

Arms Control: Africa

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Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of Arms Control: Africa, which is published by the Arms Management Programme (AMP) of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The aim of Arms Control: Africa is to provide relevant information and analysis on arms and arms control developments that are either taking place in Africa, or which have the potential to have a significant impact on the continent.

From 14 to 18 July 2008 Member States of the United Nations (UN), and a range of civil society organisations, will gather in New York for the third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on the UN Programme of Action Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects. This is an important meeting for the international arms and control and disarmament community, as last the time UN Member States met to discuss the Programme of Action was in mid-2006. This meeting, which sought to review the implementation of UN Programme of Action, was concluded without a clear agenda the future implementation of the Programme of Action being determined.

The BMS will focus on four specific themes: International cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building; illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons; stockpile management and surplus disposal; and other issues and identification of priority issues or topics of relevance in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges and opportunities.

Given the magnitude of this meeting, and the complex nature of the four themes that will be addressed at the BMS, the contributions within this newsletter focus on these four themes. In addition, articles on control and disarmament developments with regards weapons of mass destruction in Africa are included in this edition.

Contributions to this newsletter in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese, and Swahili are welcome, and should be emailed to info@armsnet africa.org.

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National Focal Point Capacity Building in Southern Africa

Ben Coetzee

In 2007 the Southern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPPCO) re-committed itself to the implementation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials during its 12th Annual General Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. The challenges posed by the implementation of this Protocol were acknowledged during this meeting. Two of the main obstacles identified were the inadequacy of individual Member States' firearms control infrastructure, and the need for a more coordinated approach at the regional level. SARPPCO consequently constituted a Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) to be the primary implementation body for the SADC Protocol. Brokering, marking and tracing, as well as stockpile management provisions are included in the SADC Protocol, and hence the RCC is required to address these issues.

The RCC met for the first time in Harare, Zimbabwe from 17 to 19 March 2008. During this meeting a Task Team was established to capacitate, through training, National Focal Points on small arms and light weapons in a number of SADC countries. The RCC also determined that the Task Team would benefit from the advice of a representative from the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control, and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

In April 2008 the Arms Management Programme of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) hosted a workshop for the Task Team to design a training curriculum for certain national focal points on small arms and light weapons in SADC. During the workshop, the Training Task Team agreed that training material should be developed that meets the specific needs of national focal points in Southern Africa. It was acknowledged that the success and experiences of established national focal points in Africa, as well as the individual experiences of the members of the Task Team, should be incorporated into the training material. In addition, it was agreed that previously published reference material, such as that which had been developed SaferAfrica, should be employed where appropriate. At the end of the workshop SADC-specific training material had been developed and an implementation plan agreed to. Training sessions in Swaziland, Lesotho and Angola were scheduled to take place during May and June 2008.

At the time of writing this article, training sessions had taken place in Swaziland and Lesotho, with a representative from the Arms Management Programme of the ISS being present during the Swaziland training. A summary of the Swaziland training is provided below.

The Swaziland workshop was hosted by the Royal Swaziland Police Service and took place from 5 to 9 May 2008. The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Isaac Magagula opened the proceedings, which received considerable media coverage. The workshop was attended by most of the current members of the Swaziland National Focal Point on small



Swaziland workshop participants

arms, which are drawn from a number of Ministries and departments including: police, military, foreign affairs, immigration and justice. A Swazi civil society representative was also in attendance.

The workshop resulted in the Swaziland participants identifying the following priority future activities:

- Hosting of a national consultative conference to further operationalise the National Focal Point.
- Establishment of a secretariat for the National Focal Point.
- Establishment of sub-committees to investigate specific priority areas, such as the strengthening of national firearms control legislation and raising public awareness of small arms and light weapons.
- The development of a national action plan on small arms and light weapons, based on research and mapping exercises.
- Fundraising for national focal point activities.
- Collaboration with relevant partner organisations.

During the second half of 2008, the SARPCCO training Task Team will undertake training sessions with national focal points in a number of other SADC Member States, including Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These training sessions will be crucial steps towards the more effective functioning of the respective national focal points, and will contribute to the implementation of the SADC Protocol.

