



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

*Civil society perspectives on the Third Review Conference of the
UN Programme of Action on small arms
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Reaching Critical Will

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial: Inside the theatre of the absurd—the final day of RevCon3**
- 4 | Side event report: Building national capacity in weapon and ammunition management**
- 5 | Reflections on UN alliances**
- 6 | News in Brief**

The *Small Arms Monitor* is produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) during meetings related to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.

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EDITORIAL: INSIDE THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD—THE FINAL DAY OF REVCON3

Allison Pytlak | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

In *Waiting for Godot*, the famous absurdist play, two characters converse across a range of topics while waiting for Godot to arrive. Spoiler alert: Godot never does.

Over the two weeks of the Third Review Conference to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA), states conversed across a range of topics while waiting for consensus. It never arrived. Absurdist theatre is characterised by a lack of harmony, being illogical, and for uncertainty—all of which was how the last day of the RevCon felt at many times. The final day's sessions lasted for a marathon eighteen hours, finally closing business in the early hours of Saturday morning. It was suspended numerous times to allow for consultations; marked by unexpected surprises and developments; and dogged by procedural confusion all of which led many to question when, and how, will this conference end?

In the end, the document adopted is laudable. It includes groundbreaking references to gender-based violence, gender equality in participation, ammunition, and sustainable development. The process to get there, however, was tortuous, due to the intransigence of a handful of delegations who have for years tried to block progress in this and other disarmament forums.

Much of Friday was spent reviewing the fourth draft of the outcome document, an exercise that may have taken longer than planned because of confusion around the numbering of paragraphs, based on the version

available to delegates versus updates being tracked by Ambassador Brunet, the conference president. By the he put forward the fifth version in the late afternoon, there were only three major outstanding issues with significant differences in opinion: ammunition, illegal armed groups, and referencing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Draft five had two paragraphs relating to ammunition: paragraph 16 of Section I, and paragraph 18 of Section II. The former welcomes the new process launched in the General Assembly to convene a group of governmental experts on surplus ammunition; the latter encourages information exchange among states that apply the UNPoA to ammunition. The United States was the only country to push for a deletion of paragraph 18 (it supports the UN General Assembly process on ammunition, and therefore accepts paragraph 16); while others like Iran had been opposed, it seemed to be more quiet on the issue in the final days of the conference. Including a reference to illegal armed groups was a point pushed mainly by Syria and opposed by a group of countries on the grounds that it is not a term in international law. However, its inclusion in the 2012 outcome document made it challenging to not include now.

Both subjects were discussed extensively in and outside of the conference room over the next few hours, until at last it was announced that the President had heard a compromise had been reached by those discussing ammunition. Ghana, a primary spokesperson for the large group of states in favour

continued on next page

Editorial, continued

of including ammunition in the outcome, read out a lacklustre new paragraph that, if accepted, would replace paragraph 18. The proposal included a vague phrase, “comprehensive application,” meant to denote ammunition, given with the support of Germany.

The proposal fell flat. Mexico stated that it falls “well below” its threshold of acceptability and would prefer the paragraph as presented in draft five. Costa Rica did the same, as did Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Brazil. Peru noted that if this version did go through, it did not want to be associated with the paragraph. Other delegations such as Poland, Netherlands, Egypt, and the United Kingdom joined in to support the Ghana proposal, some citing the “late hour” as a reason to do so. Australia proposed adding language that would indicate this issue is not resolved and will be taken up at the next Biennial Meeting of States in 2020. Portugal and India suggested light amendments, while Rwanda and Nigeria voiced unhappiness at the compromise, but were vague about not supporting it. The United States reiterated that it cannot accept paragraph 18 as drafted but Ghana’s new suggestion would be acceptable. Meanwhile, throughout this discussion on the ammunition paragraphs, there was also discussion about the references to illegal armed groups as brought up by Syria. Draft five had introduced amendments on more than one paragraph that were intended as a package to satisfy Syria’s objections and it wanted to know what the status of those was the status of those amendments. Three states spoke in favour of keeping them as presented in draft five but Syria felt the language re-opened old arguments on this.

