



# DECLARATION

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## Tackling small arms in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa

7-8 May 2000, Dar es Salaam

Seminar organised by the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC),  
the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the  
Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and  
Saferworld

in association with the Interpol Subregional Bureau, Nairobi

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### **Declaration**

**S**enior government officials and police officers from Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, together with representatives from the East African Co-operation (EAC), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Interpol Subregional Bureau, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations held a seminar in Dar es Salaam to discuss action to tackle the proliferation of small arms in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

They welcomed the initiatives which have been taken in this area in the subregion, in particular, the signing by foreign ministers of the *Nairobi Declaration* (15 March) and the development at a meeting in Kampala (31 January – 1 February) of a draft subregional action programme. They encouraged all such efforts to continue.

Participants agreed on a series of detailed proposals for action by governments and subregional organisations in a range of areas including: strengthening legal

controls over weapons possession and transfer; enhancing operational capacity to tackle illicit trafficking; removing weapons from circulation; and developing education programmes.

Participants urged that the following steps are immediately taken to take the process forward:

- National focal points should be established to address small arms issues.
- Increased co-ordination should occur between the EAC, IGAD and the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Committee (EAPCCO) to tackle the problem. Small arms should be put on the agenda of all upcoming meetings of subregional organisations with the aim of issuing declarations outlining their commitment, role and specific activities.
- The SRIC, UNAFRI, the ISS and Saferworld should organise a further meeting of this group in August or September. The specific focus will be on harmonising legal controls over weapons possession and transfer. Governments are asked to submit copies of their national legislation governing firearms possession, import, export, transfer and manufacture in advance so that the organisers can assess the differences and similarities and develop proposals for their standardisation.

A further objective will be to define the parameters of the study proposed in the *Nairobi Declaration* "on the problem of illicit arms within the region and to draw up appropriate programmes for the collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons."

Participants agreed that the next important focus should be on assessing past experiences in the subregion regarding demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration programmes for former combatants and developing guidelines for future programmes.

Participants stressed the importance of public support and the involvement of civil society and the media. The next meeting will therefore have an open public session to help spread awareness of steps being taken to tackle the issue.

A full report of the proceedings will be issued shortly.