

**WELCOME REMARKS BY RT HON NGOGA KAROLI MARTIN, SPEAKER OF EALA
AT THE SEMINAR ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY & ITS COMPLEMENTARITY TO
THE REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL INSTRUMENTS FOR EAC PARTNER STATES
DELIVERED BY HON PIERRE CELESTIN RWIGEMA**

EAC HEADQUARTERS, OCTOBER 5-6th, 2018

Mr Dumsani Dladla, Head of the ATT Secretariat;

Hon Burikukiye, Chair of the RACR and my colleagues, Members of EALA;

**My good friends, Dr Philip Mwanika and Dr Eve Massingham from ICRC, Nairobi
Delegation;**

Mr Oluwafisan Bankale, Representative of ECOWAS,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

This morning, we convene here to discuss a matter that is very close to my heart which revolves around the Question: **WHEN SHALL THE CONTINENT TOTALLY ECLIPSE AND MOP OUT ILLEGAL ARMS?** Armed conflict has for a number of years being one of the continent's main undoing in terms of development. In fact, as I was making my way here, I was juggling with the often-asked question **WHAT AILS AFRICA?** My mind kept racing back and forth and telling me, the answers are right with us and that amongst the several solutions offered, Africa needs its own self-introspection.

Illegal arms and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is a rubric of armed conflict and insecurity. Insecurity hinders development, destabilizes leadership and results in poor economic development. Violence and crimes, such as drug trafficking, arms trafficking, illegal financial flows, armed conflicts, transnational criminality, terrorism among others, similarly threaten the continent despite investment in the establishment of an African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as well as other mechanisms to safeguard peace and security.

The East African Community is a region at risk and vulnerable to terrorism of all the regions in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly all countries in the EAC region have been victims of terrorist acts due to illegal weapons. On every continent, trade of arms on the black market is rapidly expanding and perhaps aggravated by other challenges such as unemployment, unpalatable culture of consuming, exploitation of resources and a poverty mentality.

The roots of what is known today as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can be traced back to the late 1980s, when civil society actors voiced their concerns about the unregulated nature of the global arms trade and its impact on human security. The Arms Trade Treaty obligates member states to monitor arms exports and to ensure that weapons do not cross existing arms embargoes or end up being used for human-rights abuses including terrorism. As the continent strives for reforms, some adjustments remain necessary for the established institutional structures and initiatives to be functional and operational. That said, I keenly believe that one of the key aspects of ensuring peace and security lies in **“finding African Solutions to African Problems”**

This is why, I am pleased that both the ICRC and EALA have found it necessary to partner in discussing this pertinent issue of illegal Arms. However, despite the EAC region being one of the most affected by small arms, no Partner State has to date, ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. The seminar is definitely going to focus on the possible reasons why ratification has not happened, so we may see the way forward together on the critical matter. I therefore thank the ICRC and EALA who have deemed it fit to hold this crucial consultation. I am also grateful to other experts from the Small Arms Survey as well as representatives from ECOWAS who are here to share with us their experiences.

Hon Members, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen: Africa has the fastest urban growth rate of 4.5% despite been the least urbanized region in the world. The United Nations projects that Africa will become 50% urban by 2035, and this figure may rise

further to nearly 60% by 2050. In addition, if moderate growth rate forecasts materialize, the number of Africa's urban dwellers will increase from about 400 million to 1.26 billion in the next 30 years. **Ladies and Gentlemen:** this calls for us to tackle effectively tackle insecurity posed by presence of the illegal arms. The nature of security challenges has moved from Interstate to intrastate but this does not preclude any state from the obligations to the EAC Treaty. The increase in terror threats, piracy and poaching of wildlife where level of sophistication has increased has given EAC Partner States impetus to approach the matter with a given measure of seriousness. In addition, with the EAC now implementing the Common Market Protocol that envisages free movement, there is imminent fear of increase in cross-border crime. Unfortunately, free movement of persons does not only involve those in search of opportunities, but it inevitably also involves free movement of criminals. This can be destabilizing and calls for closer co-operation by the agencies. Articles 123,124 and 125 of the EAC Treaty explicitly underscores security as a critical component in supporting; consolidating and protecting regional integration.

On this score, it is necessary for all Partners to ratify the Peace and Security Protocol (One Partner State, yet to do so). I am duly informed that the EAC is seriously underfunded when it comes to resources. There is need to ensure a fully-fledged Peace and Security department is established and with it, an office for disarmament.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The workshop on ATT organized by ICRC and EALA thus offers us an opportunity to put our heads together and to see progress with regards to SALW control and how to unpack the ATT for better understanding. The role of EALA in this process is particularly critical in terms of mobilizing the relevant committees of the Partner State Parliaments in enhancing legislation, and perhaps advocacy for the ratification of th ATT. At the same time, the workshop should arm us with some fodder for consideration as we enhance our mandate on legislation, representation and oversight at the EAC.

This is the time to reposition the EAC and the continent. In the past, much has been labelled of the continent as a struggling and poor. Perhaps this is an African Paradox –

that this beautiful landscape we call Africa may be both rich and poor. The bigger picture is that Africa must now repositioning itself, **AFRICA MUST** discard the poverty mentality once and for all!

Ladies and Gentlemen: Due to other exigencies of duty, I am unable to join you for the entire day and a half of this key seminar. I shall however be keenly following the proceedings. I wish you well in the deliberations. I thank you for your kind attention.