



United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

AGENDA POINT 6 (c)

Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action, and preparations for the 2011 Experts Group meeting and the 2012 Review Conference

Upon request of the Chair, the Office for Disarmament Affairs would like to make the following five points under this agenda item.

1. Meeting of Governmental Experts 2011

States have agreed to hold a one-week Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE) in 2011.¹ No such meeting has ever been held in the context of the Programme of Action, and the PoA itself does not mention the possibility of such a meeting.

Focus, agenda, and chair-designate of the MGE have not yet been discussed.

Only the BMS3 outcome document gives some, limited, guidance: “States are encouraged to consider convening periodic meetings of governmental experts to address key implementation challenges and opportunities relating to particular issues and themes, including international cooperation and assistance”.²

The MGE is scheduled for 10-14 January 2011.

The 65th General Assembly, which is likely to decide on the relevant (‘omnibus’) resolution at the end of December 2010, comes too late to start focused preparations for the MGE.

States may wish to consider that the Outcome document of this biennial meeting could include an indication of the focus of the MGE. It could also welcome the selection of a Chair-designate for this Meeting, as we understand that the relevant regional group has concluded that process.

2. PoA Review Conference 2012

The Review Conference of the Programme of Action will be held in 2012. To effectively prepare for this Conference, States may wish to include in the upcoming GA resolution covering the small arms process, that a one-week Preparatory Committee be held in the first half of 2012, similar to 2006. It goes without saying that such a PrepCom would in particular add value if not only it would agree to the administrative documents for the RevCon, but if it would also discuss working papers on substance. In other words: the PrepCom should not be the beginning of preparations, but the end of the preparatory phase, after which draft outcome text for the revCon can start circulating.

3. Improving measurability of the Programme of Action

In the Outcome document of BMS3 (2008), States agreed that “[...] the value of assistance proposals would be enhanced if they were formulated as concrete projects with measurable goals

¹ A/C.1/64/L.42

² CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 IV.I.7(o)

as part of relevant national plans, where applicable, and posted on the Programme of Action Implementation Support System”.³

Also, at regional meetings on the PoA, States stressed the value of further developing measurability in the field of small arms control – including through the development of concrete objectives and actions, as well as realistic timelines – in order to improve the outcomes of capacity building, programming and monitoring and evaluation.⁴ The call for improved measurability could also be heard in yesterday’s debate on assistance and cooperation. And the Secretary-General has stressed the need for improving measurability in the field of small arms in his report to the Security Council on small arms and other reports.⁵

Improving measurability of the PoA process is relevant to the whole spectrum of the PoA. For this meeting’s Outcome document, States may wish to consider to refer to the expressed need for increased measurability voiced in the BMS3 Outcome and in regional PoA meetings. And they may wish to consider to address at the RevCon of 2012 the development of goals, targets and indicators for the Programme of Action. In the view of UNODA, the Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2011 could be a most appropriate opportunity to start an in-depth discussion on how the PoA can become a measurable Plan by the 2012 RevCon.

4. Reporting template

Submitting a national report under the Programme of Action is voluntary for States. However, reporting under the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) is an obligation, to be done every two years.

For their national report, States are free to use whatever reporting template they wish to use. Many States have indicated they value a suggested reporting template.

Such a template was developed in 2004 by UNDP, UNIDIR and UNODA. Guidelines for national reporting accompany this template.

Since then, the ITI has been agreed, with its distinct reporting requirement. Also, the present reporting template seems to be limited in its user-friendliness, including a lack of focus on communicating assistance needs,⁶ no possibility to do a short update report, and a lack of standardization which in turn limits the value of analysis of national reports.

Member States have brought the issue of the reporting template to the forefront in BMS3.⁷ They specifically noted “that the task of preparing national reports could be made easier through the further development of elements of standardization in reporting”.⁸

UNODA has presented a new on-line reporting template, developed with Small Arms Survey, UNIDIR and UNDP. It is available in all UN languages. States may wish to refer to this improved implementation tool in their Outcome document. They may also wish to consider to explicitly agree to a two-year reporting cycle not only for the Tracing instrument, but for the PoA as a whole.

5. Programme of Action Implementation Support System (PoA-ISS)

For the Programme of Action on small arms, which is not a treaty, no provision for an implementation unit in the UN Secretariat has been made. However, since Member States have voiced their concern over a lack of centralized information and implementation tools, the United

³ A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 IV.I.3, IV.I.7(g), IV.IV.28(w)

⁴ E.g. www.poa-iss.org/PoA/Documents/2009_07_09_Kigali_Meeting_outcome.pdf

⁵ E.g. S/2008/258; A/64/228

⁶ A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 IV.I.7(i)

⁷ A/ CONF.192/BMS/2008/3, IV.IV.29(a)

⁸ A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 IV.I.3

Nations has developed with extra-budgetary funds a Programme of Action implementation support system (PoA-ISS): the easy-to-access, web-based, ‘one-stop shop’ supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action [www.poa-iss.org, also accessible through www.un.org/disarmament].

Funding for the continued operation of PoA-ISS is not secured. At the 2009 First Committee meeting, the unstable financial situation of PoA-ISS has been recognized by States as an issue that needs to be addressed.

The PoA-ISS seems to cater to a need and can be seen as a core element of a functioning Programme of Action. It is welcomed in the BMS3 outcome and in several recent GA resolutions on small arms.⁹

UNODA is working with the informal Group of Interested States (GIS) in New York to more consistently make use of the PoA-ISS in future GIS meetings, matching needs with resources.

Now that the PoA-ISS has become operational – and since it is essential for the ‘action’ side of the Programme of Action – States may wish to consider to include in their Outcome document a request to the SG to provide the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs with sufficient resources for maintaining the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, not later than in 2012 and within existing resources.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretariat deals with the small arms process on a daily basis and shared herewith some views stemming from that experience. Let me underline that these are mere suggestions, offered in an effort to assist in further improving the process – we are here to service you and stand ready to take our work in any direction that Member States deem appropriate.

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⁹ CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 IV.I.2, IV.I.7(k), Annex.III.9(f); A/RES/63/62 (on ‘practical disarmament measures’); A/C.1/64/L.42 (‘omnibus’ resolution on small arms)