

Strategies for Strengthening the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Harrison Conference Centre, Glen Cove, NY, USA
30 September – 2 October 2005

Summary Report

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1. Background and Purpose

The *United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* (henceforth referred to as “the PoA”) will undergo its first comprehensive review on 26 June – 7 July 2006 at UN Headquarters in New York, five years after it was agreed. This Review Conference presents the international community with its first opportunity to strengthen this important global instrument with a view to making it better able to address the serious and wide-ranging human security challenges posed by the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons around the world.

Both the formal and informal components of the second Biennial Meeting of States (BMS2) to consider implementation of the UNPoA¹ went a long way towards identifying the issues that States and civil society consider to be of greatest importance when it comes to increasing the effectiveness of the PoA. These include issues that could not be resolved at the 2001 Small Arms Conference – e.g. the regulation of civilian ownership of small arms and the prohibition of their transfer to non-State groups – as well as issues that subsequent research and policy formulation have highlighted – e.g. common standards for transfer controls, addressing the factors driving the demand for small arms, providing assistance to the survivors of gun violence, etc.

Much strategic preparatory work is needed before the summer of 2006 in order to ensure that issues such as these can be adequately addressed at the Review Conference and, if possible, effectively integrated into the global regime on small arms control. Important opportunities for such preparatory work include the meeting of the UN General Assembly’s First Committee on Disarmament and International Security (3 October – 4 November 2005) and the meeting of the review conference Preparatory Committee (9-20 January 2006).

In order to provide an additional opportunity for focussed discussion and strategising, the Geneva Forum organised an informal, residential seminar on 30 September – 2 October 2005 entitled, “Strategies for Strengthening the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.” The seminar brought together 27 high-level representatives of governments, international organisations and NGOs from New York, Geneva and national capitals at the Harrison Conference Centre in Glen Cove, New York. Discussions were held under the *Chatham House Rule*, which stipulates that “participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor than of any other participant, may be revealed.”² This summary report has been drafted in respect of this rule.

This brief summary report does not attempt to reflect the depth and detail of the discussions that took place in Glen Cove. Rather, it distils the main themes of the discussion and draws out those points on which there was broad – albeit not necessarily unanimous – agreement. The Geneva Forum is distributing this report widely in the hope that the ideas and proposals contained in it will feed into the preparatory process for the 2006 Review Conference and will in turn contribute to international efforts to curb the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

¹ BMS2 was held at UN Headquarters in New York on July 11-15 2005.

² See www.riia.org/index.php?id=14.

2. Developments in Understanding

Much has been achieved on the issue of small arms and light weapons since it first appeared on the international agenda in the mid-1990s and especially since the 2001 Small Arms Conference agreed a UN Programme of Action aimed at eradicating the illicit small arms trade. These achievements stand in contrast to the recent overall lack of progress in many other areas of disarmament and arms control. The explosion of research that has taken place since the PoA was agreed, and the experience gained by States, international bodies and NGOs in implementing its provisions, have also triggered an evolution in the way in which the small arms issue is understood by many governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental actors. The proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons is seen by many today less as a pure arms control issue and more as an issue with far-reaching humanitarian and socio-economic ramifications.

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Research examining the links between small arms proliferation and misuse, on the one hand, and levels of violence in societies, human rights violations, burdens on public health systems, threats to humanitarian aid workers, etc., on the other, has played an important part in this evolution in understanding. Governments have also contributed. The Human Security Network, for example, has helped to broaden the multilateral debate on small arms and to focus attention on their humanitarian impacts. Likewise, regional intergovernmental organisations such as the OSCE and the OAS have done the same and, in many areas, call for more stringent action than the PoA.