Faced with an impasse, the session was suspended again for further consultations. When it resumed in formal mode, so as to adopt the outcome document, the US delegation called for a paragraph vote on 16 and 18.

This is highly significant and game changing in the context of the UNPoA. For almost two decades, the desire to preserve unanimity as consensus has meant that states wishing to see ammunition specifically cited in UNPoA conference outcomes have

been forced to give up because of the insistence of just one state. Even on Friday, it seemed a few times as if the conference President would overlook their concerns and press ahead, but their persistence and determination made it clear that just as the US would not accept a reference, they would not accept not having one. As Ecuador explained, there seems to be an expectation that “small” countries will always say yes, and go along with the preferences of larger or more powerful countries. But, small countries can also say no. Brazil stated that it has been like negotiating with “a wall” at which various suggestions had been thrown, but with no response and that the states supporting ammunition references have reached their limits of compromise. For too long, a unanimity interpretation of consensus has propped up a tyranny of the minority that perpetuates inequality in the UN system. The states wanting to see an ammunition reference in the document, because it is an extension of their own practice and reflects the real challenges of small arms violence, would not be refused this year.

In keeping with the unpredictability of the day, the vote was not without its own drama and developments. After spending some time working out on what precisely states were voting (yes to retain? yes to delete?), and waiving relevant rules of procedure that would normally require a notice period, everything appeared to be ready for voting at around midnight.

States voted on paragraph 16, with a result of 63-2-28. It was retained. Then, just before commencing the vote on paragraph 18, Ghana asked if would be possible to suggest an oral amendment to it. It suggested that since the compromise they had proposed a few hours earlier was just that—a compromise with a view to getting consensus—it would prefer now to vote on the version of the paragraph as presented in draft five, the one with the explicit reference to ammunition. There was confusion about what this meant for the vote—was it still necessary, given that the paragraph the US called for a vote on no longer existed? Should the President have allowed the amendment to go through, or should it have proceeded with the original

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Editorial, continued

vote? Was there a need to vote on something that had just been accepted? Amidst this ambiguity, it was decided that it was procedurally sound to vote on the paragraph as included in draft five. The results of the vote were 62-2-29. The US and Israel were the only two voting against; many of the abstentions were from Arab Group countries. The paragraph was retained, including its explicit reference to ammunition—a first for UNPoA conferences.

At Syria's request a third vote took place on paragraph 13 of Section I, which refers to the 2030 Agenda. Syria had expressed throughout the conference that there is no connection between the 2030 Agenda and the UNPoA beyond Target 16.4, which seeks to reduce illicit arms flows, and wanted the broader reference removed. The results of this vote were 65-0-25, meaning that the paragraph as drafted was retained.

At last, it seemed that the remainder of the outcome document was ready to be adopted. However, there were yet some final surprises in store for the conference. When the President asked if the conference was ready to adopt the document as a whole, Syria responded to say that, "We do not have consensus on this document." This sparked a back-and-forth between the two, in which Syria repeated that the document could not be adopted by consensus but was also not calling a vote on it, but seemed to want a vote, while remarking that we are already working in an "illegal manner". After several exchanges, the President stated that the document is being adopted, and gaveled on it—signaling that it had been adopted. Syria reacted immediately to say that nothing had been adopted and that its concerns were being overlooked. Iran took the floor to state that it opposes nothing substantive in the document but does take issue with the procedure that had just occurred. The meeting was suspended again, this time for around an hour, during which heated conversations were observed between the President, Syria, and Iran. Other members of the President's team were consulting with states in the room to identify one that would call for the vote. the session resumed, the President asked again if

When the session resumed, the President asked again if Syria would like to call for a vote and it requested a short break to consult for legal advice. It did not call for a vote but expressed again that a vote would be necessary given objections to the document. Shocking many, Syria also said that it would ultimately vote in favour of the document's adoption because it has no further issues with it. It did so after Madagascar called for a vote on behalf of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Estonia, and New Zealand. The document passed 98-0-0. The remainder of the conference was given over to explanations of vote and closing remarks as outlined in our News in Brief. The long, bizarre night formally concluded shortly before 4:00am.

