

Rebecca Peters, Director of IANSA

Toward 2012

Thank you Mr Chair

It is just one year since we lost our dear friend Pablo Dreyfus in the Air France disaster. Pablo played a crucial role in every BMS since 2003, as an adviser to IANSA members. We miss him very much.

This is the first BMS since the small arms process regained momentum in 2008. We hope the 4th BMS will continue that success.

Since the 3rd BMS, new initiatives have emerged at global and regional levels, emphasising poverty and other root causes that can drive people to violence. Meanwhile the progress toward an Arms Trade Treaty has highlighted the need for greater responsibility in international transfers.

These initiatives are all essential, given the multi dimensional nature of the problem of armed violence. IANSA supports them all, because the problem is so enormous that no single agreement or initiative can possibly provide The Solution. But these initiatives complement, rather than replace, the Program of Action, the UN Firearms Protocol, and other measures specifically addressing regulation of the weapons themselves.

Whatever motivation lies at the root of a conflict, whether between individuals or between communities, the availability of firearms in the immediate environment multiplies the probability of death, serious disability, or grave violations of human rights. An assault with a gun is far more likely to result in death than an assault with any other common weapon.

Borrowing an analogy from the Public Health Network, combatting malaria is more effective using multiple strategies. The mosquito is the vector that carries the disease, but people are more susceptible if their underlying health is poor. So improving people's health helps to protect them from malaria – but we also need to reduce their exposure to

the mosquito, for example with bed-nets. Likewise in preventing armed violence, we need to strengthen communities to build up their resistance, but also to reduce their exposure to the vector of injury, which is the gun.

So we still need strong coordinated measures to limit the quantities and the types of small arms that can be produced, imported and sold; and to regulate the purchase, use and storage of these weapons, whether by governments or by civilians. These must be underpinned by measures enabling the weapons to be tracked, removed and if necessary destroyed to protect public safety.

Specifically in terms of the PoA, we urge Member states to consolidate and strengthen the international mechanisms and agencies that support PoA implementation. Compare the resources dedicated by the international community to controlling nuclear weapons, with the resources available for small arms in the ODA and the UN Office on Drugs & Crime.

Speaking of the ODA, I must mention how impressed we have been with 3 regional disarmament centres over the past two years. In Lima, in Lomé and Kathmandu, the centres have built excellent relations with governments and civil society by providing exactly the kind of practical support and leadership that is needed.

The Centres are helping to bridge the gap between the global agreement and local implementation. It is a very long distance from New York to a national parliament, or to a local mayor or police. As we move toward the 2011 and 2012 conferences, we need more effort to connect the global and the local.

As you have heard, IANSA members are helping to bridge that gap. Over the coming two years we will emphasise our monitoring role in the PoA and other agreements to reduce armed violence. We will be monitoring not only the implementation by states, but also the suitability of the PoA itself. And we will push for the 2012 Review Conference to actually involve a review, to make the PoA stronger and more applicable to the reality of armed violence.

Thank you