Notwithstanding such advances, however, within government bureaucracies the small arms issue remains largely within the purview of foreign ministries. This tends to reinforce and perpetuate a more restrictive interpretation of the small arms issue that emphasises arms control at the expense of a broader perspective. The stipulation in the PoA that States should establish national coordination agencies to facilitate implementation of its provisions, however,³ provides an opportunity for other government ministries – such as those dealing with health, development, public safety, women and youth, etc. – to promote a broader understanding of the problem and ways of dealing with it.

It is important also to recall that, even during the negotiation of the PoA, a significant number of States and other actors advocated a more holistic approach to the problem. Although the PoA itself reflects, overall, a narrower conceptualisation of the issue, the reference in its title to “in all its aspects” does provide scope for a more expansive interpretation of the PoA’s mandate.

Further development in understanding the dynamics and implications of small arms proliferation and misuse is needed, particularly in the following areas:

- a) **Further developing a holistic understanding:** The outcome document of the 2005 World Summit augurs well for the future development in understanding of the small arms issue. In it, world leaders “recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.”⁴ They explicitly support implementation of the PoA⁵ and express their “grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights

³ PoA, section II, paragraph 4.

⁴ UN General Assembly document A/60/L.1* of 20 September 2005, paragraph 9.

⁵ Ibid., paragraph 94.

posed by [...] the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.”⁶ Additional research over the coming years and decades should lead to further evolution in the international community’s understanding of the wide-ranging and deep-rooted implications of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. NGOs and academic institutes are committed to continuing their research work. The development community is acquiring a better appreciation both of the impact of small arms availability on their work and of the factors that drive the demand for small arms. The human rights community is becoming ever more interested in the role played by small arms in facilitating abuses. Regional initiatives on small arms control continue to make progress, often in a more comprehensive and legally-binding manner than at the global level.

It is surprising that a stronger link has not been made between small arms and terrorism

- b) **Terrorism:** It is surprising that a stronger link has not been made between the illicit trade in small arms and terrorism. The 2001 Small Arms Conference was followed two months later by the September 11 attacks in the United States. Despite the fact that the 9/11 terrorists used conventional ‘weapons’ (box-cutters, aeroplanes), these attacks led to a sharpened focus on the danger of Weapons of Mass Destruction falling into terrorist hands. Apart from heightened concern about the uncontrolled proliferation of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) – which can be used to shoot down civilian airliners – there has not yet been a deliberate attempt to link the illicit trade in small arms with terrorism.
- c) **Societal costs:** The international community does not yet have a clear understanding of the costs inflicted on societies around the world by the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. These costs include, but are not limited to, those associated with crime, public health systems, workforce productivity, foreign and domestic investment, etc. The Helsinki Process⁷ has begun to address this issue. The research that is being conducted should be intensified and supplemented and brought to international attention.
- d) **Public awareness:** Public awareness of the problems caused by the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons has increased only slightly since 2001. It needs to increase much more if significant progress is to be made. Surprisingly, even in some countries with serious small arms-related problems, the issue is not being dealt with by politicians because they are not being pressured by their constituents to take action. Without heightened public awareness, some politicians will not take this issue seriously. But reciprocally, the uppermost levels of government that declare themselves to be committed to the PoA do have a responsibility to make themselves heard clearly on the small arms issue. Civilian possession is a pivotal issue in this respect, as it has a direct impact on voting citizens. If the proliferation and misuse of small arms can be made a live political (and therefore electoral) issue, it will result in clear stands on civilian possession being taken by incumbents and candidates to high office.
- e) **Reciprocal mainstreaming:** There is a worrying trend in the development and human rights community to perceive the small arms issue as a dominant agenda that is over-promoted and over-funded and, therefore, to be resisted. Some

There is an urgent need for political leaders to treat small arms as an election issue

⁶ Ibid., paragraph 111.

⁷ See www.helsinki.fi.

development and human rights practitioners also complain about being asked to mainstream small arms into their work without an offer from small arms organisations to integrate development and human rights into their work. The lesson to be drawn from this is that mainstreaming must be reciprocal.

