



General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 May 2016

Original: English

Sixth 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
New York, 6-10 June 2016

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report is divided into three sections:

- A. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and general implementation of the Programme of Action.
- B. An update of developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.
- C. The adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

This section also covers options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials, nominated by their respective Governments, in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Introduction

1. By its resolution 70/49, entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report – taking into account the recommendations and requests made by the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (BMS5) in paragraphs 27 and 38 of its outcome document – dedicated “to these issues and on the implementation of the resolution”.¹
2. The recommendations and requests in the above-mentioned outcome document of BMS5 are the following:
 - i. In paragraph 27(d), States undertook to consider developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.
 - ii. In paragraph 27(e), States recommended that “the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide through his annual consolidated report on small arms and light weapons, as required, further information relevant to these developments, building upon his initial report (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1) and discussions that will occur at the 2015 open-ended meeting of governmental experts, for consideration by Member States at relevant future meetings on the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument”.
 - iii. Paragraph 38(m) requested the Secretariat “to present, for consideration at the 2015 open-ended meeting of governmental experts, options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials, nominated by their respective Governments, in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument”. This report will provide information additional to what was presented by the Secretariat at the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, held from 1-5 June 2015.
 - iv. Paragraph 38(n)(i) of the same outcome document furthermore requested the Secretariat “to carry out a comprehensive study on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action, and to submit this study for

¹ Fifth 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 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2*).

discussion at the open-ended meeting of governmental experts in 2015 and consideration at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (2016)".

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to these requests made by the General Assembly. This report will thus be divided into three sections:
4. Section A will address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and general implementation of the Programme of Action.
5. Section B will provide an update of developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.
6. Section C will focus on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. It will also provide information on options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials, nominated by their respective Governments, in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Section A: The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and implementation of the Programme of Action

Impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

7. One in four people on the planet, more than 1.5 billion, live in fragile and conflict-affected states or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence.²
8. Nowadays, more than half a million people per year die a violent death; about 70,000 perish as a direct consequence of armed conflict.³
9. The number of civil wars in the world has tripled over the past decade.⁴ Wars, conflict and persecution have forced more people than at any other time since records began, to flee

² World Development Report: Conflict, Security, and Development (World Bank, 2011).

³ Small Arms Survey, The Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts (Geneva 2015).

their homes and seek refuge and safety elsewhere. Refugees and internally displaced persons endure some of the worst small arms-related violence.⁵

10. The widespread availability of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a key enabler of conflict and endemic crime. These weapons may originate from varied sources. Shipments of small arms from abroad to conflict zones and to areas experiencing pervasive crime can be sizeable, but are most often small-scale consignments – a steady trickle of weapons across porous borders. The cumulative destabilizing force of such trade – for example, as equipment of foreign terrorist fighters, pirates, armed groups or organized crime syndicates – is not to be underestimated.
11. Domestically, small arms and ammunition often enter illicit circulation through theft, resale and corruption. Diversion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a colossal problem in many parts of the world. It may occur as a result of a transfer without proper controls, unauthorized retransfer, thefts from poorly secured stockpiles, handouts to armed groups or civilian populations, or barter involving natural resources. Corruption is often associated with diversion. Government depots remain prominent sources of illicit weapons.
12. Those suffering most from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are civilian populations trapped in situations of armed violence in settings of both crime and conflict, often in conditions of poverty, deprivation and extreme inequality. Conflict is a key factor in leaving almost 800 million people without enough food.⁶
13. The 2015 Global Study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 contained a resounding call to accelerate disarmament and drew a strong parallel between the global arms trade and the insecurity of women and girls. The Study articulated the linkage between small arms violence, gender-based violence and organized crime.
14. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons leads to suspension or delay of life-saving humanitarian and development operations, because of armed attacks against United Nations staff and those of other humanitarian organizations. The consequences impact negatively on almost all areas of the work of the United Nations. Be it in maintaining international peace and security, promoting social and economic development, supporting peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding efforts, monitoring sanctions and arms embargoes, delivering food aid or protecting and assisting internally displaced persons and refugees, protecting children and civilians, promoting gender equality or fostering the rule of law, the United Nations have faced serious challenges and setbacks that ultimately can be traced to the consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

⁴ un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsId=53653.

⁵ forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/small-arms-and-forced-migration/displacement-and-small-arms.

⁶ Global Hunger Index 2015 (International Food Policy Research Institute, Bonn / Washington / Dublin 2015).

The Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

15. In 2001, Member States adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This politically binding instrument laid the foundation for action at the national, regional and global levels and has become a valuable tool for States, international organizations and civil society. It recommended starting negotiations on a separate instrument on tracing illicit small arms – concluded in 2005 – and it paved the way for increased attention of Member States to the issue of illicit small arms brokering. The Programme of Action contains concrete suggestions for improved national legislation and controls, and for international assistance and cooperation.