Ben Coetzee, Senior Researcher: Arms Management Programme, ISS Tshwane (Pretoria)

Getting a grip on arms brokering

Guy Lamb

Licit and illicit brokering

In the opening sequence of the acclaimed 2005 film 'Lord of War', which provides insight into the murky world of illicit arms brokering, the principal protagonist (fictional), Yuri Orlov (portrayed by Nicholas Cage) calmly declares: "There are over 550 million firearms in worldwide circulation. That's one firearm for every twelve people on the planet. The only question is: How do we arm the other 11?"

This statement and rhetorical question are indicative of the behaviour of numerous arms brokers who brazenly arranged illicit transfers of arms and ammunition to war zones, particularly in Africa, after the conclusion of the cold war. However, it is important to note that there are also reputable arms brokers who facilitate legitimate arms deals, namely those between States that are not party to armed conflicts and/or human rights abuses.

Given the duality of the brokering issue, the United Nations (UN) has over the past few years initiated processes to regulate the arms brokering sector, as well as combat and constrain the actions of illicit arms brokers.

UN response

In December 2005 the UN General Assembly established a group of governmental experts (GGE), to consider processes to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. The report of the brokering GGE was released in late 2007. Below is a summary of the main findings and recommendations from this report.

The report defines an arms broker as: "a person or entity acting as an intermediary that brings together relevant parties and arranges or facilitates a potential transaction of small arms and light weapons in return for some form of benefit, whether financial or otherwise". The report further states that: "the illicit nature

of brokering in small arms and light weapons is determined by the State concerned in accordance with its national laws and regulations, as well as in accordance with the State's international obligations."

The GGE found that illicit brokering activities in small arms and light weapons are generally undertaken by means of complex logistical and financial arrangements; can destabilize conflict-prone areas; and have contributed to the violation of UN Security Council arms embargoes. The report also reveals that some 40 UN Member States have established national regulations to control arms brokering transactions; and inter-governmental processes to regulate the activities of arms brokers are taking place in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas and Europe. In addition, the report indicates that Interpol is establishing an information system to assist national law enforcement agencies monitor illicit movements of firearms.

The key recommendations in the report are as follows:

- States which have not already done so are encouraged to develop adequate national laws, regulations and administrative procedures to control small arms and light weapons brokering activities. Such laws, regulations and administrative procedures would be more effective if they were integrated into national export control systems;
- International, regional, and subregional organizations are encouraged to organize training courses and workshops for national experts and relevant law enforcement officials to share information on lessons learned and practices regarding national arms brokering legislation and enforcement. For this purpose, States and appropriate international and regional organizations in a position to do so should seriously consider rendering assistance;
- States are encouraged to put in place measures aimed at preventing the forgery and misuse of end-user certificates or other documents which might be relevant for the conduct of brokering activities;
- States are encouraged to put in place internal measures as appropriate for validating the authenticity of documentation submitted by the broker, such as import license or end-user certificates and/or letters of credit;
- States are encouraged to voluntarily cooperate with other States with a view to facilitating national decision-making and national cross-checking procedures, including the validation of relevant documents for screening the legitimacy of all parties involved in a proposed small arms and light weapons brokering activity;
- In order to facilitate international cooperation, States are encouraged to designate a national point of contact on brokering in small arms and light weapons, which could be the national points of contact under the Programme of Action. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs could facilitate communication between national points of contact;
- States are encouraged to voluntarily cooperate with other States in law enforcement efforts to investigate illicit brokering activities in small arms and light weapons;
- States are encouraged to voluntarily engage in or strengthen bilateral or, where appropriate, multilateral cooperation pertaining to the investigation and prosecution of an individual or a legal entity allegedly involved in illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons; and
- States and relevant international, regional and subregional organizations in a position to do so should, upon request, seriously consider rendering technical, legal, financial and other support to interested States to reinforce national measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.



