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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LINCSA) wishes to thank all those who contributed to its work and success during the year 2017. We extend profound thanks and appreciation to Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, now former president, for her leadership and support in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons not only in Liberia, but the West Africa sub-region as well. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, the Liberia National Police, the Liberia Immigration Service and other state security agencies, for their invaluable support without which the achievements made during the period would not have been possible.

We say a special thank you to our international partners including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the European Union (EU), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the British Embassy and others for their financial and technical support to the work of the Commission. Our thanks also go to civil society, mainly the Liberia Action Network on Small Arms and their constituent community-based organizations in the counties for their meaningful participation in our programs and activities.

Finally, the Commission wishes to thank all others not particularly named in this report, but who one way or the other, made contributions toward the success of the Commission during the period under review.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The year 2017 was remarkably dominated by two major transition developments, namely a security transition which witnessed the final phase of UNMIL drawdown and the handover of full security responsibility to Liberian security forces; and a political transition from one democratically elected administration to another. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by these developments, the Government of Liberia remained focused on maintaining Liberia's hard-won peace and keeping the country on a stable path.

Against this backdrop, the Commission during the period under review left no stone unturned in making sure that small arms issues remained at center stage of the national security agenda. In addition to initiatives aimed at further enhancing the legal and policy environments for small arms control, the Commission exerted immense efforts in creating the necessary awareness about small arms nationwide as a means of securing the understanding and support of the public in the fight against the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons. As part of these efforts, I am proud to cite the following as some of the key achievements made during the period under review: 1) the drafting and validation of administrative regulations intended to give effect to the scrupulous implementation of the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act; 2) popularizing the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act across the country and amongst diverse target groups; 3) conduct of a SALW baseline survey to scope the dynamics of small arms availability in the country, including arms control practices; 4) the marking and recording of up to 90 percent of state-owned arms, and 5) the formulation and validation of arms SOPs, among others.

Let me hasten to say that LiNCSA could not have made these strides without the support of the Government of Liberia and a host of other local and international partners. On behalf of my colleagues and the entire LiNCSA family, I wish to extend special recognition to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the British Government through its Embassy near Monrovia, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC), the Liberia Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); all of whom we owe a debt of gratitude.

Finally, I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

James M. Fromayan
Chairman

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

In compliance with Chapter 3, Section 1 of the Act creating the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, this Annual Report provides a detailed account of the activities and programs of the Commission covering the period, January thru December 2017.

The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA) was established in 2006 by the Government of Liberia and formally enacted in 2012 by the National Legislature with the mandate to 'provide policy guidance, research and monitoring of national efforts to control the flow of arms and prevent, combat, and eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons within and across the borders of Liberia'. Consistent with this mandate, the Commission has over the reporting period (January – December 2017) made significant strides in ensuring the formulation and implementation of the necessary policy and regulatory frameworks for the effective control of small arms and light weapons in the country. The Commission also undertook a number of initiatives during the period under review ranging from organizing and coordinating stakeholders consultations and engagement meetings, to awareness and sensitization campaigns on SALW, facilitating specialized trainings in small arms stockpile management as well as local and international networking activities.

1.2 Achievements

During the period under review, the Commission was able to:

- popularize the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act across the country;
- draft and validate the administrative regulations for the effective implementation of the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act;
- draft and validate SOPs for physical security of arms and arms stockpile management;
- commence work on the domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT);
- complete the marking and recording of a total of 1,075 firearms belonging to three state security agencies including the LNP, EPS and LIS;
- conduct a SALW baseline survey in selected counties to scope the dynamics of small arms availability in the country, including arms control practices;
- carry out a small arms assessment in five (5) border counties;
- consolidate cooperation with a number of local, regional and international partners;
- represent Liberia at various international conferences, trainings and workshops on small arms and light weapons control;
- raise the level of advocacy and awareness about small arms and light weapons through engagement meetings with policymakers, civil society and international partners as well as carrying out public awareness activities; and
- strengthen the Commission's capacity through training and development and validation of management SOPs;

- strengthen capacities of relevant security agencies through the training of key staff.