It's incredible that a country that is using small arms and light weapons, among other nefarious weaponry, to wage war on its citizens continues to have sufficient status and ability within the international system to delay a conference's conclusion. Some have speculated that Syria's procedural delaying tactics were done to frustrate the French chair in response to the boycott from France, UK, and US to the Syrian chairpersonship of the Conference on Disarmament last month.

Despite the protracted final days of the RevCon, the meeting yielded several positive developments:

- Concerns about armed gender-based violence, the gendered impacts of small arms, and women's participation in disarmament are well reflected in the final version of the outcome document. The widespread "gender panic" alluded to by one critic has resulted in a document that builds on gains made in 2012 and 2016 to alleviate the overall gender blindness of the UNPoA. The language of the document will contribute to mainstreaming of gender within small arms control.
- There is a connection between the 2030 Agenda and the UNPoA writ large; and several more actionable references to Target 16.4 throughout the document. This is important because it gives a counterpart within the small arms community to decisions being taken within the

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Editorial, continued

development community around leveraging data for indicator monitoring and implementation of actions meant to reduce illicit trafficking of weapons.

- The inclusion of a specific reference to ammunition is a first and will give precedent to future references. More importantly, it ensures that the document reflects the reality of how many states are applying the UNPoA as well as something that is at the centre of small arms violence. As so many states have said repeatedly over the years, without bullets the guns fall silent.

The outcome document backtracked in some areas; for instance efforts to focus future meetings on specific topics like diversion did not succeed and have been replaced by a call to identify a meeting's focus in advance. There is no reference to 3D printing, and pushback on using the word "equal" in relation to women's participation succeeded. The proposed technical annex to the ITI was left out and subsequent efforts to mandate a guidance document were also sidelined, although the request for a report from the UN Secretary General provides an opening. There is no reference to either the Arms Trade Treaty or the Firearms Protocol.

As this publication has pointed out before, what

matters ultimately is that these commitments are acted upon. The UNPoA is not a legally binding document, and can be criticised for having been ineffective and trapped in time, or poorly implemented. States went to great lengths at this conference to defend and improve it on paper; their actions now, alongside regional organisations and supportive civil society will be what gives life to those words.

The vote sets a good precedent for future work within the UNPoA and beyond. Ghana's request to vote on language that the vast majority wanted, rather than compromise language, is reminiscent of Guatemala's similar demand at the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva in August 2016, which ultimately led to the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is incredibly significant that states that have been treated for so long as bystanders in international relations are claiming their rightly deserved space and are speaking truth to power. This is a positive trend that we hope continues across disarmament and arms control forums.

Note: The adopted version of the outcome document will be published on our website as soon as it is available, along with any explanations of vote that are available electronically. •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITY

Noa Marcus | *Nonviolence International-NY*

"Building National Capacity in Weapons and Ammunition Management" was a side event hosted co-hosted by France on 19 June and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). This particular event focused on how countries can not only reduce the flow of illicit weapons and ammunition, but how they could store them safely. The speakers included a representative of the French government; the director of UNMAS; a representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); also of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research. The director of UNMAS spoke about how the Ivory Coast can be used as an example when looking at how different countries around the world can better store their weapons and ammunition in order to both sustain peace and prevent future conflict.

The Ivory Coast now actively shares its best

practices and advice within its region which is why UNMAS believes that they are a perfect example of how a region has improved its weapon management. The DRC representative described how it has been actively trying to follow in the Ivory Coast's footsteps, and their plans for the future include continuous destruction of arms and ammunition and a new action plan that has launched this month and will end in the year 2022. There are multiple problems that can potentially arise when talking about getting rid of a country's arms and ammunitions, however, it has been proven that countries around the world are dedicated to making the world safer for everyone. What happened in the Ivory Coast can have a ripple effect if all countries are willing to reduce their flow of illicit weapons and ammunition and safeguard armories •



REFLECTIONS ON UN ALLIANCES

Dr. Natalie Goldring | Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy

Members of US President Trump's administration regularly attack Iran's leadership, trustworthiness, and role in the Middle East. In May 2018, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Program of Action (JCPOA), an Obama administration agreement that limited Iran's nuclear programme, arguing that it was a bad deal and that Iran had not complied with its terms.

