

The 2005 Biennial Meeting of States and next steps

The second Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) was held in New York from 11–15 July, 2005. Convened every two years, these are not negotiating events but so-called ‘information and exchange meetings’. They are designed to get States to report on the implementation of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on small arms (PoA). Given the proximity of the Review Conference (RevCon) in June–July 2006 and its Preparatory Committee meeting (PrepCom) in January 2006, as well as lessons learned from the first BMS, many nations used the meeting to lay down their priorities for the years ahead.

Like its predecessor in 2003, the BMS was structured in four parts: national and regional statements on the implementation of the PoA, statements by international governmental organisations, NGO statements, and thematic discussions.¹ The meeting was chaired by Finnish Ambassador Pasi Pattokallio. A former member of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and Light Weapons, convened in 1996 to identify the broad parameters of the problem, Ambassador Pattokallio was careful to keep the ‘debate’ open to encourage thoughtful exchange and space to reflect on under-represented view points. In addition, he consistently signalled his support for the active participation of civil society throughout the meeting—a standard that should be the minimum for the forthcoming meetings. Ambassador Pattokallio recently noted that his one regret from the meeting was the lack of agreement to allow NGOs to contribute their expertise to the thematic debates.²

In comparison to the 2003 BMS, the meeting was an improvement on a number of fronts, including the level of government engagement and input, the range

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of issues addressed in side events, and NGO interactions with delegations. Media coverage of the meeting was also strong. To most observers it is clear that the UN process on small arms control is evolving and this now needs to be consolidated into a comprehensive agenda to tackle the problem of gun violence and the ill-regulated arms trade.

Building blocks

Statements made by States and regional organisations at the meeting provide a gauge of the current understanding of the issue of weapons availability and misuse, which is indicative of their visions for the direction of the UN process.

Overall, the human cost of armed violence is increasingly better understood, with frequent references to the linkages with development, human security, the motivations that drive misuse, and gender dimensions. However, the availability of guns is still almost exclusively seen as a problem for war-affected or developing countries. Notwithstanding the serious challenges experienced in such contexts, little comment is made of the tremendous toll gun violence takes in ‘peaceful’ and/or developed countries, such as through armed criminality, high numbers of suicides with firearms, or gender-based violence and intimidation. While most developed countries widely report on their role as international donors or

Parliamentarians and gun control

The increased presence of parliamentarians as members of delegations at the BMS 2005 added an important reality check on the slow pace of progress at a global level. Parliamentary interest in the issue of small arms is also growing outside the UN process. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is examining the issue and it will be a key focus at its May 2006 meeting. (See www.ipu.org) The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms, comprised mainly of parliamentarians from Latin America and northern Europe, held its annual meeting in Mexico on 19–21 October 2005. (See www.parliamentaryforum.org) IANSA and the Forum have also launched a parliamentary period of action from October 2005 to January 2006 (See www.iansa.org/control_arms/parliamentary_action.htm)

their arms export/transfer policies, few actually dwell on efforts on the home front, for example the establishment of national commissions, the review of national laws, progress in stemming gun-related mortality, or cooperation with national NGOs.

As for future work, the general picture that emerges is that of “building blocks”, with the PoA as a foundation, on top of which existing achievements are added, such as the non-binding political instrument on the marking and tracing of weapons (ammunition was negotiated out); the entry into force of the 2001 Firearms Protocol (though this remains weakly connected to the UN process); and a growing array of regional instruments varying in quality and implementation. Proposed action in the near term includes curtailing the activities of private illicit weapons dealers (brokers); the development of a rigorous system of ‘end-user certificates’; stringent regulation of man portable air defence systems (referred to as MANPADS); and clarification of criteria for the international transfer of weapons. As stated by Switzerland at the meeting, “if the Programme of Action is a comprehensive document, it nevertheless is only a starting point. The realisation of its provisions, sometimes worded in too general terms, requires that completing norms and/or mechanisms be developed.”

Encouragingly, many States, including Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to name a few, support the adoption of legally-binding instruments. At least 38 States expressed interest in developing a legally-binding instrument on small arms transfers, with another 36 States expressing support for common standards regulating the international trade in small arms. Numerous statements regretted the political nature of the marking and tracing agreement, and pledged to continue working towards strengthening such commitments in the years ahead. It could be that the drive for legally-binding instruments will convince

States of the need to move beyond the current consensus-based approach, which increasingly results in the lowest common denominator and is often an impediment to real progress on several fronts. Instead, the multilateral process would be far better served if the growing majority in support of forward-looking measures was not in constant threat of veto by a few States.

