

# SMALL ARMS MONITOR

Civil society perspectives on the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons

## Reviewing, strengthening, and energizing the UNPoA

Katherine Prizeman | *Global Action to Prevent War*

As member states gather for the second Review Conference for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA), a potentially contentious policy gap remains between those who emphasize only the implementation of the UNPoA and those who seek to strengthen the instrument itself. Given the importance of implementing the existing agreement, participating UN member states should focus on developing strengthened provisions in this regard, rather than seeking to change the status or authority of the programme itself.

The first Review Conference (RevCon) in 2006 failed to reach agreement as divisions surfaced between those states wanting to expand the UNPoA's scope to include provisions on ammunition, civilian possession, and a prohibition on transfers to non-state actors and those that wished only to focus on implementation of existing measures adopted in 2001. Concern that the UNPoA process would be permanently damaged was fortunately unfounded, and the process did receive a welcome infusion of robustness following the successful (and first of its kind) 2011 Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE) under the leadership of Ambassador McLay of New Zealand. The meeting was marked with practical and technical discussions primarily regarding the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), a complementary document to the UNPoA.

However, some of the attention devoted to the UNPoA has subsequently been diverted to the arms trade treaty (ATT) process, and there is now legitimate concern that the UNPoA will not receive the attention it deserves during this RevCon.

As previously expressed, member states have extensively debated whether the RevCon mandate, in addition to a "review," should include "strengthening" (through expansion, legal status, or amendment) of the UNPoA. This disagreement is not semantic

in nature. It is a critical distinction that will affect both member states' approaches to the RevCon and the future of the UNPoA framework. Methods of strengthening national implementation measures must be identified and pursued at this RevCon. Therefore, it would be wise to avoid highly divisive debates regarding expansion of the scope and nature of the UNPoA (i.e. discussion over its non-legally-binding status) and focus instead on highly important and practical implementation issues such as stockpile management, proper disposal and storage of surplus arms, the role of peacekeepers and DDR programmes in SALW management, the responsibilities of national contact points, and the possibility of institutionalizing technical meetings such as MGEs. In this case, functionality should trump legality, at least for the moment.

Despite the arguable "overshadowing" of the UNPoA process by the ATT, preparations for this RevCon have been moderately successful. The March 2012 Preparatory Committee for the RevCon yielded a factual and procedural report, although a more substantive Chair's summary under the authorship of Ambassador Ogwu of Nigeria was also produced. The summary laid forth views expressed by member states during the week according to the structure of the UNPoA itself—measures to combat illicit trade at the national, regional, and international levels; international cooperation and assistance; follow-up mechanisms to the Review Conference; and review of the ITI. The summary was not a consensus document, but did its best to summarize member states' views and recommendations on which elements would serve as a basis for the discussion during this RevCon.

As the two-week RevCon gets underway, the UNPoA's importance must not be underestimated. While the lion's share of attention this year has been paid to the ATT process, the UNPoA is an instrument with

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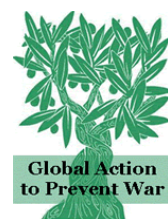
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tremendous potential to directly and practically address the dire consequences related to the illicit trade in SALWs and, perhaps most notably, to dry up existing stockpiles of weapons already in circulation. This was an issue all too clear in the aftermath of the Libyan revolution when weapons went unaccounted for and stockpiles were pilaged by rebel groups after the fall of Qaddafi. Member states must take advantage of the RevCon both to honestly assess existing efforts to curb illicit small arms and to robustly and comprehensively tackle the proliferation of looted arms and lack of adequate stockpile management.

The real challenge of the UNPoA is to fully implement the benchmarks laid forth in the instrument in all national contexts. The division of provisions among the national, regional, and global level is a helpful format and allows states to thoroughly address the responsibilities at all levels for implementation of the UNPoA and ITI. Moreover, the proposal to address the schedule of future meetings is an important contribution to the long-term success of the framework. For example, modification of biennial meet-

ings of states into biennial meetings of governmental experts who are directly responsible for national implementation of the UNPoA would be significantly beneficial to fulfilling a host of UNPoA-related responsibilities.