National action in an international environment

Despite this constructive initiative by the UN, those UN Member States that have legislation to combat illicit arms brokering do not have a promising track record with respect to the successful prosecution of alleged illicit arms brokers. Two examples are as follows:

- In 2006 a Belgian arms broker based in South Africa violated the UN Security Council arms embargo against Côte d'Ivoire. The South African authorities have been unable to take legal action against this arms broker. The arms broker in question has subsequently left South Africa.
- Gus Kouwenhoven, a Dutch national was convicted on 7 June 2006 in the District Court in The Hague of complicity in the illegal supply of arms to the Charles Taylor regime in Liberia between 2001 and 2003. Kouwenhoven subsequently lodged an appeal of his conviction, and on 10 March 2008 was acquitted of all charges in the Court of Appeal in The Hague.

On 6 March 2008, Thailand police arrested Viktor Bout in Bangkok on charges of seeking to purchase arms and ammunition for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which is in contravention of Thai law. Bout is arguably the most notorious living international arms brokers, and it has been alleged that the fictional Yuri Orlov ('Lord of War') is loosely based on Bout. On 6 May 2008, the United States (US) Government announced the unsealing of an indictment against Bout, and is currently seeking his extradition from Thailand to its own soil. Time will tell if the US authorities will achieve such an extradition and conviction.

Guy Lamb, Head: Arms Management Programme, Institute for Security Studies

Current Trends in Marking & Tracing

Gugu Dube

The illicit trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) remains a problem in Africa and a number of other regions throughout the world. Subsequently, creating a universal system of firearms marking has become a focal point of several ongoing international arms control initiatives.

If SALW are to be traced, they need to be marked in such a manner that the marking cannot be easily removed. In addition, they should be marked with basic identifying information such as a serial number, and identification codes for the manufacturer, the place and country of manufacture, the date of import, model and calibre. An example of an SALW marking is as follows:

*****ZA195812340000001MAU*****

Country code:	ZA = South Africa
Year of manufacture:	1958
Manufacturer or factory code:	1234 = Smith Pty Ltd
Serial number:	00000001
Country of destination/Import:	MAU = Mauritius

Current marking systems include some of the following flaws:

- Markings, and especially serial numbers are not unique;

- Duplicates of the same serial number can be found on the same type of firearm if these are manufactured in different countries under the same license;
- Some manufacturers periodically reset their numbering system;
- Markings such as serial numbers are not inefaceable and can be removed or falsified;
- Markings may be difficult to read and/or understand;
- The placement of marks varies making identification more time-consuming;
- Manufacturers, can decide on the type of marking they put on their firearms;
- Some manufacturers continue to produce un-marked or inadequately marked weapons and
- Some marking techniques employed do not identify the country of manufacture or the factory that produced them.

There are a number of possible approaches that can improve the reliability and effectiveness of marking. In short, this entails implementing measures that will enable the relevant authorities throughout the world to unambiguously identify recovered weapons that have been used to commit crimes and violent acts. Specific examples are as follows:

- If the weapon is marked in several places, the task of removing the marking becomes more cumbersome and the prospects of identifying the weapons are improved;
- For some weapon types, it is feasible to mark delicate components that are likely to be damaged by any attempts to erase the markings;
- Visible marks on a weapon are supplemented with invisible marks that can only be detected with specialist knowledge and equipment;
- Deeply ingrained markings and laser etching are particularly difficult to remove.
- Other effective methods include stamping or punching, engraving and casting.



A 2002 publication by the Brussels-based Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP) provides an useful analysis of advanced marking techniques. Below is a listing of some of these techniques that are detailed in the GRIP publication.

- Laser engraving
- Insertion of layers of coloured tags (that are observable through a magnifying glass)
- Use of radio frequencies
- Combination marking (stamping, casting and engraving)
- Invisible markings (the use of metal inclusions in the weapon's steel and aluminium alloys or colour particles in steel or plastic parts)

An international system for marking and tracing small arms would be a practical mechanism to combat their illicit manufacture, transfer and use. While it would not provide an instant solution to the problem of illicit arms stockpiled worldwide, it could limit the increase of these stocks.

Gugu Dube, Intern, Arms Management Programme, ISS

East Africa: making a mark

Dominique Dye

One of the major impediments to controlling the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is the difficulty in tracing their origin and movement within and across states. Developing effective mechanisms for marking and tracing these weapons can assist in curbing their proliferation by identifying sources, trade patterns, and points where weapons have been diverged from legal sources to illicit markets.