1.3 Challenges/Constraints

A major challenge we faced during the reporting period has been the issue of funding. As indicated earlier, government's approved allotment was less than 50 percent of the total amount requested by the Commission for its core operation. Also because of the focus on the 2017 elections, requests for donor assistance for some of our programs received less attention.

1.4 Summary of Conclusion and Recommendations

The year 2017 was a memorable year for Liberia. Despite the stark challenges presented by the hassles of Liberia's twin transition (security and political), it is only fair to say that the Commission did fulfill its mandate in a substantial way. As always, LiNCSA and her partners have demonstrated their commitment to ensure that the issue of small arms remained at center stage on Liberia's security sector agenda. Hence during the period under review, LiNCSA, working in concert with her partners, endeavored to ensure the enhancement of the legal and policy environments for firearms control. As indicated in this report, some of the landmark initiatives undertaken in this direction during the period under review include, operationalizing the Firearms and Ammunitions Control Act through the drafting of administrative regulations; popularizing the Firearms Act across the country to promote understanding of the Act and secure public support towards its implementation; conducting a SALW baseline survey to scope the dynamics of small arms availability in the country; improving physical and stockpile management of state-owned arms; and embarking on a collaborative process with government, civil society and other local and international partners to domesticate the Arms Trade Treaty.

Enhancing arms management in Liberia to reduce the incidence of illicit arms trafficking is paramount to genuine peace and security. It is against this backdrop that the Commission has made tremendous strides during the year under review to institute the right policies and measures. In spite of the gains made, there is yet more to be done moving forward. In this regard, the Commission would like to make the following recommendations for consideration:

- Provide more learning opportunities for members of the Commission to specialize in various aspects of arms management. This will make the Commission resourceful in not only addressing SALW related issues but contributing to the sub regional approach in preventing and controlling SALW;
- Organize more information sharing forums amongst NATCOMS members as a way of learning from each other, strengthening relations and improving strategies to enhance efficiency in preventing and controlling SALW at national and regional levels.

II. MISSION AND MANDATE

The Act creating the Commission states the general mandate of the Commission as consisting of ‘formulating policies and ensuring the implementation of such policies and measures aimed at addressing the problem of proliferation and illicit manufacturing, use, distribution, possession and trafficking of small arms and light weapons; and coordinating and monitoring all private and public sector efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons within and across the borders of Liberia’.

III. COMPOSITION

The Commission has a membership comprising representatives of government agencies and civil society organizations (please see Commission’s Act for the full listing of members). The President of Liberia also appoints three private individuals to the Commission with one of the individuals serving as chairperson and another as vice-chairperson. The day-to-day affairs of the Commission are administered by a Technical Secretariat headed by a Coordinator.

The composition of the present administration of the Commission is as follows:

1. Hon. James M. Fromayan, Chairperson
2. Ms. Bennietta Jarbo, Vice Chairperson
3. Mr. Benoni Knuckles, Commissioner
4. Mr. Josiah F. Joekai, Jr., Coordinator

IV. FUNDING

The Commission, by law, receives funding for its core operations through the national budgetary process. In FY 2017/2018 (July 2017 thru June 2018), the Government approved an allocation of US\$450,000.00. Although this represents less than 50 percent of the amount proposed by the Commission for the fiscal year, it is however a marked improvement over previous years. The Commission is also housed in a furnished office space provided by the Government of Liberia.

V. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

5.5 Government funded activities

i) Fact-finding on arms trafficking

In the wake of increasing reports of the trafficking of home-made single barrel pistols across Liberia’s border with Guinea, LiNCSA in March 2017 dispatched a 3-member fact-finding mission to the Liberian-Guinean border to ascertain the veracity of these reports. The mission which was conducted in a low profile, “intelligence” fashion, aimed to verify the identities of the alleged artisans and associates, their locations, rough estimate of manufacturing costs, the main trafficking routes and who were the end users of these firearms. A report from the mission was submitted to the Commission for follow-up actions.

ii) Marking of state security arms

In continuation of its arms marking exercise, LiNCSA in collaboration with the National Technical Committee on Arms (TCA) during the reporting period marked a total of 1,075 firearms along with corresponding ammunitions: Liberia National Police – 395; Liberia Immigration Service – 480; and Executive Protection Service – 200.