It is clear that full implementation of the UNPoA requires continuous review with an eye towards strengthening national implementation of its measures. Many, if not all, of the challenges associated with full implementation—border control mechanisms, technical information exchange, marking and tracing expertise—require international efforts and cooperation. Therefore, this Rev Con, as well as future meetings of states, must provide for a transparent and honest exchange of information regarding implementation and how to best combat the deadly consequences of illicit trade in SALWs. There is little argument that the UNPoA's provisions, if adopted according to national needs and flexible with regard to new challenges, can and will prevent illicit flows of SALWs and thus eliminate the dire consequences of these flows for international peace and security. •

**SMALL ARMS MONITOR**

27 AUGUST 2012 | Vol. 5, No. 1

The *Small Arms Monitor* features civil society reporting and analysis on meetings of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is coordinated, edited, and published by the Reaching Critical Will project of WILPF in coordination with Global Action to Prevent War and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). PDF versions of all *Small Arms Monitors*, along with statements and other documents from the conference, are available at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org).

**All views expressed in this publication are solely those of the contributing authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the supporting organizations.**

## Legal eagle

Dr. Robert Zuber | *Global Action to Prevent War*

In the period between the unsuccessful conclusion of the Arms trade treaty (ATT) negotiating conference and the beginning of this UNPoA Review Conference, there has been much discussion in the halls of the UN about the ‘relative merits’ of what are often seen as related processes.

For many diplomats seeking to make the best investment for their home countries, the ATT’s ‘legally binding’ framework is the option of choice. For these diplomats, treaties take precedence over frameworks. This is in part based on the expectation (and also the hope) that treaties equally obligate larger and small states. In an international system characterized by such dramatic power imbalances, anything that promises to hold states in mutually binding (and even mutually supportive) obligations is a most welcome development.

Regarding these particular ATT negotiations, there was the added dimension of some (quite justifiable) longing among diplomats and within the disarmament community for a ‘victory’ that can justify long weeks of deliberations and negotiations in an area of the UN’s work that is vitally important but that has demonstrated little capacity for progress in recent years.

If we were forced to choose ourselves (and we would prefer not to), the preference for Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW) is for functionally over legality. While the UN has a number of treaties and treaty bodies that have produced important results—the Rome Statute (ICC), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child all come to mind in this context—there is no necessary correlation between the legal and the functional. UN-brokered obligations that are both legal and functional are highly prized—but obligations that have legal sanction but are often filled with enforcement loopholes. We suspected that the ‘final’ treaty language proposed at the end the ATT negotiations was heading in this direction. Such instruments can thus create expectations that lead to cynicism, not only regarding efforts to resolve issues such as illicit arms transfers, but even regarding the legitimacy of the UN’s security system.

Reflecting on the ATT process, we concluded that a serious commitment to action without equally serious standards and mechanisms of implementation and assessment raises more doubts than it addresses. A treaty process can institutionalize political commitments under the right circumstances, but it can also carelessly raise expectations that produce more skepticism than enthusiasm.

Given the dangers of ‘weak’ treaty processes, during this two week Review Conference, we would do well to

keep a vigilant (‘eagle’) eye out for the many functional successes that can be attributed to the UNPoA. States in all global regions are working at stockpile management, marking and tracing, record keeping, and communications, border, and harbor control, destruction of illicit arms, and other tasks with the support of other governments, UNODA regional offices, key NGOs, and other stakeholders.

