affairs
4. The Ministry of Trade and Industry
5. The Ministry of Justice
6. The Sierra Leone Police (SLP)
7. Customs and Excise Department
8. Civil Society Organizations
   - Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA)
   - Campaign for Good Governance
9. The UNDP Arms for Development Programme
10. National Revenue Authority (NRA)
11. Immigration Department

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\(^1\) The Mano River Basin includes Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea
2. **National Contact Point**

The national contact person is:

**Mr. Lawrence L. Bassie, Director of Provincial Security Coordination in Sierra Leone**

[larrybassie@yahoo.com](mailto:larrybassie@yahoo.com)

Tel: +232-22-227719 / 224108

Mobile: +232-22-76610594

3. **Legislation, Regulations and Administrative Procedures**

The legal statute for control over the production, import, export, transit and transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons is the Arms and, Ammunition Ordnance of 1955. There is urgent need for the review of this legislation for the following reasons:

(i) The existing Firearms Legislation was adopted during the colonial times and does not meet today’s contemporary security challenges;

(ii) The achievements of disarmament are not an assurance that weapons will not return into circulation, and a weapons-free country is not guaranteed to remain so without adequate safeguards;

(iii) Sierra Leone is a signatory to the ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons, but needs to codify the Legislation into its national laws;

(iv) The present Law was formulated during a period of relative peace.

(v) The provisions for punishment of offenders are outdated.

A cabinet paper for a review of the Firearms Act of 1955 to respond to today’s need to control the movement of small arms and light weapons has already been approved by the Cabinet sitting of 23rd May 2005. It is now to address the following issues:

i. That premium should be placed on terrorism treated as a very serious crime and that where terrorist activities were alleged, possession or use of firearms or any arrangement to acquire or use them would be punishable by long term imprisonment;

ii. That importation, retailing, possession, handling and use of all types of battle field, military style and high velocity weapons e.g. AK-47, G3, RPGs etc. and related ammunition by individuals, groups or organizations other than by the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone acting through its duly authorized Ministry of Defence or Security Services, should be prohibited; when contravened, seriously punishable by law;

iii. That the request for the possession of firearms, ammunition and weapons for the sole use of game hunting should go through the Inspector-General of Police who shall become the sole registrar of all firearms and ammunition licenses. In the exercise of his duty to issue licenses for private possession of firearms by individuals, the Inspector-General of Police should be under obligation to ensure that such licenses were issued only when the individual had complied with the following:

   a. Be of aged 25 years and above;
   b. Be mentally fit;
   c. Be physically fit;
   d. Have no criminal record;
   e. Possess record of good behaviour duly testified by the host community;
   f. Possess capacity of safely storing the firearm and ammunition;
   g. Obtain clearance by both the Sierra Leone Police and ONS.
The Inspector-General of Police should in the exercise of his duty further ensure that the number of firearms issued should not exceed the maximum quota stated for a District or Chiefdom:

iv. No firearms for personal protection should be allowed, other than for protection provided by duly authorized Government Security Personnel;

v. Provision should be made for the licensing and regulation of the importation and retail of firearms and associated ammunition as were authorized to be acquired under the new legislation. This should include ownership of firearms and associated ammunition, retail outlets as well as the transfer of such firearms;

vi. Provision should be made for the licensing and the regulation for the local production of local shotguns and ammunition for game hunting by registered companies as should be authorized under the new legislation;

vii. The legislation should provide for serious penalties in the event of any breach of the Act. The cost of licenses and fines will be revised and made commensurate with the current value of the Leone, and provision should be made for future modifications as and when necessary. There will be a separate schedule of punishments and fines, to be reviewed when necessary;

viii. Power to make rules for further, better or more conveniently carrying out any of the provisions or purposes of the proposed legislation be vested in the Minister of Internal Affairs on obtaining Cabinet approval;

ix. Since Sierra Leone is a signatory to the ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons, serious attention will be paid to comply with this Moratorium when amending the Arms and Ammunition Act (Act No. 14 of 1955);

tax. The legislation will be consistent with the terms and conditions as enshrined in International Humanitarian Law, and the use of arms and ammunition, and all UN Conventions on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, to which Sierra Leone is a signatory;

