



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

Civil society perspectives on the Preparatory Committee for the
Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on
small arms

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EDITORIAL: RUNNING ON A TREADMILL

Allison Pytlak | *Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and*

The first two days of the Preparatory Committee for the Third UN Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) were a bit like running on a treadmill—there was a lot of motion, but nothing really moving. Confusion over the thematic clusters of the agenda meant that member states spoke on different subjects, at different times, making it difficult to determine if there is any emerging agreement or direction especially on the priority issues as identified by the conference chair, Ambassador Brunet.

Clearly many member states have come prepared to state their positions and offer views on what they see as important to be taken at the Review Conference in June, and ideas for how to get there. There was no lack of statements on the priority issues such as synergies with other instruments; gender; international cooperation and assistance; and ammunition. Austria, Belgium, and Germany submitted jointly a working paper on effective marking, record-keeping, and tracing of modular and polymer firearms. A growing number of member states are concerned that the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) are unable to adequately address these types of weapons. The working paper proposes a Group of Governmental Experts to be

established in June to work toward an annex to the ITI. The Non-Aligned Movement has put forward a number of concrete suggestions via a working paper, including to establish a Fellowship Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons for developing countries for training in areas related to the implementation of the PoA.

Despite the clear appetite from many member states to keep the PoA active and relevant, the method by which that will happen is still unclear. For example, there is widespread acknowledgement of the synergies between the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the goals of the PoA. The UN Office of Disarmament Affairs described the impact of the development agenda on small arms control as a “paradigm shift” in which arms control assistance has become part of official development aid. Yet what will this recognition translate into? Will it become a line in an outcome document? Will it result in a set of practical recommendations, or reporting requirements? Similarly, a lot of progress has been made in recent years toward gender sensitive implementation of the PoA. A majority of member states expressed support for continuing to improve in this area but how the Review Conference will concretely take it up, is not clear.

The divergent views about the even-

continued on next page

Editorial, continued

tual outcome and purpose of the Review Conference will be a complicating factor. Ireland, for example, said it supports the goal of a political declaration as an outcome in June whereas the United States would like to focus on existing commitments rather than adding any new ones. As decisions must be taken by consensus, as some delegations reminded through their statements, doing anything truly progressive has never been possible and it's unlikely that there will be sufficient support to actually open up the PoA and make amendments to it.

It's possible that Wednesday's informal session enabled the articulation of a path forward but at the time of writing this is unknown, because the session was closed to civil society—even though just prior to being asked to leave, we were “invited” to deliver our interventions. This rather ridiculous scheduling sends a negative message about the value of civil society expertise and involvement in PoA-related activities, despite the wealth of practical recommendations and real-life examples we provide in and out of the conference room. In its intervention, for example, Instituto Sou da Paz explained how the Brazilian experience of cartridge marking has been instrumental in opening up a criminal investigation into the murder of a prominent municipal

councilor and human rights defender, and that the Institute's research has helped reveal some of the misunderstandings that exist about the nature of ammunition diversion, so as to inform new research and improve policies.

These examples, taken from national experience, make the case in an informed and fact-based way that there are benefits to controlling ammunition, which is a perennially thorny and polarising issue at PoA meetings, including this one. More states spoke in favour of finding a way in June to address ammunition control through the PoA than against doing so, but consensus decision-making may again stifle progress on an obvious loophole. •

SIDE EVENTS: Thursday 22 March 2018

When	What	Where
Thursday 22 March, 13:15-14:45	From Words to Action: Women's Participation in Small Arms Control	CR B
Thursday 22 March, 13:15-14:45	Synergies in Reporting under Select Multilateral Conventional Arms Treaties and Instruments	CR 8



KEY ISSUES EMERGE ON FIRST DAY OF PLENARY

Lucas Musetti | *International Action Network on Small Arms and Nonviolence International*

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, opened the first plenary session of the 2018 Preparatory Committee Committee for the Third UN Programme of Action Review Conference introducing French ambassador Jean-Claude Brunet. Ambassador Brunet was quickly elected President of the conference. In her speech, the High Representative pointed to the continued hampering of social and economic development due to small arms and light weapons, called for international assistance to implement best practices on small arms control around the world, reminded the assembly that armed conflict is the leading cause for people fleeing their homes, and warned of the role of the Dark Web in aiding trafficking and production of illicit weapons. Before she turned the floor over to Ambassador Brunet, Ms. Nakamitsu also outlined three central points to guide the general debate: 1) that the 2030 agenda recognizes that only peaceful societies can bring about desired sustainable development, 2) that gender dimensions needed to be incorporated into the Programme of Action, and 3) that the fast pace of technological development necessitated additional attention.