- f) **Second-generation issues:** The UN small arms process now finds itself on the threshold between “first- and second-generation” responses to the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Not surprisingly, the UN process to date has focused on traditional arms control approaches (first generation) such as tracing, brokering, transfer controls, stockpile management, etc. Second-generation aspects of the PoA now loom on the horizon, however, attracting more and more attention from researchers and diplomats. Second-generation issues include the factors that drive the demand for small arms, the misuse of firearms (by State officials, non-State actors and civilians), integrating gender considerations into small arms control policy, and providing assistance to the victims of gun violence. Another very important second-generation issue concerns the development of tools that can measure the PoA’s effectiveness in curbing the illicit small arms trade. Further progress is undoubtedly needed on first-generation issues. This does not preclude, however, simultaneous progress on second-generation issues.
- The UN small arms process is on the threshold between “first- and second-generation” responses to small arms proliferation and misuse*
- g) **Guns and civilians:** Understanding of the impact of the misuse of firearms by civilians has developed significantly since 2001. It is now known that most guns are in civilian hands, that most gun killings happen in otherwise “peaceful” contexts, and that regulating civilian access to firearms can reduce the level of violence in societies. Despite the fact that the PoA omits reference to regulating the civilian ownership of small arms, more and more States are reporting on their regulation of civilian gun-ownership to biennial meetings of States designed to consider how the PoA is being implemented. This demonstrates that the question of civilian gun ownership is a priority issue for many States.

The fact remains, however, that some States and regions are reluctant to adopt a broader approach to addressing small arms proliferation and misuse, preferring instead to adhere to narrower arms control methodologies. Although this may change incrementally with increased knowledge and public awareness, it is unlikely that such a broad understanding will be adequately reflected at the 2006 Review Conference. This does not constitute grounds for (too much) disappointment, however. Major shifts in perceptions and understandings take time, and certainly longer than the five years that have passed since the PoA was agreed. Moreover, the PoA is not the only framework within which progress can be made (see point 6 below).

3. Desirable Review Conference Outcomes

In remaining focused on achieving the maximum possible under the prevailing political conditions, diplomats and other actors often neglect to reflect adequately on “desirable,” as opposed to “feasible,” outcomes. Desirable outcomes are those that are actually needed in order to keep a process alive and moving forward. In addition to the minimum task of candidly reviewing how the PoA has been implemented during its first years in existence, desirable outcomes of the 2006 PoA Review Conference may be grouped under the following headings:

Diplomats and other actors often neglect to reflect adequately on “desirable,” as opposed to “feasible,” outcomes

