

Statement to the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security

Small Arms and Light Weapons, on behalf of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

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Mr. Chair,

Permit me to congratulate you and your team for the able manner in which you have managed this process.

I speak on behalf of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). IANSA is a global network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to decrease the human costs of armed violence.

During the Fourth Review Conference (RevCon4) of the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN PoA) held in New York in June 2024 and the 79th Session of the UNGA First Committee, States demonstrated that they remain gravely concerned about the persistent effects of illicit trade and poorly controlled proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Concerns extend across the life cycle of these weapons, from their manufacture to stockpiling, transfer, and brokering, as well as dangers of diversion and problems related to their end use and effective disposal of obsolete weapons and unstable ammunition.

Illicit SALW trade and proliferation continue to exacerbate and sustain armed violence and conflicts and have a wide range of negative humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. They undermine the respect for both international humanitarian law and international human rights law and hamper the provision of humanitarian assistance to people affected by gun violence.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We want to use this opportunity to urge States to take the necessary steps to implement global and regional arms control and the trade regulation instruments, treaties and conventions they have committed to. These instruments, when fully implemented, are likely to help significantly in addressing the problems caused by Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). They include the UNPoA, International Tracing Instrument (ITI), the UN Firearms Protocol, and the Arms Trade Treaty. These are supplemented by several regional and sub-regional instruments.

Additionally, in December 2023, States agreed to a Global Framework for through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (GFA), which aims to improve the safety, security, and sustainability of all conventional ammunition throughout its life cycle, including SALW ammunition. The effective implementation of the GFA would reduce unplanned explosions and

enhance States' Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) processes, potentially saving several hundreds of lives and properties that would have been lost to accidental and unplanned explosions.

We therefore wish to encourage states to reaffirm their commitment to actively engage with civil society and to enhance women's equal, full, meaningful, and effective participation in arms and ammunition regulation processes, while also focusing on the need for community safety, violence reduction, stockpile management and safe destruction of conventional ammunition, conflict prevention, human rights protection, and peacebuilding.

We also call for a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the UNPoA, ITI, and GFA that fully engages underrepresented groups and individuals, including youth, gender-diverse individuals, victims and survivors, and civil society organizations in gun-violence affected areas.

It is our hope that this meeting will consider next steps to enhance effective implementation of the UNPoA, ITI, and the GFA among others, because the successful implementation of these agreements will depend on action by States, but also by international and regional organizations and their collaboration with civil society in the various world regions.

Mr. Chair,

Addressing good practices in implementing the SALW control Instruments aforementioned as well as the challenges and opportunities caused by technological developments in SALW management would be a major leap in the fight against the proliferation of SALW.

We urge you to critically consider the speed with which technological development in arms manufacture is occurring and its impact on arms control and its transfer regulation and take far-reaching decisions that anticipate the speed and next move of technology in this arena.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address you.