xi. Recognizing the fact that Sierra Leone is a signatory to the universal convention banning the killing and or trading in endangered animals species, contravention of the convention anywhere in the country will be considered a crime punishable under the provisions of the proposed Act;

xii. The use of firearms and ammunition to hunt any type of animals whether endangered species or not in protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries in Sierra Leone should be considered a crime punishable under the provision of the proposed Act.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has already conveyed the decisions of Cabinet to the Law Officers Department for that office to spearhead the preparation of the necessary legislation. A task force comprising the staff of the Attorney-General’s Office, Small Arms Experts from the Police and UNDP Country Office has been put together to carry out the exercise of preparing the legislation which is hoped to be completed soon.

Public awareness of the bill was raised by publication in the Sierra Leone Gazette and the local tabloid. When it is finally passed and gets presidential asset, the Act will again be published in the Gazette and local and international press. A nationwide public awareness raising campaign will also be organised to explain the provisions of the new legislation and the licensing procedures to the general population.
4. **Law Enforcement & Criminalization**

Enforcement of the Law for the unlawful possession of firearms including SALW is the sole responsibility of the Sierra Leone Police Force. Arrests are made and people who violate the law face penalties such as fines or imprisonment. The amount of the fines provided for under the 1955 Firearms Act are outdated and fail to act as deterrent to offenders. The new Arms and Ammunition Act aims at addressing all the pitfalls in the old legislation now considered obsolete.

5. **Stockpile Management and Security of Small Arms and Light weapons**

5.1 **Security of Arms and ammunition holdings of the primary security forces (Sierra Leone Police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces)**

All firearms procured by the two disciplined forces for service use are recorded in Master Registers with special note on manufacturers’ registration number, type and other identification features. These arms and munitions are then stored in secure armouries that are guarded 24 hours a day. The firearms and munitions held at each armoury are recorded in separate registers and the registers kept with the commander for reference. Any permanent or long term transfer is recorded in this register. The registers are checked at least once a month against the holdings of the armoury. Issuance of arms and munitions to serving personnel is done on the basis of existing national laws and the Standard Operation Procedures of the SLP and Force Standing Orders of the RSLAF. The management of stocks of ammunitions is covered by the same regulations governing firearms.

5.2 **Private security regulation in the use of firearms**

GoSL policy is that no private security company is to possess firearms and munitions. The only company treated with exception is the Sierra Rutile Mining Company. It was authorised by the GoSL to hold firearms and ammunition during the emergency period to protect company’s properties. Although the SLP has removed all of the heavy weapons and their ammunition and most of the small arms, which were held by the company, there remain 23 AK47 rifles in the possession of the company. As the situation is now normal, attempts are being made by GoSL to have these retrieved.

6. **Collection and Disposal of SALW**

A **Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD):**

The Government of Sierra Leone initiated the Community Arms Collection and Destruction Program (CACD) in order to mop up weapons that were not recovered during the disarmament process and that remained within the communities. The original goal for this programme was to secure a peaceful election by trying to recover Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) that fell out of the scope of the DDR program (such as shotguns). The National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) provided the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) with technical and logistical support in order to collect arms and ammunitions in the hands of individuals who did not qualify for the DDR programme. UNAMSIL also played an important role as an implementing partner for the storage of weapons and ammunitions collected.

CACD was conducted countrywide by the SLP between February and April 2002. Civilians were asked to voluntarily surrender all arms, ammunitions and explosives in their possession, within a specified period during which time an amnesty was granted. The amnesty remained in effect until such time as the CACD programme was declared complete in a particular district. At the end of the amnesty period, it became illegal to possess arms, ammunitions or explosives in the country. Cordon and search operation was conducted by the SLP. CACD succeeded in collecting 9,662 weapons and about 35,000 assorted ammunitions.
B UNDP Support to the Sierra Leone Small Arms Programme- Arms for Development (AfD) initiative:

Since the official conclusion of the DDR disarmament process in January 2002, partnership collaboration between the Government of Sierra Leone and the UNDP to advance peace, security and development in the country has continued to grow in strength. During the period of the war in Sierra Leone, distribution of weapons to combatants was without any criteria. Anyone that was available to fight received a weapon. The Arms for Development is a joint initiative of the Government of Sierra Leone and UNDP designed to empower grassroot communities for disarmament and development. It is a community led disarmament initiative linking security to development through an approach which promotes voluntary surrender of weapons in exchange for development. Disarmed communities duly verified and certified by the Sierra Leone Police receive the sum of US$20,000 for a community development project, democratically selected by the people. The AfD is funded on a cost shared basis by the Governments of Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Germany.