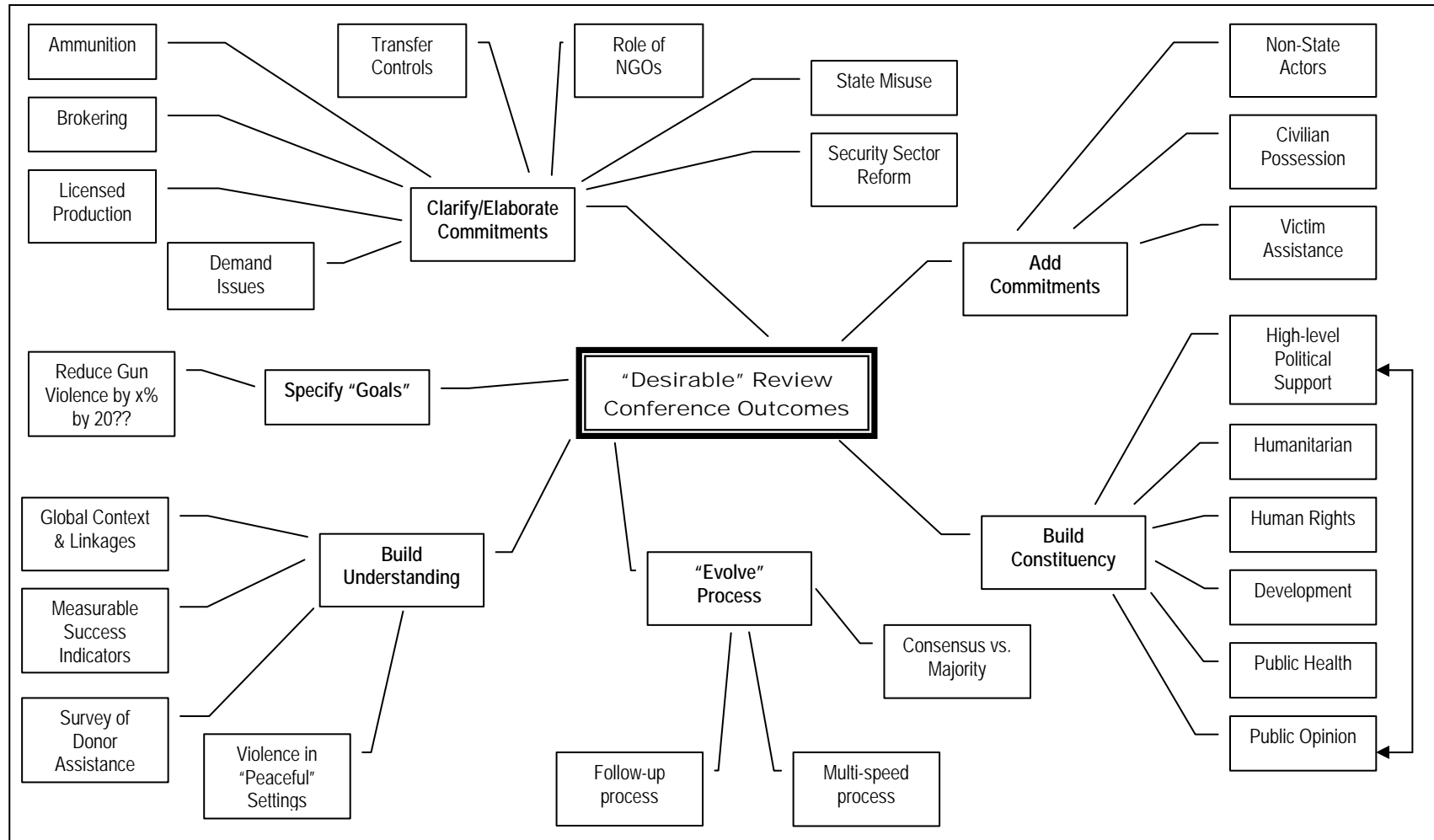
- a) **Specifying goals:** There is an urgent need for conceptual clarity on what exactly the international community is trying to achieve through the PoA. Is the ultimate goal to eradicate the illicit small arms trade; to eliminate the human suffering caused by this trade; to reduce global gun violence; etc.? The Review Conference will need to provide a clear answer to this question.
- There is an urgent need for conceptual clarity on what exactly the international community is trying to achieve through the PoA*
- b) **Clarifying and elaborating PoA commitments:** The PoA is a relatively comprehensive agreement that commits States to undertaking a broad range of actions at the national, regional and global levels to combat the illicit small arms trade. Many of its provisions are vague, however, insofar as they do not include sufficient detail to guide and facilitate State action. The 2006 Review Conference should clarify and elaborate on a number of key PoA provisions. These could include:
- i) *Transfer controls:* Elaborating on the responsibilities of States when it comes to transferring small arms to other countries, including the issuing to other countries of licenses to produce small arms.
- ii) *Small arms demand:* Specifying strategies that States can use to reduce the demand for small arms on their territory, including security sector reform and the prevention of firearms misuse by State officials, and soliciting international cooperation and assistance in this regard.
- iii) *Ammunition:* Explicitly pronouncing on the place that small arms ammunition fills within the scope of the PoA and on how it should be addressed in agreements emanating from the PoA.
- iv) *The role of NGOs:* Specifying the role that UN Member States expect NGOs to play in the global effort to curb the proliferation and misuse of small arms, including their role in the formal UN small arms process.
- c) **Adding to PoA commitments:** The PoA omits reference to a number of important policy responses to the illicit small arms trade. Two such issues – the regulation of civilian possession of small arms and transfers of small arms to non-State actors – were the subject of heated debate during the 2001 Small Arms Conference. The provision of assistance to victims of gun violence has emerged since 2001 as a priority issue. The Review Conference should address such issues with a view to including them within the scope of the PoA.
- d) **Building the small arms constituency:** The global small arms “constituency” (i.e. the government agencies and international and non-governmental organisations that advance the global agenda on this issue) should be as heterogeneous as possible. It should encompass areas such as humanitarian action, human rights protection, development and public health. This constituency should also include an informed general public, without whose engagement politicians will not feel obliged to act.
- The Review Conference follow-up process should allow interested states to proceed at different speeds on different issues*
- e) **Evolving the UN small arms process:** The Review Conference should improve the design of the UN small arms process in order to make it more effective. This would include agreeing on a strong follow-up process, synchronised with PoA reporting commitments, that would allow groups of interested States to proceed at different speeds on different issues, while allowing other States to join such initiatives when they feel ready to commit to the goals being pursued. A