At the beginning of Third Review Conference (RevCon) to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) the conference, these perspectives seemed to carry over to the conference. On the first day of the RevCon, a US diplomat publicly objected to the appointment of Iran as one of the Vice Chairs of the conference. The United States representative argued that Iran's failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions made it ineligible to be in a position of leadership. He also said that Iran had no legitimate cause to serve in any position related to arms control in the United Nations or elsewhere.

Yet despite this animosity, the Iranian and US delegations had remarkably similar approaches to many substantive issues during the RevCon; there seemed to be far more uniting the two countries than dividing them.

One of the most important common positions supported a narrow approach to the conference itself. Both countries argued that it was appropriate to examine the progress that has been made in implementing the UNPoA, but that countries should not extend the commitments in the document.

The endorsement of a narrow approach was also evident in the countries' perspectives on ammunition. Upholding a consistent US "red line" since the development of the Programme of Action, the US delegation wanted all references to ammunition to be deleted from the final document. Iran argued that ammunition should not be included because it wasn't in the original scope of the PoA.

Both countries also opposed referring to instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty. Even though virtually all of the other states seemed to support direct references to other instruments such as the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty, the United States and Iran were among the small group of countries that prevented direct references from appearing in the final text.

The two countries' opposition to referring to "international standards" is also consistent with this approach. Both countries seemed intent on limiting the extent to which the PoA was tied to broader ideas; not just other instruments.

Ironically, although they agreed on many policy positions during RevCon3, US diplomats only seem to have referred to Iran by name during their protest of Iran's appointment as a vice president of the conference. Iran apparently returned the favor, and does not seem to have referred to the United States by name over the course of the conference.

In the end, US and Iranian diplomats were successful in introducing many amendments that weakened the text of the outcome document for the RevCon. But the initial drafts circulated by conference President Ambassador Brunet were so detailed and substantial that even after the work of this unholy alliance, the outcome document contains significant advances on many issues.

In a sense, it's the reverse of the classic American Chuck Jones cartoons, in which Sam Sheep Dog and Ralph Wolf are friends when they're not at work. Once they're "on the clock," they spend their work hours battling each other. Despite the common antagonistic rhetoric in more formal settings, the actions of American and Iranian diplomats at the RevCon suggested significant common interests. •



NEWS IN BRIEF

Marina Kalliga | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The positions conveyed here are not comprehensive but intended as a summary of the consultations on the fourth draft of the outcome document as well as explanations of vote. Attribution is not given due to informal nature of the consultations.

DRAFT FOUR

Section I: 2018 Declaration

Illegal armed groups

- A state proposed adding the phrase “aids illegal armed groups” after “conflicts” in paragraph 5, and the phrase “by illegal armed groups; as well as” in paragraph 7. One state spoke in favour of these proposals, and one state asked for the retention of paragraph 7 in the form it took in the draft 4 of the outcome document. The President suggested a compromise: to accept the mention of “illegal armed groups” in the first line of paragraph 7 as proposed, on the condition that it is the only reference to this term in the outcome document. One state stated that no one consulted with it with regards to the compromise proposal on “illegal armed groups”. It argued that the matter has been consensual since 2012, and it would not agree with the condition that this term be used only once in the outcome document.
- The fifth draft of the outcome document contains one reference to illegal armed groups in paragraph 5 of the Declaration.