The Arms for Development (AFD) focuses on three main activities:

1. Community Arms Collection and Development;
2. Developing new ways to stem the illicit trade in SALW; and
3. Supporting the revision and eventual implementation of a new firearms legislation.

Progress has been made within each activity as follows:

(a) Activity 1: Community Arms Collection and Development - The AfD initiative is currently being implemented in 32 Chiefdoms located in 6 Districts. Out of these, 10 Chiefdoms have already been declared arms free and 4 more are ready for verification and certification by the Sierra Leone Police. Accordingly, expansion activities started in May 2005 with preparatory activities in new Chiefdoms in Kenema and Koinadugu Districts. Up to June 2005, a total of 1,703 weapons have been collected in the target Chiefdoms. The expansion plan of the AFD is to cover 50 Chiefdoms by the end of 2006.

Weapons collected are sorted into two categories:

- **Licensable and safe weapons** (such as shotguns) are stored awaiting the new legislation under which their owners will be allowed to apply for a license;
- **Non licensable or licensable but unsafe weapons** (such as military guns and unsafe shotguns) are disposed by cutting into pieces.

(b) Activity 2: Developing New Ways to Stem the Illicit Trade in SALW

As outlined in the introduction of this report, there is a regional dimension to the problem of small arms proliferation in Sierra Leone exacerbated by border porosity and persistent armed conflict in the region. Problems of cross border criminality vis-à-vis trafficking in small arms, drugs, diamonds, humans, mercenary armed groups etc., continue to pose a threat to both national and regional efforts towards sustainable peace, security and development.

To address these cross border problems, the Government of Sierra Leone developed the Border Strengthening Programme with support provided by the UNDP. The main focus of the programme is to provide institutional capacity building and support to grass root initiatives for collaboration with State Security Agencies to ensure effective...
surveillance and protection of the border. Sierra Leone appears to have made significant progress in this direction. Provincial and District security committees already in place, dealing with border control issues. This is expected to be taken further with sister states through establishment of Joint border Security and Confidence Building units (JBSCBU) with the neighbouring states of Guinea and Liberia to support the 15th Protocol of the Mano River Union.

A further objective is to foster regional cooperation and partnership in the Mano River Union countries within the framework of the agreements among member states to promote peace and stability in the region.

The Border Strengthening Programme is being coordinated by the Office of National Security (ONS). The main implementing partners are the Sierra Leone Police, Ministry of Defence, Immigration Department, Customs and Excise Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Country Planning & the Environment and the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), an umbrella organization of civil society groups involving in campaign and awareness raising to control small arms proliferation.

Under this activity the UNDP provided the sum of US$30,000 for pilot activities geared towards the collation of baseline information on border security. The objective of the pilot project also included, the development of a comprehensive national border strengthening project proposal. A border security assessment has been carried out. A validated report on the assessment with recommendations will soon be published and writing of the national project proposal is in progress.

(c) Activity 3: Revision of the Firearms Act (Act. No. 14 of 1955)

As stated earlier, Sierra Leone is currently without a suitable legislation for firearms control. The existing one was last amended in 1955. It is now quite obsolete and ineffective in meeting the security demands of a post conflict situation. The AD is currently assisting the GoSL to undertake the review process for a new legislation and the setting up of a new Firearms Licensing Bureau that should ensure adequate transparency and accountability in Civilian firearms possession. The proposal for the revision of the legislation has been approved by Cabinet. Drafting of the legislation is in progress.

7. Export Controls

Sierra Leone does not export weapons. Importation of firearms into the country is currently under a general ban imposed by the Government of Sierra Leone in 1996, prohibiting private possession of civilian firearms in the country. The ban is hoped to be lifted with the passing of the new firearms legislation and subsequent development of appropriate regulations for firearms import control.