central element of such a reorganisation should also include a reassessment of the concept of consensus decision-making (see point 5(c) below).

- f) **Building understanding of the small arms issue:** Further research is necessary in order to advance understanding of the humanitarian and socio-economic implications of the illicit small arms trade. The Review Conference should create a climate and provide a mandate for continued research. Priority areas include:
- i) *Global context and linkages:* Developing a better understanding of the global context of the illicit small arms trade and its impact on other issue-areas such as human rights, humanitarian assistance, socio-economic development, etc.
 - ii) *Donor assistance:* Conducting a survey of donor assistance provided to small arms projects in order to ascertain whether needs are being matched with resources in an effective manner.
 - iii) *“Peaceful” settings:* Developing a better understanding of the dynamics of gun-violence in otherwise “peaceful” settings (i.e. gun-violence not directly attributable to inter- or intra-State war) with a view to developing effective violence prevention strategies.
 - iv) *Performance indicators:* Developing and putting in place a set of “performance indicators” to measure the effect that the PoA is having on stemming the illicit small arms trade and reducing the human suffering caused by it. Feedback provided by such indicators is indispensable in the medium- and long-term to making the PoA a more effective instrument.

These desirable outcomes of the 2006 Review Conference are summarised in figure 1 below. It may not be possible, of course, for the Review Conference to address all of these issues. It will be important to distinguish between the nature of the issues, to prioritise them wisely, and to decide which issues could usefully be framed in international instruments and which are best left up to States to implement at the national and regional levels, possibly with the aid of collectively-developed guidelines.

Figure 1: Desirable Review Conference Outcomes



4. Elements of a Review Conference Action Plan

The action plan adopted by the 2006 Review Conference could usefully comprise two main documents – a political declaration and an agenda for implementation.

- a) **Political Declaration:** The political declaration would deal with issues that need further normative reinforcement. It should take as its starting-point the preamble of the PoA, but should attempt to develop it further. It could take stock of both biennial meetings and comment on what has been achieved to date, reflect on the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, urge States to fully implement the tracing instrument and launch the expert group or open-ended working group on brokering, provide guidelines for transfer controls, identify subjects in need of further development (e.g. cooperation and assistance), and set out the follow-up process, including synchronisation of PoA reporting and, possibly, the establishment of an implementation assistance team.
- b) **Agenda for Implementation:** The agenda for implementation would deal with issues that require more detailed elaboration in order to facilitate their implementation. It could set out concrete, measurable targets to be achieved by the PoA within a specified timeframe, provide best practice guidelines or model regulations, set the scene for beginning work on annexes to the PoA, and put in place a monitoring mechanism with country profiles.