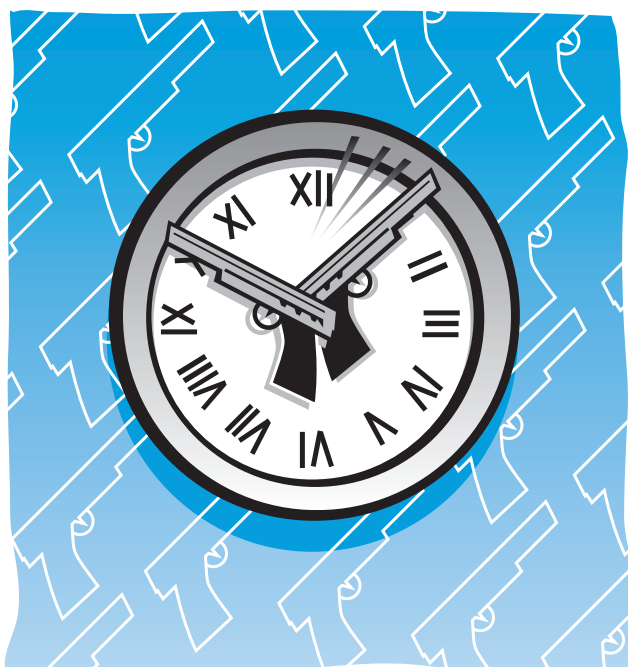
My delegation continues to believe that the struggle against the illicit trade of small arms cannot be limited to political statements of intent. . . This struggle must necessarily be grounded in the determination and unequivocal commitment of all member States, which bear the primary responsibility for neutralising illicit production of small arms, and dismantling networks of illicit brokers involved in this traffic, which is the main source of weapons for conflict zones, terrorist groups and international criminality.

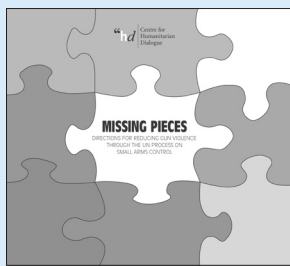
Statement by H.E. Larbi El Hadj Ali, Algeria, at the 2005 BMS, 12 July

Next in line: brokering

Illicit brokering was one of two issues, together with marking and tracing of small arms, that the 2001 PoA explicitly identified for development into an instrument of some sort. Attention to private arms dealing has also been called for in the UN *High-Level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change*, and in the UN Secretary General’s report *In larger freedom*. The UN General Assembly is expected to decide during its current 60th session on the establishment of a group of governmental experts that will start work only after the 2006 RevCon. In fact, several States and most NGOs are calling instead for the establishment of an Open Ended Working Group on controls to end illicit arms dealing, given the detailed evidence base that exists on the issue and the work of a previous Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). Indeed, an experts group has already worked on the issue in 2000–2001,³ and numerous regional instruments adopted recently by the European Union, the Organisation of American States, the Wassenaar Arrangement⁴, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or States parties to the 2004 Nairobi Protocol provide further precedents likely to facilitate the agreement to a global legally binding instrument.

Relevant to the upcoming process on brokering are some important lessons from the disappointing results of the marking and tracing process. Several factors threatened and ultimately weakened the marking and tracing negotiations: the UNGA had not determined the nature of the instrument prior to the negotiations (would it be legally or politically binding?); the consensus-based approach imperilled the process as a small number of States held out until the last minute on particular issues they considered fundamental (e.g. the exclusion of ammunition); the need for greater technical proficiency among delegations; and the need to allocate sufficient time to the negotiations, particularly if the scope and nature of the future instrument are also open for negotiation.





Packed with fresh insights and policy recommendations, this publication is available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish at www.hdcentre.org (go to Small Arms/Publications).

