

Statement of
Kennis: Knowledge for Safety and Good Governance
at
Consultative Dialogue on the review process following the
conclusion of the 9th session of the Working Group on Firearms
UNTOC Review Mechanism

Mr./Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, fellow members of civil society,

Transnational organized crime and the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms are complex challenges; by establishing and engaging in the Review Mechanism, states are taking active steps in assessing progress towards objectives established back in 2000 and 2001. Kennis: Knowledge for Safety and Good Governance applauds this exercise and the reaffirmation of the call, expressed in this Consultative Dialogue, to “cooperate with non-governmental organizations” to combat transnational organized crime.

Dialogue and engagement with civil society is critical to the success of this exercise, and I would like to focus in my remarks on civil society’s role as a vital source of data and analytic expertise. When it comes to sources that can provide data against indicators of progress in implementing UNTOC and its Firearms Protocol, officially held data is essential but limited. In many contexts, the collection, storage and analysis of official data is hindered by a range of challenges, including low capacity and prioritization. Whether we are considering trends in the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms, or the use of illicitly manufactured and trafficked firearms in organized crime and violence, states simply do not have access to all the data points.

Civil society is critical here. A number of widely recognized international research organizations have spent years developing, refining, and analyzing datasets constructed from non-official sources, or which combine official and non-official data. Indeed, for two decades organizations like the Small Arms Survey, the Peace Research Institute Oslo, Sou da Paz, and the Flemish Peace Institute, just to name a few, have also generated original, robust data through the fielding of rigorous surveys and other forms of quantitative and qualitative research of direct relevance to states in considering implementation of UNTOC and its Firearms Protocol.

Not only are there are a number of donor-funded research organizations whose mandate focuses specifically on the collection of relevant data; many are also engaged on the ground in many regions strengthening the capacities of national authorities to enhance their data collection practices. I would like to add that the capacity to analyze data and draw relevant conclusions for action is also critical, and this is another area where civil society can be of essential assistance.

In light of the fact that academia and NGOs have provided and continue to provide value to States in this domain, we encourage States that collaborate productively and usefully with civil society to showcase these positive relationships and experiences, to promote the outcomes of these interactions, and to encourage other States to draw upon the vast reservoir of experiences, knowledge, data and analysis available to them from the civil society domain.

Mr. Chair, allow me to end by highlighting that the Firearms Protocol shares with its parent Convention and the other two protocols the ultimate goal of making the world safer for people, by reducing the negative impacts of certain illicit practices, which endanger “[...] the well-being of people, their social and economic developments and their right to live in peace” (Firearms Protocol preamble, para. 1). This higher objective, expressed either as a reduction of criminal violence or as

an increase in safety and security, is firmly in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, these objectives align with the 2030 Agenda goals for peaceful and inclusive societies (Sustainable Development Goal 16), to be achieved in part by reducing all forms of violence and related death rates (SDG Target 16.1) and a significant reduction in illicit arms flows (SDG Target 16.4).

To provide expert perspectives on how the aspect of impacts might be considered, the recently published peer-reviewed journal article "Has the Firearm Protocol Reduced Armed Violence?" -- published in *Journal of Studies and Research on Organized Crime* -- has been made available to this group via the UNODC Civil Society Unit.

On behalf of Kennis: Knowledge for Safety and Good Governance, thank you for the opportunity to provide this intervention.

END

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