Once President Brunet opened the floor to statements, five common themes soon arose. The first—which is also one of the the most contentious—is the inclusion of ammunition in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA). Many delegates asserted that ammunition controls in the Programme would provide significant help in curbing armed violence, and several noted that its lack of inclusion is an aberration compared to other instruments that explicitly include ammunition. A minority of member states, including Bahrain on behalf

of the Arab Group, the United States, Germany, and Cuba, urged the assembly to not to expand the scope of the PoA too far and to instead focus on implementation of existing elements within the framework.

Four other common themes that emerged from the statements and have widespread although perhaps not yet universal support, were the inclusion of gender considerations; synergies with other international agreements (particularly the Arms Trade Treaty); directly linking the Sustainable Development Goals to the PoA, and addressing armed crime. One additional area that had broad support was the sharing of information and intelligence between states in relation to small arms and light weapons.

The five main themes were also the subject of an IANSA side event that took place immediately after the first plenary session. Speaking on behalf of civil society, and joined by the government of Ghana, IANSA members presented examples from the field of why each of those themes needed to be included in the Programme of Action. The frequent positive acknowledgements of these themes on the opening day of the PrepCom—as well the voices of opposition to them—is a good indication that president and his bureau will have to work deftly to achieve consensus at the Review Conference in June. •



SIDE EVENT REPORT: KEY ISSUES FOR THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE

Erica Mumford | International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

IANSA's side event titled, "Key Issues for the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action" sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Ghana, highlighted five key priorities for the Programme of Action (PoA): ammunition, synergies, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender, and crime and pervasive violence with small arms and light weapons (SALW).

The first priority is the inclusion of ammunition, because without ammunition, guns cannot kill. Jones Bortey Apperh, head of Ghana's National Commission on Small Arms, explained how the steady supply of ammunition transforms inoperative SALW into lethal weapons capable of taking human lives. To close this gap, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) should be used to facilitate the destruction of ammunition and avoid its recirculation into illicit networks.

The second priority is taking advantage of synergies between the PoA and other instruments, discussed by Dr. Natalie Goldring from the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy. Even in 2001, the PoA already emphasised the importance of ensuring "coordination, complementarity, and synergy in efforts to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons"—this is not a new concept. Taking advantage of synergies with other instruments such as the Firearms Protocol and the ATT is necessary to ensure that the PoA is truly dealing with the illicit trade in SALW "in all its aspects." This is consistent with President Jean-Claude Brunet's focus on ensuring a holistic perspective in the PoA.

Rebecca Peters of Surviving Gun Violence demonstrated how the pervasive effects of gun violence in Guatemala undermine the SDGs, the third key priority. On SDG 1, the consequences of gun violence in Guatemala cause at least a 50 per cent reduction in household income after a shooting. Countries that experience rampant gun violence often lack the necessary health services to ensure adequate medical treatment for victims, thus hindering SDG 3. Regarding SDG 16, the proliferation of guns undermines the justice system by enabling the power of

gangs and flooding courts with cases related to gun violence.

The gender dimension is the fourth priority, addressed by Dr. Jasmin Nario Galace from the IANSA Women's Network. Most of the world's SALW are in the hands of men, and gender-based violence is rendered more severe with the possession of small arms. A gender analysis can help us see the links between socially constructed masculinities and a culture that tolerates arms proliferation. Gender-informed initiatives may include: challenging perceptions of violent masculinity, ensuring women's active engagement at all policy making levels and strengthening synergies with women's organisations.