Missing Pieces: Directions for reducing gun violence through the UN process on small arms control

At the 2005 BMS, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue launched a publication aimed to provide policy makers with guidance for key components and under-represented elements in the current UN process on small arms. The main themes addressed are:

- Preventing misuse: regulation of small arms at a national level
- Controlling supply
- Assistance to survivors of gun violence
- Focusing on gender
- Taking guns and ammunition out of circulation
- Addressing the demand for small arms
- Justice and security sector governance

Towards 2006

Expectations are high among many States and civil society organisations for the tasks ahead. What is less clear is how the 2006 RevCon will chart the next phase of the UN process on small arms. In various meetings and forums over the last months, those States discussing next steps appear to agree on one thing: that the PoA should not be re-opened for negotiation. From this point, visions start to differ about what form(s) the next phase of work should take. It is clear that the PoA has been a groundbreaking framework in many regards, and much can be done to honour existing commitments *and* identify what else is needed to effectively tackle the crisis of armed violence and the arms trade.

In our view, the deliberations in the coming Review Conference should address a number of pertinent issues such as marking and tracing, brokering, export controls, civilian possession, the role of non-state actors and modalities for enhancing international cooperation.

Statement by HE Mrs. Adiyatwidi Adiwoso Asmady, Indonesia at the 2005 BMS, 11 July

Various suggestions are beginning to float in diplomatic circles about models and approaches of RevCon outcome documents, ranging from the adoption of a declaration on the value of the PoA complemented by a more detailed implementation document, to a possible set of annexes on guidelines or principles on various issues. Close attention to the shape and form of these documents is important to ensure that the small arms issue stays prominently on the agenda, and that commitments continue to be implemented and expanded in the long-term. Careful framing can helpfully guide the next phase of international programmes to support more effective implementation of existing commitments; advance progress on issues that are 'ripe' for international agreements or instruments; elaborate or clarify existing PoA commitments; and provide guidelines on model regulations or approaches and lessons learned.⁵ The Chair designate of the forthcoming PrepCom, Sierra Leone's Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, will no doubt be gauging views and opinions in the coming months on these issues in particular.

Putting people first

In the lead-up to this important stock-taking of global progress and the charting of next steps, pressure is mounting on States to measure progress not just against the requirements of the PoA, but also for the difference that collective efforts are making to the lives of ordinary people caught up in situations of armed violence. A framework that puts human security at its core should encompass five overarching and complementary objectives:

- **Regulating the use of small arms** by civilians, private security companies, armed groups, and all branches of the security sector;
- **Draining and controlling the existing pool of guns and ammunition**, including weapons collection programmes, stockpile management and a consolidation of effective disarmament and demobilisation in war-affected nations;
- **Regulating the transfer of small arms and ammunition** through the agreement of an international instrument specifying transfer criteria, promoting transparency, restricting transfers to non-state armed groups, and regulating brokering;
- **Reducing the demand for guns** by paying attention to gender considerations, strengthening the rule of law, promoting awareness raising activities, strengthening the linkages with development action and increasing overall work with communities;
- **Providing assistance to survivors of gun violence** through identification of best practices and linkages to other multilateral processes.

Global small arms control policymaking has matured since 2001 but is far from the comprehensive agenda needed to tackle the suffering and insecurity caused by the misuse of these weapons. The next nine months will be crucial for committed and creative action to move the slow pace of progress to an agenda for action that takes on board all we have learned in the intervening years, and applies it to the task at hand. Much currently rests in the hands of a number of forward-looking States, who must display leadership and vision in the months ahead to get us to the next level.

This article was written by Cate Buchanan, Emile Le Brun and Mireille Widmer of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Small arms and development: Converging priorities

In September 2005 world leaders gathered in New York for the World Summit. They acknowledged that “peace and security, development and human rights ... are interlinked and mutually reinforcing ... and the foundations for collective security and well being”.¹ This declaration represents the most important articulation of the relationship between security and development to date, and echoes the words of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who stated in his report *In larger freedom* that, ‘the accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to be a serious threat to peace, stability and sustainable development.’² The recognition that security and development are inextricably linked, and that weapons availability and misuse can erode development gains, is slowly being translated into UN programming—though much work remains to be done both conceptually and practically.

How should the small arms control and development agendas support one another, in light of current thinking and practice?

From the development side, the world’s attention has been directed recently to the World Summit and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—the targets set in 2000 by States to, for example, eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. As outlined in the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) recent report, *Securing Development*, the incidence of armed violence, whether in situations of armed conflict or crime, can undermine the achievement of many of the MDG’s.³

The 2005 UNDP *Human Development Report* makes the links even clearer: ‘conflict disrupts food systems, contributes to hunger and malnutrition and undermines progress in health and education.’⁴

The UNDP has recognised these implications and undertakes programming in three mutually reinforcing areas:

- *small arms control*—building national capacities with respect to weapons management
- *armed violence reduction and prevention*—strengthening local capacities to address armed violence, promoting non-violent livelihoods and addressing the structural causes of armed violence; and
- *disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)*—supporting the transition from war to peace by facilitating the reintegration of ex-combatants to civilian life and the removal and destruction of weapons used in conflict.

