

# **The Geneva Process on Small Arms**

## *Making the UN Programme of Action Work*

### **WORKING GROUP ON NEEDS AND RESOURCES**

Developing effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources to facilitate implementation of the UN Programme of Action

#### **INTERIM REPORT**

*19 June 2007*

#### **Background**

At its meeting of 26 February 2007, participants in the Geneva Process on Small Arms created a working group to help develop effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources to facilitate implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (henceforth “Programme of Action”).

Ambassador Clemencia Forero Uelos of Colombia volunteered to coordinate the working group. Representatives of the following States and Organisations have so far contributed to the work of the group: Australia, Colombia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, UK, USA, Geneva Forum, Quaker United Nations Office, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The working group has met four times to exchange views and to hear and discuss expert presentations. In particular, the working group has benefited from presentations from UNIDIR on its research into cooperation and assistance in the context of Programme of Action implementation and from the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on how needs are assessed and matched with resources to advance implementation of that treaty.

The working group has made good progress in identifying options and proposals on developing effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources to facilitate implementation of the Programme of Action. These are presented in outline form below. The working group feels, however, that, due to the complexity of the issue, it should continue its work during the second half of 2007. This interim report provides an update on the working group’s deliberations and outlines some of the issues on which it will continue to work.

The working group invites other participants in the Geneva Process on Small Arms, especially States that require assistance in implementing their Programme of Action commitments, to contribute to the work of the group over the coming period (please contact Patrick Mc Carthy at the Geneva Forum; phone 022 908 5932; email [mccarthy@hei.unige.ch](mailto:mccarthy@hei.unige.ch)).

## Rationale

The Programme of Action places strong emphasis on the importance of international cooperation and assistance to its implementation. Specifically:

- The preamble stresses “the urgent necessity for international cooperation and assistance, including financial and technical assistance, as appropriate, to support and facilitate efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (section I.14).
- An entire section of the Programme of Action is devoted to “implementation, international cooperation and assistance” (section III.1-18).
- The follow-up section encourages “all initiatives to mobilize resources and expertise to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action and to provide assistance to States in their implementation of the Programme of Action” (section IV.2.b).

The Programme of Action does not, however, elaborate on *how* international cooperation and assistance should be carried out. It offers no guidance on the way in which the needs of implementing States should be assessed and subsequently matched with available resources. Nor does it suggest ways in which additional resources could be mobilised to advance implementation.

The fact that the Programme of Action does not provide such guidance and that UN Member States have not, in the interim, developed mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources, has led to dissatisfaction both among States in need of assistance and among those in a position to provide it. On the one hand, States requiring assistance to implement their Programme of Action commitments continue to have difficulty in accessing the necessary resources. On the other hand, States and organisations in a position to provide assistance continue to find it difficult to decide where to invest their resources most effectively. It is this “disconnect” that this working group seeks to address.

UNIDIR estimates that, from 2001-2005, US\$ 660 million worth of cooperation and assistance has been invested in advancing implementation of the Programme of Action.<sup>1</sup> While this is by no means an insignificant sum, it constitutes only about 15 percent of the estimated value of the illicit small arms trade during the same period.<sup>2</sup> This working group believes that developing effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources would not only lead to an increase in the amount of cooperation and assistance provided, but also to more efficient investment of these resources and, therefore, to better overall implementation of the Programme of Action.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Figure based on an estimation of the value of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons over the four-and-a-half year period from July 2001-December 2005 of US\$ 4.5 billion (US\$ 1 billion per year).

The mandate of the working group contains two distinct elements. It refers to helping to develop effective mechanisms for (1) assessing needs and (2) matching them with resources to facilitate implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition, the working group has considered an additional element: (3) resource mobilisation, understood as the generation of additional resources to advance Programme of Action implementation. The remainder of this paper outlines the options and proposals identified by the working group under these three headings. The working group plans to elaborate these further over the coming months.

### **Assessing needs**

A fundamental first step in the cooperation and assistance process should involve a comprehensive assessment of the needs of States in relation to implementing the Programme of Action. Since it is States that bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,<sup>3</sup> each State should take upon itself the primary responsibility for assessing its own needs when it comes to meeting its Programme of Action obligations.

A comprehensive assessment of needs would comprise four main elements:

- Identification of the problems to be addressed relating to a State's implementation of its Programme of Action commitments
- Prioritisation of the problems identified
- A plan for addressing the problems identified, including budgets and a strategy for resource mobilisation
- A mechanism for assessing progress in addressing the problems identified

Since a comprehensive assessment of needs requires a significant investment of time and resources, States should be encouraged to seek, and donors to provide, assistance for this phase of the cooperation and assistance process.

A prerequisite for such a needs assessment would seem to be, at a minimum, the designation of national coordination agencies and a national point of contact, as called for in section II, paragraphs 4-5 of the Programme of Action.

In carrying out a comprehensive needs assessment, States have the option of contracting specialised organisations, agencies or consultants to assist with mapping exercises, baseline surveys, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Programme of Action, section I.13.

