

Briefing Paper

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WAYS FORWARD

Conclusions of the Small Arms Symposia



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Front cover photo

A member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) walks through the Transitional Standardization Zone Jaime Pardo Leal, Colinas, Colombia, June 2017. The FARC had earlier begun handing over its weapons to the government as part of a peace deal. Source: Raul Arboleda/AFP Photo

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Overview

This Briefing Paper outlines possible next steps in the UN small arms process as proposed by participants in the thematic symposia that were held in October–November 2017 as part of a European Union project designed to support preparations for the Third Review Conference of the UN Small Arms Programme of Action (PoA).

The paper outlines the main observations and recommendations made by participants in the following areas:

- small arms control in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- small arms and the SDGs, and gender-related aspects of small arms control;
- recent developments in small arms manufacturing, technology, and design; and
- synergies between the PoA and other arms control instruments and processes.

Each of the symposia sought to identify practical, actionable steps that could be taken by the UN membership in strengthening small arms-related work after the Review Conference.

Introduction

In support of the UN Small Arms Programme of Action (PoA), in particular its Third Review Conference, scheduled for June 2018, the European Union convened four thematic symposia in October–November 2017.¹ These symposia, held in New York, Brussels, and Geneva, brought together experts from civil society, multi-lateral organizations, and states in order to develop recommendations for practical, actionable steps that could be taken by the UN membership in strengthening small arms-related work after the Review Conference. The discussions and recommendations drew on the normative framework provided by the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), as well as recent PoA meeting outcomes, such as that of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6).

This paper presents recommendations supported by most—although not necessarily all—of the symposia participants in the following areas:

- small arms control in conflict and post-conflict situations (New York, 23–24 October);

- small arms and the SDGs, and gender-related aspects of small arms control (New York, 25–26 October);
- recent developments in small arms manufacturing, technology, and design (Brussels, 20–21 November); and
- synergies with other arms control instruments and processes (Geneva, 23–24 November).

The thematic symposia also addressed the following cross-cutting issues:

- strengthening implementation;
- strengthening the measurement of implementation;
- strengthening international cooperation and assistance;
- identifying and addressing normative gaps; and
- gender-related aspects.

The following sections present the main observations and recommendations emerging from the symposia in chronological order, beginning with that held in New York from 23 to 24 October 2017.

Small arms control in conflict and post-conflict situations

The first thematic symposium was held at UN headquarters in New York from 23 to 24 October 2017. Formally entitled ‘Small Arms and Light Weapons Tracing and Stockpile Management in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations’, the symposium also looked at other aspects of small arms control in these settings.

In fact, weapons tracing, stockpile management, and other types of small arms control present considerable challenges in conflict and post-conflict environments, given weak state structures, scarce resources, and the proliferation of illicit weapons.

The application of the PoA and ITI to conflict and post-conflict situations is reflected in the instruments themselves. The PoA, for example, refers to weapons collection and control in such settings (UNGA, 2001b, paras. II.20–21, II.34–35), while in its preamble the ITI notes the instrument’s potential application to ‘all forms of . . . conflict situations’ (UNGA, 2005, Preamble, second para.). It was not, however, until the PoA’s Second Review Conference in 2012 that the UN small arms process began to emphasize the broader potential applications of the PoA and ITI to conflict and post-conflict situations.

In this regard, PoA (and ITI) meeting outcomes since 2012 have tended to emphasize the issues of weapons identification and tracing (UNGA, 2016, paras. 74–75, 82–84, 105), and stockpile management and security (para. 37). These documents have also referred to the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants (UNGA, 2016, paras. 35, 56) and stressed the broad relevance of small arms control to conflict and post-conflict situations (para. 105).

The first thematic symposium examined these issues in turn, beginning with tracing (session 1), followed by stockpile management and security (session 2), other relevant control measures (session 3), broader security promotion programmes (session 4), and the role of the private sector in security provision (session 5). In each case the discussions focused on conflict and post-conflict environments.

Small arms identification and tracing

Building on the Second Review Conference and BMS5 outcomes, the BMS6



Illegal weapons seized from criminals and civilians are cut into pieces at a metal foundry before being destroyed, Janjevo, Kosovo, July 2016.
Source: Stringer/AFP Photo

outcome document makes extensive reference to the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons in conflict and post-conflict settings (UNGA, 2016, paras. 74–75, 82–84, 105). Expert participants at the first thematic symposium were asked what specific additional steps they thought the Third Review Conference should take in this area. Discussion points included:

- identifying challenges and opportunities associated with conflict and post-conflict situations;
- relevant implementation standards, guidelines, and tools;
- the actors and organizations best placed to trace weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- the purposes of and procedures for collecting and exchanging tracing information in order to gain actionable weapons-related information;
- building capacity for small arms identification and tracing; and
- building capacity for the collection and exchange of information, including tracing information.

Observations

Symposium participants noted that conflict-related tracing information had a wide range of potential uses:

- in support of criminal—including terrorism-related—investigations and prosecutions (while emphasizing that tracing is one component of a broader weapons-related investigation);
- in support of arms embargo monitoring;
- to identify sources of diversion;
- to identify other forms of illicit supply from within a particular state or from other states;
- to address sources of diversion and other forms of illicit supply (for example, strengthening stockpile security in a state or in neighbouring states);
- to strengthen arms transfer decision-making (through improved end-user risk assessments); and
- in support of long-term data collection and analysis (monitoring arms flows, identifying new materiel, and identifying illicit weapons types, for example, craft-produced and illicitly converted weapons).

Symposium participants noted that conflict-related tracing faced several specific challenges:

- a lack of tracing cooperation (sometimes due to concerns about confidentiality or as a result of other legal restrictions; sometimes as a routine practice);
- the deliberate removal of weapon markings;
- the recirculation of weapons that were supposed to have been destroyed into the illicit market;
- the fact that many conflict weapons have complex lines of supply; and
- the poor traceability of older weapons (largely due to a lack of records on weapons older than 10–20 years).

Symposium participants considered the following provisions of the ITI especially relevant to the discussion of conflict-related tracing:

ITI, paragraph 9 reads:

‘States will ensure that all illicit small arms and light weapons that are found on their territory

are uniquely marked and recorded, or destroyed, as soon as possible. Pending such marking, and recording in accordance with section IV of this instrument, or destruction, these small arms and light weapons will be securely stored.’

ITI, paragraph 12 reads:

‘From the time of the adoption of this instrument, records pertaining to marked small arms and light weapons will, to the extent possible, be kept indefinitely, but in any case a State will ensure the maintenance of:

(a) Manufacturing records for at least 30 years; and

(b) All other records, including records of import and export, for at least 20 years’ (UNGA, 2005).

Recommendations

1. Many of the weapons seized or collected in conflict and post-conflict settings lack unique markings or are not properly recorded. Symposium participants therefore recommended that weapons that are seized or collected in conflict and post-conflict situations, including as part of DDR programmes, be uniquely marked (when they lack such markings) and recorded in all cases. Such records should be kept indefinitely, but in any case for at least 20 years, in accordance with paragraph 12 of the ITI. In order to facilitate tracing, they should also be kept in electronic form.
2. Weapons that are designated for destruction in conflict and post-conflict situations should be recorded pending such destruction. Participants noted that this would deter the diversion of such weapons into the illicit market and facilitate their identification if they were diverted.
3. Where possible, records of weapons that are seized or collected in conflict and post-conflict situations should be centralized in order to facilitate the tracing of such weapons. At a minimum, record holders should ensure that these records can be accessed in a timely manner.
4. Such records could also be incorporated into the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS), including weapons in short- and long-term storage, as well as those designated for destruction.
5. Participants noted that new technologies, such as digital photography, could facilitate the identification and tracing of weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations. They also recommended the development of best practice guidelines and the use of existing information resources, such as the INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table, in strengthening the accurate identification of small arms and light weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations, including the identification of a weapon’s model and its unique markings.
6. Authorities with responsibility for weapons tracing in conflict and post-conflict situations should have access to information relevant to tracing.
7. Processes for weapons tracing in conflict and post-conflict situations, including within the framework of UN-mandated peace operations and UN arms embargo monitoring mechanisms, should be established or strengthened.
8. Participants also recommended beginning the tracing of a conflict weapon by accessing domestic records in order to determine if the weapon had been diverted within the country where it was found.
9. Since conflict-related tracing was not always well understood, all of the actors involved—or potentially involved—in this process should strengthen dialogue and information exchange, for example, on the intended use of tracing information, in order to build mutual trust and confidence.
10. Participants also recommended strengthening the collection, compilation, and analysis of conflict-related tracing information at the sub-regional, regional, and international levels. Analysis could, for example, be strengthened by ensuring that relevant databases are searchable.

Recommendations: international assistance

1. Symposium participants noted the need to build sustainable capacity for weapons marking and record-keeping in conflict and post-conflict situations.
2. In particular, they recommended strengthening the capacity for weapons identification and tracing, covering such topics as the interpretation of markings and the determination of the likely traceability of a weapon as a function, for example, of its year of manufacture.