5. Preparing for the Review Conference

- a) **The Review Conference as Launch-Pad:** Rather than marking the end of the first five years of the PoA, the Review Conference will mark the beginning of the next phase of the international community's effort to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the human suffering caused by it. Rather than forging new, fully formed agreements, however, the Review Conference will more likely act as a launch-pad for further initiatives. This, in itself, will require a lot of preparatory work. *Rather than marking the end of the first five years of the PoA, the Review Conference will mark the beginning of the next phase*
- b) **Drafting a concept paper:** Ideally, on the first day of the Review Conference Preparatory Committee in January 2006, a concept paper should be tabled by a cross-regional group of States outlining and proposing possible content for the Review Conference outcome document (political declaration and agenda for implementation). Work on drafting the concept paper should begin without delay. One way of jump-starting this process would be for smaller groups of States to begin to circulate food-for-thought papers. This could lead to a meeting of a cross-regional but likeminded group of States to begin intensive work on drafting the concept paper, drawing on existing language from a variety of sources, especially regional agreements. The development of the concept paper should take the form of an open-ended process, with all UN Member States welcome to join if they subscribe to a core set of objectives defined at the outset.
- c) **Correcting the interpretation of “consensus” decision-making:** Although much has been achieved since 2001, the progress of the UN small arms process has been hampered by an overly restrictive interpretation of “consensus” decision-making that has allowed a small number of States to frustrate the will of the vast majority to move forward more quickly on this issue. Judging from current practice, it would seem that some countries believe that consensus decision-making confers upon them the right of veto. This is an erroneous

understanding. Consensus decision-making is not about making everyone happy and it does not involve veto powers. Rather, it is about tact and flexibility. It requires countries holding a minority position to recognise this fact in accommodating the will of a large majority of States, albeit with assurances that their vital security interests will not be compromised as a result. An added advantage of acting on this understanding is that States would feel more obliged to declare their intentions on contentious issues rather than hiding behind a small number of other States who use a restrictive understanding of consensus – and the clock – to get their way. In the run-up to the Review Conference, it will be important to remind UN Member States of the correct purpose of consensus decision-making.

Consensus decision-making is about tact and flexibility; it is not about the veto

- d) **Avoiding unnecessary procedural wrangling:** At the Review Conference, the more attention can be focused on concrete measures to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the better the outcome is likely to be. It will be important, therefore, in the run-up to the Review Conference and at the Conference itself, to avoid as much as possible the procedural wrangling that marred the 2001 Small Arms Conference process and, to a lesser extent, the Biennial Meetings of States. Given that the participation of NGOs in the UN small arms process remains a contentious issue, special attention should be paid to resolving this question as far as possible in advance of the Review Conference. NGOs themselves could help in this process by clearly setting out the kind of access and participation they would need at the Review Conference and during its preparatory process.
- e) **Pushing for stronger action on brokering:** The international community is poised to establish, at the Review Conference or soon thereafter, a Group of Governmental Experts to “consider further steps” to enhance international cooperation on brokering regulation. Some hold that such a course of action would be too little, too late. The damage caused by illicit small arms brokering was one of the main reasons the small arms issue appeared on the international agenda in the mid-1990s. Understanding of how illicit brokering networks operate and how they can be thwarted is well developed. Some argue that, rather than investing valuable time and resources in “considering further steps,” UN Member States should move directly to negotiating a legally-binding international instrument to eradicate illicit small arms brokering.

UN Member States should move directly to negotiating a legally-binding international instrument to eradicate illicit small arms brokering

- f) **Developing an effective public awareness strategy:** A coordinated and coherent strategy to sensitise the general public to the humanitarian impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons is badly needed both before and following the Review Conference. This will require leadership from a number of States and organisations and the Chair-designate of the Review Conference might wish to consider establishing a specialised group of “Friends of the Chair” for this purpose. Developing an effective public awareness strategy will also require funds and fresh ideas such as, for example, the appointment of a widely-recognised Good-Will Ambassador to highlight the issue.