In this spirit, governments are urged to share their success stories as well as their policy preferences, to tell us what they have to celebrate on small arms control as well as their concerns in this area, to highlight their contributions and commitments to the UNPoA process as well as their capacity needs. Capacity support is the oil that lubricates UNPoA implementation, and we would be wise to learn as much as we can—in formal UNPoA sessions as well as in the Group of Interested States meetings and at RevCon side events—about the many ways in which governments are helping each other to solve difficult challenges in controlling illicit arms flows through technology and communications, consulting guidance, direct cash investments and more..

From the Andean region to Central Africa, GAPW and other groups have seen first-hand some of the many hopeful developments that have helped dry up sources of illicit weapons, ensure more stability and transparency in state security sectors, and promote more safety on our streets. In the days to come, we will hopefully have many stories to convey about the ways in which a Programme of Action is leveraging measureable results towards ending the scourge of illicit small arms.

But for now, it is sufficient to reinforce an important point: while treaties establish obligations, functionality defines successes. In the case of the UNPoA, functionality is a product of both political will and generosity by states, acts that are encouraged but not legally-binding. There is much to improve about how the UNPoA does its business, to be sure, but also much to celebrate.

In the aftermath of unsuccessful (for now) ATT negotiations, we would do well to focus our UNPoA attention during these two weeks on ways to increase the functionality of a process that has demonstrated in many parts of the world its capacity to stem the flow of illicit weapons and reduce prospects for arms-related violence. •

Also check out Small Arms Monitor: The Blog  
<http://smallarmsmonitor.blogspot.com/>

## Going beyond DDR in PoA's work on post-conflict situations

Melina Lito | *Global Action to Prevent War and Hector Guerra* | *International Action Network on Small Arms*

The reference to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) within the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) (Sections II.21, II.22, II.30, II.34, II.35, and III.16) is relevant and shows the possibilities this instrument has in dealing with post-conflict situations in relation to small arms and light weapons (SALW).

In a nutshell, DDR programs are divided as follows: **Disarmament** “is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population [...] includes the development of responsible arms management programs.” **Demobilization** “is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups.” **Reintegration** “is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income,” (Source: Note by the Secretary-General on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations, 24 May 2005 [A/C.5/59/31]).

DDR has been an important approach in the transition of war-torn societies from armed conflicts to peace—albeit not always very successfully. It is not only the first step in the peacebuilding process, but also forms part of the broader political and reconstruction efforts. DDR programs, at least on paper, should help make peace irreversible. These programs, ideally at least, have to be people-centered, flexible, transparent, accountable, nationally-owned, integrated and well-planned.

Inadequate disarmament procedures could take the form of either improper storage of stockpiles that are maintained for national security or they could be kept as surplus, scheduled for destruction. As such, there is no guarantee that SALW will not end up in the wrong hands or in neighboring states because of poor stockpile management. Without proper demobilization and reintegration of combatants, a ready availability of guns means that these individuals could get rearmed and resort to violence—due to their training and experience—toward innocent people who might have already been victimized in war.

Evidently, the PoA addresses such programs, placing special emphasis on the control and elimination of SALW, from collection to disposal, calling on regional and international organizations to get involved in carrying out such programs, in particular the UN Security Council through its peacekeeping operations.

The PoA could have a more holistic approach to peacebuilding, going beyond DDR, one that includes attention

to the situation of communities affected during armed conflicts. As we know, civilians, in all their diversity, are increasingly affected by armed violence—in particular that perpetrated by SALW—bearing the burden of victimization. In armed conflicts they make up most of casualties, sometimes reaching ninety percent of the total. Deaths are but one part of the armed violence phenomenon. For each person who dies as a result of armed violence, many more fall victim to direct physical and psycho-emotional damage, loss of limbs and/or livelihoods, as well as loss of family members and material. Communities as a whole are affected and face conditions of human insecurity: negative effects against food production and procurement, public health, education, religion, and women's rights, among others.