Stockpile management and security

The issue of stockpile management and security has been a focus of UN small arms meetings since BMS³, with several meeting outcomes referring to its relevance in conflict and post-conflict situations (see, for example, UNGA, 2016, para. 37). Participants at the first thematic symposium were asked what specific additional steps they thought the Third Review Conference should take in this area. Discussion points included:

- identifying challenges and opportunities associated with conflict and post-conflict situations;
- relevant implementation standards, guidelines, and tools;
- physical security (fences, guards, locks, etc.): what is needed?
- inventory management, including marking and record-keeping: what is needed?
- the management and security of small arms that are transported, moved, and/or transferred within a conflict/post-conflict environment;
- strengthening synergies between stockpile management and weapons marking, record-keeping, and tracing; and
- surplus disposal/destruction: what is needed?

Observations

Symposium participants noted the following:

- A wide range of actors may hold and store significant quantities of small arms and light weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations, including national security forces, peacekeeping missions (military and police components), private military and security companies, non-state armed groups, and local manufacturers.
- In practice, the ‘conflict and post-conflict’ label covers a wide range of environments, ranging from high-intensity armed conflict to countries with recent or less-recent conflict legacies that influence—typically weaken—stockpile management and security.
- The control measures that are most relevant to a specific conflict and post-conflict situation, including the potential destruction of collected weapons, depend, among other

things, on the actor in possession of the weapons and the operational environment.

- High-level political support for stockpile management and security is crucial to ensuring that small arms stockpiles are a source of security rather than insecurity in countries emerging from armed conflict. When present, such support often attracts international funding and facilitates the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel.
- Improvements in stockpile management and security are typically associated with improvements to other small arms control measures, in particular record-keeping.
- Weapons tracing also supports effective stockpile management by identifying security gaps in the stockpile.
- Although currently underutilized, international standards, guidelines, and best practice documents that apply to stockpile management and security in general also apply to stockpile management and security in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- New technologies, including new types of equipment, can strengthen stockpile management and security in conflict and post-conflict situations. Such technologies include, for example, mobile weapons depots that can be built in-country.

Symposium participants highlighted the following specific challenges to stockpile management and security in conflict and post-conflict situations:

- stockpile security in conflict and post-conflict situations, especially in situations of state collapse;
- security for the transport of weapons, especially in conflict-affected countries;
- inadequate record-keeping and inventory control;
- stockpile management and security for seized or recovered weapons;
- poor staff and skill retention in countries emerging from conflict; and
- the sustainability of efforts to strengthen stockpile management in conflict and post-conflict situations, including the human resources component.

Recommendations

1. Symposium participants emphasized the need to ensure the adequate

management and security of all small arms stockpiles in conflict and post-conflict situations. Of particular importance were regular inventories and the implementation of appropriate control measures when losses are detected.

2. Adequate stockpile management and security measures should be in place from the time weapons are imported into a conflict-affected/post-conflict country.
3. Equally important, adequate management and security measures, including record-keeping, should be applied to small arms that are seized or recovered in conflict and post-conflict situations in order to prevent their diversion to the illicit market.
4. Participants also noted the need for full accountability for peacekeeping contingent-owned equipment, including regular inspections and the reporting of any losses of equipment that occur during the mission.
5. It was important to ensure the security of all weapons transported from one location to another, especially in conflict-affected countries.
6. It was also important to ensure the security of weapons held by peacekeepers located outside of headquarters sites, including in forward operating bases and observation posts.
7. Participants recommended temporarily deactivating weapons designated for disposal/destruction pending such final disposal/destruction.
8. Participants encouraged the use of international standards, guidelines, and best practice documents for stockpile management and security in conflict and post-conflict situations.
9. Symposium participants also encouraged initiatives that would raise the awareness of senior political leaders—especially in countries emerging from conflict—of the importance of stockpile management and security for small arms and light weapons.

Recommendations: international assistance

1. Symposium participants noted that efforts to strengthen stockpile management capacities in conflict and post-conflict situations needed to be sustainable. This required, among other things, long-term donor support, sustainable budgeting for human resources, adequate resources for

field operations, and the effective coordination of resources and programmes.

2. Training for the management and security of small arms stockpiles in conflict and post-conflict situations was especially important. Such training should cover topics such as the transport of small arms from one site to another and secure storage at sites located outside of headquarters, including at forward operating bases and observation posts.
3. Participants encouraged the inclusion of a stockpile management training component in direct military assistance (“train and equip”) programmes.
4. They also encouraged the use of risk assessments in allocating resources for stockpile management and security in conflict and post-conflict situations in order to identify the most pressing needs and maximize the cost-effectiveness of such programmes.

Other relevant control measures

In line with the PoA itself, the BMS6 outcome document emphasizes the broad relevance of small arms control to conflict and post-conflict situations (UNGA, 2016, para. 105). Participants at the first thematic symposium were asked, in their view:

- What specific additional steps should the Third Review Conference take in this area?
- What control measures, in addition to weapons tracing and stockpile management, helped to curb illicit small arms and promote security in conflict and post-conflict environments?
- What could/should the UN small arms process say about such measures?

Discussion points included:

- relevant implementation standards, guidelines, and tools;
- counter-trafficking measures, including border controls;
- the collection of illicit, unwanted, and/or surplus small arms and ammunition in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- small arms control and the re-establishment of public security in post-conflict situations; and
- building the capacity of states emerging from conflict for small arms control, including those states transitioning from an arms embargo regime.

Voluntary weapons collection

Symposium participants noted that weapons-for-development programmes are often the most effective type of collection programme, because they avoid the creation of the secondary weapons markets that can arise when financial incentives are offered. At the same time they promote community engagement in the programme.

Symposium participants made the following recommendations regarding voluntary weapons collection programmes:

1. Adequate legal frameworks need to be in place for such programmes, addressing, among other things, weapons amnesties and, as applicable, the destruction of collected weapons.
2. Collected weapons should be managed with full public transparency, including at the time of their disposal/destruction.
3. Participants recommended integrating relevant small arms control measures into voluntary weapons collection programmes, including record-keeping and broader stockpile management and security measures.
4. They noted that civilians should feel secure before weapons are collected from them.
5. Education and public-awareness programmes should be conducted in order to build public confidence in voluntary weapons collection programmes
6. Community needs should be assessed when designing weapons-for-development programmes.
7. Participants also recommended, as applicable, integrating voluntary weapons collection programmes into local and national small arms strategies.

Export controls

Symposium participants identified international transfer control measures, in particular export controls, as essential to the promotion of security in conflict and post-conflict situations. They made the following recommendations in this area:

1. that governments strictly comply with their international arms transfer commitments, including with respect to end-user certification, when assessing export authorizations relating to conflict and post-conflict situations; and
2. that governments strictly vet applications for arms exports to private security providers operating in conflict and post-conflict environments, and deny such applications when

they risk undermining security in the recipient country.

Counter-trafficking measures

Symposium participants noted the important linkages between counter-trafficking measures in conflict and post-conflict situations and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG Target 16.4, which calls for a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030 (UNGA, 2015b). They also emphasized the important role that states neighbouring a country subject to an arms embargo play in monitoring its implementation. Participants made the following recommendations in this area:

1. Initiatives aimed at reducing incentives to engage in illicit trafficking, including in border areas, should be encouraged.
2. Synergies between the PoA/ITI and UN Firearms Protocol processes should be strengthened in the area of counter-trafficking.
3. Participants recommended enhancing synergies between the PoA/ITI and the Security Council Resolution 1540 process on weapons of mass destruction (UNSC, 2004), in particular by strengthening, as needed, controls on small arms exports, including brokering.
4. They also recommended taking gender into account in the design and implementation of measures to combat weapons trafficking, including the involvement of women in some forms of arms trafficking.

Border controls

Symposium participants noted that illicit weapons trafficking is often a problem in ungoverned or poorly governed border areas, which are a common feature of conflict and post-conflict settings. They made the following recommendations regarding border controls:

1. Cooperation should be strengthened, including the exchange of relevant information, to improve security at land, sea, and air borders; and relevant cooperation mechanisms should be strengthened or established for this purpose.
2. Adequate coordination should be ensured between government agencies within countries in addressing cross-border trafficking.
3. Participants recommended involving border communities in counter-

trafficking initiatives, including through the establishment of standing government–community structures (for example, ‘community safety councils’), to ensure that local concerns are understood and that communities understand how governments can help address their concerns.

4. They also urged the sustained, regular training of border and customs officials in the detection of trafficked weapons, including their parts and components (relating to methods of concealment, for example).

Security promotion programmes

Security promotion programmes encompass a range of specific small arms measures, such as those covered in the preceding sections of this paper. One such programme, DDR, features prominently in the PoA (UNGA, 2001b, paras. II.21, II.30, II.34–35, III.16) and has been referenced most recently in the BMS6 outcome (UNGA, 2016, paras. 35, 56). The BMS6 outcome also notes the relevance of conflict/post-conflict small arms control to UN peacekeeping missions (para. 55) and post-conflict reconstruction programmes, including peacebuilding (para. 56). Participants at the first thematic symposium were asked, in their view:

- What could/should the UN small arms process say about these and other conflict and post-conflict security promotion programmes?
- What role can such programmes play in monitoring illicit small arms, combating diversion, and strengthening small arms control?

Discussion points included:

- arms embargo monitoring;
- peacekeeping;
- DDR;
- security sector reform; and
- post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Observations

In ensuring the long-term success of programmes to promote security in conflict and post-conflict situations, symposium participants noted the importance of:

- high-level political backing;
- whole-of-government engagement;
- national ownership;

- human resources (skills development and retention); and
- long-term donor support.