Brian Wood, from Middlesex University Law School, addressed the fifth key priority of crime and pervasive violence with SALW. A major challenge to reducing the oversupply and misuse of SALW in conflict prone countries lies in the lack of robust risk assessment systems in national regulations and oversight of SALW manufacture and export. For example, many states do not regularly report, or report at all, to the UN on firearms deaths and injuries leading to incomplete data, with particularly low response rates in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Risk analysis is challenging because such data usually does not distinguish between gun "violence" - deaths and injuries from criminal or unlawful actions - and those resulting from the lawful use of force. NGOs can play a role in mobilising political will to ensure stronger national regulation and reporting in a "rule of law" framework, including relevant international law, ensuring successful implementation of the PoA in all its aspects. •



FROM WORDS TO ACTION: JOIN US AND SUPPORT THE MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

In just over one month before the start of the Preparatory Committee, a mass shooting at a school in Florida, in the United States, killed 17 people and injured more than a dozen, sparking calls across the country for tougher gun laws. Days later in Nigeria, 110 girls were abducted from their school by armed men suspected of being members of the extremist group Boko Haram.

In regions around the world, both conflict and crime frequently hinder the ability of young people to receive quality education in a safe learning environment. Recognising that much more can be done to stop the proliferation and misuse of guns, student survivors of the Florida shooting launched a campaign to demand that their lives and safety become a priority. Part of their efforts includes organizing a “March For Our Lives” on the US capital on 24 March 2018—an event that has grown to now include marches in other cities across the United States as well as in other countries.

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) supports the efforts of civil society around the world in convincing governments to take tougher measures to prevent gun violence. We have helped to promote the March For Our Lives internationally by translating and transmitting information about it in Spanish and French. Supporting the March is also part of our efforts to help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on quality education and strives to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Reducing the proliferation and misuse of guns is an important part of reaching that goal.

With the march beginning the day after the PrepCom ends, there are two ways PrepCom participants can join us in supporting the March For Our Lives:

1) On 24 March tweet:

“Make the lives and security of young people a priority. #MarchForOurLives #Enough #EndGunViolence

To more specifically promote SDG4, tweet or post:

“Our youth need safe, nonviolent learning environments. End the proliferation and misuse of guns to help achieve SDG 4 of the Global Goals. #MarchForOurLives #Support-OurYouth #SDG4”

2) Join IANSA members in participating in the March For Our Lives—New York City on the morning of 24 March. •



NEWS IN BRIEF

Marina Kalliga | *Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*

The positions conveyed here are not comprehensive but intended as overview of state position on key issues discussed during the first half of the PrepCom.

Process

- The US said it would be best to focus on existing commitments instead of adding new commitments to the list of those that remain unimplemented and described the Review Conference (RevCon) as a chance to delve deeper into technical and policy issues preventing implementation.
- The Arab Group said it was important to retain the consensual nature of the Programme of Action (PoA) to allow it to be implemented "as widely as possible" and that the RevCon's purpose is to review implementation, not amend the PoA.
- Pakistan and India supported preserving the consensus-based decision making of the PoA.
- China said the RevCon should be forward-looking, built on consensus, and take stock of past progress.
- Colombia noted the importance of achieving a consolidated document from the RevCon.
- Switzerland said that the RevCon outcome document must reflect the critical issue of diversion of government stockpiles.
- Trinidad and Tobago hoped the outcome of the PoA Review Conference (RevCon) is expansive, not restrictive, and considers synergies with other instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be priority issues.
- Ireland supports the goal of a political declaration as an outcome of the RevCon and calls for enhanced relationships with other instruments, such as ATT in order to strengthen the PoA.
- Pakistan expressed support for the ATT but is concerned that establishing linkages between the ATT and the PoA would negatively impact the universal support enjoyed by the PoA.
- Cuba spoke against changing the scope of the PoA, raising the concern that it would affect implementation by states.

Diversion

- Jamaica said it shares the UN Secretary General's concerns that the diversion of small arms poses significant

threat to daily survival of ordinary citizens.

- Australia said that preventing the diversion of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is crucial to stability and development and referred to the complimentary nature of the PoA and the ATT, which both aim to prevent diversion.
- Argentina stated that to avoid diversion of legal arms transfers there needs to be clear criteria for authorising transfers.
- Japan also stressed the importance of adopting provisions on preventing the diversion of arms.
- Switzerland said that it makes sense for states parties to the ATT to make use of synergies with the PoA in efforts to prevent diversion.
- Ghana described the safe destruction of weapons and ammunition as crucial to preventing diversion of arms.
- Netherlands said that to avoid diversion of weapons there need to be solid arms controls in export systems and end user certificates.
- El Salvador highlighted the need for preventive approaches to diversion, including effective arms control, the use of arms registries, and correct authorisation of end users.
- The Philippines called for strengthening end user instruments in order to prevent diversion.
- Bulgaria stressed the importance of strict export control systems and their effective implementation.
- The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said its document on SALW provides the framework for preventing diversion of SALW. It recently adopted a "Best Practice Guide on Deactivation of SALW".