5.2 Donor funded activities

i) Popularization of the Firearms Act

With funding from the British Government through its Embassy in Monrovia, and the UNMIL under its Quick Impact Project, the Commission in November 2016 through June 2017 organized and carried out county consultations and local community engagement meetings on the newly enacted Firearms and Ammunition Control Act across the country. The engagement meetings targeted wide range of local stakeholders in the 15 political subdivisions and aimed to promote public understanding of the new Act as a way of securing the support of the public towards the implementation of the Act. In addition to the engagement meetings, the popularization also took the form of printing and dissemination of copies of Act, posters, banners, flyers and t-shirts; production and airing of radio jingles and dramas; and publication of newspaper articles;

ii) SALW baseline survey

Under the UNMIL Transition Framework, LiNCSA secured some funding from the Japanese Government to conduct a SALW baseline survey in selected counties. The survey which was facilitated by a technical team from the Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KA IPTC) was conducted between January and June, 2017. It aimed to scope the dynamics of small arms availability in Liberia, including arms control practices and also the legal and policy frameworks. An initial report of the survey has been submitted to the Commission by the KA IPTC team for its review and comments.

iii) Activities implemented under the ECOWAS-EU SALW Project

Liberia is one of seven countries implementing the ECOWAS pilot project on community arms collection. The ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project which was launched in 2015 in 3 counties in southeastern Liberia seeks to, among other things, create and enhance community awareness on the dangers associated with the illicit proliferation of small arms and armed violence as well as strengthening the capacity of security institutions and communities to enhance safety; and above all, encourage voluntary weapons surrender/collection in return for community based development projects. The following activities were implemented under the Project during the period under review:

a) Small arms assessment in border counties

The Commission conducted a small arms assessment in 5 border counties between May and June 2017. The counties include Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Cape Mount and Gbarpolu. The missions were intended to assess the current small arms and light weapons situation in each county to inform the development of an arms collection intervention in said counties under the ambit of the ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project.

b) CSO workshop on Human Security and Development

A three-day training workshop focusing on human security and development was organized and held with 30 civil society actors in Ganta, Nimba County, Northern Liberia. The participants were drawn from 15 civil society organizations operating in eight border counties. The training which was facilitated by 2 civil society experts in the field was part of the capacity building component of the ECOWAS-EU SALW Project and sought to provide CSOs with the techniques of community engagement for human security and development.

c) Local partners dialogue & experience sharing

Two engagement meetings were organized and held with local partners under the ECOWAS-EU SALW Project. The first meeting was held in Monrovia in April 2017 with opinion leaders of the 3 counties currently participating in the pilot project. Against the background that the southeast project was slow in achieving the intended results, the Monrovia meeting was organized to sensitize the opinion leaders from these counties and secure their support in influencing their respective constituent communities for their full cooperation in the successful implementation of the project.

The second engagement meeting was held in Ganta in July 2017 with local leaders from the 3 pilot counties plus leaders from 5 additional counties where the project is expected to be extended. The Ganta Meeting also provided opportunities for experience sharing as colleagues from neighboring Guinea and Ivory Coast were invited to share experience and lessons in the roll-out of the project in their respective countries. The meetings ended with a commitment to double up in the implementation of the Liberia Project.

d) Validation of LiNCSA SOPs

Four (4) SOPs (standard operational procedures) for Personnel, Procurement, Finance and IT were reviewed and validated during the period. The draft documents which were developed earlier in 2016 under the Project were further reviewed by local experts prior to the holding of a validation workshop involving LiNCSA and key partners. The Validation was held in Buchanan, Grand Bassa in December 2017 during which time the instruments were finalized.