General recommendations

1. Symposium participants emphasized the important role that national small arms coordination agencies can play in promoting security during post-conflict transitions. They recommended that such agencies be established or strengthened so as to ensure effective coordination on small arms and security issues across the whole of government.
2. Neighbouring states, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations, should be involved in the design and implementation of security promotion programmes in post-conflict situations.
3. Relevant small arms measures should be included in security promotion programmes conducted in conflict and post-conflict situations, including security sector reform programmes.
4. Small arms-related standards and guidelines, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (UN, 1990), should be employed in police training programmes in order to promote security and strengthen the rule of law, especially during post-conflict transitions.
5. The Security Council should include mandates for small arms control in the peace operations that it establishes, provide the necessary resources and expertise for their implementation, and monitor such implementation.
6. Countries emerging from conflict should be encouraged to develop national small arms action plans that include detailed implementation targets and associated indicators, based on the PoA and ITI.
7. Symposium participants underlined the need for security promotion programmes to take account of gender distinctions.
8. Security promotion programmes should also include gender-inclusive education covering such issues as weapons- and ammunition-related risks and weapons handling.
9. Communities, including traditional leaders, women, and other relevant stakeholders, should be closely involved in the development and implementation of security promotion programmes.

10. Such programmes should be coordinated with related efforts throughout all phases of the conflict and post-conflict period.
11. Symposium participants also emphasized the important role of regional and sub-regional organizations in enhancing security in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Recommendations: DDR programmes

Symposium participants recommended:

1. the integration of relevant small arms control measures into DDR programmes, including record-keeping and broader stockpile management and security measures;
2. linking the reintegration component of DDR programmes to initiatives designed to counter violent extremism;
3. addressing the specific needs of female ex-combatants in DDR programmes; and
4. implementing interim small arms control measures, such as record-keeping, in advance of disarmament and demobilization.

Recommendations: counter-terrorism programmes

Symposium participants recommended:

1. the involvement of affected communities in the design and implementation of counter-terrorism programmes;
2. the full integration of small arms-related investigative tools, including weapons tracing and the exchange of ballistics information, into efforts to combat terrorism;
3. strengthening cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels in conducting counter-terrorism initiatives; and
4. exchanging counter-terrorism best practices.

Recommendations: international assistance/capacity-building

Symposium participants recommended:

1. ensuring national ownership of small arms training programmes, including through their integration into recipient government structures, in order to maximize skills acquisition and

retention, in particular during post-conflict transitions;

2. ensuring adequate remuneration for personnel who work in arms control institutions;
3. providing training materials in local languages; and
4. establishing expert rosters for small arms control in conflict and post-conflict situations at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The role of the private sector in security provision

The private sector often plays an important role in the provision of security in conflict and post-conflict situations. Private security providers take many forms, including private military and security companies, community protection groups, and business-funded protection groups. They play a wide range of roles, including the provision of direct military assistance ('train and equip' programmes), the protection of humanitarian workers, and the performance of counter-trafficking functions.

Discussions at the first thematic symposium focused on the need to fill the regulatory gaps that sometimes exist with respect to private security providers in conflict and post-conflict settings, along with other factors aimed at strengthening their contribution to the security of the countries in which they operate.

Symposium participants made the following recommendations in this area:

1. They urged governments to strictly vet arms exports to private security providers operating in conflict and post-conflict environments, and to deny such exports where they risk undermining security in the recipient country.
2. The provision of security by private actors in conflict and post-conflict situations should be regulated in line with relevant international standards and guidelines.
3. There should be full accountability for the use of armed force by private security actors in line with relevant international standards and guidelines.
4. Small arms held by private security providers in conflict and post-conflict situations should be controlled in line with the provisions of the PoA and ITI, including those relating to record-keeping and stockpile management and security.
5. Small arms held by private security providers in conflict and post-conflict situations should be uniquely marked in line with the ITI.

6. Small arms held by private security providers in conflict and post-conflict situations should be responsibly disposed of when the security providers' role comes to an end.
7. Participants also noted the need to ensure the adequate regulation and control of armouries located in international waters ('floating armouries') in line with the provisions of the PoA and ITI, including those relating to weapons marking and record-keeping, and to the management and security of small arms stockpiles.

Small arms and the SDGs, and gender-related aspects of small arms control

The second thematic symposium was held immediately after the first, from 25 to 26 October 2017 at UN headquarters in New York. It covered two related, but distinct topics: (1) small arms and light weapons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 16; and (2) the gender-related aspects of small arms control (EU Council, 2017, p. 16).

Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly links sustainable development to peace, security, and arms control, with Target 16.4 committing UN member states to achieving a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030. BMS6—the first PoA meeting after the adoption of the SDGs—acknowledges this link in general terms and through specific references to synergies between the implementation of the SDGs and the PoA/ITI, including for reporting and data collection (UNGA, 2016, paras. 24–27, 53, 76, 99, 101, 108). As a result, the UN small arms process has clearly acknowledged the link between sustainable development and security, and taken some initial steps to take advantage of potential synergies with the SDGs process.

Beginning with the Second Review Conference in 2012, UN small arms meetings have also begun to connect small arms control to the broader UN agenda on women, peace, and security. Most recently, the BMS6 outcome has emphasized the need to promote the participation of women in small arms-related policy-making, planning, and implementation processes. More broadly, it underlined the importance of gender distinctions ('women, men, girls and boys'),

gender-disaggregated data, and gender equality to the fight against illicit small arms (UNGA, 2016, paras. 25, 58–61).

The second thematic symposium began its examination of PoA–SDGs synergies by focusing on implementation synergies (session 1), before considering the use of PoA/ITI reporting and other forms of data collection to support the measurement of SDGs implementation (session 2), as well as the development of complementary national- and regional-level indicators for the same purpose (session 3). Session 4 of the symposium considered the gender-related aspects of small arms control, while session 5 looked at PoA–SDGs synergies at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Identifying and taking advantage of implementation synergies between the UN small arms and SDGs processes

The BMS6 outcome acknowledges the connection between development and security through specific references to the



An Italian peacekeeper helps a Lebanese girl put on a helmet at the headquarters of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Naqura, Lebanon, September 2013. Source: Mahmoud Zayat/AFP Photo

SDGs, the illicit small arms trade, and PoA/ITI implementation (UNGA, 2016, paras. 25–26, 99, 101). Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of PoA and ITI implementation to the achievement of SDG 16 and Target 16.4 (para. 26). Participants at the second thematic symposium were asked what specific additional measures they thought the Third Review Conference should adopt in order to take full advantage of the implementation synergies between the two processes. Discussion points included:

- What specific small arms control measures support the achievement of SDG Target 16.4? What could be done to enhance such support?
- How do PoA/ITI control measures support the achievement of SDG 16, generally? What could be done to enhance such support?
- How do PoA/ITI control measures support the achievement of other SDGs? Which ones? What could be done to enhance such support?
- What relevant implementation standards, guidelines, and tools should be applied?
- What synergies exist with Target 16.a regarding the building of the capacity of national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime?

Target 16.4 reads:

‘By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime’ (UNGA, 2015b).

Indicator 16.4.2 reads:

‘Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments’ (UNGA, 2017).

Symposium participants made the following recommendations relating to implementation synergies:

1. They noted that the branches of government that deal with development and those that deal with small arms control often work in isolation. They recommended bridging this divide, in particular through national small arms coordination agencies (NCAs).

Paragraph II.4 of the PoA calls for the establishment of ‘national coordination agencies . . . for policy guidance, research and monitoring of’ small arms control

efforts (UNGA, 2001b). These bodies are also called ‘national small arms commissions’. Their specific functions, composition, and capacity vary according to the country.

2. The capacity of NCAs for integrated small arms/development work, including for PoA-/SDGs-related data collection and analysis, should also be strengthened.
3. The meaningful participation of women and civil society in NCAs should be ensured.
4. Small arms and small arms control issues should also be integrated into national development plans. Senior political ownership of such plans, as well as adequate financial, technical, and other resources for their implementation, should be ensured.
5. In the context of such plans, participants recommended linking specific PoA/ITI measures to specific development targets based on the SDGs, including those mentioned in paragraph 25 of the BMS6 outcome.

Paragraph 25 reads: ‘States noted that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has implications for the realization of several Sustainable Development Goals, including those relating to peace, justice and strong institutions, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality, and safe cities and communities’ (UNGA, 2016).

6. Symposium participants also recommended that national indicators, based on the PoA and ITI, be developed in order to measure progress made in the implementation of such plans, as well as the impacts of implementation. The data needed for this purpose should be collected and analysed.
7. National indicators, based on the PoA and ITI, should also be developed in order to measure progress made in the implementation of SDG Target 16.4 and other relevant SDG targets, including those relating to the reduction of violence and related death rates (Target 16.1), the promotion of the rule of the law (16.3), and the reduction of corruption and bribery (16.5). The data needed for this purpose should be collected and analysed.

The two preceding recommendations build on paragraph 27 of

the BMS6 outcome, which reads: ‘States encouraged, where appropriate, the development of indicators at the national level, based on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, which could be used to measure progress made in the implementation of target 16.4’ (UNGA, 2016).

8. In order to reduce illicit cross-border trafficking in line with SDG Target 16.4, effective national governance should be ensured in border areas in cooperation with border communities.
9. In strengthening the implementation of SDG Goal 16 and its Target 16.1, governments should also implement the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (UN, 1990).
10. Consistent with the PoA/ITI and related SDGs, participants recommended an increased focus on security promotion and violence reduction at the community level, drawing on partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
11. SDG implementation should be linked to community development, for example through the establishment of community-level incentives designed to underpin the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets.
12. Symposium participants also recommended that governments partner with civil society in designing and conducting public-awareness and education programmes relating to the PoA/ITI and SDGs.