8. Brokering

There is no evidence of brokering in the firearms business in Sierra Leone at the moment. However, as a precautionary measure, necessary prescriptions will be encapsulated in the forthcoming new legislation for firearms arms control in Sierra Leone.

9. Marking, record keeping and tracing

Sierra Leone’s local craft gun manufacturing is at the moment at a very rudimentary stage, though not to mean that the scale of manufacturing is insignificant. Guns produced are not marked. On the other hand, a majority of imported guns are marked. Before the war, record keeping of licensable firearms in the country was under the responsibility of the Police through the Firearms Licensing Bureau. Even though it is difficult to establish the fact that
poor record keeping had been a problem, this does not mean that proper record keeping was being done. The police are yet to learn and to be equipped for firearms tracing.

10. **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration**

After the eleven-year civil war, Sierra Leone with the support of the International Community embarked on the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (DDRP) that has been acclaimed to be largely successful. The programme had essentially focussed on the weapons and the needs of the combatants that were carrying them.

The overall goal of the DDRP in Sierra Leone was to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants belonging to the various factions, i.e. the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) for the purpose of consolidating short term security and as a basis for lasting peace in Sierra Leone. The three key objectives were:

(i) To collect register, disable and destroy all conventional weapons and ammunition retrieved from the combatants during the disarmament period;

(ii) To demobilise approximately 45,000 combatants of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, RUF, CDF and the paramilitary forces. It was estimated that 12% of the total were children under the age of 18 years;

(iii) To prepare and support the ex-combatants for reinsertion and socio-economic reintegration upon discharge from demobilization centres.

Within the last one year and three months before the conclusion of the DDR Programme in Sierra Leone, the focus of the programme was on reintegration which included delivery of benefits to eligible and registered ex-combatants in all chiefdoms/districts in the country and promotion of reconciliation through various social measures.

With the completion of disarmament and demobilisation in January 2002, which enhanced access to all areas of the country, the reintegration programme expanded in both quantity and quality. The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) that had been set up by the Government of Sierra Leone under the Chairmanship of His Excellency the President, decentralised its structures to the district level in the months of April and May 2002. This led to an improvement in the delivery capacity of the institution and further decentralization of referral and counselling services that were established at the various DDR Centres. By the end of December 2002, a total of 56,751 ex-combatants had been registered for reintegration assistance in the 12 Districts and in the Western Area.

Registration analysis in the DDR Programme revealed a high concentration of ex-combatants in Bo, Port Loko, Kailahun, Kono, Kenema districts and in the Western Area. The critical areas in terms of placement into programmes were Kono, Bo, Pujehun and Kailahun districts, mostly due to the late disarmament and the inability of most agencies to establish their presence in these districts. In addition, artisanal mining activities in the Kono and Tongo Field areas (Eastern Province) provided the ex-combatants with other options for economic engagement.

At the end of the DDR Programme, the ex-combatants were able to receive assistance from various sectors. Some of the assistance received was in the following areas:

(a) **Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Scheme** - This was the largest sector of participation under the programme. It provided support for the acquisition of skills in various trade areas. A total of 17,981 ex-combatants is reported to have completed training in various vocational training and apprenticeship outlets. Another 10,572 are registered in on-going programmes all over the country.

(b) **Formal Education** - In this sector, many ex-combatants opted also for formal education. The Programme had up to 7,233 ex-combatants in various
schools/colleges and other formal training institutions. Ex-combatants were given support for periods ranging from one to three years, depending on the date they were disarmed.

(c) **Agriculture** - The total number of beneficiaries in agriculture (including fisheries and pig raising) shared at 9,342. The support for Agriculture was mostly input based.

(d) **Public works and Job Placement** - The Public works sector attracted limited interest and participation both in terms of partnership and the involvement of ex-combatants. Only 798 of the 56,700 registered ex-combatants were reported to be interested in job placement.

Two major programmes were designed for children. For those under 15 years of age, a community Education and Investment Programme (CEIP) was designed by UNICEF and other child protection agencies. A total of 3,050 children participated in the programme. Children over 15 years and less than 18 years of age also participated in the NCDDR designed Training and Employment Programme (TEP). The majority were placed in Apprenticeship Schemes. A total of 1,858 children completed the training programme, whilst 800 are enrolled in ongoing programmes around the country.