The end of hostilities does not immediately translate into peace, development, and security for people. During times of uncertainty, war-torn societies have to sometimes undergo long reconstruction and reconciliation processes in order to take the necessary steps to produce institutionalized and lasting work to cope with poverty and set the foundations to reach at least minimum levels of welfare and economic growth. “The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts. If countries succeed in these core areas early on, it substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace—and reduces the risk of relapse into conflict.” (General Assembly, (June 2009) Introduction, *Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict*, A/63/881-S/2009/304).

Therefore, there are two areas of opportunity in the PoA's approach to post-conflict situations: a) the opportunity to address the rights of victims of gun violence; and b) the opportunity to address the participation of women in decision-making and peacemaking processes, including DDR.

Victim assistance focuses attention on assistance to direct, indirect, and collective victims. In the mechanism for PoA implementation, there could be clear standards regarding state commitments to not repeat (or accept) patterns of violence and abide by human rights and other international standards. Such commitments could help avoid the recurrence of situations of armed violence that could in turn re-open cycles of victimization.

On the other hand, if the reintegration for ex-combatants is considered as part of the DDR programs, it should



consider the needs of the victims of SALW-related armed violence, always bearing in mind their rights, assistance, and very importantly, their participation. As individuals, groups and communities directly and indirectly affected, they must contribute in the definition and embodiment of such programs as stakeholders participating under equal conditions, especially if in order to have former combatants cooperate with communities and non-governmental organizations. Attention to the rights of victims of armed violence should be part and parcel of PoA's call on the UN and other intergovernmental organizations to support DDR as part of peacekeeping operations' mandate and budgets.

Similarly, attention must be given to women's contributions as active agents in peacebuilding processes. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for women's participation in peace processes and decision making levels and it encourages all those establishing DDR programs to "consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents." (See, S/RES/1325 (2000), para. 1,2,13). Regarding DDR programs, women can face many barriers in participation because they can have limited access to disarmament benefits. (See, Massimo Fusato, *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants*, February 2003). Likewise, women face not only issues of stigma for returning to their communities but also

pushback into their traditional roles within society. While programs often provide necessary training to ex-combatants, for women such training can be limited to cooking, tailoring or other traditional skills typically associated with women. (See source, Luisa Maria Dietrich Ortega, *Transitional Justice and Female Ex-Combatants: Lessons Learned from International Experience*, International Center for Transitional Justice, February 2010). As such, efforts must be undertaken to ensure that women have equal access to disarmament and reintegration programs and that women actively participate as relevant stakeholders in the creation and implementation of DDR programs. Overall, an effective peacebuilding process is one which includes the skills and perspectives of all members of the population and one which addresses the different needs of all members of society. As such, efforts must be taken to ensure that women can play an active role to make significant contributions in peace processes.

In conclusion, as part of the greater peacebuilding process, the purpose of a successful DDR program is to eliminate the flow of arms in post-conflict societies and to ensure for the full reintegration of ex-combatants into their communities. In the context of the PoA, more attention is needed on communities affected by violence stemming from the use of SALW, including on survivor's rights and women's participation. •

## Small arms wordsearch

Q	V	A	T	P	K	U	D	Z	M	M	N	R	V	Z
S	B	E	S	E	Z	Y	N	T	U	L	Z	E	E	F
W	U	S	S	S	D	W	T	F	T	H	G	I	L	K
V	A	B	M	U	A	C	O	N	C	E	A	L	W	F
S	Y	I	M	R	L	U	E	A	V	G	R	N	U	E
L	S	R	V	A	A	A	L	F	S	E	L	F	I	R
W	B	E	E	H	C	L	U	T	U	G	M	U	U	R
O	H	X	N	V	C	H	L	D	R	B	N	N	F	T
L	P	B	V	I	O	V	I	A	I	I	C	A	T	X
F	P	I	Y	K	B	L	D	N	M	V	F	P	G	L
M	J	Y	X	B	R	R	V	Y	E	S	I	L	D	V
K	F	O	P	U	I	V	A	E	V	G	T	D	E	G
T	V	P	A	E	H	C	J	C	R	L	U	A	N	S
B	T	X	W	G	U	N	U	L	L	S	U	N	M	I
J	V	Z	T	I	V	N	Z	M	P	K	Y	P	S	W