National level

16. Further progress has been made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. An increasing number of States have improved their legislation related to stemming the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms at the national level. Marking at manufacture is often in place. Weapons collection and destruction initiatives have sometimes lead to good results. Some States have integrated small arms action plans into national development strategies. In their national reports, States needing assistance increasingly indicate so.
17. But many of the requirements of the instrument for implementation at the national level remain unfulfilled. Inadequate stockpile management persists as an acute problem in many parts of the world. Illicit manufacture, or craft production, continues on a large scale. Marking small arms on import is too often not undertaken. Security forces are often not able to enforce the law and provide safety to communities. And the setting up of procedures for effective operational information exchange with investigative and law enforcement authorities from other States and with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) leaves much to be desired.

Regional level

18. The Programme of Action's suggested measures at the regional level have prompted some promising regional initiatives to curb the illicit trade in small arms, especially from a norm-setting point of view. More efforts are needed to reflect these initiatives in national legislation and functioning procedures. Where resources are made available, regional organizations have been able to make a real difference on the ground; technical support and assistance is often provided by programmes, initiatives and projects of United Nations funds and agencies. These partnerships ensure synergy and the effective use of resources.
19. The League of Arab States and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are examples of regional organizations that regularly align the timing of

regional meetings regarding illicit small arms and light weapons with the global cycle of meetings. Connecting efforts at the regional and global level – as mandated by the outcome of the Second Review Conference on the Programme of Action in 2012⁷ – can create a synergetic interaction which impacts positively on implementation at the national level.

Global level

20. At the global level, States were able to agree to substantive outcomes of the biennial meetings of the Programme of Action in 2010 and 2014 and its review conference in 2012. They held technical discussions in two meetings of governmental experts (2011, 2015). Progress in these various meetings included understandings to work on measurability, on gender considerations, on the value of ballistics research in weapons tracing, on preventing depot explosions, on discussing the impact of new weapons-related technologies, and on considering improved mechanisms for assistance and cooperation. The coming two years will provide the opportunity to develop these and other issues into concrete elements for a tailored work programme for a new six-year cycle starting with the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action in 2018.
21. Progress in related processes also positively impacts implementation of the Programme of Action. Most importantly, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – on which Member States agreed at the beginning of the 70th General Assembly session (A/Res/70/1) – was a defining moment for global efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. With the inclusion of the specific target to, “by 2030, significantly reduce illicit (...) arms flows”, States have embedded the objectives of the Programme of Action in a time-bound, measurable, development-focused perspective, that may now guide further work under the Programme of Action.
22. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), in December 2014, was a second recent momentous occasion. Through the ATT, properly regulating the international arms trade, and taking steps to prevent the diversion of weaponry and ammunition, have become binding commitments for its States parties. Importantly, the ATT contains a criterion on gender-based violence. Progress in implementation of the ATT is of immediate relevance to implementation of the Programme of Action.
23. Also other progress can be noted. The Security Council has adopted two resolutions on the issue of small arms (S/RES/2117 (2013); S/RES/2220 (2015)), which in particular focused on the small arms situation in settings of conflict and peacekeeping. The latest of these resolutions called for enhanced reporting synergies on the issue of illicit use of small arms and light weapons. It noted the utility of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) in helping Sanctions Committees determine if an exemption to an arms embargo is justified. The resolution acknowledged the urgent need to address the issue of ammunition alongside small arms and light weapons. Moreover, Resolution 2242 (2015) encourages women’s participation in the design and implementation of efforts to prevent illicit transfer of small arms.

⁷ A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, III. Para 7.

