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General and complete disarmament: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 31 December 2020

[on the report of the First Committee ([A/75/399](#), para. 96)]

75/241. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [74/60](#) of 12 December 2019, as well as all previous resolutions on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including resolution [56/24](#) V of 24 December 2001,

Emphasizing the importance of the continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,¹ and recognizing its important contribution to international efforts on this matter,

Emphasizing also the importance of the continued and full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument),²

Recalling the commitment of States to the Programme of Action as the main framework for measures within the activities of the international community to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

Underlining the need for States to enhance their efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument,

¹ 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.

² See decision 60/519 and [A/60/88](#) and [A/60/88/Corr.2](#), annex.



Mindful of the implementation of the outcomes adopted by the follow-up meetings on the Programme of Action,

Welcoming the successful conclusion of the third 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 (the third Review Conference), held in New York from 18 to 29 June 2018,

Recognizing the need for the strengthened participation of women in decision-making and implementation processes relating to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and reaffirming the need for States to mainstream gender dimensions into their implementation efforts,

Noting that web-based tools developed by the Secretariat, including its searchable database and the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium, and the tools developed by Member States could be used to assess progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the acknowledgement, by the third Review Conference in its outcome document,³ of the proposal on the establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons in order to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, in particular in developing countries,

Welcoming the series of open, informal consultations in early 2020 held by the Chair-designate of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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,

Noting the decision of the General Assembly to postpone the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to 2021 in response to the situation concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,⁴

Noting also that voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action can serve, *inter alia*, to provide a baseline for measuring progress in its implementation, build confidence and promote transparency, provide a basis for information exchange and action and serve to identify needs and opportunities for international assistance and cooperation, including the matching of needs with available resources and expertise,

Noting with satisfaction regional and subregional efforts being undertaken in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and commending the progress that has already been made in this regard, including the tackling of both supply and demand factors that are relevant to addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,

Recognizing that sharing and applying best practices, on a voluntary basis, at the regional, subregional and national levels support the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument and should therefore be an ongoing effort, in order to address ongoing challenges associated with the diversion of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,

Reaffirming that international cooperation and assistance are an essential aspect of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument,

³ A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex.

⁴ See decision 74/552.

Recognizing the efforts undertaken by civil society in the provision of assistance to States for the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Recalling that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in accordance with the sovereignty of States and their relevant international obligations,

Reiterating that illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons is a serious problem that the international community should address urgently,

Highlighting new challenges and potential opportunities with regard to effective marking, record-keeping and tracing resulting from developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, and bearing in mind the different situations, capacities and priorities of States and regions,

Recognizing that the opportunities and challenges associated with these developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, including polymer and modular weapons, must be addressed in a timely manner,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,⁵ which includes an overview of challenges related to the diversion of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and international levels, as well as good practices, lessons learned and recommendations on preventing and combating the diversion and illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients,

Welcoming the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty,⁶

Acknowledging that effective national control systems for the transfer of conventional arms contribute to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

1. *Underlines* the fact that the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and that their uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels;

2. *Recognizes* the urgent need to maintain and enhance national controls, in accordance with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including their diversion to illicit trade, illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, taking into account, *inter alia*, their adverse humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences for the affected States;

3. *Calls upon* all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument) by, *inter alia*, including in their national reports the name and contact information of the national points of contact

⁵ A/75/78.

⁶ See resolution 67/234 B.

and information on national marking practices used to indicate country of manufacture and/or country of import, as applicable;

4. *Encourages* all relevant initiatives, including those of the United Nations, other international organizations, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action, and calls upon all Member States to contribute towards the continued implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels;

5. *Encourages* States to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution [60/81](#) of 8 December 2005 to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons;⁷

6. *Affirms* the outcome of the third 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, held in New York from 18 to 29 June 2018 (the third Review Conference);

7. *Decides*, pursuant to decision 74/552 of 14 May 2020, to convene a one-week biennial meeting of States from 26 to 30 July 2021 to consider key challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument at the national, regional and global levels for the purposes of preventing and combating the diversion and the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients;

