

SAAMI
BMS4, June 16, 2010

Thank you Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman. My name is Richard Patterson. I'm the Managing Director of the Sporting arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, also known as SAAMI. SAAMI was created in 1926 at the request of the US government to create standards for the safety and reliability of firearms ammunition and components. We are an accredited standards-setting organization under the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which is the US representative to the International Standards Organization (ISO).

I have the privilege of participating on the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) project as a member of the Experts Reference Group. Since SAAMI is a standards-setting organization, we strongly endorse the concept of creating standards—which by definition provides fact-based, measurable, and repeatable results when applied in the prescribed conditions. However, as the ISACS develops we are having concerns about the project's adherence to basic standards-setting goals and processes.

With a couple of exceptions of technical and non-controversial modules, the initial drafts of ISACS modules were based largely on unsubstantiated and superficial assumptions—that more guns automatically equals more violence, more gun control automatically equals less violence, that guns automatically result in more deaths, etc.

Firearms are a tool—and like any tool can be used for great harm or great good. If ISACS procedures do not examine the whole picture, they do not provide decision-makers with information required to make critical decisions in the best interests of society. Studies show that eliminating gun ownership by law-abiding citizens does not reduce violence. In fact, some scholars have shown the opposite may be true. In those countries where firearm ownership is increasing among law-abiding citizens, more guns has resulted in less violence.

We were encouraged in the early stages of the project when we were assured that our comments would have to be incorporated into the ISACS—unless of course they were factually incorrect. We provided the factual evidence that proves these assumptions are without merit. Unfortunately, the feedback we are receiving on our comments to several modules has not followed the basic procedures for proper standards-setting. Some comments are dismissed with little more than a casual “We don't like this idea.”

The ISACS project will be a success if it follows the basic principles of ALL standards. The standards must clearly define the scope of applicability. They must be based solely on all relevant facts. The results must be measurable, and it goes without saying they must measure all potential results. And the results must be repeatable.

Anything short of this and ISACS will not be standards—they will be nothing more than political statements.