24. In 2015, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on “Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms”, requesting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report “on the different ways in which civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms have been effectively regulated, with a view to assessing the contribution of such regulation to the protection of human rights, (...) and to identify best practices that may guide States to further develop relevant national regulation if they so deem it necessary” (A/HRC/RES/29/10). The ensuing report provides an overview of the impact of the misuse of firearms on the enjoyment of human rights. It includes recommendations for States to “provide victims of firearms violence with effective measures of protection and reparation, including access to adequate health care”, and to impose appropriate penalties for offences involving the misuse or unlawful possession of firearms, the illicit sale of firearms and their unauthorized international transfer. Importantly, the report stresses that “firearm violence and the underlying proliferation of firearms, including illicit firearms, must be systematically measured, monitored and reported” (A/HRC/32/21).
25. Under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, States pay increased attention to the provisions of its Firearms Protocol, through a recently established dedicated working group and tools developed by the Secretariat.⁸
26. Solid advances were made in consistency and comprehensiveness of United Nations support for full life-cycle management of small arms and light weapons. In order to provide dependable, high-quality assistance across offices and agencies, the United Nations system has developed modular packages of good practices on small arms, light weapons and ammunition control (ISACS – International Small Arms Control Standards, and IATG – International Ammunition Technical Guidelines), which are publicly available.⁹ Security Council resolution S/RES/2220 (2015) recognized the value of these standards and guidelines, as did the outcome of BMS5 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2 I.12. and I.17(e)). Their wide application by the United Nations system as well as by other stakeholders, underscores the value of coordinated approaches on highly cross-sectional topics. Many other entities, within the United Nations and outside of it, now make routine use of these guidelines.
27. Within the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), a structure for operational information exchange on illicit small arms has been established, the Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS) database. INTERPOL reports that access to iARMS is extended to all INTERPOL member States, that 146 countries are connected to iARMS, that iARMS currently has more than 785,000 illicit firearms records, and that more than 12,000 trace requests were received.
28. Within the World Customs Organization, States have adopted a small arms and light weapons strategy in 2015. The strategy aims at assisting the 180 WCO member States to combat illicit cross-border trafficking of arms, their parts, and ammunition. The WCO Secretariat’s work on this topic has focused on setting up coordinated global operational activities to detect illicit shipments in international supply chains, as well as policy guidance, technical assistance, and capacity building.

⁸ unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/firearmsprotocol.html.

⁹ smallarmsstandards.org; un.org/disarmament/convarms/ammunition/IATG.

29. Lack of progress at the global level is also noticeable. Importantly, until now the Programme of Action was deficient on measurability and including specific numerical targets. Also, it does not provide concrete procedures for operational information exchange among States' investigative or law enforcement authorities. Nor does it provide a framework to facilitate international assistance and cooperation among States. Hence, States have had difficulty finding cooperative structures and linking needs with resources.
30. The issue of small arms intersects with many related themes. It is relevant in areas from peacekeeping, inner-city crime and elections, to maritime security, forced migration and public health; from human rights, trade policy and aviation security, to military stockpile management, humanitarian aid and development. Because of the deeply cross-cutting nature of the issue, meetings under the Programme of Action should take into account that several national agencies may need to be involved, and that the international work related to small arms control is simultaneously undertaken in many fora.
31. This report provides suggestions which may assist States in further strengthening their implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, by focusing recommendations in particular on how States can improve global process management – both under the Programme of Action meetings and as an effective contribution towards the mechanism underpinning the sustainable development goals. The start of preparations for the Third Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action – to be held in 2018 – makes this endeavour even more topical.

Legislation, law enforcement, and information exchange

32. Up-to-date national legislation and well-functioning law enforcement remain essential elements for successfully addressing the illicit arms trade at the national level. Also, it is key for any government to have in place tested procedures allowing frequent information exchange between police, intelligence, armed forces, border control, coast guard and other security sector agencies.
33. Meanwhile, the value of cross-border information exchange on matters pertaining to national security has become more prominent as well. Under relevant treaties and agreements – including the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty – States consistently underline the need of exchanging operational information. Such information exchange could be on weapons tracing, preventing diversion, trafficking routes, illicit brokers, sources of illicit supply, methods of concealment, and on enhancing capacities for statistics, data collection and analysis.
34. However, cooperation and information exchange on security-related matters continues to be a serious challenge within and between countries. Although threats have internationalized more than ever – in particular transnational organized crime and violent extremism – defence and security sectors in most States remain often weary of

sharing crucial information. Progress in addressing small arms control will be limited where cross-border trust levels are low, where procedures for contacting international colleagues are not engrained in work plans and trainings, where information is shielded rather than shared, and where security- and confidence-building measures to improve international relations are not in place.

Recommendation 1

States are encouraged to give further priority to cross-border information sharing on arms trafficking. Concluding bilateral or regional mutual legal assistance treaties or agreements is an essential step in that regard. Such instruments can be agreed in the context of cooperation on transnational crime, border controls, or other areas.¹⁰

Recommendation 2

Under the International Tracing Instrument, the Secretariat is tasked to collect from States information on their national point of contact for the International Tracing Instrument (paragraph 31(a)). At the same time, for outreach to law enforcement in other countries States have designated ‘national central bureaus’ within the context of INTERPOL cooperation, linking national police with the global INTERPOL network.¹¹ The INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS) has been established as an effective operational tool assisting all States in weapons tracing. Moreover, States have set up a Directory of Competent National Authorities under the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which has explicit competencies on illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.¹² It is recommended to streamline tools for practical information exchange related to cross-border weapons tracing by using these two existing operational mechanisms for contacting other countries regarding a weapons trace.