Synergies with other instruments

- The President put forth a compromise proposal for the inclusion of a reference to the Firearms Protocol in the 2018 Declaration if the reference to it in paragraph 17 of section II is removed.
- Two states spoke against the inclusion of any reference to the Firearms Protocol, with one of them stating that it does not believe the Firearms Protocol sets standards relevant to the UNPoA and in order to be consistent with numerous changes made to the text, namely the deletion of the reference to the Arms Trade Treaty and other references to the Firearms Protocol, it should not be mentioned in the Declaration. A group of states urged that references to the Firearms Protocol be included in the outcome document, pointing out that it is referenced in the UNPoA itself.
- The result of this debate is that draft 5 paragraph 12 of the Declaration includes the phrase “other relevant instruments to which a State is a Party” and in para-

graph 17 of Section II the language “such as the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, its Firearms Protocol” was removed, meaning that the Firearms Protocol is not explicitly mentioned at all draft 5 of the outcome document.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- A compromise proposal was made to include a broad reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in paragraph 13 of the Declaration and all other references to the 2030 Agenda throughout the text would be preceded by “target 16.4”, which some states have insisted is the only relevant part of the SDGs for the UNPoA. Two states argued that the UNPoA is not the place to establish links with the whole 2030 Agenda, and they will only accept reference to target 16.4 where the SDGs are mentioned, not even Goal 16. One state stressed the importance of preserving the integrity and the indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda, noted the extent that the states wishing to see this reflected in the outcome document have already compromised on this issue, and agreed to accept the compromise proposal made by the President. Eighteen states agreed to support the proposal to have one reference to the 2030 Agenda as a whole in the Declaration and specific reference to target 16.4 elsewhere in the document. Draft 5 was amended according to this compromise.

Ammunition

- A proposal was made to add a qualifier after the word “ammunition” in paragraph 18 that would read “without prejudice to the fact that ammunition is not within the scope of the UNPoA”, which would make the paragraph acceptable to one of the states that has been opposing references to ammunition throughout the review conference. Another state, however, expressed its continued opposition to the inclusion of the paragraph, both in the form it took in draft 4 and with the above amendment, because it believes ammunition should stay outside of the UNPoA regardless of what individual states decide to do. A proponent of the inclusion of ammunition in the UNPoA stated it would reluctantly accept the proposed qualifier, but could not understand the argument of ammunition being outside of the scope of the UNPoA as a reason for excluding any reference to ammunition from the outcome document. The state noted that the deletion of several paragraphs on ammunition have already been agreed to, and called for the retention of paragraph 18 in the spirit of consensus and compromise.

continued on next page



News in Brief, continued

- The President suggested replacing paragraph 18 of section II with paragraph 16 of the Declaration. The state that suggested adding a qualifier to paragraph 18 stated it would prefer the language of paragraph 18 in draft 4, even without its own proposal, than replacing it with paragraph 16 of the Declaration because it views the phrase “material additional to” of paragraph 16 as interpretable. The President responded that paragraph 16 was based on previously agreed language, which was why he proposed it. One state expressed its support for the text as it stood in draft 4 but in the spirit of compromise would agree to President’s proposal of replacing paragraph 18 of section II with paragraph 16 of the Declaration, but could not agree to first amendment of adding “without prejudice to the fact that ammunition is not within the scope of the PoA” to the existing text of paragraph 18.
- The President offered another option based on the language of paragraph 18 as formulated in draft 4, to start the paragraph with the phrase “To acknowledge that” and to add the word “can” after “ammunition”. One state said this proposal was going in the right direction, but noted again that a compromise was already made on this text.
- Negotiations on this paragraph continued later in the day. One state was firm in its position that it could not agree to paragraph 18 because it is outside the scope of the UNPoA and ITI, explaining that it was making compromises on other issues but this one has been very very important to it since 2001, and it remains of vital importance to it ammunition remain outside of the UNPoA
- One state expressed its support for the President’s amendment to paragraph 18 but it could not accept the deletion of this paragraph because without it the document would be incomplete and it did know whether it could move forward with it. Another state described the President’s amendment as a very good compromise, but stressed that total exclusion of ammunition would result in the outcome document being “hollow” and having very little value. One state stated that while it can accept the President’s amendment, it has reached the limit of its flexibility, because paragraph 18 does not go beyond the mandate but rather reflects the practice of an overwhelming amount of states that apply some of the provisions of the UNPoA on ammunition. An additional twenty-four countries expressed their willingness to accept the President’s amendment

but could not accept the deletion of paragraph 18.