Reporting/data collection synergies

The 2030 Agenda stresses the importance of measuring the achievement of the SDGs and adopts a system of global indicators for this purpose. The current formulation of Indicator 16.4.2, designed to measure the implementation of Target 16.4, reads: ‘Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments’ (UNGA, 2017).

The UN small arms process has an obvious role to play in supporting the measurement of progress made in implementing Target 16.4, with the BMS6 outcome highlighting synergies between PoA/ITI reporting and ‘data collection for relevant [SDG] indicators’

(paras. 53, 76). Participants at the second thematic symposium were asked how they thought the Third Review Conference could contribute to the measurement of relevant SDGs and targets, while at the same time strengthening ITI (and PoA) implementation. Discussion points included:

- using PoA and ITI reporting to provide data for relevant SDG indicators, in particular 16.4.2;
- the possible development and use of new global indicators;
- other types of data collection, including gender-sensitive methods, based on the PoA and ITI, that can enhance the measurement of progress made in achieving Target 16.4 and other relevant goals and targets; and
- drawing on the UN small arms process to establish information baselines for Target 16.4, Indicator 16.4.2, and other relevant targets and indicators.

Recommendations: types and characteristics of information

1. In addition to seizure data, symposium participants recommended the collection, compilation, and analysis of information on weapons used in crime, including homicides; weapons prices, including changes in prices; and trafficking routes and methods.
2. Seizure information should be disaggregated by weapon type and model, as well as the circumstances of seizure or retrieval. Information on parts, accessories, and ammunition should be distinguished from information on weapons.
3. Participants also called for the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data on small arms issues, including data on the meaningful participation and representation of women in policy-making, planning, and implementation processes related to the PoA.

Paragraphs 59–60 of the BMS6 outcome read:

‘59. To promote the meaningful participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to the Programme of Action, including their participation in national small arms commissions and in programmes relating to community safety and conflict prevention and resolution,

taking into account General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and subsequent resolutions on that question, as well as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up resolutions.’

‘60. To encourage the collection of disaggregated data on gender and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular for the purpose of improving corresponding national policies and assistance programmes’ (UNGA, 2016).

4. Participants noted the importance of providing the necessary context for data shared with states and other stakeholders. This included, for example, information about the geographical and temporal scope of the data, the agencies that had collected it, and the definitions and concepts used to generate it.
5. Where possible, the same definitions and concepts should be used for the same types of information in order to strengthen its comparability.
6. Symposium participants also encouraged the development of flexible reporting templates that allow states to provide detailed, disaggregated data where available.

Recommendations: national level

1. NCAs should be mandated to collect and compile small arms-related data from national agencies, including police, customs, and public health authorities.
2. The collection and analysis of national small arms-related data should be linked to national PoA/ITI implementation processes.
3. Participants also emphasized the need for senior political ownership of small arms-related data collection and analysis at the national level, as well as the provision of adequate financial, technical, and other resources for these efforts.

Recommendation: regional and sub-regional levels

1. In accordance with their existing mandates, regional and sub-regional organizations should be encouraged to build national capacity for the

collection and analysis of data relevant to the implementation of the PoA/ITI, SDG 16, and other related SDGs.

Recommendations: global level

1. Symposium participants urged states to increase the proportion of seized, found, or surrendered arms that they trace in order to measure reductions in illicit arms flows in support of Target 16.4 and Indicator 16.4.2.
2. They also recommended the development of global indicators in addition to Indicator 16.4.2, based on the PoA and ITI, in order to strengthen the measurement of progress made in implementing Target 16.4. Such indicators could, for example, involve the compilation of data on weapons collected, destroyed, marked, and/or recorded.

Recommendations: international cooperation and assistance

1. Participants called for the enhanced exchange of information relating to the implementation of the PoA/ITI, SDG Target 16.4, and other SDGs at the national, regional, and global levels, including between these levels.
2. The capacity of national statistical institutions to collect and analyse data related to the implementation of the PoA/ITI, SDG 16, and other related SDGs should be strengthened.

SDG Target 16.a reads:

‘Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime’ (UNGA, 2015b).

3. The capacity of NCAs to collect and analyse data related to the implementation of the PoA/ITI, SDG 16, and other related SDGs should be strengthened.
4. The capacity of regional/sub-regional organizations to collect and analyse data relevant to the implementation of the PoA/ITI, SDG 16, and other related SDGs at the regional/sub-regional level could also be strengthened in accordance with their existing mandates.

Complementary national- and regional-level indicators

Consistent with the 2030 Agenda, the BMS6 outcome encourages the development of national-level indicators, based on the PoA and ITI, for the purposes of measuring reductions in illicit arms flows in line with Target 16.4 (UNGA, 2016, para. 27). Participants at the second thematic symposium were asked what specific additional steps they thought the Third Review Conference should take in this area. Discussion points included:

- what national-level indicators, based on the PoA and ITI, would best complement Indicator 16.4.2;
- what regional-level indicators,² based on the PoA and ITI, would best complement Indicator 16.4.2; and
- how to build sustainable capacity for improved data collection and reporting.

BMS6 outcome, paragraph 27 reads:

‘States encouraged, where appropriate, the development of indicators at the *national* level, based on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, which could be used to measure progress made in the implementation of target 16.4’ (UNGA, 2016; emphasis added).

Note that the 2030 Agenda also encourages the development of *regional-level* indicators for measuring the implementation of SDGs and their targets:

‘The Goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the *regional and national* levels which will be developed by Member States’ (UNGA, 2015b, para. 75; emphasis added).

Recommendations: SDGs-related research

1. Symposium participants recommended that all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, be involved in the collection, compilation, and analysis of SDG data related to the PoA/ITI.
2. Baseline studies should be conducted in order to determine the scope, nature, and specific characteristics of small arms-related problems in a

country, including at the local/ community level.

3. Multiple sources of information should be used; changes should be tracked over time; and, to the extent possible, the accuracy of information should be verified.
4. Participants also urged the carrying out of longitudinal cohort studies in order to determine risk and resilience factors for armed violence.

Recommendations: indicator characteristics and features

1. Small arms-related indicators based on gender and on the women, peace, and security agenda should be developed. Such indicators could, for example, build on those proposed by the UN Secretary-General in his 2010 report (UNSC, 2010).
2. Youth should be involved in the development of national- and community-level indicators.
3. Communities should be involved in the development of indicators that apply to the relevant community, but that in certain cases could also be used at the national and regional/ sub-regional levels.
4. Symposium participants emphasized that complementary national- and regional-level indicators need to be clear and implementable.
5. They also noted the need for data to be disaggregated, indicating, as applicable, the weapon type/model, the circumstances of use, the licit/illicit nature of the weapon, whether the weapon had been illicitly converted or reactivated, ammunition calibre, the geographic location of an incident, and the gender and age of the perpetrator or possessor.

Recommendations: potential indicators

Indicators could be developed in the following substantive areas:

- community safety;
- security in border areas;
- reasons for migration/displacement;
- criminal small arms use (disaggregated by weapon type/model, etc.);
- pricing information (assessing supply and demand, including changes over time); and
- gun ownership and gun carrying.

Recommendations: information sources

Relevant information could be derived from the following sources:

- population-based surveys (concerning, for example, victimization, security perceptions, and attitudes towards public security provision);
- key informant/expert interviews;
- media reporting; and
- social media (but accounting and compensating for the limitations of social media).

Other recommendations

1. Symposium participants stressed the importance of raising awareness of the PoA/ITI and related SDGs, including the need to collect and analyse relevant data, among all segments of society.
2. Capacity for the unique identification of small arms and light weapons in support of SDG Indicator 16.4.2 should be strengthened.
3. Data on criminal small arms use, disaggregated by weapon type/model, circumstances of use, and other factors, should be collected.
4. Participants also encouraged the exchange of information on SDG data related to the PoA/ITI, including through global data-sharing platforms.

Gender-related aspects of small arms control

The Second Review Conference and BMS5 outcomes took the first steps within the UN small arms framework to acknowledge the broader UN agenda on women, peace, and security. The BMS6 text, building on these efforts, endorses ‘the meaningful participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to the Programme of Action’, referring to the specific examples of ‘their participation in national small arms commissions and in programmes relating to community safety and conflict prevention and resolution’ (UNGA, 2016, para. 59).

Building on past PoA meeting outcomes, the BMS6 outcome also highlights the gender-related aspects of the small arms problem. UN member states undertake to ‘take account of the differing

impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys’ in small arms-related policies and programmes, and to strengthen the latter through the collection of gender-disaggregated data and increased funding (UNGA, 2016, paras. 58, 60–61). Paragraph 25 of the BMS6 outcome also notes that the illicit small arms trade adversely affects ‘the realization of several Sustainable Development Goals, including those relating to . . . gender equality’.

As noted at the beginning of this paper, gender was a cross-cutting theme applicable to all of the topics discussed during the thematic symposia. But session 4 of the second thematic symposium saw participants focusing on this issue with a view to identifying specific additional steps that the Third Review Conference could take in this area. Discussion points included:

- promoting the meaningful participation and representation of women in small arms policy-making, planning, and implementation processes: specific steps?
- gender-specific aspects of the small arms problem (women, men, girls, and boys): contexts, policy implications?
- the adverse impacts of illicit small arms on gender equality: contexts, policy implications?
- the collection of gender-disaggregated data: inclusion in national PoA/ITI reports, additional steps, capacity-building;
- related SDGs and their implications for the PoA/ITI (including SDG 5 and SDG 10); and
- relevant standards, guidelines, and tools.

