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Le Secrétariat Général

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KINSHASA CONVENTION

Libreville, April 30, 2020

Adopted on April 30, 2010 in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, All Parts and Components That May Allow Their Manufacture, Repair and assembly, commonly known as the Kinshasa Convention, will total its ten (10) years of existence this Thursday, April 30, 2020.

The genesis of this convention is known as the Sao Tome initiative. Indeed, the member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), meeting within the framework of the 25th Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) held on May 14-18, 2007, adopted in Sao Tome an initiative (document) aimed at providing Central Africa with its own instrument, intended to be binding, for the control of small arms and light weapons and a code of conduct for the forces defense and security of Central Africa.

The Kinshasa Convention regulates several matters related to arms control in its broad sense. These subjects include:

- The transfers ;
- The possession of weapons by civilians;
- Manufacturing, distribution and repair;
- Operational mechanisms (brokerage, marking and tracing, registration, collection and destruction, inventory management and security, border control, SALW entry points, etc.);
- Education and awareness of communities on the proliferation of small arms;
- Transparency and exchange of information on SALW (electronic database, sub-regional database, sub-regional electronic database for peace operations, dialogue with international manufacturers and international organizations, confidence building,...

Indeed, the states of Central Africa have found that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons constitutes a threat to the peace and security of the sub-region of Central Africa. Consequently, the success of a fight against this threat requires a subregional response. No

state, taken individually, can win the fight against the proliferation of small arms, because the threat transcends national borders. Hence, efforts must be joined together and cooperative to counter the threat posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the sub-region.

Since the adoption of the Kinshasa Convention, the ECCAS General Secretariat, established as a mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, worked closely with the member states to initiate the process of signature and of ratification of this Convention. As of September 30, 2011, all 11 ECCAS member states had already signed the Kinshasa Convention, thereby becoming SIGNATORY STATES.

In the same perspective, out of the other signatory states, eight (8) have ratified the Kinshasa Convention and have today become STATES PARTIES to the Kinshasa Convention. The ratification by the ECCAS member states, at least 6 signatory states, allowed the entry into force of this Convention on March 8, 2017.

Since the entry into force of this Convention, the States Parties and signatories have accelerated the establishment of institutional mechanisms for implementation at national level, namely the National Commissions. Today, seven of the 11 ECCAS member states have their National Commissions (Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda). Cameroon, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad are very advanced in the establishment of these mechanisms.

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, a first conference of the States Parties and signatories was held from June 11 to 13, 2018 in Yaoundé (Republic of Cameroon). This Conference laid the solid foundations for the organization of future conferences of States Parties and launched the creation of a Secretariat on small arms in Central Africa and a trust fund to finance activities on control small arms in Central Africa.

In the implementation of this Convention, the States benefit from technical assistance from the General Secretariat of ECCAS and other partners (UNREC- UNODA, UNODC, which conduct joint projects under the coordination of ECCAS. Thus, workshops capacity-building initiatives on the harmonization of national laws were conducted in 2019 in Equatorial Guinea (September) and in the Democratic Republic (November 2019) in order to assist the ECCAS states in the harmonization of national laws with regard to of the Kinshasa Convention and other relevant treaties.

On December 11, 2019, the ECCAS member states adopted in Kinshasa the five-year action plan for the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention. This plan defines in detail the various actions that will be carried out in the period from 2020 to 2024 to make effective the various objectives pursued by the Kinshasa Convention.

This plan will be presented to the second Ministerial Conference of States Parties and signatories to the Kinshasa Convention scheduled for 2020 in Brazzaville (Republic of the

Congo). It takes into account different challenges related to arms control in Central Africa. There are many challenges, of which the most crucial and urgent:

- The persistence of armed groups;
- Physical security of stocks of weapons and ammunition;
- Border control;
- Possession of weapons by unauthorized civilians...

These challenges will be at the center of the priority activities of the ECCAS General Secretariat and the National Commissions for the Control of Small Arms in Central Africa and will not fail to benefit from the assistance of ECCAS partners (United Nations, African Union, Communities Regional Economic Partners, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Organizations).