- A state called for the deletion of paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Declaration of draft 4 of the outcome document, which referred to ammunition, because it considers ammunition controls outside of the scope of the UNPoA. One state reminded states that in informal consultations on Wednesday paragraph 15 of the Declaration was being considered along with paragraph 18 of section II. One state spoke about the importance attached to these paragraphs by many delegations present, and as compromise proposed amending the language of paragraph 15 to “we take note of” instead of “we welcome”. Another stated argued that the formulation of paragraphs 15 and 16 in draft 4 was the result of a compromise that was already reached, and that for the 76 countries that made a statement on ammunition keeping these paragraphs is a red line. The President suggested the language “We welcome the parallel process established by General Assembly resolution 72/55” for the start of paragraph 15 and the deletion of paragraph 16 from the declaration because it did not receive consensus. One country stated that it was not prepared to support the suggestion to remove paragraph 16 of the Declaration until paragraph 18 of section II is discussed.
- In the fifth draft of the outcome document, paragraph 16 had been removed and paragraph 15 of the fourth draft referring to the General Assembly resolution 72/55 was numbered 16 in the fifth draft.

Section II: Implementation of the UNPoA**SDGs**

- The sub-section on the target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda of section II of the outcome document was impacted by the compromise made in regards to paragraph 13 of the Declaration. The President announced that the language in paragraphs 74 and 76-78 will be amended to refer specifically to target 16.4. In response, one state reiterated its position that it did not agree to this compromise and it will not accept a single reference to the 2030 Agenda anywhere in the outcome document. The language of draft 5 reflects the compromise proposal.

continued on next page



*News in Brief, continued***Section IV: Follow-up***Paragraph 1 - NAM fellowship proposal*

- A compromise proposal was put forth to replace paragraph 1 of Section IV of the fifth draft of the outcome document with the following language: Acknowledge the proposal "On the establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons in order to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to the implementation of the Programme and Action and the International Tracing Instrument, particularly in developing countries". The President explained that this language was taken directly from the proposal made by the Non-Aligned Movement. This amendment was agreed to and this was the formulation included in the fifth draft of the outcome document.

Paragraph 3 - Report of the Secretary-General on recent developments in SALW manufacturing, technology, and design

- A state proposed the following language for paragraph 3 of Section IV: "To request the Secretary-General to seek the views of member states with regard to the recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology, and design, particularly polymer and modular weapons, including under associated opportunities and challenges as well as their impact on the effective implementation of the ITI and the ways of addressing them, and to submit a report thereon, well in advance of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States, for its consideration."
- One country stated that the proposal does not go far enough because not having anything other than a report is too little, thus it would prefer using the compromise language formulated in the informals on Thursday, which is included in draft 4. Another state supported the language of draft 4.
- One state noted that BMS7 is only a five day meeting, and a topic has already been decided upon and it would not want to see that discussion overshadowed by considering the Secretary-General's report on recent developments in technology. The state expressed its willingness to accept the new language proposed if an amendment were made to add "if consensus has already been reached" to the end of the paragraph.
- Negotiations on paragraph 3 of Section IV resumed later in the day. The proposed language was altered slightly: Request the Secretary-General to seek the views of member states with regard to the recent de-

velopments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology, and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons, including on their associated opportunities and challenges, as well as their impact on the effective implementation of the ITI, and recommendations on ways to addressing them, and to submit a report thereon before the end of 2018 for its consideration. Stresses the importance of informal consultations with a view to finding an agreement before BMS7.

- One state stated that it could not agree to the language of "finding an agreement" because agreements can only be reached in a formal setting, not in informal consultations as this paragraph suggests.
- A state reiterated its position that it would have much preferred the original version of this paragraph, and that this formulation is reaching the end of the compromises it can make. It urged states to retain the last sentence of the paragraph because the it is important that this paragraph not refer to just another report but a way forward on this issue.
- The President proposed changing the language of the last sentence to "with a view to facilitate consensus before BMS7" to accommodate the concerns voiced with the phrase "finding an agreement". This language was agreed to, and is reflected in draft 5 of the outcome document.