SMALLARMS  
INDIVIDUALUSE  
REVOLVERS  
RIFLES  
CARBINES  
SUBMACHINEGUNS  
ASSAULTRIFLES  
CHEAP  
LIGHT  
CONCEAL

**Q: What has the PoA actually achieved on the ground? A: We have no idea***Daniel Mack | Instituto Sou da Paz*

After more than a decade in existence, the PoA indeed comes to a “crossroads” at the 2012 RevCon, forcing governments to look back and seriously scrutinize the instrument’s (few) achievements and (plentiful) limitations. Also, they cannot squander an irreplaceable opportunity to look forward and act to overcome the PoA’s myriad failures and challenges. Many in civil society and government alike perceive this RevCon as possibly the last chance to avoid condemning the PoA to the ‘dustbin of history’.

As Amb. Jim McLay of New Zealand noted in his excellent brief for the Small Arms Survey, the PoA “now faces a more insidious threat (than paralysis) – that of a gradual, but sustained slide into indifference and obscurity, with national awareness of and commitment to the process ebbing away, and with donor attention and funding increasingly directed elsewhere... Another acrimonious failure would be as damaging to the credibility of the Programme of Action process as would one that simply and blandly restates existing commitments”.

Indeed, ‘more of the same’ is simply not an option. Even though on a normative level the PoA has several damaging ‘wounds’ from birth that should be urgently ‘cured’ – such as the omission of the illicit trade of ammunition as part and parcel of that in firearms, and the instrument’s politically- rather than legally-binding nature – it is arguably the PoA’s lack of an independent mechanism to assess its actual implementation on a national level that poses the largest threat to its relevance.

This lethal gap must be effectively overcome during the next two weeks, with the creation of a credible blueprint for the coming into existence of an implementation assessment mechanism as soon as possible.

To put it simply, we have close to absolutely no idea whether the decade-old PoA has had an actual impact on changing the world around us. We know the PoA has served as a framework, catalyst or inspiration for many important efforts, especially national and sub-regional gun control legislation and technical measures (stockpile security, marking, destruction, etc.). However, it remains utterly unclear whether, and especially how much, the PoA has impacted levels of gun violence – on a national, regional or global basis.

While data is patchy, partially because often non-existent and partially because concepts and methodologies have not yet been perfected, the best available research suggests that armed violence is not diminishing worldwide even as the number of actual armed conflicts decreases. On a regional level, some areas are in fact going

in the opposite direction – Central America and the Caribbean, for example, are reportedly experiencing higher levels of gun violence than before.

On a national level, some countries (including my own, Brazil) have had success in diminishing gun violence levels in the last decade – but has this been due to the PoA, even if indirectly? And the many countries unable to diminish their armed violence levels – is it because they haven’t implemented the PoA at all, haven’t done so effectively or sufficiently, or tried and it didn’t work?

We just don’t know for certain, mainly because most assessments have been ad hoc, selective, and self-analysing. Even if annual national reports on PoA implementation were universal, comprehensive and analytical – which they are most certainly not, as the always insufficient levels, periodicity and quality of reporting have decreased over the years – anecdotal self-assessment is never a sufficient tool to monitor, measure and analyse any “program of action”. Such exercises, like the statements in plenary they often inspire, are often biased, incomplete and uncritical.

The PoA was not developed because countries were “gravely concerned” with the illicit trade in SALW per se, but rather because they were “determined to reduce the human suffering caused by” said trade. Given this clear *raison d’être*, agreed by all UN member states, the very heart of an answer to the question of whether the PoA is serving its purpose depends on having enough evidence to make such analysis from a fact-based, comprehensive and comparative perspective. Recent efforts on the matter from UNIDIR and the Small Arms Survey, among others, suggest this is clearly achievable.