Recommendations: data collection and analysis

Paragraph 60 of the BMS6 outcome reads:

‘To encourage the collection of disaggregated data on gender and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular for the purpose of improving corresponding national policies and assistance programmes’ (UNGA, 2016).

1. Symposium participants emphasized the need to increase knowledge on gender and small arms, including

gender-specific impacts, such as intimate-partner violence, as well as female threat perceptions.

2. The public transparency and availability of gender-disaggregated data should be ensured.
3. The exchange of information on gender and small arms should be strengthened, including through the use of armed violence monitoring platforms.

Recommendations: promoting the meaningful participation and representation of women in small arms-related policy-making, planning, and implementation

Paragraph 59 of the BMS6 outcome reads:

‘To promote the meaningful participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to the Programme of Action, including their participation in national small arms commissions and in programmes relating to community safety and conflict prevention and resolution, taking into account General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and subsequent resolutions on that question, as well as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up resolutions’ (UNGA, 2016).

1. Symposium participants urged the strengthening of the participation and representation of women in small arms-related policy-making, planning, and implementation, including in leadership roles.
2. The participation and representation of women in the security sector, including in leadership roles, should be increased.
3. The equitable participation of women and women’s organizations in NCAs should be ensured.

Recommendations: mainstreaming gender in small arms policy development and implementation

Paragraph 58 of the BMS6 outcome reads:

‘To take account of the differing impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys in policies and programmes designed to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons’ (UNGA, 2016).

1. Participants underlined the need to reflect gender issues in policies and programmes relating to small arms.
2. Similarly, small arms issues should be reflected in policies and programmes relating to gender.
3. Gender-disaggregated research should be applied to the development, implementation, and evaluation of small arms policies and programmes, including national action plans.
4. Participants also emphasized the importance of public-awareness and education programmes relating to gender and small arms.

Recommendations: addressing gender-based violence

1. Data on armed violence targeting women and girls, including on their perceptions of threat and security/insecurity, should be collected and analysed.
2. Participants also urged effective measures at the national level, including legislative measures, to prevent and combat domestic and intimate-partner violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

Recommendations: gender-inclusive capacity-building, including training

1. Training on small arms issues, including weapons safety, should be made available to women.
2. As needed, women should also be trained in order to facilitate their participation in small arms control processes, including stockpile management and DDR.
3. Training on gender and small arms, including social and cultural norms relating to the use of small arms, should be made available to women and men, including at the community level.
4. Symposium participants also emphasized the importance of training on gender and small arms for government officials and decision-makers with responsibility for small arms control.

Capitalizing on PoA–SDGs synergies at the regional and sub-regional levels, including regional-level indicators

The fifth and final session of the second thematic symposium focused on synergies between small arms control and the SDGs process at the regional and sub-regional levels. This discussion included the topic of regional-level indicators, mentioned in paragraph 75 of the 2030 Agenda (UNGA, 2015b).

Recommendation: regional-level indicators

1. As a complement to global- and national-level indicators, symposium participants recommended the development of regional and sub-regional indicators based on the PoA and ITI for the measurement of related SDGs and targets, reflecting the specific situations of the various regions and sub-regions.

Recommendations: data collection and analysis

1. Existing regional and sub-regional mechanisms for the collection, compilation, and analysis of small arms-related data should be used to strengthen the measurement of related SDGs and targets.
2. Participants encouraged the development of common standards for the collection and analysis of small arms and related SDGs data at the regional and sub-regional levels.
3. They also encouraged the exchange of information on small arms and related SDGs between regions and sub-regions, and between regions/sub-regions and the global small arms process.

Other recommendations

1. Symposium participants recommended the incorporation of SDG-related targets and indicators in regional and sub-regional action plans on small arms.

2. Regional and sub-regional organizations should coordinate their small arms control efforts linked to SDG implementation with related initiatives in other regions and sub-regions, as well as at the global level.
3. Participants also encouraged regional and sub-regional organizations to identify within the region or sub-region gaps in capacity for the implementation of the PoA/ITI and related SDGs, including for data collection and analysis, and, in cooperation with the concerned state or regional/sub-regional entity, assist in addressing such gaps.

Recent developments in small arms manufacturing, technology, and design

Participants at the third thematic symposium, held in Brussels from 20 to 21 November 2017, were asked to identify practical, actionable steps that the UN membership could take at the Third Review



A man holds an AR-15 rifle and a lower receiver made of ABS plastic (in blue) that he made at his own home using a 3D printer, Maryland, United States, February 2012. Source: Jahi Chikwendiu/AFP Photo

Conference in order to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by recent developments in small arms manufacturing, technology, and design.

The First Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE1), which was convened within the PoA framework in 2011, called attention to two issues:

- the difficulty of durably marking polymer-frame firearms; and
- the challenges posed by modular weapons design to unique identification and tracing.

To these issues, the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2, 2015) added two others:

- the 3D printing (additive manufacturing) of small arms; and
- the opportunities offered by new and emerging technologies for strengthened small arms control.³

Discussion of the implications of these developments for PoA and ITI implementation at the PoA's Second Review Conference and BMS5 did not result in agreed steps forward (see UNGA, 2012; 2014b). The question of how to meet the new challenges was mostly left open in the chair's summary for MGE2 (UNGA, 2015a)—a document that, in any case, was not agreed by UN member states. The BMS6 outcome also postponed concrete action on the new challenges and opportunities, putting the issue on the agenda of the Third Review Conference (UNGA, 2016, paras. 63, 90).

The third thematic symposium considered in turn the issues of:

- polymer frames;
- modular weapons;
- 3D printing and other emerging challenges to small arms control;
- new opportunities for strengthened control; and
- new trafficking challenges, including illicit conversion, illicit reactivation, and online trafficking.

In each case participants were asked to identify practical, cost-effective solutions to the challenges, as well as opportunities for strengthened small arms control.

Polymer-frame marking

As noted at PoA meetings dating back to MGE1, the use of techno-polymers in the production of firearm frames often thwarts fulfilment of the ITI commitment to 'ensure

that . . . all marks required under this instrument are . . . durable and, as far as technically possible, recoverable' (UNGA, 2005, para. 7). Arms traffickers seeking to make a polymer gun untraceable will normally succeed in doing so once they remove the visible, factory-marked serial number from the frame. In contrast to markings made and erased on metal components, it is seldom possible to recover markings made and erased on polymer parts. The ITI does not take these characteristics of polymer firearms into account. Guidance is therefore needed on such issues as the marking technologies applicable to polymer firearms (including secondary, covert marking), the use of metal tags on such weapons, and the depth and placement of markings made directly on polymer parts.

Discussion points included:

- polymer vs metal: latest developments and implications for durable marking;
- technical solutions for the durable marking of polymer-frame firearms (including secondary, covert marking);
- post-manufacture marking;
- marking recoverability; and
- polymer parts (marking, record-keeping, and tracing).

ITI, paragraph 7 reads:

'The choice of methods for marking small arms and light weapons is a national prerogative. States will ensure that, whatever method is used, all marks required under this instrument are on an exposed surface, conspicuous without technical aids or tools, easily recognizable, readable, *durable* and, as far as technically possible, *recoverable*' (UNGA, 2005; emphasis added).

ITI, paragraph 10 reads:

'States will ensure that every small arm or light weapon always receives the unique markings prescribed in subparagraph 8 (a) above. A unique marking should be applied to an essential or structural component of the weapon where the component's destruction would render the weapon permanently inoperable and incapable of reactivation, such as the frame and/or receiver, in compliance with paragraph 7 above. States are encouraged, where appropriate to the type of weapon, also to apply the marking prescribed in subparagraph 8

(a) above or other markings to other parts of the weapon such as the barrel and/or slide or cylinder of the weapon, in order to aid in the accurate identification of these parts or of a given weapon' (UNGA, 2005).

General recommendation

1. As a general principle, symposium participants recommended that UN member states define the objective that is to be achieved (for example, the durable marking of small arms, including polymer-frame small arms). Within the parameters defined by the UN membership, the small arms industry would determine the best means of achieving this objective.

Recommendations: the use of metal tags; other methods for durable marking

1. Metal tags containing the unique markings prescribed by the ITI should be used for small arms or light weapons whose frame is not removable (in particular, handguns).
2. When such tags are used, they should be embedded into the frame or receiver of the weapon in such a way that their removal would significantly damage the frame or receiver, rendering the weapon permanently inoperable (see UNGA, 2005, para. 10).
3. Symposium participants also encouraged the development and use of methods other than metal tags for the durable marking of polymer-frame small arms and light weapons. Such methods could include the insertion of a window in the polymer frame so that unique markings made on metal parts of the weapon, such as the barrel or slide, can be seen.

Recommendations: primary, secondary, and additional marking

1. Participants emphasized that the primary marking of a polymer-frame small arm or light weapon containing the unique markings prescribed by the ITI should be 'on an exposed surface, conspicuous without technical aids or tools, easily recognizable, [and] readable' in accordance with paragraph 7 of the ITI (UNGA, 2005).