8. *Renews its decision*, pursuant to the schedule of meetings for the period from 2018 to 2024 agreed upon at the third Review Conference, to convene a one-week biennial meeting of States in 2022 and the fourth 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 in 2024, to be preceded by a preparatory committee meeting in early 2024 of not more than five days;

9. *Underlines* the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument for attaining Goal 16 and target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals;⁸

10. *Emphasizes* that international cooperation and assistance remain essential to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, while being mindful of the need to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of international cooperation and assistance;

11. *Also emphasizes* the fact that initiatives by the international community with respect to international cooperation and assistance remain essential and complementary to national implementation efforts, as well as to those at the regional and global levels;

12. *Recognizes* the necessity for interested States to develop effective coordination mechanisms, where they do not exist, in order to match the needs of States with existing resources to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action and to make international cooperation and assistance more effective, and in this regard encourages States to make use, as appropriate, of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System;

⁷ See [A/62/163](#) and [A/62/163/Corr.1](#).

⁸ See resolution [70/1](#).

13. *Encourages* States to consider, among other mechanisms, the coherent identification of needs, priorities, national plans and programmes that may require international cooperation and assistance from States and regional and international organizations in a position to do so;

14. *Also encourages* States, on a voluntary basis, to make increasing use of their national reports as a tool for communicating assistance needs and information on the resources and mechanisms available to address such needs, and encourages States in a position to render such assistance to make use of those national reports;

15. *Encourages* States, relevant international and regional organizations and civil society with the capacity to do so to cooperate with and provide assistance to other States, upon request, in the preparation of comprehensive national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

16. *Encourages* States to reinforce, as necessary, cross-border cooperation at the national, subregional and regional levels in addressing the common problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, with full respect for each State's sovereignty over its own borders;

17. *Also encourages* States to take full advantage of the benefits of cooperation with the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, the World Customs Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in accordance with their mandates and consistent with national priorities;

18. *Encourages* all efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, including those highlighted in the outcome document of the third Review Conference;

19. *Encourages* States to submit, on a voluntary basis, national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action, notes that States will submit national reports on their implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, encourages those States in a position to do so to use the reporting template made available by the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, and reaffirms the utility of synchronizing such reports with biennial meetings of States and review conferences as a means of increasing the submission rate and improving the utility of reports, as well as contributing substantively to meeting discussions;

20. *Encourages* States in a position to do so to provide financial assistance, through a voluntary sponsorship fund, that could be distributed, upon request, to States otherwise unable to participate in meetings on the Programme of Action;

21. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Saving Lives Entity fund to ensure sustained financing for coordinated, integrated small arms control measures in countries most affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and encourages States in a position to do so to make voluntary financial contributions to the fund;

22. *Encourages* interested States and relevant international and regional organizations in a position to do so to convene regional meetings to consider and advance the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, including in preparation for the meetings on the Programme of Action;

23. *Encourages* civil society and relevant organizations to strengthen their cooperation and work with States at the respective national and regional levels to achieve the implementation of the Programme of Action;

24. *Reaffirms* the importance of States undertaking to identify, where applicable, groups and individuals engaged in the illegal manufacture, trade, stockpiling, transfer, possession, as well as financing for acquisition, of illicit small arms and light weapons, and take action under appropriate national law against such groups and individuals;⁹

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

26. *Requests* the Secretariat, within existing resources, to present an analysis of implementation trends, challenges and opportunities relating to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including needs for cooperation and assistance, based on information submitted by States, at the Seventh Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

27. *Also requests* the Secretariat to report on support provided by the United Nations system for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including experiences, best practices and lessons learned regarding the efficient use of available resources, for presentation at upcoming meetings on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

28. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session, under the item entitled “General and complete disarmament”, the sub-item entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”.

48th (resumed) plenary meeting
31 December 2020

⁹ Report of the United Nations Conference on 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, sect. II, para. 6.