From the small arms control side, the focus of multi-lateral policymaking is the 2001 UN Programme of Action (PoA). A wide ranging document, in its preamble the PoA notes that illicit weapons availability poses a ‘serious threat to ... sustainable development’, and it encourages States to ‘address problems related to human

and sustainable development’.⁵ The PoA does not, however, make explicit recommendations for how the international community and States can address these challenges.

The PoA misses a critical opportunity to strengthen the linkages with development in its over-reliance on supply-side measures. While addressing the easy availability of weapons is essential, gun violence is equally dependant on the motivations that drive individuals and groups to arm themselves in the first place—factors often directly related to issues of poverty, inequality and the lack of alternative livelihoods. In this sense, the PoA is lopsided. When it comes up for review in mid-2006, approaches to better address the causes of armed violence should be made more explicit in any new commitments Member States agree.

There is much room for a more forward-looking agenda from the development side, as well. To date, much of the development discourse around small arms control has been limited to discussions of armed conflict and its aftermath. While conflict is unquestionably part of the continuum of armed violence, it is only one aspect of the problem. As the Small Arms Survey has recently noted, the majority of small arms deaths worldwide do not occur from collective armed conflict, but in situations of individual criminal violence, misuse and suicide.⁶ This much broader appreciation of the impacts and scale of gun related violence must be recognised and addressed within the development community. Post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), for example, cannot be the end-point. It must be followed by other efforts to absorb excess weapons stockpiles and to address civilian disarmament, whether through community-based weapons-for-development schemes or stronger partnerships with governments to establish and enforce stronger national gun regulations.

The UNDP believes that the most effective way to address weapons availability and misuse is to encourage States to identify these security-related issues as national priorities and incorporate them into national development frameworks (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and UN Development Assistance Frameworks). UNDP Assistant Administrator Kathleen Cravero noted at the 2005 BMS, by using such frameworks, governments are able to allocate resources in a transparent and systematic way to address the issue of weapons availability and misuse, making it easier for bilateral and multilateral donors to provide resources to help address these issues.⁷

The recent decision by the OECD Development Assistance Committee in March 2005—in which donors agreed to allow Official Development Assistance (ODA) to be spent on activities aimed at ‘controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons’—is highly significant. Donors are now able to allocate resources to countries that are afflicted by the scourge of gun violence.

Peter Batchelor is Team Leader, Small Arms and Demobilisation Unit, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP.

Small arms—Big opportunities

Without irony I have heard some diplomats in Geneva refer to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as ‘the best club in town’. This nickname probably started a couple of decades ago, when the CD was actually functional and producing some important treaties. More recently, it has been unable to agree to a programme of work for an incredible eight-year period.

One area in which disarmament diplomats *can* make headway these days is small arms control. Not that it’s easy—diplomacy involving all States is a profoundly tedious business. Yet, in a globalised world, controlling these tools of violence is increasingly appearing on multiple agendas.

Why link small arms issues to globalisation? Three key reasons drive such a focus. First, globalisation in security matters directly relates to a widening range of threats. In many areas of the world today it is not large armies, but lightly armed individuals and small groups, who challenge national and international stability. Second, thanks to the global boom in shipping, communications and finance, guns and ammunition are transported everywhere, by anyone, at any time, making full use of the expanding global networks that are a particular feature of the past two decades. Finally, while globalisation is visible in the multiplying linkages between issues, weapons availability is a key factor in a cluster of issues identified at the September 2005 World Summit—namely, the interconnection between development, peace, security and human rights.

Small arms control is increasingly recognised as an issue of global relevance. It was one of only two disarmament issues that survived the gauntlet of the hotly contested World Summit outcome document. But when looking for ‘small arms’ in the document, one should not solely focus on processes. The UN Programme of Action on small arms (PoA) is mentioned twice, but not in a way that opens up any new horizons. The real gain is contextual. The document notes the need to act on a number of fronts that feature or respond in various ways to the lethal availability and misuse of guns. These include references to zones of conflict, transnational crime, peace building, human security, child soldiers, the position of women and girls during and after armed conflict and the centrality of human rights. Most critically, the Summit final document establishes the interdependency of development and security.