iv) Drafting of firearms regulations

With funding from UNMIL under its Quick Impact Project scheme, the Commission

during the period under review commenced the drafting of administrative regulations for the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act. With the technical support of a local lawyer, the draft regulations have been completed and plans are under way to hold a stakeholders validation for the regulations. The Commission anticipates jump-starting the registration of civilian arms as soon as the regulations are finalized and approved.

v) ATT domestication project

Domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is in progress. The process began in 2016 with a national assessment on Liberia's compliance with the ATT. The national assessment exercise was funded by the Norwegian Government and implemented in partnership with the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA), Liberia Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA) and SAFERWORLD. With funding from the ATT Secretariat based in Geneva under its Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), LiNCSA and its partners during the period under review commenced activities leading to the drafting of a proposed national arms transfer law. The law will ultimately amend the current Small Arms Act and the Firearms and Ammunition Act to include other conventional weapons. It is anticipated that the draft law, when completed, will be submitted to the President of Liberia for onward submission to the Legislature for enactment. The one-year project is being spearheaded by LANSA as the implementing partner to this initiative.

5.3 Participation in Workshops

No	Name of Staff	Function/Status	Event & Venue	Key Result / Output	Date
1	Ms. Blessing Bornor	Gender Focal Point	COAM Regional Conference held in Accra, Ghana	Measures to combat arms	October 25-26, 2017
			Conference on Women held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Monrovia	Empowering women in security	December 14, 2017
			Workshop for Gender Coordinators held at the Ministry of Justice, Monrovia	Mainstreaming gender in agencies programs	January 8, 2017
2	Mr. Hezekiah Myers	Admin Finance Director &	Steering Committee Meeting of the ECOWAS-EU Small Arms	Review of the status of the Pilot Project and plan for the	November 6-10, 2017

			Project held in Niamey, Niger	coming year	
3	Mr. Benoni Knuckles	Commissioner	ECOWAS Awareness Workshop held in Ganta, Northern Liberia	Greater Awareness of ECOWAS including programs, services and benefits	February 2017
			National Security Council Border Conference held in Ganta, Northern Liberia	Planned border (peace) meeting with Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia	May 2017
			14 th Annual ICRC-ECOWAS IHL Meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria	Review IHL implementation in ECOWAS Member States; Share Best Practices; Adopt new positions/policies and address related matters	November 2017
			Steering Committee Meeting of the ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project held in Niamey, Niger	Review of the status of the Pilot Project and plan for the coming year	November 6-10, 2017
4	Angie Y. Sackie	Admin Assistant to Chairman	Gender Training for Women in Security held at the Ministry of Defense, Monrovia	Gender Roles and Responsibilities	June 2017
5	Josiah F. Joekai, Jr.	Coordinator	Physical Security & Stockpile Mangt. Held in the Federal Republic of Germany	Learned the basic steps and procedures in arms and ammunition management	November 9-18, 2016

				Understood the various conventions and protocols on arms management	
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5.4 Submission of Project Proposals to Donors

Name of Project	Key Objectives	Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries	Submission Date & Implementation Timeline	Donor & Total Cost
1. Civilian Arms Registration Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and register around 5,000 hunting guns held by civilians in 4 counties To mark the targeted civilian arms using a standard marking system and to record them in a national arms registry; To vet and certify all holders of civilian arms in the targeted counties through the issuance of owner's license. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> About 5,000 hunters in possession of single barrel hunting guns registered, licensed and recorded in the national arms database; Around 10,000 beneficiaries (including hunters, farmers, county authorities, local leaders, local security apparatus, CSO actors, etc.) educated about and have an understanding of the law and regulations governing the acquisition, possession, registration and use of civilian arms. 	Hunters, farmers, county authorities, local leaders, local security apparatus, CSO actors	<p>Submission Date: August 2017</p> <p>Implementation Timeline: Jan – December 2017</p>	<p>Donor: British Embassy in Monrovia</p> <p>Total Cost: US\$250,000.00</p>

VI. Challenges

A major challenge we faced during the reporting period has been the issue of funding. As indicated earlier, government's approved allotment was less than 50 percent of the total amount requested by the Commission for its core operation. Also because of the focus on the 2017 elections, requests for donor assistance for some of our programs received less attention.