- When used as a backup to primary marking, the secondary marking of a polymer-frame weapon with the unique markings prescribed by the ITI need not meet the ITI (para. 7) requirement of visibility.
- States should exchange information on secondary marking systems in use within their jurisdictions for polymer-frame small arms, strictly ensuring its confidentiality.
- In addition to marking the essential/structural component of a polymer-frame small arm or light weapon, such as the frame or receiver, with the unique markings prescribed by the ITI, symposium participants also encouraged the unique marking of one or more metal parts of the weapon, such as the barrel or slide.

Other recommendations

- Participants recommended the durable marking of information permitting the identification of the country of import and, where possible, the year of import at the time of the manufacture of a polymer-frame small arm when the importer is known at the time of manufacture.
- They also encouraged the development and use of methods that allow marks that are erased or altered on polymer frames or receivers to be recovered to the same extent as markings erased or altered on metal components.

Modular weapons

Many countries are now looking to modular-design rifles as ‘all-in-one’ replacements for various rifle types and models. The upper or lower receiver of a modular rifle typically serves as a core section around which all—or almost all—other major parts and components can be changed in order to reconfigure the rifle to meet different operational needs. The barrel or calibre could be changed, for example, in order to optimize the engagement of targets at different distances. Despite such advantages, modular weapons erode the distinction between the weapon and its components, complicating unique identification and record-keeping, which are essential to weapons tracing. Symposium participants were asked how marking and record-keeping practices could be adapted so that a modular weapon can be uniquely identified—and traced—at any point in its life cycle, irrespective of the potential changes in its configuration.

Discussion points for this session included:

- the latest developments in modular design and their implications for marking, record-keeping, and tracing;
- marking location: identifying a ‘control component’, practical modalities;
- duplication of marks: an exception to the ITI paragraph 10 recommendation?
- marking content;
- record-keeping: creation of records, accounting for possible configurations; and
- tracing: additional problems and solutions.

Proposed definition of a modular weapon

- A ‘modular weapon’ is a small arm or light weapon whose parts and components can be changed by the user of the weapon with minimal technical knowledge, employing only common hand tools.

Recommendations: control component

- So that a modular weapon can be uniquely identified for tracing purposes, symposium participants recommended that the unique markings prescribed by the ITI be placed on a ‘control component’ of the weapon. The control component should be considered the ‘essential or structural component’ of the weapon, as defined in paragraph 10 of the ITI, and would constitute the weapon for tracing purposes, irrespective of subsequent changes in its configuration (change of parts or modules).
- Subject to government approval, the original holder of intellectual property rights for a specific model of modular weapon should determine which component of the weapon is the control component, consistent with paragraph 10 of the ITI. This information should be shared with other UN member states in order to facilitate tracing.
- Potential clearing-house mechanisms for the exchange of information identifying the control components of modular weapon models include INTERPOL (iARMS).
- The control component of a modular weapon should be distinguished

from its other, non-control components through distinctive marking. Options in this regard include placing a universally recognized symbol or character before or after the serial number marked on the control component. The same method would allow the control component serial number to be distinguished from logistical (lot) numbers that may be marked on the control component and/or other components.

Recommendations: additional marking

- In general, it is not appropriate to apply the unique markings prescribed by the ITI to parts of a modular weapon other than the control component. Modular weapons constitute an exception to the ITI paragraph 10 recommendation for additional marking.
- If, however, the unique markings prescribed by the ITI are made to non-control components of a modular weapon, they should be clearly identified as such. Options in this regard include placing a universally recognized symbol or character before or after the markings. In the same way, the unique markings applied to the control component should distinguish the control component from a modular weapon’s non-control components.
- Calibre should not be marked on the control component of a multi-calibre modular weapon, but rather on the barrel and on other components of the weapon that function according to a specific calibre. Alternatively, the control component of a multi-calibre modular weapon could be marked ‘multi-calibre’.

Recommendations: record-keeping

ITI, paragraph 11 reads:

‘The choice of methods for record-keeping is a national prerogative. States will ensure that accurate and comprehensive records are established for all marked small arms and light weapons within their territory and maintained in accordance with paragraph 12 below in order to enable their competent national authorities to trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner’ (UNGA, 2005).

- States should ensure that a record of the unique identifying information

marked on the control component of a modular weapon is established and maintained in line with the ITI.

2. At their discretion, states may wish to establish and maintain records of marked, non-control components of a modular weapon for tracing purposes, including tracing within the state.

Additional recommendation

1. Symposium participants underlined the importance of training, in particular of law enforcement personnel, in the unique identification of modular weapons for accurate and effective record-keeping and tracing.

3D printing and other emerging challenges to small arms control

An increasing number of firearms producers are using 3D-printing (additive manufacturing) technology to produce gun components and accessories. While high costs currently preclude the mass production of 3D-printed metal firearms, some hobbyists and craft producers are using the technology to produce functioning, although still basic, polymer firearms. Current norms, both national and international, including those contained in the PoA and ITI, are largely adequate for the control of consumer-produced 3D-printed guns, but the application of these norms is more difficult—largely because of the diffusion of small arms manufacturing technology to an increased number of individuals and groups. Unmarked, potentially untraceable, and less easily detected by security screening devices, 3D-printed guns are potentially attractive to criminals and non-state armed groups. While, on current measures of relative cost and performance, firearms produced using traditional manufacturing techniques, including craft-produced weapons, still better their 3D-printed counterparts, 3D-printing technology continues to improve and decrease in cost. How, therefore, can governments, drawing on the PoA and ITI, anticipate and forestall future, 3D-printing-fuelled small arms proliferation?

Discussion points for this session included:

- the latest developments in firearm-suitable, 3D-printing technology (including metal printers, materials, software, patents, and accessibility);
- manufacturing controls: accounting for 3D printing;

- marking, record-keeping, and tracing: accounting for 3D printing;
- international transfer controls: accounting for 3D printing;
- 3D printing: law enforcement challenges (including security screening and forensic techniques); and
- other emerging challenges to small arms control: problems and solutions.

New developments

Symposium participants noted the following technical developments regarding small arms manufacture:

- New developments in 3D metal-printing technology, 3D scanning technology, and computer-aided design (CAD) files may soon make it possible for individuals and small groups to produce safe, reliable small arms using these technologies.
- Among the most pressing proliferation risks is that posed by computer numerical control (CNC) machining. CNC machines are now facilitating the workshop-scale, often-unregulated production of small arms throughout the world.
- Distributed manufacturing, in particular the expansion of makerspaces in many countries, also poses a pressing proliferation threat, since it is increasing public access to small-scale, often-unregulated production capacity, including for the production of small arms.

Recommendations: regulation

1. Symposium participants noted that existing provisions of the PoA and ITI relating to small arms manufacturing apply to all forms of small arms manufacture, including 3D printing and distributed manufacturing.
2. Potential control gaps relating to the new developments include the regulation of the manufacture of small arms parts and the use of 3D-printing technology, including CAD files, for small arms manufacture.
3. States can combat the illicit manufacture of small arms using 3D-printing technology or other new technologies by strengthening the protection of intellectual property rights relating to small arms and light weapons.
4. Participants also recommended that UN member states and relevant UN bodies, such as the Security Council, ensure that the arms transfer

restrictions they impose on specific countries or entities cover relevant technical data and equipment, including CAD files and dual-use 3D-printing technology.

Other recommendations

1. Symposium participants encouraged the development and use of new technologies for the identification of small arms design files that are transferred over the internet.
2. Through targeted education programmes, they also recommended increasing the awareness of the manufacturers of 3D printers and other distributed manufacturing equipment of the need to comply with national laws regulating small arms manufacture.
3. Cooperation and information exchange on new forms of small arms manufacture, including their associated proliferation risks and options for control, should be strengthened, drawing on relevant expertise, including from industry and from within government.

New and emerging technologies: opportunities for strengthened small arms control

While technologies that are relatively new to the firearms industry—including the use of polymer, modular design, and 3D printing—can make small arms control more difficult, many new technologies could potentially strengthen such control. The BMS6 outcome highlights ‘the opportunities new technologies, when available, can offer’ for enhanced stockpile management and security, improved marking and record-keeping, and surplus weapons destruction (UNGA, 2016, para. 18). Such technologies range from new systems for firearms marking, recording, and information retrieval to networked, radio frequency identification-based inventory management systems that expand and increase the accuracy of information available to armoury managers.

The extent to which the potential of these technologies is realized depends on several factors, including cost, reliability, and maintenance and infrastructural requirements. Not all countries are able to set up and maintain the networked IT structures that some of these new systems require. Nevertheless, the declining relative cost of some of these technologies, including more mature technologies such as laser marking

machines, is putting them within the reach of a greater number of states.

Participants were asked what new, cost-effective technologies for small arms control the UN membership should be made aware of. This included the question of whether these technologies were suitable for use in less developed countries or other environments with limited physical and IT infrastructure.

Discussion points included:

- new and emerging technologies for marking, record-keeping, and tracing;
- new and emerging technologies for stockpile management and security;
- new and emerging technologies for strengthened end-use control, including for man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS);
- existing technologies that can be put to greater use as a result of increased availability, improved reliability, and/or reduced cost;
- the advantages and disadvantages of new and emerging technologies vis-à-vis conventional methods of small arms control;
- the primary barriers to the widespread adoption of promising new, emerging, or underutilized technologies for small arms control; and
- challenges and opportunities relating to international assistance.

