

Fourth Biennial Meeting of
States to Consider the Implementation of the
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the
Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects
New York, June 16, 2010

Defense Small Arms Advisory Council

Statement of Major General (Retired) Allen Youngman

Mr. Chairman, I am Allen Youngman, Executive Director of the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council or DSAAC. We would like to earnestly thank you, Mr. Chairman, and this august body for the opportunity to make a statement.

Mr. Chairman, DSAAC is a trade association of US military small arms manufacturers. Over the past four years, we have participated in prior Biennial meetings, meetings of the UN General Assembly First Committee and the Arms Trade Treaty Open Ended Working Group. DSAAC is also part of the UN International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) Reference Group. Mr. Chairman I mention these facts to underscore one of the points I wish to make in this short presentation.

Mr. Chairman, as States continue to seek more effective ways to combat the illicit trade in small arms, we firmly believe that we, as representatives of a the legitimate small arms industry, can be an integral part of that process. Article 51 of the UN Charter acknowledges that States have the right to self defense and it seems obvious that they will continue to require arms for their military and security forces to meet their domestic and international obligations with respect to national defense and domestic law enforcement as well as participation in peacekeeping and related missions. Legitimate defense manufactures will continue to meet those needs. Because our industry must meet the highest possible standards for arms export licensing, we remain adamantly opposed to the illegal transfer of arms, frequently characterized by indifference to the consequences of illicit transactions. These are not contradictory positions, but the stance of a responsible and engaged industry.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that industry participation is vital to the credibility and effectiveness of ongoing efforts such as the PoA, ISACS, and a future Arms Trade Treaty and we sense that this view has been increasingly recognized by the States. For example, we were very grateful to see the important role industry plays in those efforts acknowledged in the pre-meeting non-paper on marking and tracing.

Finally Mr. Chairman, we would hope that civil society participation, in future efforts on the PoA and especially the Open Ended Meeting of Government Experts, will continue to be broadened. In referring to "civil society," we hope that this body will define that term in a manner that includes all of civil society, not just traditional advocacy groups but also organizations such as DSAAC which can bring genuine expertise and real-world experience to the process. We have all seen examples of initiatives undertaken with the best of intentions that were doomed to failure because there was no vehicle in place to provide industry input. We believe that any realistic view of small arms issues must acknowledge that industry can play a vital role and we hope this body will embrace our willingness to assist in this important effort.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you for this opportunity and please be assured that DSAAC will remain a resource for those engaged in the process of working to eliminate the burden caused by the unregulated and under-regulated international trade in arms.