Recommendation 3

Under the International Tracing Instrument, the Office for Disarmament Affairs is tasked to collect from States information on their national marking practices (paragraph 31(b)). Only a few States have provided this information, as part of their national reports. It is recommended to collect this information within INTERPOL, where it would complement the INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table (IFRT), the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network (IBIN), and iARMS. The International Tracing Instrument would remain a valuable normative agreement, whereas operational databases on weapons tracing would thus be comprehensively brought together.

¹⁰ See e.g. the Manual on Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition, unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Publications/Mutual_Legal_Assistance_Ebook_E.pdf, or the World Customs Organization’s Model Bilateral Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/~media/DFAAF3B7943E4A53B12475C7CE54D8BD.ashx.

¹¹ interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/Structure-and-governance/National-Central-Bureaus.

¹² unodc.org/compauth/en/index.html.

Stockpile management; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; security sector reform

35. The management of weapons stockpiles of armed forces and law enforcement has emerged as one of the greatest challenges related to small arms and light weapons control. Stocks are susceptible to diversion if they are not appropriately secured. Diversion tends to feed and sustain the activities of armed groups, terrorist organizations and organized criminal networks. It is one of the principal sources of illicit ammunition (see A/63/182).
36. A central element in adequate stockpile management is the identification of surpluses, namely, the weapons and ammunition that do not constitute an operational need. Authoritative assessments estimate that some 40 percent of military firearms in the arsenals of State armed forces can be considered surplus and should therefore be priority items for destruction.¹³
37. When surpluses are not recognized, the entirety of the national weapons stockpile may continue to be seen as of operational value. Although not used, weapons and ammunition surpluses thus continue to fill warehouses and to pose a grave year-on-year risk.
38. Defective stockpile management has been assessed as the norm rather than the exception in many developing countries and in States recovering from armed conflict. In those circumstances, it is not only surplus stocks that should be the focus of attention, but the lack of appropriate policy behind this situation. Governments remain unaware of surpluses, while their national stockpiles continue to be a source of illicit weaponry and often remain an explosive hazard.
39. Destruction is the preferred solution for surplus stockpiles of arms and ammunition, not only from a safety and security perspective, but also when considering the costs of destruction over the costs associated with safe long-term storage and maintenance.¹⁴
40. Key parts of the United Nations system, including the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres for peace and disarmament, the Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Department for Peacekeeping Operations including its Police Division and its Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others, are contributing to securing stockpiles and to relevant training of national law enforcement and security forces of affected as well as troop-contributing countries. For

¹³ Small Arms Survey 2008: Risk and Resilience (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Mandy Turner, *Costs of Disarmament: Cost Benefit Analysis of SALW Destruction versus Storage* (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research 2006).

all actors involved, the standards on weapons and ammunition management developed by the United Nations – ISACS and IATG – form consistent guidance in this respect.

41. For peacekeepers, responsibilities in the civilian, post-conflict sphere have gained further prominence. This has led to a shift in emphasis from disarming ex-combatants towards weapons control at the community level. Moreover, it is seen as essential that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) interventions build the capacity of national institutions and national officials. Such programming should assist transition to adequate civilian rule and to domestic responsibility for the full spectrum of national security.

Recommendation 4

Member States are encouraged to make every effort to secure arms and ammunition stockpiles and shield them from diversion. Existing voluntary guidance such as the International Small Arms Control Standards, and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines developed under the United Nations SaferGuard programme, can be of use in improving arms and ammunition stockpile management practices. Relevant peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions should consistently be mandated to assist host countries in their stockpile management. More can be done to mainstream physical security and stockpile management programmes in peacekeeping mandates and concepts of operations. Special attention is required for the weapons management needs of countries bordering conflict areas.

Recommendation 5

United Nations police and mine action components, and where relevant United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, can be further strengthened to take on tasks in combating illicit arms and ammunition, including weapons collection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; physical security and stockpile management practices; record-keeping and tracing; development of national export and import control systems; countering trafficking; enhancement of border security; armed violence prevention; and strengthening judicial institutions.

Recommendation 6

The delivery of security services at the community level is a crucial component in the mitigation of armed violence and crime. Such efforts should be planned in an integrated manner with other mission and United Nations country team components, including police, justice, corrections, security sector reform, mine action, gender and human rights. Only a comprehensive approach can sustainably improve the delivery of security services at community levels and make communities safer. Women's and youth groups can be powerful actors in monitoring agreements if given the access and support to do so.