General recommendations

1. Symposium participants urged increased cooperation between government and industry for the development of small arms control technology.
2. In particular, they proposed that a portion of defence sector research and development funding be used for the development of small arms control technology.
3. They also recommended making better use of existing tools and technology to strengthen small arms control.

Specific applications

Symposium participants identified the following specific types of technology as warranting further consideration for the purposes of strengthening small arms control:

- technical end-use controls for the supply of sensitive or potentially destabilizing weapons (including for the supply of weapons to non-state armed groups);

- tracking technology for the supply of sensitive or potentially destabilizing weapons (including for the supply of weapons to non-state armed groups);
- shape recognition technology that can identify objects in CAD files that are transferred online to 3D printers, thus allowing law enforcement officials to prevent the unauthorized 3D printing of weapons; and
- the use of distributed ledgers in strengthening the security of small arms-related transactions.

Recommendation: international assistance

1. Symposium participants emphasized that small arms control technology that is transferred to a recipient should be suited to the aims of a given project and sustainable over the long term. They stressed the importance of national ownership, the presence of recipient institutions with adequate capacity, and sustained donor support in this regard.

New trafficking challenges, including illicit conversion, illicit reactivation, and online trafficking

The final session of the third thematic symposium took up the question of new trends in small arms trafficking, with a specific focus on the illicit conversion of replica or blank-firing firearms into functional small arms, the illicit reactivation of deactivated small arms, and online trafficking—issues briefly referenced in the BMS6 outcome (UNGA, 2016, paras. 10, 31, 37, 72).

Illicit conversion

Illicit conversion becomes a problem when items such as replica or blank-firing small arms that are subject to little or no government control can be readily converted to function as lethal-purpose small arms. The ITI definition of ‘small arms and light weapons’ addresses the problem to some extent by specifying that items that ‘may be readily converted’ to function as a small arm or light weapon are to be considered small arms and light weapons (UNGA, 2005, para. 4). Yet the ITI offers no guidance as to what determines whether an item ‘may be readily converted’ to serve as a functioning weapon.

Symposium participants made the following recommendation regarding the question of convertibility:

1. An international standard should be developed based on existing national legislation. For example, under the UK Firearms Act 1982, ‘an imitation firearm shall be regarded as readily convertible into a firearm . . . if it can be so converted without any special skill on the part of the person converting it . . . and the work involved in converting it does not require equipment or tools other than such as are in common use by persons carrying out works of construction and maintenance in their own homes’ (UK, 1982, art. 1(6)).

Illicit reactivation

Article 9 of the UN Firearms Protocol addresses the issue of firearms deactivation. This provision requires ‘All essential parts of a deactivated firearm . . . to be rendered permanently inoperable’ and the procedure ‘to be verified, where appropriate, by a competent authority’ (UNGA, 2001a).

While the PoA does not address the issue, the BMS6 outcome, drawing on the language of the Firearms Protocol, offers basic guidance:

‘To ensure that destroyed and deactivated small arms and light weapons are rendered permanently inoperable such that illicit reactivation is physically impossible, and recognizing the value of relevant best practices in this regard’ (UNGA, 2016, para. 31).

Symposium participants made the following recommendations regarding illicit reactivation:

1. Information on deactivation standards should be shared.
2. The issue should be addressed in national legislation.
3. In accordance with national legislation, the deactivation of a small arm or light weapon should be verified by, or notified to, a competent national authority.
4. Participants also encouraged states to associate the deactivation procedure with a specific licence, thus allowing them to follow subsequent changes in a weapon’s ownership or possession.

Online trafficking

In discussing the problem of online trafficking, symposium participants made the following observations:

- While the internet facilitates small arms trafficking, bringing sellers and purchasers together more easily, it does not qualitatively change the illicit weapons trade.
- It is difficult to monitor the standard (generally accessible) part of the internet, given the huge number of transactions conducted there, most of which are legitimate.
- A significant portion of the illicit online trade in small arms and light weapons involves parts and components.

Participants made the following recommendations regarding online trafficking:

1. States should ensure that national laws and regulations applicable to the small arms trade apply to transactions conducted through the internet in the same way that they apply to transactions conducted by other means.
2. They should also ensure that national laws and regulations applicable to the small arms trade apply to transactions in 'essential or structural' parts and components (UNGA, 2005, para. 10), whether conducted through the internet or by other means.

Synergies with other arms control instruments and processes

The fourth and final thematic symposium, held in Geneva from 23 to 24 November 2017, dealt with synergies between the PoA/ITI and other arms control instruments, including the UN counter-terrorism mechanisms.

Although the PoA covers most aspects of the small arms/light weapons life cycle, from manufacture to destruction, it is part of a broader framework for conventional arms control that complements and expands on PoA norms. For this reason, in the PoA 'States undertake . . . to ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy' in tackling the illicit small arms trade (UNGA, 2001b, para. III.2). The BMS6 outcome emphasizes the point, highlighting the 'linkages', 'complementarities', and 'synergies' that exist between the UN small arms instruments (the PoA and ITI), on the one hand, and related

instruments, organizations, issues, and processes, on the other (UNGA, 2016, paras. 22, 36, 45, 67).

The fourth thematic symposium focused above all on the synergies between the PoA/ITI and other conventional arms control instruments at the global level, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (UNGA, 2013) and the UN Firearms Protocol (UNGA, 2001a). Participants were asked how they thought the PoA and ITI could draw on other instruments (and organizations and processes) in addressing the most pressing small arms-related challenges.

The symposium's first session examined potential synergies between the arms control instruments with reference to the main issues covered by the PoA and ITI. The second session addressed the question of synergies in an area of increasing importance for the UN small arms process, namely small arms-related crime, including terrorism. For the third session the focus shifted to implementation processes: information exchange, including reporting, as well as broader forms of cooperation and coordination. The fourth session considered synergies in the area of international assistance, specifically with a view to ensuring its 'adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability' in line with commitments made most recently at BMS6 (UNGA, 2016, sec. III.B).

Synergies between the instruments: issue by issue

While at the global level the PoA provides the basic normative framework for small arms work, other instruments fill normative gaps or provide the operational detail that is lacking in the text of the PoA. The first session of the symposium, which was structured around many of the principal control measures contained in the PoA, sought to identify these sources of added value. Topics of discussion included:

- manufacturing controls;
- international transfer controls, including brokering;
- stockpile management and security; and
- surplus identification and disposal.

Manufacturing controls

The problem of small-scale, illicit craft production was not only on the agenda in Geneva; it was a recurrent theme throughout the thematic symposia. PoA norms applied to this activity, but were relatively broad in nature and lacking in

operational detail (see UNGA, 2001b, paras. II.2–II.3). Participants at the fourth thematic symposium noted that the UN Firearms Protocol offered more detailed guidance for the regulation of small arms manufacture, since it defined 'illicit manufacturing' (UNGA, 2001a, art. 3d); required the confiscation and destruction or disposal of illicitly manufactured firearms (art. 6); and required 'the security of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition at the time of manufacture' (art. 11a).

As in Brussels, participants in Geneva noted that the increasing availability and use of CNC milling machines brought small arms manufacturing technology within the reach of more and more people.

Symposium participants made the following recommendation in this area:

1. Governments should subject the acquisition or possession of equipment that can be used for small arms production to a formal licensing or authorization procedure.

International transfer controls, including brokering

Arms transfer licensing

Symposium participants noted that articles 6 and 7 of the ATT fleshed out the general PoA commitment to ensure that international small arms transfers are conducted in accordance 'with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law' (UNGA, 2001b, para. II.11). In essence, these articles define what 'relevant international law' is for ATT states parties.

Participants made the following recommendation with respect to the licensing of small arms transfers:

1. PoA commitments on the licensing of small arms transfers should be strengthened by drawing on the reference in ATT Article 7(4) to 'serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children'. This should be integrated into small arms transfer decision-making.

Preventing and combating diversion

Participants noted that PoA norms relating to the prevention of arms transfer diversion are relatively strong. For example, under paragraph II.12 of the PoA, states undertake 'to ensure . . . effective control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons' (UNGA, 2001b).

The BMS6 outcome refers to 'end-use certification' (UNGA, 2016, paras. 12, 107;



A confiscated sub-machine gun belonging to jihadists linked to the Islamic State group in Morocco is put on display by the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation (BCI), Salé, Morocco, January 2017. Source: Fadel Senna/AFP Photo

emphasis added), building on the PoA reference to ‘authenticated end-user *certificates*’ (UNGA, 2001b, para. II.12; emphasis added). As noted by symposium participants, ensuring that declared end users are the actual end users of a potential shipment of arms abroad is in fact a *process* that involves not only the use of end-user documentation, but also its verification.

Participants made the following recommendations in this area:

1. General PoA and BMS6 references to end-user certificates/certification should be developed by drawing on Article 11 of the ATT, which lists measures that can be taken to reduce diversion risks and address actual cases of diversion.
2. Participants also recommended strengthening the exchange of information on cases of diversion among governments and within individual governments in order to enhance arms transfer licensing (strengthening risk management through better information).

Brokering controls

Symposium participants made the following recommendation in this area:

1. States should exchange information on brokering licences, brokers operating outside their country of nationality, and disbarred brokers.

Stockpile management and security

Building on the BMS5 outcome, the BMS6 outcome makes several references to the ‘life-cycle management’ of small arms and light weapons (UNGA, 2016, paras. 14, 102, 109). It is unclear how the concept of life-cycle management differs from the standards for stockpile management and security prescribed in the PoA.