High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane has rightfully stated that the PoA ‘suffers from the absence of measurable benchmarks and concrete targets for implementation’. If nothing else, this RevCon must deliver a clear prescription for this crippling malady, mandating a path towards a comprehensive, independent and objective mechanism for the monitoring, measuring and analysis of PoA implementation, with evidence-based benchmarks and targets. At the next RevCon, whether the answer is “yes, significantly”, “yes, a bit” or “no, not at all”, we must be able to minimally respond to the question “has the PoA impacted levels of gun violence on the ground?” •

## Invitation: Group of Interested States on practical disarmament measures

Two sessions of the Group of Interested States (GIS) will take place on **28 and 29 August 2012** at the German House. This meeting is designed to offer practical tools and experiences on how the international community can co-operate to further implement the UNPoA. Below is the provisional agenda for the meetings. **Please RSVP to Amalie Harrison: tel. 212.940.0419; email amalie.harrison@diplo.de.**

### GIS Meetings August 2012 Provisional Agenda

#### Session 1

**Date:** 28 August 2012  
**Time:** 6:15 – 7:45 pm  
**Venue:** German House, 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, 871 United Nations Plaza, New York

<b>Welcome by Co-Chairs</b>
<b>Launch of 2012 Compilation of National Assistance Requests under the Programme of Action</b> Daniël Prins, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>Interactive Guide on Small Arms: a tool for PoA implementation</b> Peter J. Croll, Director, Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) Lars Wirkus, Head of Section Data & GIS, Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) Capt. Laurentius Wedeniwski, Arms Control Officer, German Armed Forces Verification Center -- Discussion --
<b>Handling of surplus in South Sudan</b> Eric Berman, Small Arms Survey
<b>Preventing diversion of arms and ammunition: Approaches in Sudan and South Sudan</b> Moderator: Wolfgang Bindseil, Conventional Arms Control Division, Foreign Office Wolf-Christian Paes, Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) Dr Mahmoud Zainelabdeen, Small Arms Control Focal Point, Sudan DDR Commission, The Presidency of the Republic of Sudan, Khartoum Dr Riak Gok Majok, Head, Bureau for Community Security and SALW Control, Ministry of Interior of South Sudan, Juba Lt. Col. (GS) Stefan Gundlach, Branch Chief Arms Transfers and Conventional Ammunition, German Armed Forces Verification Center Marius Kahl, BICC Technical Advisor, Bureau for Community Security and SALW Control, Ministry of Interior of South Sudan, Juba -- Discussion --
<b>Closing Remarks</b> Detlev Wolter, Head, Conventional Arms Control Division, Foreign Office, Berlin
<b>Reception at the German House</b>

#### Session 2

**Date:** 30 August 2012  
**Time:** 1:15 – 2:45 pm  
**Venue:** German House, 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, 871 United Nations Plaza, New York

<b>Welcome by Co-Chairs</b>
<b>"Smart Weapons": electronic control in firearms as solution against diversion and misuse</b> Guenter-Maximilian Hefner, Managing Director, Armatix
<b>Small arms and light weapons control in Côte d'Ivoire</b> Anzian Kouadja, Executive Secretary of the National Commission on SALW in Côte d'Ivoire Kora Gouri Bi, GIZ- Abidjan -- Discussion --
<b>Considering Gender in the effective implementation of the PoA</b> Rebecca Gérome and Nounou Booto Meeti, IANSA -- Discussion --
<b>Authorized and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons</b> Matt Schroeder, Consultant, Small Arms Survey; Senior Analyst, Federation of American Scientists -- Discussion --
<b>Developments in demilitarization</b> Pierre Gobinet, Researcher, Small Arms Survey -- Discussion --
<b>Closing Remarks</b> Detlev Wolter, Head, Conventional Arms Control Division, Foreign Office, Berlin

## Mainstreaming gender in the UN PoA

A gender-sensitive approach is not exclusively about women, but about analysing gender more broadly. This approach factors the special needs and capacities of men and women, and boys and girls, in the formulation of appropriate responses to issues of gender and SALW.

