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**Preparatory Committee for the United Nations  
Conference to Review Progress Made in 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, 9-20 January 2006

**Working paper submitted by the Netherlands and  
the United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland**

**Preparing for the Review Conference**

**Addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the  
illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light  
weapons and their excessive accumulation**

**I. Introduction**

1. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a threat to peace, reconciliation, security, stability, investment opportunities, economic growth and sustainable development. Both the human and socio-economic toll of armed violence levied by the illicit use of small arms and light weapons in society is huge. The objective of the present working paper is to discuss small arms and light weapons-related issues and development issues more comprehensively. Providing an integrated approach to both types of issues will improve opportunities for development and will help ensure that small arms interventions are more effective and sustainable. The paper suggests ways forward for discussion during the 2006 Review Conference.

**II. Existing commitments**

2. During the past year, considerable attention has been drawn to links between small arms and development. As recently as 8 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/68 on addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms

and light weapons and their excessive accumulation, in which it emphasized the relationship between small arms and light weapons-related issues and development. It built on the 2005 World Summit outcome document, in which, on the interrelationship between human security and development, Heads of State and Government had stated that “(w)e recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing”.<sup>1</sup>

3. Another important milestone during 2005 was the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) decision in March to include support for controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in those activities that qualify as development spending internationally. This decision creates new opportunities for the integration of small arms reduction measures into poverty reduction frameworks. It also enables donor countries to classify many of their small arms reduction activities as official development assistance (ODA).

4. The 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects<sup>2</sup> had already made mention of the connection between small arms and light weapons and the impact they could have on reconstruction and development in considering “the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, which have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to ... sustainable development”.<sup>3</sup>

5. Since 2001, many countries and regions have made considerable progress in fulfilling their commitments under the Programme of Action. However, additional assistance for small arms reduction and capacity development is desperately needed. Rooting such assistance in the context of development will create new opportunities to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action.

### **III. Key challenges**

#### **A. National poverty reduction strategies**

6. General Assembly resolution 60/68 calls for developing, where appropriate, comprehensive armed violence prevention programmes that are integrated into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies (para. 1 (a)). Furthermore, it calls for establishing small arms funds to support the implementation of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (para. 1 (b)).

7. *Basis in the Programme of Action.* Section III, paragraph 17: “States should make, as appropriate, greater efforts to address problems related to human and sustainable development, taking into account existing and future social and developmental activities, and should fully respect the rights of the States concerned to establish priorities in their development programmes.” Also, paragraph 6 of

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<sup>1</sup> See General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, New York, 9-20 July 2001 (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., sect. I, para. 2.

section III mentions that “States and international and regional organizations should seriously consider assisting interested States, upon request, in building capacities in areas including the development of appropriate legislation and regulations”.

8. *Implementation.* Several nations have already developed comprehensive national action plans on small arms and light weapons. Some have integrated such plans or other small arms reduction measures into their national security strategies and poverty reduction frameworks. In doing so, they have acknowledged that the reduction of illicit small arms and of armed violence is closely linked to the provision of personal and economic security as basic entitlements of the poor. Unless people are safe, secure and free from extreme poverty, they will not feel able to give up their weapons. The inclusion of small arms and light weapons-related issues in development policy dialogues based on the stated priorities and policies of the national Government ensures that small arms and light weapons control measures will be appropriate and sustainable. Indicators of success for such measures need to be developed and used in development reporting on both budget and sector support, and stand-alone projects. Good examples of this already exist in some countries. At the international level, the OECD/DAC and relevant United Nations organizations should formulate guidance that would examine how best to integrate small arms and light weapons-related measures into development frameworks, how interventions should be designed and implemented, which indicators should be used to measure success, and how donors can ensure better coordination. The Programme of Action could provide a basis for this guidance.

## **B. Peacebuilding**

9. General Assembly resolution 60/68 calls for “systematically including national measures to regulate small arms and light weapons in longer-term peacebuilding strategies and programmes” (para. 1 (d)).

10. *Basis in the Programme of Action.* Section II, paragraph 2, calls for States, at the national level, “to put in place, where they do not exist, adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures ... in order to prevent illegal manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, or their diversion to unauthorized recipients”. Also, section III, paragraph 6, states: “With a view to facilitating implementation of the Programme of Action ... international and regional organizations should seriously consider assisting interested States, upon request, in building capacities in areas including the development of appropriate legislation.”

11. *Implementation.* In post-conflict situations, small arms and light weapons often present a significant risk, which, if left unattended, will hold back reconstruction, recovery and development. The newly established Peacebuilding Commission will need to ensure that measures to reduce illicit small arms availability are factored into post-conflict reconstruction plans. Civilian weapons collection programmes, weapons amnesties, and the development of legislation to regulate weapons possession and use can be instrumental in preventing a resurgence of armed violence. The Programme of Action will be a useful basis for such work in the Peacebuilding Commission and will help create awareness and capacity on small arms and light weapons-related issues within the Commission and among all United Nations organizations engaged in post-conflict recovery.

### **C. Peacekeeping**

12. General Assembly resolution 60/68 encourages “United Nations peacekeeping operations to address the safe storage and disposal of small arms and light weapons as an integral part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes” (para. 1 (c)).

13. *Basis in the Programme of Action.* Section II, paragraph 21, calls upon States “(t)o develop and implement, where possible, effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, including the effective collection, control, storage and destruction of small arms and light weapons, particularly in post-conflict situations”. In addition, section II, paragraph 35, mentions the undertaking of States participating in the Conference “(T)o encourage the United Nations Security Council to consider, on a case-by-case basis, the inclusion, where applicable, of relevant provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations”. These two provisions have been combined in General Assembly resolution 60/68.

14. *Implementation.* The Review Conference should welcome the significant progress that has been made during the last year to build the capacity of the United Nations and its organizations to develop and implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and to formulate guidance covering all aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. This guidance recognizes that technical and country-specific aspects of small arms and light weapons collection, storage and disposal should be fully considered when designing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. However, more guidance is needed on the links between formal disarmament and wider voluntary weapons collection programmes. These should complement each other but they must be properly sequenced as part of post-conflict recovery. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should also take into account how weapons are managed in newly created State security structures. The Programme of Action provides some guidance on these areas, but could be further enhanced with the support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations and regional organizations involved in the design and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

### **IV. Recommendation**

15. We encourage the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, in his final statement, to make clear reference to the links between small arms and light weapons and development and the consequent need to integrate small arms and light weapons-related interventions into wider development programmes.