COUNTRY REPORT
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME
OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE
ILICIT TRADE ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
IN ALL ITS ASPECT (UNPOA)
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

I. Preamble

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has remained in the forefront of the implementation of the provisions of the international instruments on small arms and light weapons (SALWs), especially the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade on SALWs (UNPOA) and the ECOWAS Convention on SALWs, their ammunition and other related materials. This is against the background of the direct and indirect impact of SALWs on its sovereignty, national security and corporate existence as well as its commitment to the promotion of sub-regional, regional and global peace and security.

II. The National Committee on SALWs (NATCOM).

In accordance with the decision of the ECOSAP (ECOWAS Small Arms Programme), the Nigerian government instituted a committee, consisting of all government agencies connected with the implementation of the ECOWAS Small Arms Convention, called the National Committee on SALWs (NATCOM), domiciled in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Committee is currently engaged with carrying out the small arms survey in the country, as a part of the sub-regional survey.

III. National Level Implementation
Further to its previous reports on the status of the implementation of the UNPoA during the Review Conference, and as a demonstration of its support to the UN Resolution 62/47, the following programmes, amongst others were undertaken:

- **Strengthening of Border Control and Security**

  Determined to combat the menace, Nigerian security agencies made several seizures of illicit SALWs from organized criminal gangs and armed robbers. These weapons were being used for economic sabotage, abuse of human rights, destruction of lives and property, among others. Between June – August 2007, about 1,582 arms were seized. Further investigation on these seizures has not only helped to improve the operational capacities of the security agencies but has also helped to understand the complex network and routes of these arms flow into the country.

- **Enhancing Stockpile Management and Control**

  There is no gainsaying the fact that some of the small arms and light weapons circulating illegally in the country were originally legal stockpiles from within and neighbouring countries. In a bid to curtail the transfer of licit arms to the hands of unauthorized users, Nigeria conducted workshops on “Enhancing Stockpile Management”. Participants consisted of armament officers of the Military and Paramilitary agencies. The aim of the workshop was to improve the control and management skills and measures of the nation’s personnel involved in arms stockpile management.

- **Activities of Illicit Brokers**
It is also imperative to state that there is an improved control of the issuance of End-User-Certificates for arms importation by government agencies. This is to avoid forgery and to ensure that it is only authorized users that obtain the license to import arms in accordance with the national policy on non-transfer of arms to non-state actors. This was why Nigeria kept participating in global conferences and fora where related issues were discussed. Thus, in 2005 the focal point participated at the Consultative Meeting Process on transfers to Non State Actors organized by the Biting the Bullet Project (International Alert, SaferWorld and University of Bradford) in Rio, Brazil. This assisted in further exposing our expertise and strategies in dealing with illicit activities of arms dealers and brokers.

- Sensitization and Enlightenment Campaigns on Building a Culture of Peace

In furtherance to raising awareness on the increasing impact of illicit SALWs availability and circulation, especially on the development and humanitarian sectors, advocacy programmes were conducted for traditional and religious leaders on their role in fostering a culture of peace at the grass root level, as well as for the national legislature. Also, a framework for mainstreaming peace building in development programming was formulated with the assistance of the development partners. The capacities of various stakeholders are being enhanced through this framework and this is in line with the African Declaration on Armed Violence Reduction and Development, which recognized the instrumental role being played by illicit SALWs proliferation. Nevertheless, the 7-point agenda of the present Nigerian government, which includes ensuring security of lives and property, will ultimately address substantially the various variables that trigger the demand for arms among the civilian population.
Implementation of the International Tracing Instrument

Nigeria participated actively in the open-ended conference leading to the conclusion of the International Tracing Instrument and is desirous in seeing its full implementation. Thus, local efforts were made to sensitize the various stakeholders on the advent of the new instrument. Furthermore, operatives are billed to receive intensive capacity building training towards its operationalization. It is therefore against this backdrop that Nigeria, amongst other efforts, will actively be participating in a workshop dedicated for the Tracing Instrument being organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) in April, 2008.

IV. SUB REGIONAL LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

Development of National Plans of Actions

It is important to highlight that efforts are being made to conduct the first comprehensive national arms survey on small arms in the country. The project will entail a national public dialogue on SALWs, focus group discussions, administration, collation and analysis of data from questionnaires administered in about 16 states (40% of the country), national workshop on report validation, among others. This project will generate critical information and identify existing gaps in the fight against illicit SALWs proliferation in the country. It will therefore enable the Nigerian government to further develop appropriate measures to stem the proliferation as well as improve on the capacities of various institutions involved in these efforts. This pilot support project is being sponsored principally by the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP) and other development partners in the country.
Implementation of the ECOWAS Convention

As the sub region has transited from the Moratorium to a more legally binding Convention on Small Arms, Nigeria which was at the forefront in the lead up to the creation of the Convention, has since put in place machinery towards its ratification and eventual domestication. The ECOWAS Commission and its related agencies, such as ECOSAP, are also taking the lead in supporting member states in promoting the ownership as well as the implementation of the Convention.

V. International Cooperation and Assistance

This report will not be complete without mentioning the technical / financial support received from our international partners in the course of implementing the UNPoA and other related programmes. In the country, the National Focal Point and our NGOs/CSOs received support from international partners such as IANSA, Oxfam GB, SaferAfrica, SaferWorld, Bitting the Bullet Project, GIS, etc and of course the active role and support of UN Agencies such as UNDP, UNDDA, UNDESA, BCPR etc in the control process. Above all, the ECOWAS Commission, through its Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP), is putting in place a number of technical and financial support for the capacity building of the focal point.

VI Constraints, Challenges and Request for Assistance

However, in order to realize maximum impact on the implementation of UNPoA, there is need to assist countries with less capacity to confront the challenges associated with illicit SALWs circulation. Indeed, Nigeria will require assistance in the following areas:
and management;

iii. provision of metal detectors at land, sea and airports; and

iv. Training of security in mode of modern arms and ammunition destruction.

VII. Conclusion

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is very much committed to the implementation of the UNPoA. It will continue to support and actively participate in all the concerted efforts to entrench a safe and secured world devoid of illicit SALWs circulation. The fact that the country experienced a civil war in the past, and is still contending with the activities of militants and cross border activities of miscreants, within and outside the country, accounts for the massive proliferation of SALWs, and has informed the concerted efforts of the present administration to rid the country of the menace of small arms proliferation.

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