The success of the DDRP in Sierra Leone was therefore due largely to the support given by both local and international partners in the overall implementation of the programme. A spatial analysis of the partnerships involved revealed that the programme was delivering reintegration assistance using 303 implementing agencies in the Western Area (especially the capital Freetown), 146 partners in the East, 173 in the North and 172 in the South. The programme benefited from funding and reintegration opportunities from the following partners: DFID/CRP, UNDP, UNAMSIL, USAID, BMZ/GTZ and others.

By 31st December, 2003, the NCDDR completed its mandate to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants in Sierra Leone and then finally phased out.

11. **Awareness Raising Campaigns and Civil Society Activity**

In the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium and UN Programme of Action, Civil Society Groups have been playing a significant role in Awareness Raising Campaigns on the threats associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons at both national and regional levels.

The Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) is the Civil Society Organisation that is working in partnership with the UNDP to address the proliferation of SALW in Sierra Leone. The main agenda of SLANSA has been to raise awareness on the situation of SALW in the country and internationally through information dissemination, advocacy and lobbying in collaboration with the small arms networks in the West African sub-region and globally. Established in October 2001, SLANSA is a national chapter of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). SLANSA is coordinated by the Council of Churches of Sierra Leone (CCSL) has a membership of fifteen (15) civil society organizations.

The activities undertaken by SLANSA by way of awareness raising campaigns nationally and in the sub-region on Small Arms proliferation are given hereunder:-

- Sustained advocacy and lobbying of stakeholders in the campaign against small arms and light weapons proliferation coupled with pressure on GoSL to review the Firearms Act (Act No. 14 of 1955) and enact a new legislation.
- Participation in the Global Week of Action from July 1 -9 2004, an event that helped raise media and public awareness on the dangers of SALW to both the socio-political and economic well-being of Sierra Leone.
- Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNDP/AFD initiative and sourcing funding to mobilize and sensitize rural communities in Sierra Leone from
July - December 2004, 14 chiefdoms in five districts were sensitized. Awareness raising strategies involve regular meetings of stakeholders to discuss SALW issues and sustained electronic and print media advocacy on the dangers of unchecked small arms movement. The Million Faces Campaign was launched during the global action week (6 – 12 June 2005) to support the principles of the Arms Trade Treaty, its development, promotion and inclusion into the 2006 UN Programme of Action on Small Arms.

- Representation in the Border Strengthening Initiative for Sierra Leone and the National Focal Committee on SALW control.

However, awareness raising campaigns on SALW nationwide have not only been undertaken by the civil society groups. With the reactivation of the National Focal committee, National Consultative Conferences have been scheduled to be held in all four regions of the country to firstly raise awareness and also adopt a participatory community approach geared towards the development of a National Action Plan for the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Sierra Leone.

A six months Project Proposal has been developed and is funded by the UNDP. The objectives of the project include:

- To elicit the views of stakeholders on control of small arms and light weapons with a view to providing guidelines for consultants in developing a National Plan of Action spanning the 2004 – 2009 period;
- To facilitate procedural measures for the collection and destruction of illicit weapons to ensure effective arms control;
- To provide effective methods of registering, controlling and using legitimate arms stock within the country;
- To sensitize communities on the impact of having porous borders and the dangers of the proliferation of illicit weapons.

The above programme is considered necessary by the National Focal Committee, because based on the threat assessment that was done by the Border Strengthening Programme that has just concluded its pilot phase. The threats along Sierra Leone’s borders were diagnosed as follows:

- Smuggling/Illegal Trade/Movement of Small Arms;
- Armed Robbery;
- Dissident Activities in neighbouring countries; and
- Cross border raids.

The National Focal committee therefore hopes to address all these problems with support provided by GoSL, UNDP and other development partners. The theme for the National Consultative Conference which will take place from 19th - 24th June 2005 is “Towards a National Action Plan Against Small Arms and Light Weapons”.