On the African continent, internal and cross-border conflicts combined with porous borders have resulted in the easy flow of goods between countries, including SALW. This is further aggravated by poor security over state stockpiles of weapons in many countries, resulting in leakages of firearms and ammunition to illicit users.

By branding weapons with a unique marking, including details such as the date and country of manufacture, the date of import, the model and calibre, it becomes easier to trace their movement along the supply and demand chain. These details can also provide useful information for mapping out illegal arms trade patterns between countries. Furthermore, marking SALW on importation can assist in identifying and holding countries accountable for supplying weapons to states in conflict situations or where human rights abuses are occurring. Trade in weapons to countries that are under arms embargoes or even those facing internal repression, can have devastating consequences and arms exporting states should be held accountable for supplying arms to these countries.

Standardising marking practices

The marking of firearms has been widely recognised as an effective means to assist in controlling the illicit proliferation of SALW and there is global recognition for the need for an international standard for marking weapons, as divergent marking practices hamper the identification and tracing of weapons. Both the United Nations Firearms Protocol and the United Nations Programme of Action stipulate basic standards for marking firearms. However, the specifics surrounding markings are left up to individual states.

In the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa, states have adopted a regional approach to fulfil marking commitments by prescribing specific marking standards in the legally binding Nairobi Protocol (2004).

Under article 7 of the Nairobi Protocol, states are required to:

- Mark all SALW upon manufacture with a unique marking, which includes the name of the manufacturer, country or place of manufacture, and the serial number;
- Mark all SALW upon import indicating the country and year of import, and a serial number if the weapon does not already possess one;
- Ensure that all state-owned firearms are marked; and
- Ensure that a database of information in relation to firearms is maintained for no less than ten years for tracing purposes.

Markings on firearms must be stamped or etched on the barrel, the frame, and where applicable, the slide.

At a regional arms marking and recordkeeping workshop, held from the 31st March to the 4th April 2008 in Mombasa, the 12 Member States¹ that are signatories to the Nairobi Protocol, reaffirmed their commitment to marking all current stocks of state and civilian-owned firearms by the end of this year.

¹ Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.

In order to facilitate the marking process, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA), which is responsible for co-ordinating the SALW activities of signatories to the Nairobi Protocol, committed itself to acquiring electronic marking equipment for Member States. Manual marking equipment was originally purchased as it can be used in areas where electricity is not available. However, certain Member States later expressed a preference for electronic machines, and the manual equipment is currently being exchanged for electronic equipment.

States favoured electronic marking equipment, as these devices are able to mark up to 1 500 weapons a day, and information on firearms is automatically captured and stored on a database. Through this process, states are aiming to meet the December 2008 deadline for the marking of all state and civilian-owned firearms in the region.

SALW in the region will be marked in line with international standards, as stipulated in the International Tracing Instrument and the UN Firearms Protocol. Each weapon will therefore be stamped with a country code (ISO 3166-1 country codes are recommended), a force code (if the weapon belongs to the state), and the weapon's serial number.²



National database systems

An effective tracing system requires establishing and maintaining a database of information relating to marked firearms. RECSA has acquired 24 computers for those states that are signatories to the Nairobi Protocol to assist with the development and maintenance of national databases for recording arms. A regional SALW marking and data management workshop will also be held in the region once marking equipment has been distributed. This workshop will be aimed at training representatives from Member States on practical marking and the generation and maintenance of a database system for SALW. Furthermore, RECSA is in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding with Interpol to assist in the development of a regional tracing database system.

The Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa is the first regional community in Africa to attempt to implement a regional marking programme. When completed, the potential for states to track weapons throughout the region and map out illicit trade patterns will be considerably enhanced. The success of this initiative is, however, heavily dependent on the creation and maintenance of national databases on SALW. This will prove to be a major challenge for states, as it will require significant resources and technical expertise, particularly as some of these states still make use of manual record-keeping systems.

Three years ago, signatory states to the Nairobi Protocol agreed to mark all state and civilian owned firearms and create national databases by the end of this year. Given the slow progress in securing and distributing marking equipment to states, it will require a monumental effort on the part of Member States to meet the December 2008 target. However, once the marking process is completed, it will be a significant advancement in the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and in curbing the illicit proliferation of SALW in the region.