- g) **Mobilising the UN and its Member States:** In the short time that remains before the summer of 2006, UN Member States should be encouraged to organise regional and sub-regional consultations to coordinate their positions and aims before the Review Conference. The new small arms unit in the African Union could play a central role in this regard. A sponsorship programme could

be launched, with support from donors, to ensure that Capital-based government officials from developing countries particularly affected by small arms misuse would be able to participate in the Review Conference. Governments could also consider seconding a small number of officials to the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) in order to enhance its capacity in the run-up to the Review Conference.

The table below summarises some of the main specific steps that would need to be taken between October 2005 and July 2006.

Table 1: Next Steps

During 2005 1 st Committee	By the PrepCom	February to July 2006	A support group can:
Chairs of PrepCom and RevCon decided	Chair(s) may convene 'Friends' group'	RevCon Chair visits to New York and Geneva	Convene New York and Geneva meetings
Draw up calendar of events & opportunities for communications & advocacy and to gather contributions to text for outcome document	Sponsorship program for MPs, NGOs, Focal Points, National Commission members, survivors, police, health workers, journalists		Support the sponsorship program
Form communications working group	Develop communications strategy	Next phase of communications strategy	Support the communications strategy
Convene a support group or like-minded states and make a task list	Develop concept papers(s)	IANSA publishes analysis of PrepCom	Divide up task on themes in concept paper
DDA note on procedural issues	2-3 people seconded to DDA (2 in NY, 1 in Geneva)	Survey of donor assistance to identify gaps & duplication	Second people to DDA
Rationalisation of Resolutions	Regional consultations	Regional consultations	
NGO input into Resolutions	IANSA presence in New York and Geneva		Assist IANSA activities
	NGO accreditation by end of October		
	Decide whether to hold a 2 nd PrepCom		

6. Alternatives for Progress

The main contribution of the PoA is that it is a global framework that stimulates action at the global, regional and national levels. It is an enabling rather than a constraining agreement. Some countries and regions have opted to go beyond certain of its provisions in their efforts to curb the illicit small arms trade. Others have not lived up to any of the commitments it sets out. The result is an overall record of weak and patchy implementation.

While the PoA constitutes the cornerstone of international action to eradicate the illicit small arms trade, it is not the only framework within which progress can be made. Going beyond the PoA, or working outside of its framework, does not undermine, but rather strengthens the PoA. The future of multilateral action on illicit small arms does not depend entirely on the outcome of the 2006 Review Conference. There are alternatives for progress.

Significant progress is possible at the regional and national levels on issues, such as civilian possession and non-State actors, that have proven contentious at the global level. Groups of likeminded States are free to take initiatives to develop issues that seem to them to be of particular importance. Useful work could be conducted in the UN General Assembly's 3rd Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Forum on small arms and light weapons are promoting and facilitating parliamentary activism. The work of the UN Security Council on small arms could be better integrated into the overall UN small arms process and a Security Council resolution on the impact of small arms proliferation on international peace and security could create new avenues for action.

UN Member States should not have to consider moving outside of the UN framework in order to make progress on the small arms issue

While recognising and taking full advantage of these and other alternatives for progress, however, equal emphasis should be placed on making the PoA regime work as effectively as possible. UN Member States are masters of their own fate.

They should not have to consider moving outside of the UN framework in order to make progress on the small arms issue. Rather, they should focus on making the UN work in such a way that progress is possible. This will necessitate, *inter alia*, a fundamental shift in thinking away from strategic arms limitation and towards humanitarian impact.

7. Conclusion

The arms control culture of the Cold War era is no longer relevant today. Faced with pressing humanitarian crises – such as that posed by the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons – the international community should not rely on outdated and cumbersome procedures and processes that waste time while people die. A new approach is needed.