VII. Lessons Learnt

In spite of the competing interests for public attention, small arms issues can be elevated in the public domain in a more prominent way through sustained awareness and education at the community level.

The experiences of Liberians during the arms conflict years have provided local people adequate insight into the dangers associated with illegal small arms proliferation, and, can be a motivation for communities to coalesce around concrete actions aimed at reducing the threats posed by small arms proliferation.

VIII. National Priorities

Security and the rule of law is one of the priority pillars under the Government of Liberia's development agenda. Arms management happens to be one of the key elements of this pillar. Hence, over the next 2 to 3 years, the Commission plans to focus its attention to the scrupulous implementation of the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act as a means of ensuring the effective regulation and control of firearms in the country. To this end, the Commission will endeavor to:

- Undertake the registration of civilian arms and the issuance of owners licenses
- Conclude the domestication of the ATT
- Increase nationwide awareness of the dangers of small arms

IX. Conclusion

The year 2017 was a memorable year for Liberia. Despite the stark challenges presented by the hassles of Liberia's twin transition (security and political), it is only fair to say that the Commission did fulfill its mandate in a substantial way. As always, LiNCSA and her partners have demonstrated their commitment to ensure that the issue of small arms remained at center stage on Liberia's security sector agenda. Hence during the period under review, LiNCSA, working in concert with her partners, endeavored to ensure the enhancement of the legal and policy environments for firearms control. As indicated in this report, some of the landmark initiatives undertaken in this direction during the period under review include, operationalizing the Firearms and Ammunitions Control Act through the drafting of administrative regulations;

popularizing the Firearms Act across the country to promote understanding of the Act and secure public support towards its implementation; conducting a SALW baseline survey to scope the dynamics of small arms availability in the country; and embarking on a collaborative process with government, civil society and other local and international partners to domesticate the Arms Trade Treaty.

Other practical actions were also undertaken by the Commission during the period under review to improve physical security and stockpile management of state-owned arms and to curb illegal firearms activities amongst the civilian population as well. They include, the marking and recording of state-owned arms; assessment of small arms situations in border counties with the intent to launch arms collection programs in these counties; fact-finding missions on arms trafficking and the emerging black markets of home-made single barrel pistols; and awareness and sensitization campaigns nationwide on the dangers of illegal SALW. All of these, of course, were not without conscious efforts to strengthen institutional capacities through a number of trainings for LiNCSA staff, key personnel of government entities and civil society actors; experience sharing in and out of the country; and institutional assessment leading to the development and validation of administrative and financial SOPs (standard operational procedures) for LiNCSA.

Finally, the Commission seizes the opportunity to extol the range of technical and financial support it received during the year from The European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Japanese Government, United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPCT), Civil Society and the Government of Liberia in making sure that the Commission live up to its mandate as we look forward with optimism to even more rewarding years ahead.

X. Recommendations

Enhancing arms management in Liberia to reduce the incidence of illicit arms trafficking is paramount to genuine peace and security. It is against this backdrop that the Commission has made tremendous strides during the year under review to institute the right policies and measures. In spite of the gains made, there is yet more to be done moving forward. In this regard, the Commission would like to make the following recommendations for consideration:

- Provide more learning opportunities for members of the Commission to specialize in various aspects of arms management. This will make the Commission resourceful in not only addressing SALW related issues but contributing to the sub regional approach in preventing and controlling SALW;
- Organize more information sharing forums amongst NATCOMS members as a way of learning from each other, strengthening relations and improving strategies to enhance efficiency in preventing and controlling SALW at national and regional levels.