Ammunition

- Chile does not wish to see a separation between small arms and ammunition, stating that the RevCon should address the inclusion of ammunition in the PoA.
- Mexico and MERCOSUR support the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the PoA. MERCOSUR supports including the trade in parts and components amongst the measures of the PoA.
- Finland strongly supports the inclusion of the illicit trade in ammunition and said it would be natural to include ammunition in the PoA's scope.



News in brief, continued

- The EU included the addition of ammunition to the scope of the PoA in its list of ten objectives for the RevCon.
- The UK stated that control of the supply of ammunition would have an immediate impact on the intensity of armed violence. States must address stockpiles of ammunition, which is often stored in the same facilities as weapons.
- Ghana said that the RevCon provides an opportunity to strengthen the PoA by directly including ammunition. Addressing the high risk of diversion of ammunition to unauthorised actors is key.
- Brazil said the objectives of the PoA will be beyond reach if the PoA doesn't address ammunition.
- Ireland called for ammunition to be added to the scope of the PoA and wants to see progress towards this in the RevCon because if considered separately, it weakens the implementation of the PoA.
- El Salvador spoke against the "artificial division" of ammunition and weapons and said they should be dealt with as parts of a single chain.
- Jamaica placed emphasis on controls of ammunition as a major thematic component of the PoA process.
- Sweden said including ammunition is fundamental, because effective control of SALW requires effective control of ammunition.
- The non-governmental organisation Instituto Sou da Paz expressed regret that ammunition control is not yet part of the PoA because the exclusion of ammunition makes the PoA's full implementation impossible.
- Speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, Bahrain said that ammunition is a different issue from SALW and the PoA should not expand its mandate to include ammunition.
- Egypt stated that it would be counter-productive to include ammunition in the PoA because it requires different tools and approaches.

Gender

- EU objectives for the RevCon include the recognition of the gendered impacts of the illicit trade in SALW.
- Finland said that gender aspects need to be in the core of the PoA's implementation as this approach would be smart, cost-effective and would have long-

lasting results.

- The states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) seek strong references to women, girls, and youth in the outcome document, and recognition of the role of women, in keeping with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- Ghana spoke of the significant gaps in women's participation in small arms processes, and called for the full participation of women. Ghana also stressed the need for more disaggregated data on small arms and gender in order to understand the nexus between SALW and gender issues.
- The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs explained that in order to effectively mainstream a gender perspective into small arms control work, more research and analysis, more advocacy, education, training, and better, disaggregated data is required.
- Costa Rica said states must recognise the impacts of arms on women, girls, men and boys, include a gender perspective, and promote the significant participation of women and their contribution to security in their communities.
- Netherlands called for the recognition and integration of gender as a factor in all parts of the weapons cycle and more disaggregated data.
- A Colombian parliamentarian spoke in favour of women's participation in disarmament. She said that of eight million victims of armed violence in Colombia, 86 per cent were women, and every three days there is a case of femicide.
- El Salvador believes in the role of women as agents of change and says the outcome document should include a gender perspective, including on the impact of small arms on gender-based violence.
- Bangladesh called on states to amplify the voices of women and youth.
- Sweden called for women's full and effective participation in the PoA, the mainstreaming of gender issues into small arms control efforts, the recognition of the differential impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys, and intensified efforts to prevent small arms from being used to commit acts of sexual and gender-based violence.

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News in brief, continued

- MERCOSUR reaffirmed its commitment to implement relevant provisions of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and called for deepening the incorporation of a gender approach to the implementation of the PoA.
- Ireland stated that illicit trade of SALW contributes to gender-based violence and hopes for a meaningful inclusion of gender in this year's PoA process. They welcomed the inclusion of gender in the template for the national reports on the PoA, and asked for enhanced information sharing and data collection on issues related to gender.
- Switzerland said there need to be more women involved in the PoA efforts because women can bring change to how the small arms issue is looked at.
- Germany seeks to enhance the role of women in the security sector, including in small arms control efforts. It supports policies and projects strengthening the role of women at the community level in various regions.
- Jamaica seeks collaboration in order to develop intervention programs that include women.
- The IANSA Women's Network presented six recommendations to integrate gender perspectives into small arms initiatives, including strengthening women's technical capacities and ensuring their active engagement and leadership