Adopting a new approach does not, however, imply abandoning UN structures and procedures. UN Member States “constitute” the United Nations. It is up to them to change the way they do business on small arms within the UN. An important first step in this process will be a return to the correct understanding and operation of “consensus” decision-making, which does not (contrary to current practice) confer veto powers on individual States.

An equally important step will be the creation of a dynamic, “multi-speed” process to follow up on the 2006 Review Conference. This process should emphasise initiative and innovation and should encourage coalitions of interested States to drive forward the development of specific elements of the global small arms control regime. Such “islands of activity” should be open to the participation of all UN Member States that subscribe to the objective being pursued and should involve the active participation of relevant international bodies and experts from civil society.

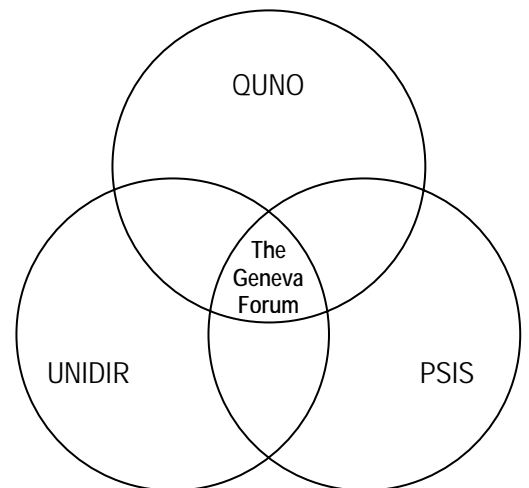
While recognising the PoA as the cornerstone of global efforts to eradicate the illicit small arms trade, and doing their utmost to fully implement its provisions, UN Member States should also do their best to develop further alternative avenues along which progress can be made; e.g. at the regional level, in national parliaments and in the UN Security Council. Such activities are complementary to and strengthen the PoA.

About the Geneva Forum

The Geneva Forum project is the brainchild of the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies (PSIS) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies. Its overarching objective is to contribute to building international peace and security by forging partnerships among and between governments, international organisations and NGOs on disarmament and arms control issues of common concern.

The Geneva Forum is a unique partnership between a nongovernmental organisation, a UN body and an academic institute, each of which is engaged in its own right in research, policy and advocacy on issues related to multilateral security and disarmament. These organisations pool their extensive knowledge, skills and networks for their common work within the framework of the Geneva Forum.

The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has been at work in Geneva since 1948. Through its seminars, encounters, active presence where possible in negotiations, and links both to the diplomatic and international organization community and to a whole range of international networks, QUNO is ideally placed to provide a critical non-governmental element in the Geneva Forum "triad".



The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), an inter-governmental organization within the United Nations, conducts research on disarmament and security. Working with researchers, diplomats, officials and non-governmental organizations, UNIDIR acts as a bridge between the research community and governments and promotes informed debate within United Nations structures.

The Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies (PSIS) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies has operated as a policy-relevant academic research programme at the Graduate Institute of International Studies since 1978, and has a long record of successfully organising activities that bring together scholars, activists and practitioners.

The Geneva Forum Partner Organisations work together to advance along the three tracks that comprise the work of the Geneva Forum:

- **Building agendas around new and emerging issues in disarmament and arms control**
- **Supporting ongoing disarmament and arms control negotiations**
- **Promoting the implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements**

In carrying out this work, the Geneva Forum interacts principally with the 153 government missions to the United Nations in Geneva, but also with UN bodies, international organisations, NGOs and the media. The Geneva Forum also actively engages Geneva's important humanitarian, development, human rights and public health communities in its disarmament work.

The Geneva Forum

QUNO UNIDIR PSIS

Pavillon Rigot, Avenue de la Paix 11a, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

● Phone +41 22 908-5932 ● Fax +41 22 733-3049 ● Email mccarthy@hei.unige.ch ●

www.geneva-forum.org