**B) REGIONAL LEVEL**

**Adherence to Legally Binding Instruments, Moratoria and action programmes**

Cognisance of the problems prevailing in the sub-region and on the continent as a whole, and mindful of its sovereignty and security of its people, Sierra Leone has also been working assiduously with its regional and international partners in line with two of its Foreign Policy Objectives;

(i) the promotion of Sub-regional, regional and inter-African cooperation and Unity; and

Government of Sierra Leone SALW Programme of Action 11
(ii) the promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of international peace and security and normal respect among all nations and respect for their territorial integrity and independence.

Regional Cooperation

The level of cooperation among the Mano River Union States was increased at a meeting of the Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in Rabat, Morocco on 29th April 2002 in a bid to address regional security problems of the Mano River Union bordering on the illicit proliferation of SALW.

At the Rabat Summit, a number of recommendations were made for peace and stability to prevail in the MRU basin. These recommendations were again reconfirmed at the MRU Summit held in Conakry, Guinea on 20th May 2004 which included decisions on:

(i) The endemic problem of dissidents;
(ii) The deployment of Joint Border Security and Confidence building Units;
(iii) The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons;
(iv) The establishment of a tripartite legal framework of the Union;
(v) Dealing with the problems of refugees and the need to open borders that were closed;
(vi) Need to educate the entire population of the MRU; and
(vii) Financing the MRU Secretariat based in Freetown that was dysfunctional due to lack of funding to implement projects that had been lying dormant for many years.

C) GLOBAL LEVEL

At the multilateral level, Sierra Leone has been participating effectively with multilateral partners charged with resolving conflicts in Africa and the Sub-region and fighting to control the flow of SALW. Among these are:

(i) The central Organ of the African Union Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at the level of Heads of State;

(ii) Adherence to the protocol relating to the Establishment of the peace and Security Council of the African Union;

(iii) The Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS;

(iv) ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council especially its Committee of six on Sierra Leone;

(v) Adherence to the following ECOWAS Conventions and Protocols:
   • Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence signed in Freetown in May 1981;
   • Convention on Mutual Assistance in communal matters adopted in Dakar in July 1992;
   • Convention on extradition;
   • Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and security;
   • ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms and light weapons.

(vii) Sierra Leone has adhered to a number of international conventions and protocols adopted by the UN dealing with the problems and control of SALW. These include:

- The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms Proliferation in all its aspects;
- The twelve core United Nations conventions relating to anti-Terrorism;
- The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC);
- The Convention relating to certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five related Protocols.

(viii) Cabinet has just approved the ratification of the convention relating to Transnational Organized Crime and its three related protocols as well as the AU Convention against Terrorism. These will soon be laid before Parliament for the necessary ratification;

(ix) To implement some of the conventions on Terrorism and Trans-national Organized Crime, an anti-Money Laundering Act has been promulgated and a refugee legislation and child rights bill are all under way.

As a country just emerging from eleven years of Civil Conflict and Conscious of the fact that peace consolidation was a pre-requisite for sustainable development, the Government of Sierra Leone embarked on a number of Security Sector Reform Programmes, especially targeting the Primary Security Forces. These include reforming the Army, the Police and Intelligence Agencies.

Under these reforms, the National Security and Central Intelligence Act, 2002 was promulgated. The structures put in place under this Act, and especially the Office of National Security, have been very effective in gathering intelligence on the movement of SALW not only across the borders of Sierra Leone but within the sub-region as a whole. This has been made possible by the deployment of Provincial and District Security bodies with strong civil society and community authorities’ involvement.

As a result of the reform measures, His Excellency the President launched three Security Sector Reform Documents in Freetown on 26th May 2005. These documents relate to the following:

(i) The Key findings and Recommendations of the Security Sector Review (SSR) for Sierra Leone;

(ii) Protective Security expressing the need for all hands to be on deck to safeguard our national assets; and

(iii) Standard Response Guidelines, a mechanism for decision making on matters of national security.

All the above mentioned Actions of Government and the reform measures undertaken have resulted in marked improvement in the security situation. The drawdown of UNAMSIL therefore will leave the security forces well prepared to take over the security of the State and to efficiently protect the country's borders from armed external aggression and the infiltration of SALW.