Dominique Dye, Junior Research, Arms Management Programme

² M. Ringa (2008), States agree to mark weapons. The Nation (Nairobi), April 7. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200804070939.html>

Manpads: The problem of proliferation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Nelson Alusala

Man-portable air defence systems (Manpads) are short-range surface-to-air missile (SAMs) systems that are carried and operated by either a single individual or a crew of individuals. They are commonly referred to as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles. Manpads were developed in the late 1950s to provide land-based military groupings with the ability to damage and destroy enemy aircraft. Manpads proved to be decisive weapon in the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1980s. Manpads pose a specific threat to peace and security in Africa, and other regions, as terrorist groups and non-state actors can use Manpads to target and destroy civilian aircraft.

According to a Jane's Information Group publication titled Land-Based Air Defense 2006-2007, nine countries are known to have manufactured Manpads: China, France, Japan, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States. Three types of Manpads guidance systems exist: infrared homing (missile homes in on a heat source, such as an engine exhaust



plume); laser-beam riding (missile travels along the path of laser beam, which points at the target); command line of sight (target is identified through an optical sight by the Manpads operator). The range of Manpads devices vary between 4,000m and 8,000m. The Russian Strela (SA-7), a first generation infrared guided Manpads, which has a range of 4,400m, is arguably been the most commonly used Manpads.

Armed conflicts and weak states throughout sub-Saharan Africa have sustained a market for illicit weapons transfers, including Manpads. Combined with poor weapons stockpile management by certain governments, this state of affairs results in Manpads being relatively cheap and easy to acquire. According to an article on Manpads that appeared in the September 2001 issue of Jane's Intelligence Review, it was estimated that 27 terrorist organizations possessed Manpads at the time. Examples included: the Somali National Alliance (SNA), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Interahamwe militia based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. More recently, the July 2007 report of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia indicated that Russian Strela (SA-7) units were circulating freely among militia groups in Somalia.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been a significant number of incidents in sub-Saharan Africa where Manpads were allegedly used to target and destroy/damage civilian aircraft. Some examples are listed below.

- Somalia, 23 March 2007: shooting down of an IL-76 cargo plane belonging to Transaviaexport, a Belarusian company.
- Mombasa, Kenya, November 2002: attempted shooting of an Arkia Airlines Boeing 757-300.
- Angola, June 2001: shooting down of the UN World Food Program aircraft in Angola.
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), October 1998: the shooting of a Boeing 727.
- Angola, December 1998 and January 1999: the downing of a United Nations-chartered Lockheed C-130 Hercules by UNITA rebels.
- Kigali, Rwanda, April 1994: the downing of the plane carrying the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi.

Global consensus on the control of Manpads is yet to be achieved, however some international processes are being developed. For instance, in 2003, the Wassenaar Arrangement adopted strengthened guidelines for control over Manpads transfers. Similar guidelines were adopted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2004. Initiatives to control the trade and transfer of Manpads have also been pursued in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the Organization of American States. In total, over 95 countries have agreed to adopt measures to control the transfer and use of Manpads.

There are a number of small arms and light weapons control instruments in Africa, however, there are no MANPAD-specific initiatives. Recently the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) has undertaken an evaluation of the proliferation and impact of Manpads in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. One hopes that the findings of this study will motivate states in Eastern Africa, and the rest of the African continent to initiate a process that will see Africa states pursue a common approach to the Manpads problem.

Nelson Alusala, Senior Researcher: Arms Management, Institute for Security Studies

Towards an African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone:

Update on the Implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty

Noel Stott

From 31 March to 1 April 2008, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) with the financial support of the Royal Government of Norway convened a workshop in Pretoria, South Africa, to discuss the implications of the pending entry-into-force and implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty.

The Pelindaba Treaty seeks to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, tested, or otherwise acquired or stationed any where on the African continent, thereby strengthening the global non-proliferation regime; providing for the promotion of co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; requiring complete nuclear disarmament; and enhancing both regional and global peace and security.

