

**Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the
Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade
in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (BMS7)**

26-30 July, 2021

Daily Briefing Day 4

Today marks the fourth day of BMS7. The fourth draft of the outcome document was issued last night [1] and states are now very focused on the details of the document and hopefully working towards reaching a consensus on its content. Discussions on the outcome document are being held in closed sessions, meaning that civil society is not able to follow what is happening. Now that states' attention has shifted to focus on the outcome document, the plenary sessions today were short.

The 7th plenary meeting focused on agenda items 8 [2] and 9 [3], which were discussed in tandem. The meeting was very short with five states (Iran, Côte d'Ivoire, Brazil, Colombia, and Egypt) delivering statements. While there is general consensus on the importance and need for international cooperation and assistance (especially in the areas of stockpile management and marking), there continue to be divergent views on the inclusion of ammunition, and the inclusion of "synergies" to other conventional arms instruments (such as the Arms Trade Treaty).

Côte d'Ivoire addressed agenda item 8, noting that international cooperation, both between member states but also with organizations such as Interpol, is critical in combating the illicit trade of SALW and cross-border control.

Iran spoke first on agenda item 9 on behalf of Bolivia, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria and Venezuela. Iran stated that "endeavours that put a large economic burden on States should be avoided" and that developed countries should further assist in alleviating the economic burden that is already created by the implementation of the PoA in developing countries. Iran also stated that ammunition should not be included in the PoA, and instead the focus of the PoA should be on universally agreed elements of the PoA. The delegate of Iran then

went on to make another statement (now speaking on behalf of Belarus, Nicaragua, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba and Iran) that condemned actions by the United States of America, stating that the outcome document should include a statement “rejecting unilateral coercive measures by the USA to deprive certain delegations from participating virtually in meetings”.

Colombia supported the inclusion of ammunition in the PoA, saying “ammunition is a fundamental problem in the trade of SALW”. Colombia also supported increased cooperation between states, particularly with regard to the more challenging aspects of implementing the PoA and the ITI.

The delegate of Brazil spoke on behalf of the MERCOSUR countries (Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay) as well as associated states (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam). Brazil also supports international cooperation measures, highlighting the important multilateral steps MERCOSUR countries have taken to stem the illicit trade of SALW within South America. Brazil emphasized that the effective implementation of the ITI and PoA requires the formation of new organizations and new legislation in MERCOSUR countries, and that implementing marking and tracing initiatives is a challenge that requires international cooperation. Brazil additionally noted that more developed countries have a duty to assist MERCOSUR through partnerships, training, and economic support, as the “technology gap” has been detrimental to MERCOSUR’s ability to effectively implement marking and tracing initiatives. Brazil also agrees that ammunition should not be excluded from the PoA, as it is a fundamental element of the SALW trade.

Egypt then spoke on Agenda item 9, agreeing that international cooperation and assistance was fundamental to the effective implementation of the PoA. Egypt stated that in order to effectively deal with the SALW trade, cross-border partnerships and agreements between exporters and importers of arms must be put into place. Egypt then spoke in agreement with the delegate of Iran, that ammunition should not be included in the PoA, and that in general only topics of total consensus should be included. Egypt extended this to include topics from the Arms Trade Treaty, of which it is not a signatory, and stating that language and topics from the ATT should be kept separate and independent of BMS7 proceedings.

The 9th plenary meeting began at 3 pm and continued discussion of Agenda Item 9.

Japan spoke virtually, stressing the challenges and importance of the collection and disposal of stockpiled weapons involved in the illicit SALW trade. Given this, Japan highlighted the importance of providing assistance to developing countries to adequately implement the PoA.

Following Japan's statement, the chair moved on to agenda item 10 [4]. Sudan spoke on behalf of the Arab League. Sudan noted the need for increased cooperation among member states, and stated that "controversial" aspects of the PoA should be set aside in the name of progress, saying "we must also avoid linking PoA with other conventions and treaties that do not enjoy agreement among member states". Sudan also stated that ammunition should not be included in the PoA. Sudan additionally called for increased assistance to developing nations in the implementation of the PoA, saying "effective and complete implementation of the PoA to prevent/combat illicit trade in SALW requires cooperation with developing countries to ensure they can follow the technological developments, including the technology for adequate marking and tracing by Member States". Sudan then named increased international cooperation through the creation of a fellowship, marking and tracing objectives, and further assistance to developing nations, as key issues to focus on for BMS8.

The final speaker of the session was Mexico. Mexico spoke on agenda items 9 and 10, and advocated for further research and information on the "multidimensional problem of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons." Mexico argued that increased information and research is critical to full international cooperation and information exchange in combating the illicit trade in SALW. Mexico additionally called for a focus on cross-border partnerships in combating the illicit trade, arguing that bi-lateral and cross-border partnerships are crucial to successful implementation of the PoA. Mexico was the final speaker of the session, and the meeting was adjourned to continue informal discussions on the outcome document.

Today, though short, was a day of divergent views. As states now negotiate on the outcome document, hopefully these divergent views are not an impediment to reaching consensus and achieving a strong outcome document that allows for "a renewed and more responsive platform" as stated by the Chair on the first day of BMS7.

[1] Available at: https://meetings.unoda.org/section/poa-bms7-2021_documents/

[2] Consideration of international cooperation and assistance, including capacity - building, for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and including the proposals on the establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons as well as national, regional and global target-setting, where applicable

[3] Exchange of views on the eighth Biennial Meeting of States.

[4] Other issues and topics of relevance for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

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