Paragraph 5 - BMS8

- One state proposed that specific issues for the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States be decided on at a later time, and that a reference to this decision be inserted in the outcome document, for example by adding at the end of the paragraph the following language: "specific issues for consideration by the meeting are to be decided upon at a later stage". Another state suggested ending the paragraph after 2022 in order to keep it as simple as possible, and that would imply that the topics for BMS8 would not be decided on at this review conference. A third proposal was made to merge the other two proposed amendments and also be more concrete at setting the time when a decision would be made by adding language such as "to be decided upon by the BMS7". This latter proposal was agreed to and is reflected in paragraph 5 of draft 5.

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*News in Brief, continued***EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE**

- After the vote on the document as a whole, Iran asked for it to be put on the record of the conference that it attaches great importance to the UNPoA, it will continue implementing it, but it will only implement the outcome document if its content is not in contradiction with other laws, agreements, and commitments that Iran has.
- Mexico stated that despite the outcome document being adopted by consensus, the states had failed in addressing the ultimate goal of being at the Review Conference, which was to update the UNPoA in order to reduce human suffering. Mexico stated that the desire to reach the result of the outcome document made it hostage to economic and political interests, and expressed its disappointment that it did not adequately address the issue of ammunition and did not emphasise the importance of having synergies with other instruments in the international framework. The positive result of the outcome document for Mexico was its provisions regarding diversion of small arms and light weapons. It ended with a reminder that all these meetings and discussions are about saving lives.
- Syria stated that many new topics have been incorporated in the outcome document that are outside the scope of the UNPoA, and that the mandate of this conference did not entitle states to amend the UNPoA. It reiterated its view that there is no direct relationship between the scope and mandate of the UNPoA and the 2030 Agenda. It also expressed its confusion at the opposition of some states to the inclusion of the phrase “illegal armed groups” in the outcome document. It added that it will implement the final outcome document in accordance with its constitution and national laws, and where it did not exceed the scope of the UNPoA. Finally, Syria would like the outcome document to reflect that the voting processes on paragraph 13 and on the document as a whole.
- The US reiterated its position on paragraphs 16 and 18, and stated that while its votes on those individual paragraphs still stand, it voted in favour of the document as a whole because it agrees with the rest of the document.
- The Netherlands stated that the outcome document contains a number of important provisions, including the provisions on gender-based violence, the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in

conflict-affected areas, and the role of peacekeeping operations in preventing and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

- The European Union welcomed the unanimous adoption of the final outcome document, and described it as a comprehensive review, which offers a direction on the way ahead. The EU particularly welcomed the reference to the General Assembly resolution 72/55, the references to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the full recognition of gender dimensions, including gender-based violence. However, it expected stronger language on the Arms Trade Treaty, and was disappointed that consensus could not be reached in the text on the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the UNPoA, stating that the Review Conference was a missed opportunity to greatly enhance the UNPoA in this regard.
- Egypt expressed satisfaction with the document’s unanimous adoption, and that some progress was achieved on one of the two issues of most importance to Egypt, that is the intentional supply of small arms and light weapons to unauthorised recipients. Egypt was glad to see the BMS7 dedicated to address this issue, as it views this as one of key loopholes of the regime against the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.
- Japan stressed the importance of the “day-to-day” work which was adopted in the outcome document, and was happy to see focus be given to diversion in 2020, but was disappointed with the lack of a specific reference to the Arms Trade Treaty. It emphasised that addressing new developments in technology is an area that should be given priority.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- In his concluding remarks, the President stated that the outcome document is a very complete and substantive outcome document, with a very substantive follow-up process. He highlighted the provisions addressing the diversion of small arms and light weapons, tracing and marking, the SDGs, and the role of regional organisations. He concluded that the member states had achieved the result of a synergy by joining forces and unanimously adopting the outcome document. •