## **Mobilising resources**

As mentioned above, national plans for implementing Programme of Action commitments should contain a strategy for resource mobilisation. Where possible, the State concerned should invest some of its own resources in the realisation of its plan. Such investment is a powerful signal of the importance attached by a State to meeting its Programme of Action commitments and, as such, can act as a strong incentive for donors also to invest substantially in the realisation of the plan.

Donor countries and organisations should recognise that States that comprehensively assess their own needs with regard to Programme of Action implementation and that invest some of their own resources in the realisation of their national plan, are demonstrating a strong commitment to implementing the Programme of Action and, as such, should be provided with the cooperation and assistance that they need to fully realise their goals.

The working group has also discussed the significant implications for resource mobilisation of mainstreaming small arms work into development programmes and will continue to examine all aspects of this issue.

## **Matching needs with resources**

The comprehensive assessment of needs is only the first step in an effective cooperation and assistance process and, as mentioned above, can itself require the provision of assistance. Such needs assessments, embedded in national action plans, can provide a coherent picture of the strategy to be followed by a State in implementing its Programme of Action commitments. To be at all meaningful, however, these needs must be matched with resources if they are to be met.

The working group believes that the most effective way of matching needs with resources in the context of Programme of Action implementation is *not* to focus on developing one centralised mechanism, but rather to encourage the development of a variety of mechanisms that States can choose from when seeking assistance to implement their Programme of Action commitments.

The working group also recognises that States, although they bear the primary responsibility for implementing the Programme of Action, are not the only entities that need to be taken into account when considering matching needs with resources. Other actors, including international organisations, foundations and NGOs, are also in a position to provide assistance or to receive assistance in helping to implement the Programme of Action.

The working group has considered the following options and proposals in this regard and will continue to elaborate on these and other ideas over the coming period:

- The role of Biennial meetings of States: Biennial meetings of States could fulfil, much more than they have to date, the role of a global forum for matching needs with resources. This could be achieved either by dedicating one biennial meeting to the issue of cooperation and assistance or, preferably, by making cooperation

and assistance the predominant theme of all biennial meetings and by making full use of the opportunities provided by such meetings for formal as well as informal interactions among States seeking assistance and those in a position to provide it.<sup>4</sup>

- More targeted use of reporting: In connection with the above point, the working group recommends that the optional reporting template developed by UNDP, UNODA, UNIDIR and Small Arms Survey be modified to make it easier for States to indicate their assistance needs when reporting on their implementation of their Programme of Action.
- The role of the Group of Interested States: Since its establishment in 1998, the Group of Interested States (GIS) has been making an important contribution to advancing practical disarmament measures by providing a forum in which States and others in need of assistance can interact with those in a position to provide it. Since 2001, the GIS has devoted more and more attention to advancing implementation of the Programme of Action. The working group intends to investigate further, with the help of those States leading the initiative, how the role of the GIS might be strengthened even further.
- The need for better coordination within the United Nations system: UN Member States have to date not officially designated a body within the United Nations system to act as an official coordinator of requests for, and offers of, assistance in the context of Programme of Action implementation. The working group will discuss further the feasibility of this idea, bearing in mind the necessity of providing any such coordinating body with the resources necessary to carry out its mandate.
- “Contact Group” on assistance: The working group will also consider further the potential role that could be played by a “contact group,” made up of States and relevant organisations, which would focus exclusively on matching needs with resources in the context of implementing the Programme of Action.
- Standing support mechanism: To date, some useful mechanisms to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action have been developed on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>5</sup> The working group would like to consider further the utility of developing other such support mechanisms, *ad hoc* or otherwise, specifically focused on matching needs with resources.
- Web-based assistance mechanism: UNIDIR is in the process of developing a secure web-based database through which States seeking assistance can indicate their needs and States and others in a position to provide assistance can respond. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has developed a database under the auspices of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, in cooperation with UNIDIR and UNDP (<http://www.un-casa.org>). The database highlights needs expressed by Member States in its *Country Profiles* section and

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<sup>4</sup> See also page 3 of the paper produced by the Geneva Process Working Group on biennial meetings of States (1 June 2007), which recommends that the 2008 biennial meeting should have an “overarching focus on international cooperation and assistance.”

<sup>5</sup> A notable example is the project on “Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms” run by UNDP, UNODA, UNIDIR and Small Arms Survey. See [http://www.unidir.ch/bdd/fiche-activite.php?ref\\_activite=247](http://www.unidir.ch/bdd/fiche-activite.php?ref_activite=247).

is in the process of evolving into a Global Monitoring System for the implementation of the PoA (GMS-PoA). In order to harmonize efforts within the UN system, CASA is seeking to establish the GMS-PoA as a consolidated tool for the exchange of information to promote international cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The working group will continue to follow these promising projects with interest.

- The importance of donor coordination: The importance of good coordination among donors has been a recurring theme in the working group's deliberations. Coordination among donors is crucial in order to avoid duplication, to prevent good projects from being overlooked, and generally to contribute to an overall strategic approach to cooperation and assistance in the context of the Programme of Action. One mechanism that the working group has been considering as a means of improving donor coordination is the convening of regional and sub-regional cooperation and assistance meetings, possibly convened by UN regional offices, in order to facilitate the development of multi-stakeholder regional approaches to advancing implementation of the Programme of Action through coordinated assistance and cooperation.