Measurability

42. Within the context of the Programme of Action, States have agreed “to encourage the further development of mechanisms to increase the measurability and effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance” (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2, para 37).
43. Measurability is increasingly seen not only as a means to monitor global progress but as a vital self-assessment tool for governments to learn where they can improve in achieving their own objectives. As world leaders formulated it in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals: the objective of systematic follow-up and review is “to promote accountability to citizens, support effective international cooperation (...) and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning” (A/RES/70/1, para 73).
44. As mentioned in paragraph 21, States have included the key subject matter of the Programme of Action in the Sustainable Development Goals. Under target 16.4, Member States aim by 2030 to significantly reduce *inter alia* illicit arms flows. Hence, States have accomplished their objective to introduce measurability in global efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
45. The Programme of Action’s conceptual linkage to Agenda 2030 is reinforced by the provision in Agenda 2030 to “encourage ongoing efforts by States in other forums to address key issues which pose potential challenges to the implementation of our Agenda” (A/RES/70/1, para 58).

Indicators under target 16.4

46. The Agenda 2030 document mentions that “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.” (para 75). In 2016, a global indicator (16.4.2) under this target was agreed by the Statistical Commission: “The proportion of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments”.¹⁵ This indicator is classified as containing conceptually clear, agreed definitions; methodology and standards are available but data are not regularly produced by countries.¹⁶
47. The relevant instruments mentioned in this global indicator may include the Firearms Protocol, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument. Of these, the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument reflect a universally agreed approach to matters pertaining to small arms control.

¹⁵ E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1. The global indicator framework was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, and agreed on by the Statistical Commission. It is submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for further adoption.

¹⁶ ECE/CES/2016/19, para 13.

Supporting national data collection on seizure, record-keeping and tracing of weapons

48. In general terms, States have committed to collect the data relevant for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals through their national statistical offices. However, on several indicators, many national statistical offices do not yet collect data. Indicator 16.4.2 would be a case in point. Agenda 2030 recognizes this problem and calls for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist (A/RES/70/1, para 57).

Existing reporting mechanism

49. States have underlined that “data and information from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible” (A/RES/70/1, para 48), and that “follow-up and review processes (...) will build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist” (para 74). The International Tracing Instrument includes a commitment by countries to report on a biennial basis (para 36). National reports under the International Tracing Instrument could therefore be instrumental and efficient for global data collection on indicator 16.4.2.

Recommendation 7

States are encouraged to develop capacity within their national law enforcement systems and national statistical offices to sustainably collect data on indicator 16.4.2. As long as such national streamlining has not been completed, biennial national reports under the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument can be used to convey national information on indicator 16.4.2 to the United Nations Secretariat. This ensures that relevant national information will be fed into the progress reports on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 8

Governments are encouraged to conduct a self-assessment of their national small arms controls, and pinpoint areas that may be in need of strengthening. For such an exercise, an ISACS assessment tool is available.¹⁷

¹⁷ Developed by UNIDIR. smallarmsstandards.org/tools.

Section B: An update of developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument

Materials¹⁸

50. Plastics are increasingly used in the production of firearm frames and receivers. Plastics provide lower cost, lighter weight, resistance to moisture, and thermal neutrality.
51. Markings stamped in steel, when subsequently erased, can often be recovered because the stamping leaves a permanent sub-surface deformation in the deeper crystalline structure of the steel. Markings cannot be stamped in plastic as in steel; plastics are best marked using laser-engraving or micro-percussion (also called dot-peen stamping). Markings in plastics, once erased, cannot be recovered as they have left no trace in the deeper crystalline structure of the weapon.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

52. An alternative for marking plastic weapons parts is to add a metallic insert or tag in the main plastic component, on which markings can be added – although regularly such metallic inserts have been found removed after the weapon's diversion. All in all, the advent of plastics in weapons manufacture complicates tracing considerably.

Modular weapons

53. Increasingly, rifles are manufactured onto which can be attached an array of parts essential to the operation of the weapon to obtain different configurations suited for different purposes.
54. Modularity allows for temporarily changing a weapon's calibre, a fundamental characteristic for its identification. In such cases, the same serial number, if marked only on the receiver or other component, can be associated with different calibres.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

55. The fact that modular weapons can be fitted with different components, including from other weapons, could result in different serial numbers appearing on different parts of the same weapon, increasing the risk of misidentification.

¹⁸ Further to A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1.