For example, global research has shown young men suffer disproportionately from the direct impacts of SALW use (90% of gun homicide victims are men), while women tend to be victims of the indirect, longer-term consequences.

However, it is inaccurate to identify women solely as victims of violence perpetrated by men with small arms. Such an approach not only neglects the active role that women play globally, regionally and locally in civil society-driven as well as government-led disarmament initiatives as peacebuilders, politicians, community organisers and activists, but also ignores the role that women and girls increasingly play as users of guns, as combatants or traffickers. In this regard, UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 represents an important tool to empower women.

"It is not about feminism, it is about business. Member states give us money to implement projects, and if I implement a project that only affects 50% of the population, that is bad business."

*Agnès Marcaillou, Former Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs*

## Mandates for Gender in the PoA

The UN has endorsed the strategies of gender mainstreaming and gender balance in its pursuit of gender equality through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, implementation of UN SCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, the Beijing Platform for Action, ECOSOC-agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming and various other policy and practice initiatives. A Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan launched by UNODA in April 2003 also underscores the commitment and importance it attaches to addressing the impact of all categories of weapons, including SALW, on both men and women.

UN SCR 1325 recognises the active role that women can play in peace processes and as advocates, and it binds Member States to ensure women's full participation accordingly. It has also proven to be a decisive mandate for the field of small arms control policy and practice, to include women in decision-making and take gender issues into account.

## Guidelines for gender mainstreaming for effective implementation of the PoA (A/CONF.192/2006/RC/CRP.3)



The Gender Guidelines promote understanding of the importance of gender perspectives, as well as to provide practical gender guidelines and concrete examples designed to assist UN policy makers and field personnel in incorporating gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations in the process of implementation of the PoA. The Guidelines:

1. illustrate the relevance of gender considerations for the PoA; and
2. provide guidance to policymakers and practitioners on how to integrate such considerations into their implementation of the PoA.

## Gender objectives for combating the illicit trade and trafficking of SALW

Addressing the gender, poverty and development dynamic behind illicit trade and trafficking including sexual exploitation and human trafficking in national, regional and international collaboration with development partners will enhance the effectiveness of PoA implementation by:

- strengthening control of the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects;
- eliminating opportunities for traffickers to exploit the vulnerability of the poor and other marginalised populations;
- addressing the human rights and security and livelihoods needs of women and girls drawn into trafficking networks and offer livelihoods alternatives to men who rely on trafficking to make a living;
- increasing the engagement of social and economic development actors in SALW control.
- improving knowledge of criminal network mechanisms in order to better address the problem of trafficking;
- encouraging and supporting participatory enabling mechanisms and the concomitant capacity to identify and respond to potential conflict situations;
- combating the drivers of illicit trade in SALW.

Integrating gender perspectives is critical to the successful implementation of the PoA in 4 key areas:

1. Illicit trade in SALW, and the linkages between different forms of trafficking;
2. DDR programmes;
3. National and regional focal points: defining specific regional and national approaches; and
4. Civil society integration and public awareness initiatives.



## The relevance of gendered approaches

Developing effective interventions against those involved in the illicit trade of SALW is impossible in the absence of controls to prevent illicit brokering – controls which facilitate the monitoring of every stage of the SALW transfer/transaction chain. This in turn entails identifying the people carrying out the illegal activities at every stage. Men constitute a large majority of those involved in illicit brokering and trafficking, exploiting the vulnerability of others for profit. However, women are also active participants in the illicit arms trade.

Widows and dependents form a high proportion of the civilian population in conflict environments. This demographic change places a heavy economic burden on women. Threats to security posed by the easy accessibility and proliferation of SALW further undermine the potential for traditional economic activity, and restrict the mobility of civilians. In this context, many women have little choice but to become active players in the illicit SALW trade, which may represent their only means of income-generation.

