



**Joint Statement of UN CASA (Coordinating Action on Small Arms)
At the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States
to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action
Wednesday, 16 June 2010**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Secretary-General has pointed out that the boundaries between underdevelopment, instability, fragility, crisis, conflict and war have become increasingly blurred; the small arms issue is therefore intertwined with security, development and human rights preconditions for sustainable peace.¹ He has underlined that present-day violence, crime and conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building require multidimensional interventions.

The uncontrolled circulation of small arms and their increasingly harmful use in conflict and non-conflict settings impedes the diverse actions requested by the Member States of the United Nations to enhance security and development; for instance, in humanitarian aid, violence and crime prevention, education, protection of the rights of children and youth, gender mainstreaming, peacekeeping, economic development, public health, good governance, human rights, and countering organised crime and terrorism.

The Programme of Action sets out a comprehensive framework for a coordinated international response to these problems associated with small arms and light weapons. It clearly frames States' primary concern as a determination to reduce human suffering, and encourages States to address the issue from both the supply and the demand perspective.

The cross-cutting nature of their impact is why coordination of the small arms issue within the United Nations organisation is so vital. To meet this challenge, *CASA*, which stands for Coordinating Action on Small Arms, was established. *CASA* now brings together twenty-two UN system partners, which deal with preventing violence and mitigating the impact of small arms and light weapons on societies, communities and individuals from their particular angle. UN system partners assist Member States and regional organisations with their implementation of the Programme of Action.

CASA covers not only the Programme of Action, but also all global small arms-related agreements, including the Firearms Protocol², the International Tracing Instrument, and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. It is also the coordinating body within the United Nations on the arms trade treaty, which has a strong relevance for the issue of small arms.

¹ S/2008/258

² Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, adopted in 2001 by the GA resolution 55/255 and entered into force on 3 June 2005.

CASA's flagship initiative at present is the development of International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS), which, when finalised, will enhance policymaking and programming on small arms across the UN system and provide comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers. On the opening day of this meeting, at the ISACS side-event, Member States had the opportunity to consider the first tangible results of this undertaking. Over the coming months, the United Nations will conduct a broad-based consultation on all ISACS modules in order to shape, fine-tune and finalise them. Member States, as well as international and regional organisations, civil society and the small arms industry, are invited to contribute to this consultation by providing inputs from technical and policy experts.

Another CASA initiative of note is the *Programme of Action Implementation Support System* (www.poa-iss.org), the evolving web platform which serves as a one-stop shop for providing comprehensive information on all elements directly relevant to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

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The subject of small arms is situated at the nexus of intersecting policy issues and it has become apparent to the United Nations that a broad, multi-sectoral perspective is required to deal with the issue in all its aspects. States can only successfully come to grips with it through integrated approaches, including security and development angles, crime and conflict settings, supply and demand situations, top-down and bottom-up initiatives, government and community-level actions.

The ongoing discussion on an Arms Trade Treaty represents an example of this comprehensive approach, as it is driven by concerns about the impact of the unregulated trade in conventional weapons on development, human rights and security – and could thus be an instrument of value to the UN system as a whole.

The United Nations also supports the initiative by States to advance the cross-cutting topic of “armed violence” within the Organisation, which has gained momentum through the 2006 *Geneva Declaration* and the 2010 *Oslo Commitments*. These offer an important roadmap to achieve the tangible reductions in the global burden of armed violence that are called for by the UN Secretary-General.

Within the UN system, a number of CASA participants are now collaborating on the inter-agency Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP), which aims to promote effective responses to armed violence through support for the development of international policies and nationally-led comprehensive armed violence prevention programmes.

The upcoming High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), next September, will provide an excellent opportunity to emphasize how a consistent engagement in armed violence prevention and reduction can be an effective component in efforts to alleviate poverty and to achieve the MDGs.

From the perspective of the United Nations system, implementation of the Programme of Action will greatly benefit from such all-encompassing approaches.