



BITING THE BULLET

INTERNATIONAL ALERT | SAFERWORLD | UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

Development dimension of the PoA

Introduction

Between 26 June and 17 July 2006, international governments will meet to review their commitment made five years ago to control small arms and light weapons (SALW). The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA) was agreed at a UN Conference in July 2001, and is the primary international instrument relating to the controls of small arms and light weapons.

The PoA sets out a range of measures and initiatives to be taken by states' in areas such as: controls on the import, export and transit of small arms (transfer controls); the regulation of arms brokering; stockpile management; addressing the impact of small arms on development; and the marking and tracing of small arms.

The Biting the Bullet project aims to promote effective implementation of the PoA and periodically it produces a "Red Book" analysing progress against the PoA.

The 2006 Red Book concludes that global implementation of the PoA is patchy. Although progress has been made in some areas, action taken so far has not been sufficient to have more than a local or marginal impact on the problems of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) trafficking, proliferation and misuse. Some of the factors contributing to inadequate performance are linked to weaknesses in the PoA itself. This year's conference provides the first formal opportunity to review and strengthen the PoA since it was agreed.

This Biting the Bullet briefing focuses on the development dimension of the PoA, highlighting progress thus far, and outlining recommendations for further improvements.

Key recommendations

The Outcome Document of the Review Conference should, inter alia:

- **Emphasise** the importance of the inter-relationships between the implementation of PoA and development and poverty reduction;
- **Emphasise** that such inter-relationships are important in the context of large scale armed conflict or post-conflict contexts, and also in relation to armed crime and social violence involving SALW;
- **Call for** appropriate and effective integration of international, regional, and national measures to control SALW, prevent and reduce armed violence, promote development and alleviate poverty;
- **Welcome and encourage** the growing engagement of development and humanitarian aid institutions and agencies in programmes and activities that contribute to the implementation of the PoA; including the OECD DAC decision

that most efforts to support implementation of the PoA may qualify for development aid;

- **Call for** SALW National Action Plans (NAPs) or other SALW reduction and control initiatives to be integrated into national security strategies and national poverty reduction frameworks;
- **Call for** appropriate integration of SALW reduction and control strategies to be an integral part of programmes for conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building; and also for appropriate linkage and integration with DDR, return of displaced persons, and other such programmes;

SALW and development

The proliferation and misuse of SALW is fuelling conflict, facilitating violent crime and human rights abuses and so undermining development around the world. From states in long-term conflict, in crisis or in the post-conflict phase, to countries beset by social violence and crime, arms availability and armed violence compounds the effects of disease and malnutrition, inhibits access to social services and diverts resources away from efforts to improve human security and development. As Kofi Annan has asserted: "in terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as 'weapons of mass destruction'" (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Millennium Assembly 2000)

International recognition of the links between small arms proliferation and development is increasingly gaining recognition with the inter-relationships between small arms and poverty reduction recognized by a number of international documents and statements.¹

At the regional level, organisations in Africa have repeatedly addressed the links between development and small arms control with both the Bamako and Nairobi Declarations of 2000 emphasising this relationship.

Critically, it is also increasingly recognised that action on SALW should – where appropriate – be integrated with broader development programming. For example, Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) designates Pillar 3 to Security, Conflict Management and Disaster Management and recognises small arms control as a priority. The OECD DAC's decision to make SALW programming eligible for overseas development assistance (ODA) was critical in helping to build understanding and support of the implications of tackling armed violence in development programming.

The 2006 Review Conference should aim to build on these supportive statements and elaborate and develop statements of principle on the importance of the links between PoA implementation and development and call for appropriate integration of SALW reduction and control strategies in development programming by governments and donors.

¹ The UN Secretary General's March 2005 report, *In Larger Freedom*; World Summit declaration, September 2005; The UN General Assembly resolution 60/68 of December 2005;

The PoA and existing language on development

Since 2001 the international community has increasingly recognised that addressing the proliferation and misuse of national SALW requires action beyond the disarmament framework and effectively tackles the human rights, humanitarian, development, and governance aspects of SALW. Launched in 2001, the UN PoA contains only a few references to development issues related to the spread of small arms. During the 2006 UN Preparatory Committee (a meeting held in January 2006 to set the agenda for the Review Conference), a large and growing number of countries and organisations highlighted the need to integrate and consolidate the development component of the UN PoA process.

The UN PoA is structured into four main sections: (I) Preamble, (II) Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, (III) Implementation, international cooperation and assistance and (IV) Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The PoA refers indirectly to development in the preamble, and contains only one direct reference to development:

Section III: Paragraph 17: “With regard to those situations, 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”.

One of the key objectives for the Review Conference Outcome Document is to elaborate and develop statements of principle on the importance of the links between PoA implementation and efforts to promote development, eradicate poverty and address humanitarian needs.

Although these links are widely recognised in principle, in practice appropriate integration of programmes and measures between these areas is often obstructed, not least by institutional and even legal barriers at the national, regional and international level. For example, many development aid agencies remain reluctant to properly engage with efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence or control SALW, and SALW issues remain neglected in many countries’ poverty reduction strategies. Strong statements to encourage and endorse effective and appropriate linkage or integration at the Review Conference will provide important reference points for those working to overcome such obstacles. Similarly, the Review Conference should aim to request and encourage UN and other international institutions and processes to contribute to the implementation of the PoA, while at the same time clarifying how efforts to implement the PoA can help them to achieve their own goals.

References to development in the Review Conference Presidents non-paper

As Chair of the Review Conference, HE Ambassador P. Kariyasawam, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations has produced a draft outcome document (a “non-paper”) in advance of the conference. The latest version of the *President’s non-paper for informal consultation purposes* of 18 May 2006 does elaborate on development and states: [comments here as per those made on transfer controls draft]

24. "To mainstream action to eliminate illicit small arms and light weapons and integrate armed violence prevention programmes, as appropriate, in national and local plans and strategies related to national security, development, poverty reduction, crime prevention and post-conflict reconstruction."²

The inclusion of Paragraph 24 which recognises the need to integrate SALW programmes into national development strategies is a strong and welcome proposal. However, this must also be complemented by a paragraph referring to the need for states, donor countries/agencies, regional and international organisations to take steps to ensure they have the policies, programmes and capacities required to support and cooperate on the implementation of such national development frameworks and strategies, which integrate tackling SALW proliferation and armed violence into development frameworks.

Furthermore, a reference in support of the OECD DAC guidelines to include "support for controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of SALW in those activities which qualify for development spending internationally" would also be particularly welcome.³

Further information

- *Implementing the Programme of Action 2006: Action by States and Civil Society*, Biting the Bullet (International Alert, Saferworld and University of Bradford), June 2006
- *Promoting Effective Global Action on Small Arms: Priorities for the 2006 UN Review Conference*, Biting the Bullet Project (International Alert, Saferworld and University of Bradford), January 2006
- Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, UN Document A/CONF.192/15
- *President's Non-Paper for Informal Consultation Purposes - 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*, 18 May 2006
- OECD DAC guidelines on small arms control.

² Ambassador outcome draft

³ OECD DAC