Symposium participants made the following recommendation in this regard:

1. The concept of life-cycle management for small arms and light weapons should be developed with reference to relevant international standards, including the International Small Arms Control Standards (UNCASA, n.d.) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (UNODA, 2015).

Synergies between issue areas

Participants noted that synergies occur not only in relation to different instruments,

but also in relation to different types of control measures. In this regard, they made the following recommendation:

1. Stockpile security in a prospective importing country should be linked to arms export authorizations in the case of high-value or potentially destabilizing items, such as MANPADS.

Addressing small arms-related crime, including terrorism

The fight against small arms-related crime extends not only to transnational organized crime, which is referenced in the PoA (UNGA, 2001b, para. II.38) and is the main focus of the UN Firearms Protocol (UNGA, 2001a), but also to ‘organized crime’, ‘urban crime’, and ‘terrorism’ (UNGA, 2016, para. 35). The PoA and ITI emphasize measures such as weapons seizures, as well as marking, record-keeping, and tracing, in addressing these challenges. Since 2010, PoA meeting outcomes have given greater prominence to border controls (UNGA, 2016, paras. 33–35, 104). The UN membership has also recently underlined the need to tackle new developments in small arms trafficking, such as the illicit conversion of replica or blank-firing weapons into functional weapons, the illicit reactivation of deactivated small arms, and online trafficking (UNGA, 2016, paras. 10, 31, 37, 72). Symposium participants were asked how the PoA and ITI could meet these challenges, drawing on the example of other arms control instruments and processes.

Control measures discussed during the session included:

- border controls;
- seizure, confiscation, and collection (including gender-related aspects); and
- marking, record-keeping, and tracing.

Topics of discussion included:

- illicit conversion;
- illicit reactivation;
- online trafficking (including the trafficking of parts and components);
- terrorism (including synergies with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and associated mechanisms); and
- other aspects of small arms-related crime, including gender-related aspects.

Observations

The discussion of small arms-related crime highlighted the following:

- the presence of links between small arms trafficking and trafficking in drugs, cultural property, and people; and with cybercrime and terrorism;
- the problem of ungoverned border spaces where trafficking is often common; and
- gender-related aspects, including the involvement of women in some forms of small arms trafficking, while also noting the need for better data in this area.

Recommendations

1. Symposium participants urged states to take full advantage of synergies with the UN transnational organized crime/Firearms Protocol and UN counter-terrorism processes.
2. Counter-terrorism initiatives should be linked to regional-level PoA implementation.
3. Whole-of-government approaches to arms control should be strengthened to involve all relevant branches of government, including police, customs, and arms export licensing authorities.
4. Information should be shared on successful trafficking prosecutions, incidents of diversion, trafficking routes and techniques, and good law enforcement practices—including risk management methods and processes, which, participants stressed, depended on good information.
5. Participants recommended that the UN membership consider and address, within the PoA framework, the links between small arms trafficking and corruption.
6. Participants also recommended the application of principles underpinning action against violent extremism to DDR, in particular its reintegration component.

Illicit conversion, illicit reactivation, and online trafficking

Discussions of these issues at the fourth thematic symposium mirrored those at the third thematic symposium. See, therefore, the sections of this paper covering the third symposium for the main observations and recommendations in this area.

Cooperation, coordination, and information exchange/ reporting

The BMS6 outcome covers the subject of cooperation and coordination on small arms issues extensively, with a particular focus on the theme of information exchange, including national reporting. Drawing on other instruments and processes, including those related to gender, symposium participants were asked how they thought UN member states could strengthen practical (operational) cooperation and coordination on small arms control. In addition, they were asked what kinds of information exchange—within individual governments, among states, and between states and other stakeholders—remained underutilized or entirely untapped.

Discussion points included:

- enabling cooperation for international investigations and prosecutions in relation to illicit small arms, including mutual legal assistance (operational cooperation);
- strengthening cooperation with organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO) in combating illicit small arms (operational cooperation);
- exchanging information, experiences, guidelines, and standards used in a country, sub-region, or region that may be of relevance to others;
- the role of national points of contact (NPCs) in strengthening cooperation, coordination, and information exchange, including cooperation between NPCs for different instruments; and
- practical ways of minimizing reporting burdens and making better use of the information provided in national reports.

General recommendations

1. Symposium participants urged UN member states to strengthen operational cooperation, including with multilateral organizations such as INTERPOL and the WCO.
2. Information exchange at all levels should also be strengthened.
3. Participants noted that NPCs could be used to strengthen cooperation, coordination, and information exchange among states, and between states and other stakeholders.

4. It was equally important at the national level to strengthen NCAs.
5. Where possible, reporting burdens should be minimized. At the same time, better use should be made of the information contained in national reports, thus creating clear incentives for reporting.

Recommendations: regional and sub-regional levels

1. Where possible, regional reporting should be linked to global reporting, as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has done. Some symposium participants noted, however, that this was often difficult in practice because of the divergent evolution of regional and global norms, as well as the need to update supporting IT infrastructure.
2. Cooperation at the regional level should be strengthened, for example by bringing national small arms commissions together for discussions on the implementation of the PoA and ITI at the regional and sub-regional levels. Such discussions could also be held among the law enforcement, customs, and arms transfer licensing authorities of the various countries in the region or sub-region.
3. Information in national reports should be used to support discussions around strengthened PoA and ITI implementation at the regional and sub-regional levels.
4. Symposium participants also recommended that regional organizations report on regional-level implementation of the PoA and ITI and propose specific means of enhancing regional-level synergies with the global small arms process.

Recommendations: global level

1. Cooperation and information exchange should be strengthened between PoA/ITI NPCs and the NPCs of related instruments and processes.
2. Operationally driven cooperation should be strengthened among states and between states and other stakeholders.
3. Symposium participants also recommended that states take advantage of reporting synergies with the SDGs process, using the SDGs' emphasis on measurability to strengthen the measurement of PoA and ITI implementation.

International assistance: adequacy, effectiveness, and sustainability

International assistance is a critical element of efforts to strengthen small arms control in line with the PoA and ITI. It has been a standalone theme of PoA meetings since 2008 (BMS3), with recent PoA meetings focusing on 'Ways to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of assistance' (UNGA, 2016, sec. III.B). Symposium participants were asked how they thought the Third Review Conference, drawing on complementary instruments and processes, could strengthen international assistance for PoA and ITI implementation.

Discussion points included:

- recipient states: challenges and solutions relating to international assistance;
- donor states: challenges and solutions relating to international assistance;
- ensuring recipient ownership of assistance programmes, including the participation of women and other relevant stakeholders;
- coordinating international assistance in order to avoid the duplication of efforts: lessons learned at the global, regional, sub-regional, and national levels;
- measuring the impact of assistance programmes, in particular their adequacy, effectiveness, and sustainability; and
- sharing lessons learned and good practices.

Challenges

Symposium participants noted the following challenges relating to international assistance:

- donor coordination;
- ensuring recipient ownership; and
- ensuring that the needs of individuals and communities are addressed in assistance programmes (which at present is often overlooked).

Recommendations

1. Symposium participants stressed the need to build the capacity of NPCs and NCAs so that they can function effectively *as institutions* over the longer term.
2. Small arms work should be integrated into national development frameworks.

3. Long-term support should be provided for small arms control, including support for projects that build on existing ones (sustained support for sustainable capacity).
4. The institutions that have the authority and capacity to implement projects in a sustainable way, including at the regional level, should be targeted.
5. Existing funding mechanisms should be used to improve donor coordination (although some participants believed that additional information and new mechanisms that consolidate available information are needed; several participants also said that some existing funding mechanisms are not suited to comprehensive, long-term work).
6. Symposium participants encouraged donors, project implementers, and recipients to strengthen their coordination of assistance projects in order to avoid duplication and maximize impact.
7. Participants also urged the development and exchange of guidelines and good practices for the assessment of the impacts of assistance projects.

Unauthorized re-export

Given its many qualifiers, it is difficult to claim that PoA paragraph II.13 discourages states from re-exporting small arms without notifying or seeking authorization from the original exporting country in accordance with an initial end-user undertaking (UNGA, 2001b). Nor does the ATT address the issue, for example in its diversion article (UNGA, 2013, art. 11).

In light of this normative gap, symposium participants offered the following recommendations:

1. States should develop a common understanding of the types of unauthorized re-exports that should be considered to be problematic, taking into account such things as the timing of a particular re-export.
2. States should share information on measures they have taken in response to cases of unauthorized re-export.
3. They should also share information on states that do not comply with end-user undertakings relating to re-export.
4. Symposium participants also noted that existing tools could be used to reduce the risk of unauthorized re-export. They included end-user verification, post-delivery checks, and the application of risk management good practices. ●

List of abbreviations and acronyms

ATT Arms Trade Treaty
BMS Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
CAD Computer-aided design
CNC Computer numerical control
DDR Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
iARMS INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System
INTERPOL International Criminal Police Organization
IT Information technology
ITI International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons
MANPADS Man-portable air defence system(s)
MGE Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts
NCA National small arms coordination agency
NPC National point of contact
PoA Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
SDG Sustainable Development Goal
WCO World Customs Organization

Notes

- 1 For the mandate, see EU Council (2017).
- 2 The 2030 Agenda calls for the development of both national- and regional-level indicators (UNGA, 2015b, para. 75).
- 3 For more on these issues, see King and McDonald (2015); UNGA (2014a).

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