As of 31 March 2008, all 53 African states, as well as the territory known as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic have signed the Treaty, and that 23 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission (the Treaty Depository). The unanimous decision by the Mozambican parliament on 26 March 2008 to ratify the Treaty was welcomed. The following countries have not yet ratified the Treaty: Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Rep., Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Democratic Rep. of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sao Tome & Principe, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia. Four more ratifications are still needed to bring the Treaty into force. During the workshop, the representative from Mozambique offered to assist other Portuguese speaking African states (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Sao Tome & Principe) to ratify the Pelindaba Treaty.

Over the two days, the workshop brought together a total of 40 participants, including delegates from the following governments: Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Inter-governmental and civil society organizations present included the United

Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the ISS, CNS, and the South African Institute for International Affairs.

Workshop participants expressed concern that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons continues to be one of the most fundamental threats to global human and environmental security. Nuclear weapon states were called upon to fully implement their Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear disarmament obligations. There was also commitment expressed by the workshop participants to actively work towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Noel Stott, Senior Research Fellow: Arms Management Programme, ISS Tshwane (Pretoria)

Dealing with Biosecurity in Africa

Noel Stott

In May 2008, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) under its Africa's Development and the Threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) project, co-hosted a regional biosecurity workshop with the Center for International and Security Studies (Maryland), in Johannesburg, South Africa. The regional biosecurity workshop brought together government, scientific, international security and industry experts from various African countries to examine the opportunities and challenges posed by advances in the life sciences. As part of this effort, the workshop considered various national and international proposals aimed at helping promote legitimate research activities and prevent misuse, whether deliberate or inadvertent.



The aim of ISS' WMD project is to identify and strengthen Africa's role in international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts as they relate to WMD in the context of Africa's developmental imperatives and as such engages issues relating to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Current developments in biotechnology present unprecedented opportunities and dangers for the health and well being of humankind. Today, one can plausibly imagine the eradication of many historic diseases. One can also envisage the creation of new diseases that would endanger a substantial proportion of the entire human species. As powerful applications for biotechnology research are identified, appropriate arrangements for managing their extraordinary consequences will inevitably become necessary.

The workshop was thus designed to engage a broad range of government, scientific, academic, security, and industry experts from Africa on the issue of dual-use biotechnology research. It had two primary goals: to help raise awareness among key stakeholders about the dual-use issue; and to obtain feedback on the proposals that have been developed for managing the most consequential areas of dual-use research, whether government, academic or industry-sponsored.

Participants included: Academy of Science of South Africa, South Africa; Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, United States; ICSU Regional Office for Africa, South Africa; IFPRI; Program for Biosafety Systems, Kampala, Uganda; Institute for Security Studies, South Africa; International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Italy; International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, South Africa; Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Kenya; Kenyatta University, Kenya; Makerere University, Uganda; Medical Research Council, South Africa; Ministry of Health & Social Development, Seychelles; Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Zimbabwe; Ministry of Health, Malawi; Ministry of Health, Zambia; Ministry of Health, Zimbabwe; National Institute for Communicable Diseases, South Africa; National Medical Lab Reference Centre, Nigeria; Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, Ghana; South

African National Defense Force (SANDF), South Africa; Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Tanzania; Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, Uganda; University of Yaounde, Cameroon; WHO Regional Office for Africa, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).

In a joint statement following the workshop, the senior scientists from the twelve sub-Saharan countries, agreed that:

- The promotion of the life sciences and their biotechnological applications are beneficial to the advancement of human health and development and environmental well-being.
- In Africa, the primary concern is not the intentional misuse of science to cause harm, but rather, the risk to animal, plant and human health from natural disease outbreaks either originating on the continent or elsewhere.
- It is recognised that there is, nevertheless, a risk that human, plant or animal disease could be caused by an accidental or deliberate release of pathogens and products from laboratories.
- The public health systems of African countries have limited capacity to deal with large-scale disease outbreaks.
- There is an urgent need to develop and strengthen the capacity, both human and infrastructural, for life sciences research and diagnosis across the continent.
- There is an urgent need to improve the safety practices at laboratories and to develop policy and legislation in this regard.
- African scientists, like scientists elsewhere in the world, have a responsibility to society and to their professions to ensure that their work is practiced safely, responsibly and in such a way as to minimise the risk that the knowledge or products of their research lead to destructive consequences, either deliberately or inadvertently (i.e. dual-use).
- There is a need to educate and raise the awareness of scientists, from school to professional level, about the risks, rules and responsibilities associated with dual-use research.
- There is a need to build upon existing review systems to develop oversight arrangements for life sciences research, particularly work that has dual-use implications.
- African governments and scientific associations need to become more involved in national, regional and international discussions and deliberations about biosecurity, and to start developing and implementing policies that promote safe, responsible science.
- The World Health Organisation has an important leadership role to play in working with other partners to support countries to develop systems to prevent the misuse of the life sciences.