Five years ago, at the Millennium Summit, development priorities did not yet include security issues. The concept of this linkage was just budding. When the PoA came into existence a few months later, it referenced the Millennium Development Goals. With further recognition of the development–security link established at the recent Summit, a useful step would be for this year’s General Assembly to integrate the line of thinking from the outcome document into the multilateral small arms agenda. Such an action would be particularly timely,

as the PoA is due for review in mid-2006. The General Assembly could:

- note the importance of integrating armed violence prevention programmes into poverty reduction strategies;
- encourage UN peace-building strategies to include weapons collection and destruction, stockpile management, adequate national arms regulation and the prevention of illicit arms transfers;
- take into account the roles that women’s organisations play in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes, as well as the requirement to address the needs of women and girl combatants and dependants in such programmes;
- promote the protection of the rights of children in armed conflicts; and
- call for the development of adequate curricula on the proper application of international humanitarian law and human rights law in weapon management procedures for armed forces, police and security forces.

This step would help set the stage for further work on the small arms issue from a development perspective, including the elements of misuse and alternative choices. It would do so without diminishing attention from the ever-crucial supply side, which is quickly diversifying globally and becoming a development issue in itself.

Following a General Assembly resolution recognising development priorities, it would be key for States to operationalise these concepts in preparation for the 2006 UN Review Conference (RevCon) on small arms. Doing so presents an ideal opportunity to put into practice what was agreed by world leaders in principle.

At the 2006 RevCon, States could build on this action in many ways, including by developing systems to enhance reporting and monitoring of the implementation of the PoA, establishing a resource mobilisation strategy, determining results achieved to date in the implementation of the PoA and identifying areas where additional international instruments need to be developed—one example would be the issue of ammunition.

It is vital that the 2006 RevCon be prepared for in close cooperation with key stakeholders, such as relevant international organisations, parliamentarians (small arms is a key agenda point at the upcoming Interparliamentary Union Assembly in May 2006) and NGOs.

In the small arms control field, some big opportunities now present themselves. But the biggest challenge will be effective coordination between capitals; New York, the venue for the RevCon and its preparatory January meeting, and Geneva, where expertise on weapons control and armed violence is increasingly clustered. Effective coordination will allow disarmament experts to say a year from now, “small arms, not a bad club in town”.

Daniël Prins is deputy at the Netherlands disarmament mission in Geneva. He wrote this opinion piece in a personal capacity.

Editors note: For more information on the moribund Conference on Disarmament, go to www.acronym.org.uk or www.reachingcriticalwill.org

■ In Their Own Words

What do you consider the priorities for the 2006 Review Conference (RevCon) and beyond?

Stella Sabiti

Executive Director

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE), Uganda

The 2006 meeting will determine global action for the next decade. Therefore it is essential for NGOs to contribute actively to shaping the outcomes of this meeting. Due to the changed geopolitical environment as well as the wealth of experience and knowledge accumulated since the PoA was adopted, this space for discussion and action has widened. The RevCon must also assess how implementation of the PoA has helped solve real problems: do people feel safer? What concerns civil society in many parts of Africa is the issue of regulating gun possession by civilians, and of arms transfers to non-state actors—militias, freedom fighters, insurgents and mercenaries. In addition, the 2006 RevCon might also provide an opportunity to discuss a range of other matters that have been left out of the PoA, such as gender concerns, police reform, and unresolved issues such as ammunition control.

Francis K. Sang

Director / Coordinator

Regional Centre on Small Arms & Light Weapons, In the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (RECSA)

The priority of the 2006 RevCon is to evaluate the implementation process and commitments of Member States. During the Second Biennial Meeting of States, it was evident that States were fully aware of the intention, objectives and goals of the PoA. However, what came out of the reports is that many countries have progressed where as some are still lagging behind since they have not established institutional frameworks to implement the process as agreed in 2001. There is need therefore, for a further PoA term in order to enable

countries to undertake some aspects of the implementation. If we are to succeed in this endeavor, we should put emphasis on integrating small arms programmes into other relevant issues—high priority concerns such as poverty eradication, development and security sector reform—if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Ambassador Camilo Reyes

Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colombia

Colombia is deeply committed to the UN process, having presided over the 2001 UN conference, during which the PoA was adopted. Whilst we are heartened by the effort of States since then, progress has in fact been slow and could be enhanced and better coordinated. The 2006 RevCon is an opportunity to re-focus, paramount among priorities should be the question of regulating civilian possession of small arms. Civilians own 60% of the world's guns and are responsible for the majority of gun death—almost twice the global estimated amount from armed conflict. Global promulgation of norms would thus not only help reduce armed violence, but would limit transnational movements of weapons. In addition to this issue, it is time for member States to tackle head on weapons transfers to non-state actors, to discuss the possibility of negotiating an arms trade treaty, and commit to supporting DDR in more sustainable ways.

Jonathan Frerichs

World Council of Churches

The priority is success, on two levels. One is take-home success: the RevCon sets specific, five-year goals for improved regulation of the small arms cycle and governments go home more focused and accountable for the period ahead. The other is shared success: even as local, national and regional programmes now address gun violence in more of its many facets, so too this global Programme of Action must promote interdisciplinary and government-civil society partnerships to crack the chain of supply and demand for weapons. Success at these levels will save lives and improve livelihoods. It may also energise other disarmament forums.

Tip of the Hat



To the Transitions Foundation, Guatemala Alex Galvez was shot when he was 16, a case of mistaken identity in a gunfight between two rival gangs in Guatemala City. He was just on the way to the local shop to get some soft drinks for lunch. "I thought I was going to die," he said. "And I wanted to die, because in Guatemala there aren't many chances for disabled people." But Alex's life has turned around. He is one of the founders of an organisation based in Antigua, Guatemala's second city, run by and for people with disabilities. The UN has estimated that there are at least 1.5 million illegal guns in Guatemala, making it the most heavily armed country in Central America. In 2004, nearly 4,500 died a violent death, and eight out of 10 of them were shot. In response, the Foundation provides specialised services—like prosthetics and wheelchairs—to people who arrive from all over Guatemala. In a developing country like Guatemala there is nothing automatic about access to basic resources. And with a disabled population of perhaps more than a million, many poor disabled people rely on non-governmental organisations to help them with essentials.

For more information, visit www.transitionsfoundation.com

(Based on a story broadcasted by BBC Radio 4's Crossing Continents, by Linda Pressly, 20 October 2005)

Conference on violence as a public health threat

Experts in preventing violence have gathered in San Francisco, California, on 19 October 2005, to review the advances made in violence prevention. The conference, the 2nd Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention, was co-hosted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and The California Wellness Foundation. Since the launch of the WHO World report on violence and health in 2002, there has been significant progress by many countries towards measures to prevent violence, WHO reports. "A few years ago, you could have counted on one hand the number of countries able to spell out the links between violence, public health and prevention," said Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health. "Today, more than 70 countries have national violence prevention focal points and more than 50 have initiated policies and programmes focused on addressing the root causes of violence."

Source: UN News Service and WHO, 19 October 2005

Liberia: Vigilante gangs patrol streets as police force rebuilds

Worries about war have given way to concerns about crime. "You have a lot of people accustomed to violence and nothing to preoccupy their minds. . . and the country is awash with small arms," said Peter Zaizay, a spokesman for the Liberian National Police. "Armed robberies have increased to some extent." In response, vigilante gangs have sprung up around the capital and the trend is worrying those in the upper echelons of the UN, which has some 15,000 troops and 1,000 policemen charged with helping keep the peace. Some say that vigilantes are proof of the lack of trust in the forces of law and order, a hangover from the civil war when officers were not only corrupt but also involved in human rights abuses. "There's a lack of confidence in the justice system. That's really the problem," said Zaizay. "That's why we have the community policing strategy, to increase awareness and share information."

Source: IRIN News, 18 October 2005

Yemen: Demand for law to control firearms as crime soars

Hundreds of protestors took to the streets of the Yemeni capital Sana'a on 19 October to demand that the country's parliament debate a stalled draft law controlling the ownership and use of firearms. "The protestors are here to demand that parliament start debating and endorsing the firearms control draft law," said Khaled al-Eryani, coordinator of a committee set up by a group of NGOs demanding the passing of the draft bill. The draft bill on firearms control has languished in the Yemeni parliament for the past six years after influential tribal leaders pushed for its rejection, fearing it could eventually lead to their groups being disarmed. Over the years, no concrete steps have been taken by the parlia-

ment to start debating the draft. A report submitted in November 2003 to the United Nations named Yemen as a possible source of weapons to a number of neighbouring countries, particularly Somalia.