In some countries, women participate in the smuggling and hiding of illegal arms, whether through coercion, for money or other rewards, or as part of their activities as supporters of a given side in a conflict.

Criminal and terror networks have discovered that women and girls are often not regarded as threats by border guards, and consequently they are often used as couriers to smuggle SALW and ammunition across borders. Such a phenomenon cannot be addressed without a gender-responsive policy.

India's Northeast, especially Meghalaya State, has become a supply zone for the traffickers of women and girls who have been lured by promises of employment or abducted by armed men. India's Northeast is a transit point on the route for trafficking in women and SALW. The traffickers use extortion and intimidate people with guns. They also provide armed security as some people pay for informal armed protection during their illegal migration from one country to another. The international border is extremely porous and transnational criminal networks flourish.

There is evidence that both guns and women are being traded across the frontiers including cases where trafficked Burmese girls were caught carrying guns in the Indian State of Mizoram. Many of the routes where women are trafficked are the same routes where SALW and drugs flow.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Trafficking women and guns in India's Northeast' in Women at Work: Preventing Gun Violence, IANSA Women's Network Bulletin No. 17, January 2009

At the buyer and user end of the chain, women often support men who are arms bearers because of their own protection needs and sense of vulnerability in an insecure environment where crime arising from poverty is a problem. Women may also feel that their personal security increases through association with men with guns, particularly when the state security infrastructure is incapable of protecting them from criminal or paramilitary violence. The combination of poverty and the prevalence of guns is also linked to violence against women and girls, including sexual exploitation. There are also instances where single women living alone or heading households feel safer having a gun in the house. However, most women often view a gun in the home as a risk, rather than a form of protection, an outlook more common among men.<sup>2</sup>

## How to integrate gender into the PoA

International implementation of the PoA has come a long way in terms of building norms and standards to combat and prevent the proliferation of SALW.

The Gender Guidelines advocate a systemic gender-inclusive approach in the implementation of the PoA. An inclusive approach will help in full ownership of all efforts to eradicate illicit small arms and light weapons trade. It is a fact that gender-oriented policy, continuously and rigorously implemented, will maximize all efforts.

To ensure sustainability of progress to date and to make sure that the PoA responds adequately and more meaningfully to peace challenges on the ground, it is critical that the gender implications of SALW form an integral component of national and regional strategy development.

## Download the Guidelines for gender mainstreaming for the effective implementation of the UN PoA

<http://www.iansa-women.org/node/454>

### The IANSA Women's Network



<sup>2</sup> Pampell Conaway, C. (2004) 'Small Arms, Light Weapons and Landmines' in Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action, International Alert and Women Waging Peace

Review Conference of the Programme of Action on small arms: 27 August – 7 September 2012

(This paper is extracted from the Guidelines for gender mainstreaming for the effective implementation of the UN PoA (2010) by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs/Regional Disarmament Branch and IANSA)

## SMALL ARMS MONITOR 5.1

### Calendar of events for Monday, 27 August 2012

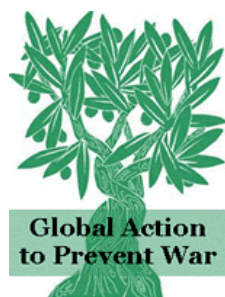
When	What	Where	Who
10:00–13:00	Plenary	Conference Room 1 North Lawn Building	
13:15–14:45	Launch of Small Arms Survey 2012: Moving Targets	Conference Room E North Lawn Building	Small Arms Survey Contact: Martin Field email: martin.field@smallarmssurvey.org
13:15–14:45	Role of Legislators in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)	Conference Room 4 North Lawn Building	Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN and Parliamentarians for Global Action Contact: Mónica Adame email: monica.adame@pgaction.org
15:00–18:00	Plenary	Conference Room 1 North Lawn Building	

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