Development

- The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said that the recognition of the interconnected nature of arms regulation, peace and security, and development has given states a significant opportunity to increase the coherence and effectiveness of their combined efforts to combat the problems caused by small arms.
- Germany stated that the inclusion of SALW in the SDGs has been crucial.
- Ireland welcomed the UN Secretary General's call for a greater link between disarmament and SDGs as curbing the illicit weapons trade is crucial to peace and security.
- South Africa said that the 2030 Agenda should be reflected in the RevCon's outcome document.
- The UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) delivered a presentation about the linkages between the PoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

opment. It described the 2030 Agenda as a "paradigm shift" in which small arms control measures have become part of national development plans, and arms control assistance is recognised as official development aid.

- Finland supported this paradigm shift in stating that small arms control is no longer a disarmament issue, but one of development. Indonesia encouraged the integration of the PoA into national action plans on development.
- The Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) has been encouraging practical ways for states to integrate SALW control into their national development programs.

International cooperation and assistance

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) believes that there is an urgent need to intensify international assistance and cooperation efforts, and underlined that assistance to developing countries should be unconditional and non-discriminatory. These views were echoed by Algeria, Cuba, and Venezuela.
- Cuba made several concrete suggestions on this issue, including the establishment of a UN Trust Fund with voluntary contributions and a mechanism to link requests for assistance and offers of assistance.
- Algeria said that establishing mechanisms to increase cooperation is a critical issue, and assistance is needed in the areas of training and capacity building and physical security and stockpile management.
- MERCOSUR, CARICOM and Indonesia drew attention to the technological divide between developed and developing countries. MERCOSUR called for technical assistance to be provided to ensure the implementation of marking, registration, and tracking instruments in developing countries. CARICOM also called for the provision of equipment and training programs to build capacity in developing countries.
- Bangladesh said that many countries need support in terms of technology, logistics, and services to improve interception, detection, and marking and tracing. It suggested that NAM's recommendations on international cooperation and assistance be factored into the deliberations and outcomes of the RevCon.
- Switzerland emphasised strengthening institutional capacities as a key prerequisite for assistance to be sustainable in nature and hopes that the RevCon out-

News in brief, continued

- Mexico said that border controls require a harmonised approach to security and believes that the RevCon is a good opportunity to address this issue. India sees border control as a key preventive measure of illegal weapon smuggling and is committed to bilateral cooperation with its neighbour states.
- The EU stated that cooperation and assistance is an important part of its current and future strategy. It funds a wide range of projects on capacity building, legislation support, awareness raising, promotion of international standards, information exchange between authorities, national bodies and civil society that are implemented with the support of regional or sub-regional bodies.

Stockpile security

- The UK proposed destruction of SALW as the best solution to surplus stockpiles.
- The Republic of Korea stressed the importance of stockpile management efforts, and Netherlands said that physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) must be a top priority, for both small arms and their ammunition.
- Thailand said that stockpile management is a crucial element, which should include assistance from the private sector.
- Switzerland stressed the need for safe and secure management of stockpiles and said efforts should focus on logistical capacities, training, infrastructure, and management aspects.

National actions

- Nigeria said its national efforts have included strengthening national borders and alliances across Africa, creating a national prevention committee on SALW in 2013, and organising capacity-building programs for security actors.
- Romania has created a national registry of SALW transfers, which includes ammunition transfers.
- Colombia spoke about the efforts of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, with the logistical support of Colombian armed forces, that has resulted in the destruction of almost nine thousand weapons, as well as ammunition, explosives, hand grenades, and anti-personnel mines.
- Kenya expects the RevCon will reinforce the imperative to adopt and strengthen national laws, and

said it is in the process of implementing its national action plan and conducting a small arms survey, as well as carrying SALW tracing at the community level, public education, and marking over 98 per cent of their state weapons.

- Argentina has renewed its national program of voluntary firearm hand-ins, including for those holding arms illegally.
- Jamaica spoke about the positive results of the assistance package received from the UN, that facilitated destruction of 5,000 stockpiled weapons and ammunition, which decreased the risk of diversion.
- Iraq described its border control, verification, and monitoring agreements with neighboring countries as part of their strategy to prevent terrorist groups from obtaining SALW.