56. It could also be maintained that a modular weapon found with more than one serial number actually provides more potential clues to enable a successful trace. The International Tracing Instrument prescribes the application of a unique marking to an essential or structural component of the weapon, such as the frame and/or receiver, and also encourages the marking of other parts of the weapon, such as the barrel and/or slide or cylinder.¹⁹

Three-dimensional printing and craft production

57. After manufacturers mastered the production of small arms mainly made of plastics, it was a small step to use three-dimensional (3-D) printing to produce such weapons. Now, even 3-D printing using metals is becoming an option.
58. 3-D printing is not the only method to make weapons away from recognized industrial facilities. Sophisticated craft weapons are being made in workshops on several continents.²⁰ Often, these artifacts are produced outside of state controls. Craft production can range from pistols and sub-machine guns to mortars, single-launched rockets, grenade launchers and rocket-propelled grenades. Craft production can include the reloading of cartridges.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

59. At the moment, weapon theft or purchase on the illicit market may require less effort and costs than 3-D printing a reliable weapon. But once production costs decrease and quality increases, 3-D printing will become a lucrative alternative for small-scale illicit weapon manufacture. States may wish to assess if their national regulations – including their national control list definitions – adequately cover 3-D printing technology.

Micro-stamping

60. When a small arm with a microscopic code laser-engraved onto the tip of its firing pin is fired, these etchings are transferred to the cartridge case. If the cartridge case is recovered, this microscopic code – identifying the weapon's serial number – can help trace the firearm from which the shot was fired to its last registered owner. Thus, micro-stamping of cartridges can help trace a weapon that is not found.
61. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) issued a resolution in 2008 supporting the use of microstamping technology in criminal investigations. The IACP

¹⁹ Paragraph 10.

²⁰ smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-3.pdf.

specifically identified microstamping as an inexpensive yet effective way to mark and identify cartridge cases.²¹

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

62. Microstamping technology is increasingly mentioned as a serious improvement in law enforcement investigations. Member States could consider including it in their national regulations.

Record-keeping and stockpile management

63. Barcodes, radio frequency identification and biometrics – for example, fingerprint recognition – all come under the umbrella of automatic identification and data collection technology. Such methods electronically identify objects, and collect data on them. These technologies have been adapted to a range of applications related to small arms and light weapons stockpile management so as to improve identification, safety and tracking.
64. Portable gun locks can be inserted into the barrel or cartridge chamber of weapons and digitally locked to ensure secure storage or transport. Arms storage devices and containers are available whereby weapons can only be removed after entering a code number or scanning a fingerprint, or by way of a radio-frequency identification application. In this way, it is possible to track and document which individual has used which specific weapon, when and for how long.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

65. Poor stockpile management around the world remains an area of disturbing concern. Many States lack thorough planning and consistent attention to safe storage, handling, transportation and disposal of state-owned weapons. Poor national inventory practices mean that surpluses cannot be identified, leading to extensive build-ups of frequently unnecessary stockpiles. Although adequate weapons stockpile management is entirely possible with traditional safety methods, new technologies – when properly applied and maintained – can assist in making procedures watertight.

²¹ theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/2008Resolutions.pdf, p.45.

Recommendation 9

The Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2) on 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 (1-5 June 2015, New York) considered developments on small arms and light weapons technology and its implications at a technical level. States, at BMS6 and at the 71st session of the General Assembly, may wish to identify policy implications of these discussions.

Recommendation 10

In particular the International Tracing Instrument addresses a topic with considerable technological implications. To ensure its continued relevance, the Instrument could be strengthened by taking into account new developments in technologies to enhance weapon marking, record-keeping and tracing. Member States may wish to consider developing a supplement to the Instrument, such as a technical annex, which would reflect the implications of present-day technology on the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms. Furthermore, they could consider enhancing the assistance and capacity-building side of international tracing, also in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Section C: Adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action; options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials

(i) Adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance

66. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001, UNODA and its regional centres for peace and disarmament have been receiving funds from donors for projects in the field of small arms control. These funding mechanisms have functioned as trust funds for well over a decade. Moreover, in 2013 the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) was established – a trust fund characterized by sustained donor involvement. To date, ten donor countries have

provided contributions to UNSCAR to the amount of over USD 9 million, which has resulted in dozens of projects being carried out on all continents.

67. Because of the deeply cross-sectional character of the issue of small arms, international assistance for activities which in themselves can be seen as implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, is routed through multiple channels. Within the United Nations system, projects directly relevant to the Programme of Action are undertaken by most offices, funds and agencies which participate in the UN-internal coordination on small arms, ammunition and the arms trade. These channels range from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund, the Global Firearms Programme, the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, and many more. Humanitarian funds and 'one UN funds' at the country level also often include elements of weapons management. Certain support for the offices of the special representatives on Children and Armed Conflict and on Violence against Children is relevant to small arms control, as is support for practical arms control measures in United Nations missions, from Haiti to the Sahel to Afghanistan.
68. Also non-United Nations entities have been deeply engaged by Member States in assistance and capacity-building on these issues, such as INTERPOL, the World Bank, the World Customs Organization, and the World Maritime Organization. The Arms Trade Treaty Trust Fund is expected to be an important additional channel for capacity-building on weapons control.
69. Bilateral assistance flows, and those established through regional organizations, complement the picture.
70. All in all, for donor States wishing to provide practical assistance on small arms management and control – and for affected countries needing such assistance – there is an array of funding options available, from global to regional, from thematic to country-level.

