

UPDATE #3:

**77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on
Disarmament and International Security**

Small Arms and Light Weapons

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The thematic debate on conventional weapons, which started on Wednesday, 19 October, provided member states with an opportunity to share their grave concern about a wide range of issues related to small arms and light weapons (SALW), including on humanitarian harm, the undermining of socio-economic and sustainable development and human rights, diversion, control of ammunition, threats from terrorism and criminal groups, porous borders, the emergence of new technologies, gender dimensions, and the need for greater cooperation and assistance. States also continued to express how critical the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) are for controlling the devastating effects of the illicit trade, transfer, and circulation of SALW and reiterated the importance of cooperation between states to effectively implement these multilateral instruments.

There are multiple resolutions being presented this year that include reference to SALW. These are summarised below along with relevant references from statements delivered during the thematic debate.

L.50, "[The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects](#)" is an omnibus resolution tabled annually by Colombia, South Africa, and Japan. Colombia underlined that the resolution seeks to maintain dialogue, concerted action, and cooperation to strengthen the implementation of the UNPoA and of the ITI. L.50 contains many substantive changes compared to last year's resolution. The resolution adds a preambular paragraph which recalls the recommendations from the Eight Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) that the UNPoA's Fourth Review Conference (RevCon 4) discuss the establishment of an open-ended technical expert group to develop agreed recommendations to ensure the full implementation of the ITI and the UNPoA in light of recent developments in manufacturing, technology and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons, and firearms produced using 3D printing.

The resolution also takes notes of the report of the UN Secretary-General containing recommendations to enhance international security and cooperation modalities and procedures in the framework of the UNPoA.

A new operative paragraph (OP) 17 was also inserted. It encourages states to develop options for enhancing the effectiveness of the existing international assistance frameworks in support of the implementation of the UNPoA and ITI, including by establishing a structured procedure, within the UN Secretariat, to process requests for assistance for consideration and appropriate follow-up by states during RevCon 4.

OP23 is also new and decides to establish a dedicated fellowship training programme on SALW in order to strengthen the technical and practical knowledge and expertise of government officials directly responsible for the implementation of the UNPoA and ITI.

OP30 was modified to request the UN Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive analysis on the implementation of the UNPoA to be presented at RevCon4 for states' consideration and appropriate follow-up.

Last year's OP32, which called on the UN Secretariat to develop a good practice document on marking practices for

modular and polymer weapons, was replaced to encourage states to discuss at RevCon 4 the establishment of an open-ended technical expert group to develop recommendations to ensure the full implementation of the ITI and UNPoA in light of recent developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design, and requests the Secretariat to prepare and circulate proposals for the aforementioned issues prior to RevCon 4.

L.51, “[Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus](#)”, was entirely replaced to make reference to the decision to establish an open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework to address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management (OEWG on conventional ammunition). The group would convene for two 5-day sessions in 2022 and one 5-day session in 2023 and submit a report on its work, including recommendations on a set of political commitments as a new global framework on conventional ammunition, to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

During this week’s thematic debate, many states, including Ghana, the Czech Republic, and Sri Lanka, reiterated their support to the work of the proposed OEWG. Peru stated that every year, enough bullets are manufactured to kill almost as twice as the number of inhabitants of the planet and asserted its belief that identifying the sources and roots to suppliers of ammunition can be just as important as identifying the illicit flows of arms.

L.33, “[Regional Disarmament](#)”, although co-sponsored by a significantly reduced number of states, contains no substantive changes compared to last year’s resolution. L.33 stresses that sustained efforts are needed to make progress on the entire range of disarmament issues.

L.34, “[Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context](#)”, also does not contain any substantive changes from last year. L.34 emphasises that the objective of confidence building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security. The resolution also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence building measures to avoid conflict.

As an example of a confidence-building measure and a tool supporting global efforts to promote transparency and establish common international standards in the conventional arms trade, Singapore, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, the United Kingdom, India, and Türkiye referred to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) to underline the need to extend the scope of the instrument to include SALW as its own category in the Register. For example, Senegal emphasised that UNROCA should “imperatively” include SALW.

L.35, “[Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels](#)”, does not contain any substantive changes from last year. L.35 recognises the crucial role of conventional arms control in the promotion of regional and international peace and security.

Some delegations spoke to relevant regional and sub-regional arms control initiatives in their statements. Belize on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) stated that the CARICOM Ministerial Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) identified firearms trafficking as one of the greatest threats to Caribbean countries. In response, CARICOM has developed a targeted approach, within the framework of the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy and the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, to address the root causes of violence in the region. With the support of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), CARICOM has been working on enacting Firearms National Action Plans.

A number of states, such as Burkina Faso, reiterated their support to the African Union’s “Silencing the Guns by 2030” initiative and stated that they remained committed to implement regional instruments on SALW such as the ECOWAS Convention on SALW and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking Firearms.

L.31, “[United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa](#)”, does not contain any substantive changes from last year. Togo welcomed the assistance it received from the UNREC and commended the good collaboration that exists between UNREC and the Togolese authorities, particularly within the framework of the project titled “Technical assistance for physical security and management of stocks, marking and destruction of

light weapons and small arms and associated ammunition.”

L.37, “[United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific](#)”, contains minimal changes compared to last year’s revised version of the resolution. The changes refer to national and sub-regional workshops on awareness-raising and promoting the universalisation of the Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles, and of a capacity-building project for states of Asia and the Pacific on gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking from a gender perspective; capacity-building and awareness-raising in support of the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones in Asia and the Pacific; and the twentieth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues.

L.44, “[United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)”, contains a minimal change in one of its preambular paragraphs to welcome the assistance of states from the centre in the management and securing of national weapons stockpiles and in the identification and destruction of surplus, obsolete or seized weapons and ammunition, in particular the implementation of the Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030 (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap).

L.9, “[United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament](#)”, does not contain any substantive changes from last year.

The Chairperson of the Eight Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) to the UNPoA, Mr. Enrique A. Manalo, delivered a report to the First Committee on Thursday, 20 October. In it he highlighted what he views as the meeting’s most significant outcomes. These include:

- States elaborated actions to enhance modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance;
- States noted the importance of National Action Plans and regional frameworks to ensure that international cooperation and assistance responds to needs and priorities identified at national and regional levels;
- States agreed to develop options for enhancing the effectiveness of the existing international assistance frameworks in support of the effective implementation of the UNPoA and ITI at the RevCon 4;
- BMS8 was able to retain the important progress that had been made on the integration of gender dimensions;
- The BMS8 outcome document also highlighted the benefits connecting the implementation of the UNPoA with other global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, the Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda, and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda;
- States reaffirmed their commitment to the UNPoA and ITI related to the international transfer of SALW;
- States addressed the current challenges posed by recent developments in weapons technology, manufacturing, and design;
- Despite divergent views amongst states on the inclusion of ammunition in the UNPoA framework, BMS8 agreed to include in the preliminary paragraph of the outcome document an acknowledgement of the establishment of the OEWG to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in live ammunition management.