Noel Stott, Senior Research Fellow: Arms Management Programme, ISS Tshwane (Pretoria)

Building Stakeholdership in Support of Malawi's Ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Report on Meeting: 5 June 2008, Lilongwe, Malawi

Amelia du Rand

A one-day meeting entitled "Building Stakeholdership in Support of Malawi's Ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention" was held on 5 June 2008 in Lilongwe, Malawi co-hosted by the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). This meeting was the third in a series of similar meetings co-hosted by BWPP partners, the first two having taken place in Nairobi in 2006 and 2007 respectively. The BWPP is a global network of civil society organisations (CSOs) that aims to strengthen the norm against using disease as a weapon.

The purpose of the meeting in Lilongwe was to bring together relevant stakeholders from the Malawi government and civil society in order to accelerate the process of ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The meeting was split into four sessions focusing on the assessment of biological threats, the BTWC itself, state party participation in the BTWC and building stakeholdership in the Convention. Participants of the meeting included members of the Malawi Government and CSOs, as well as technical experts from the BTWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) based in Geneva and the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) based in London.



Key challenges identified by the participants included the need for greater awareness-raising on bioweapons issues, as education on such issues is lacking at all levels of society, as well as a need to make issues related to bioweapons more context specific. Many African states feel the discussion on bio-related issues is not relevant for Africa because they do not have biological weapons. However, developments in the field of biotechnology raise the concern of dual-use, where science can be both beneficial and harmful. Many scientists present at the meeting raised concerns about the dual-use aspect of biotechnology and other life sciences research. Many diseases that can be used to develop bioweapons exist naturally, including Southern and Eastern Africa. Participants also highlighted the importance of collaborating with other countries within the Southern and Eastern African regions, as well as with international partners, such as the ISU in promoting the ratification the BTWC.

CSO networks, such as the BWPP, remain important for keeping bio-related issues on national agendas. A follow-up progress meeting is planned for early 2009 in Malawi.

Amelia du Rand, Junior Researcher, Weapons of Mass Destruction Project, ISS

Important Arms Control Dates: 2008

28 July – 12 September 2008: Conference on Disarmament Third Session, Geneva.

18 – 22 August 2008: Meeting of experts of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, in Geneva.

29 September - 1 October 2008: Convention on Cluster Munitions in Kampala, Uganda.

27 – 29 October 2008: The International Forum on Biosecurity: Confronting Biological Threats: Biosecurity, Biological Weapons Nonproliferation, and Regional Cooperative Mechanisms, in Amman, Jordan and hosted by the Arab Institute for Security Studies (and possibly AMP-WMD).

6 October – 4 November 2008: UN First Committee, New York.

4 – 6 November 2008: 3rd International Roundtable "Sustaining Progress in the Life Sciences: Strategies for Managing Dual Use Research of Concern," Bethesda, Maryland.

2 – 5 December 2008: OPCW Conference of State Parties, The Hague.

3 – 4 December 2008: Signing Ceremony for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Oslo, Norway.

1 - 5 December 2008: Annual meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, Geneva.

The International Forum on Biosecurity

The International Forum on Biosecurity will be held in Amman (Jordan) under the title '**Confronting Biological Threats: Biosecurity, Biological Weapons Non-proliferation, and Regional Co-operative Mechanisms**' on 27 -29 October 2008. The meeting will focus on the following topics:

- The emerging biological weapons threat and means to prevent BW proliferation
- Biosecurity hazards and risks
- Biosecurity and preparedness
- National and regional legislation implementation
- Disease surveillance and syndromic surveillance
- Developing a regional policy on biosecurity: key features and follow-up mechanisms.

Individuals and organisations interested in participating in the event (or submitting papers) should contact:

Conference Committee

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