National reports: 2002-2006 reporting period

71. States are reminded that the agreed template for national reports under the Programme of Action does not include information on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance.
72. In 2006, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament and Research (UNIDIR) published an analysis of information provided by States on international assistance for

implementation of the Programme of Action.²² The report noted a significant increase in the amount of financial assistance provided immediately after the adoption of the Programme of Action. Over the years 2001-2005 approximately 600 different activities, with an estimated total of US\$ 660 million, were reported on. They took place in at least 94 States.

73. In financial terms, the majority of the assistance was allocated to DDR programmes, followed by the destruction of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, weapons collection and stockpile management.

74. The report was based on a questionnaire circulated to Member States, as national reports were too few and did not contain enough data for analysis. It acknowledged that “States might list only selected examples of their activities (...). Few national reports consistently include monetary values for the assistance provided and fewer still for assistance received”.²³

75. For the years after 2006, no comprehensive analysis of international assistance is available. The following can be deduced from national reports received by the Secretariat.

National reports: 2007-2016 reporting period

Table 1.

Number of reports received

| | Africa | Asia&Pacific | E.Europe | Lat.America&Caribbean | W.Europe&others | Total |
|----------|--------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2007-'08 | 34 | 17 | 20 | 16 | 23 | 110 |
| 2009-'10 | 34 | 18 | 19 | 15 | 22 | 108 |
| 2011-'12 | 22 | 12 | 19 | 13 | 18 | 84 |
| 2013-'14 | 20 | 11 | 17 | 12 | 16 | 76 |
| 2015-'16 | 15 | 10 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 69 |

Table 2.

Number of States requesting assistance in national reports

| | Africa | Asia&Pacific | E.Europe | Lat.America&Caribbean | W.Europe&others | Total |
|----------|--------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2007-'08 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 22 |
| 2009-'10 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 4 | | 18 |
| 2011-'12 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 14 |
| 2013-'14 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 4 | | 20 |
| 2015-'16 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 1 | 30 |

²² Kerry Maze and Sarah Parker, *International Assistance for Implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Findings of a Global Survey* (UNIDIR 2006).

²³ *Ibid.*, page 4.

Table 3.
Number of States reporting receiving assistance

| | Africa | Asia&Pacific | E.Europe | Lat.America&Caribbean | W.Europe&others | Total |
|----------|--------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2007-'08 | 11 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 20 |
| 2009-'10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 13 |
| 2011-'12 | 3 | | 2 | 3 | | 8 |
| 2013-'14 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | | 8 |
| 2015-'16 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 10 |

Table 4.
Number of States reporting willingness to provide financial and/or technical assistance

| | Africa | Asia&Pacific | E.Europe | Lat.America&Caribbean | W.Europe&others | Total |
|----------|--------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2007-'08 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 18 | 26 |
| 2009-'10 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 28 |
| 2011-'12 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 14 |
| 2013-'14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 15 |
| 2015-'16 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | | 15 |

Table 5.
Number of States having included an amount of assistance received, and totals of those amounts

| | Number of States reporting on amount received | Their totals (in USD) |
|----------|---|-----------------------|
| 2007-'08 | 3 out of 20 | 795,000 |
| 2009-'10 | 1 out of 13 | 900,000 |
| 2011-'12 | 5 out of 8 | 4,391,000 |
| 2013-'14 | 5 out of 8 | 1,134,000 |
| 2015-'16 | 3 out of 10 | 802,034 |

Table 6.
Number of States having included an amount of assistance provided, and totals of those amounts

| | Number of States reporting on amount provided | Their totals (in USD) |
|----------|---|-----------------------|
| 2007-'08 | 5 out of 26 | 440,000 |
| 2009-'10 | 10 out of 28 | 90,980,000 |
| 2011-'12 | 9 out of 14 | 45,528,000 |
| 2013-'14 | 6 out of 15 | 290,145,000 |
| 2015-'16 | 5 out of 10 | 31,665,057 |

76. In July 2015, the Secretariat reminded Member States through a Note Verbale to submit – separate from their biennial national report – their views and inputs on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, for the full and

effective implementation of the Programme of Action, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001.²⁴

77. Six Member States have responded to the Note Verbale at the time of submission of this report. Their views can be found at www.un.org/disarmament/bms6.

