

UK NATIONAL STATEMENT FOR THE THIRD BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION (UNPoA) TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW) IN ALL ITS ASPECTS.

The UK remains committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All its Aspects.

The UK, in its commitment to section III of the UNPoA, developed the Transfer Control Initiative (TCI). This initiative seeks, through regional and sub-regional cooperation to develop common norms and principles surrounding transfer controls. The UK has emphasised the need to take this initiative in partnership with others.

The UK Conflict Prevention Pool (CPP) Security & Small Arms Control (SSAC) Strategy, jointly managed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Department for International Development (DfID) and Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), contributes to wider UK support in conflict prevention by addressing long-term structural causes of conflict, managing regional and national tension and violence, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction. The UK has provided over £31 million since 2001 in support of measures to reduce the supply of, demand for and availability of SALW. We have supported NGOs and UN partners to collect and destroy weapons, improve weapons storage facilities, develop and implement regional control agreements, build capacity to manage weapons and undertake public awareness and education campaigns.

Ongoing work in 2006 and 2007 has included:

- mainstreaming SALW control and reduction measures into wider defence relations, foreign policy, conflict, security and development programmes;
- continuing support for the implementation of national plans and regional and international agreements to control SALW;
- continuing support to UNDP's work to promote the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence Reduction

- continuing support for the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), which helps countries in Central and Eastern Africa strengthen their controls on small arms;
- assistance in weapons destruction programmes in East Europe and Africa;
- support for the Small Arms Survey, which published its authoritative 2007 yearbook in August;
- support for a seminar in Buenos Aires to look at possible regional transfer control agreements in Latin America
- support for a series of assessments by Saferworld of current legislation regarding transfer controls
- supporting IANSA's global outreach strategy for small arms reduction;

Overall, this year the UK is funding over 20 projects worth £3.25 million in Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

The UK has also undertaken work outside the SALW GCPP to promote Small Arms Control and continues to actively participate in discussion and to fund SALW activity under the auspices of the UNIDR, UNODA, EU, OSCE and Wassenaar Arrangement.

The UK actively participated in the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to Consider Further Steps to Enhance International Cooperation in Preventing, Combating and Eradicating the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects. The GGE adopted a consensus Report, which concluded with recommendations aimed at enhancing international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and practical steps for the implementation thereof. This was recognised in the First Committee Resolution A/C.1/62/L.49/Rev.1. The UK has reviewed its brokering regulations, from which some decisions have already been taken on the way forward: we will be extending extra-territorial controls on small arms and MANPADS from 1 October 2008; extra-territorial controls on light weapons will be introduced in April 2009; a decision on whether to regulate the provision of ancillary

services (and if so what services) to all SALW brokering cases has still to be taken and we are still considering whether to introduce a register of arms brokers, in particular whether the advantages of a registration system justify the burden on legitimate business.

The UK will actively participate in the 3rd Biennial Meeting of States (BMS), where we will share our experiences – and challenges – in implementation of the UNPoA. As a leading supporter of SALW projects, we welcome the focus on international co-operation and assistance at the BMS. As an international partner, we recognise that there are challenges in ensuring the coherence and co-ordination of the support that we provide, with that of other States. It is important that as a group, international partners are providing support to the range of issues covered by the UNPoA and targeted across the range of countries in need of support. We therefore hope that the BMS, and any subsequent initiatives that stem from the meeting, will enable us and fellow donors to provide more effective, co-ordinated and coherent support.

We will work actively to secure a conclusion that sets the framework for work over coming years, clearly highlights the successes and best practices in implementing the UNPoA, and identifies areas where greater attention is needed. Our objective is a result that preserves the UN's reputation as the eminent forum for controlling and curbing the illicit spread of SALW. In the context of those areas where it is agreed that further attention is needed, States might consider the establishment of informal working groups, each of which would meet regularly to discuss and consider practical ways of enhancing implementation of one such area, with any outputs to be presented to the subsequent BMS for the consideration of all UN Member States.

Greater acknowledgement of challenges is a key step towards making the UNPoA process more meaningful. As such, the UK is demonstrating the seriousness with which it takes its commitment to implementing the UNPoA by providing a lead on more open and frank reporting of challenges we have faced and continue to experience.

The UK acknowledges that there are areas of the UNPoA that provide serious challenges and we wish to continue to seek to improve practices in concert with the wider international community. These could include the steps the UK is taking to strengthen brokering controls, and the institutional challenges involved in ensuring that inter-departmental co-operation and information-sharing is always consistent with the demands that flow from comprehensive UNPoA implementation.

The UK will be distributing information leaflets at the BMS, designed as a useful tool – especially under the over-arching theme of matching needs and resources. We would be happy to discuss the work we do and synergies with work being carried out by regional and sub regional organisations, NGOs, and civil society as a whole.

United Kingdom Delegation to the BMS

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