Source: IRIN News, 20 September 2005

New report focuses on girls members of armed groups in the DRC

Some 12,500 girls currently belong to government and state armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a programme to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate all militias into society is failing them, argues the August 2005 Save the Children report, "Forgotten Casualties of War". It notes many girls did not want to be in the disarmament and reintegration process and did not see themselves as "child soldiers", but as "wives" or camp followers and, therefore, were not entitled to demobilisation and reintegration benefits. The process, it said, acted to alert communities that girls were involved with armed groups, thereby giving rise to community rejection of them. People have assumed them to have been sexually abused and were, therefore, carriers of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. As a result, they were seen as having "lost their value" to their communities.

Source: IRIN News, 25 August 2005

US firearms industry wins protection from victims' suits

The US Congress has passed a bill protecting the firearms industry from massive crime-victim lawsuits. President Bush said he will sign it. The House voted 283-144 to send the bill to the president after supporters, led by the National Rifle Association, proclaimed it vital to protect the industry from being bankrupted by huge jury awards. Under the measure, a half-dozen pending lawsuits by local governments against the industry would be dismissed. Anti-gun groups say some lawsuits filed by individuals could be thrown out, too. Waging a tough battle against growing public support for the legislation, opponents called it proof of the gun lobby's power over Republican-controlled Congress. "This legislation will make the unregulated gun industry the most pampered industry in America," said Kristen Rand, director of the Violence Policy Center.

Source: Associated Press, 21 October 2005

Croatia to digitalize registered arms database by end of 2007

By the end of 2007 the Croatian police are expected to have a digitalised database of registered guns which will also contain prints of bullets and cartridges found on scenes of unsolved crimes. Computerising information on weapons is crucial for effective enforcement of laws, and accountable gun ownership. The EUR1.4 million project will be launched in May 2006 and must be completed within 18 months. About 350,000 arms are registered in Croatia. Under a new weapons law, the registered arms will have to be tested.

Source: Seesac Daily SALW Media Monitoring Report (Belgrade)/BBC Monitoring Service, HINA Transcript 24 October 2005

Endnotes

The 2005 Biennial Meeting of States and next steps

¹ The themes were: (1) Weapons collection and destruction efforts/stockpile management/disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants (DDR); (2) Capacity building/resource mobilisation/institution building; (3) Marking and tracing of firearms; (4) Linkages to terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and precious minerals; (5) Import and export controls/illicit weapons brokering; and (6) Human development/public awareness and culture of peace/children, women and the elderly.

² Statement to Inter-Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms, Mexico City, 19 October 2005

³ See UN Document A/Conf.192/PC/33, 12 March 2001

⁴ The Wassenaar Arrangement is an organisation of 33 of the world's largest arms exporters from five continents aiming to improve transparency on weapons exports.

⁵ For an informative analysis of UN Review Conferences and models of next steps, see Sarah Parker (2005) *Reviewing Multilateral Political Agreements: Precedents for the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference*. See also www.internationalalert.org/pdfs/btb_emerging_agendas.pdf

Endnotes

Small arms and development: Converging priorities

¹ UN General Assembly (2005), *2005 World Summit Outcome*, A/60/L.1 section 3, paragraph 9, p. 2. Available at www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html

² Kofi Annan (2005), *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, A/59/2005, chapter 3, paragraph 120, p. 32. Available at www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm

³ UN Development Programme (2005), *Securing Development: UNDP's support for addressing small arms issues*. Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Geneva, pp. 14–16.

⁴ UN Development Programme (2005), *Human Development Report 2005: Human cooperation at a crossroads*, New York, chapter 5, p. 151. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_chapter_5.pdf

⁵ *UN Programme of Action Programme to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, section three, paragraph 17. Available at: disarmament.un.org:8080/cab/poa.html

⁶ See *Small Arms Survey 2004: Rights at Risk*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 174 and *Small Arms Survey 2005: Weapons at War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 230.

⁷ Statement by Ms. Kathleen Cravero, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP.

Available at: www.un.org/events/smallarms2005/Thematic/undp6.pdf

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