(ii) Options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements

78. In 2005, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) decided that controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is considered official development aid.²⁵ This falls in line with the understanding shared by all Member States that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development (A/RES/70/1, Preamble). Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals is the most concrete reflection of this collective opinion.
79. As mentioned, funding to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is channelled through countless mechanisms at the bilateral, regional and global level. It is not a lack of available trust funds which hinders full implementation of the Programme of Action. Rather, existing trust fund arrangements can accommodate higher contributions and a broader donor base.
80. Apart from increasing funding, States can also consider strengthening the mechanism on assistance and cooperation under the Programme of Action. It will be important to do so without setting up a duplicative extra layer at the United Nations: programmes are usually best implemented close to the ground. Still, at the global level more can be done to connect requests for assistance with possible donor interest.
81. Most States reporting under the Programme of Action include in their national reports information on their national assistance needs. However, the Programme of Action does not provide a mechanism for matching these needs with available resources. Many States which have formulated needs for assistance have not received a reply or a showing of interest.
82. The Secretariat will address this gap by pointing towards these reported assistance needs when opening its annual call for proposals under the United Nations trust facility

²⁴ Note Verbale mandated by the MGE2 Chair's summary, para 53.

²⁵ poa-iss.org/RevCon2/Documents/PrepCom-Background/OECD-DAC%202005%20decision.pdf.

supporting conventional arms regulation (UNSCAR). States may wish to consider other options for possible clearing house arrangements under the Programme of Action.

83. Indicator 16.4.2 may be leading in this regard. With this indicator adopted, it is foreseen that States will develop the capacity to record and trace seized weapons, as well as the capacity to collect data on these actions. Assistance programmes could focus on building capacity for record-keeping, tracing and data collection. Moreover, fully in line with Agenda 2030, programmes could focus as well on developing additional national and regional indicators.

Recommendation 11

In the preparations for the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018, States are encouraged to consider enhancing the purpose of biennial national reports. In particular the needs requests formulated therein could benefit from more sustained treatment and consideration.

Recommendation 12

In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States have underlined that follow-up and review processes regarding the Sustainable Development Goals will build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist. The Programme of Action is such an existing process. Future meetings under the Programme of Action could become a driving force for progress under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. This would also be consistent with the aim States agreed to in the outcome of BMS5 (2014) to consider options for developing a more comprehensive international assistance framework (27(i)).

Recommendation 13

In addition to global indicator 16.4.2, and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States are encouraged to develop under target 16.4 indicators at the regional and national levels. The Third Review Conference could become the starting point for information exchange on such endeavours.

- (iii) Options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials**

84. Many programmes for the training of officials in the field of small arms control are already in existence. A few examples from the past year will illustrate the range of training-related assistance currently provided.
85. The Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in particular the Mine Action Service (UNMAS), conducted many trainings including on weapons and explosive hazard management; refurbishment and construction of weapons and ammunition storage facilities; and weapons collection and destruction. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provided legislative assistance; technical assistance; and training on investigative and prosecutorial capacity to deal with complex, often transnational cases of firearms trafficking. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported authorities in establishing national coordinating bodies on small arms; supported small arms collection and awareness raising, improved record-keeping and reporting software for arms transfers licences; trained citizen security and armed violence reduction projects; provided trainings on stockpile management, and supported marking activities. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided policy support and education on weapons-related risk reduction. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), together with United Nations partners, has trained officials on conducting a national assessment of priority gaps and needs in weapons and ammunition management. The Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) including its regional centres provided trainings on ammunition life-cycle management; trained hundreds of national officials including on marking and record keeping, tracing and stockpile management; trained female legal operators to address impunity in small arms trafficking; supported officials of regional organizations; and conducted many more training activities.
86. Trainings of all involved entities consistently apply the international small arms control standards, and the international ammunition technical guidelines.

The United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament

87. Launched by the General Assembly in 1978 at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament aims to train and build the capacity of officials from Member States to enable them to participate more effectively in international disarmament deliberating and negotiating fora. The Programme consistently includes the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in its curriculum.

Recommendation 14

Trainings for national officials are best organized as close to the ground as possible. Global training programmes on small arms control would not allow for regional and national specificities.

Recommendation 15

When assessing the need for a training programme for national officials, it would be beneficial to embed such programmes in wider national small arms strategies. Trainings should be based on specific demand, should be targeted at a specific category of officials, and should have clear outcome objectives. Gender considerations are always relevant in small-arms-related trainings. National inter-agency trainings are often more fruitful than trainings bringing together officials from several countries of a region. Specialized agencies, and United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, have specialized expertise on offer.

Recommendation 16

Trainings focusing on capacity-building for data collection under indicator 16.4.2 deserve special consideration.
