



Small Arms Survey
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**Statement of
The Small Arms Survey at the occasion of the
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,

At the occasion of this first Consultative Dialogue on the review process following the conclusion of the 9th session of the Working Group on Firearms, it is important to recall that the Firearms Protocol was the first legally binding global instrument on small arms. As you know, the purpose of this Protocol, entered into force in 2005, is to *promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition* (UNGA, 2001c, art. 2). The purpose of the Firearms Protocol is fully understood when read in the perspective of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which is *'to promote cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively'* (UNGA, 2000a, art. 1).

After more than twenty years of implementation of the UNTOC and of the Firearms Protocol, we know that preventing and combating the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms is a complex endeavor. Clearly, states and their institutions play a pivotal role in this undertaking. However, effective policy-making and programming need the collaboration with the actors from academia, civil society and from the private sector.

The illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms are often transnational issues involving organized criminal groups, as well as terrorists. To understand these phenomena, states need access to quality data that is not often available through official channels only. Furthermore, the development of effective policies and responses requires the consultation and collaboration of actors outside the state institutions, for example, just think at the producers of firearms and ammunition, at actors working in the criminal



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justice sector. Last but not least, other actors, such as the Small Arms Survey- whose mission is to provide international and national stakeholders with the data required to have an informed debate and make evidence-based policy decisions are institutions that can support the actions undertaken by states.

The Small Arms Survey is an associated program of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. It was founded in 1999 to deliver solid data, analysis and policy advice to enable the development and implementation of international, regional and national mechanisms and processes to effectively combat the illicit flow of small arms and ammunition and reduce the impact of armed violence. The Survey regularly works with law enforcement and forensic services to identify and analyze emerging trends in the trafficking of firearms, and associated regulatory gaps. Recent examples of our work include the collaboration with the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS) through a regional project, which involves in-depth research to generate a regional assessment on illicit weapons flows. Also, our research on Ammunition Profiling with Ballistics Systems examines how well automatic ballistics information systems (ABISs) can be used for profiling ammunition seized by law enforcement agencies to help create a broader strategic intelligence picture. Ammunition trafficking is often overlooked, and the Survey has been able to exploit previously 'untapped datasets' that already exist for criminal justice purposes but have so far not been used systematically to understand and counter trafficking. Other recent analytical work included the issue of converted weapons in Europe, using the dark web as a vector for illicit trafficking and the challenges posed by 3D printing of firearms. Finally, our support to states in the development of national firearms strategies and national action plans, allows the Survey to collaborate with the partner countries in developing a monitoring mechanism that is able to track the progress of implementing national policies.

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The Survey's experience shows how important the collaboration between state institutions, international organisations, academia, civil society and the private sector is in order to develop effective and holistic policies that are able to decrease the risk of

illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms. In light of this experience, we welcome the establishment of a Review Mechanism for UNTOC and its three Protocols and we are encouraged by the spirit of collaboration that characterizes this Constructive Dialogue.

Civil society is critical to ensure that states can reach the ultimate goal that is at the foundation of the Convention and the Firearms Protocol, namely the improvement of “[...] the well-being of people, their social and economic developments and their right to live in peace” (Firearms Protocol preamble, para 1). This overall goal is also reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in its Goal 16 that –among other issues- sets a significant reduction in illicit arms flows (SDG Target 16.4) and a measurable reduction of all forms of violence and related death rates (SDG Target 16.1).

On behalf of the Small Arms Survey, thank you for the opportunity to provide this intervention.

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