Proposals for an open-ended technical expert group to develop agreed recommendations in the light of recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design

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I. Mandate from BMS8

“To recommend that the fourth Review Conference discuss the establishment of an open-ended technical expert group, focusing on including, inter alia, realizing international cooperation in a concrete manner, scope, objectives, participation and modalities of the group, to develop agreed recommendations by consensus to ensure the full implementation of the International Tracing Instrument and the Programme of Action in the light of recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons, and firearms produced using 3D printing. To request that, within existing resources, the Secretariat prepare and circulate proposals for the above-mentioned focus issues and any other necessary administrative arrangements in a timely manner prior to the fourth Review Conference so as to facilitate its discussion; and to initiate discussions on the mandate of such a group during the preparatory process leading up to the fourth Review Conference”
II. Scope of the open-ended technical expert group

Two main sets of considerations since 2011:

➢ **Challenges** induced by recent developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design.

➢ **Opportunities**: Technological developments have the potential to bolster the implementation of the PoA and ITI.

Suggest to adopt a **comprehensive approach** to address the full impact of developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design:

1. Current and emerging challenges
2. Potential opportunities
3. International cooperation and assistance
4. How to address future developments
Scope of the open-ended technical expert group

(1) Current challenges posed by recent and ongoing developments in weapons manufacturing, technology and design

Three main categories of challenges:
(1) Use of alternative materials such as polymers;
(2) New concepts in design, including modularity;
(3) New methods of production, particularly the advent of 3D-printed weapons.

Indicative list of challenges: marking and x-ray identification of polymers, marking and record-keeping of modular weapons; recovery of obliterated markings; post-manufacture marking; border control/detection of illicit SALW; SALW conversion and deactivation issues; tracing capabilities throughout a weapon’s life cycle; craft-manufacturing, including components, accessories and CNC production; additive manufacturing, including 3D-printing; knowledge transfer to/among unauthorized recipients.
Scope of the open-ended technical expert group

(2) Potential opportunities to strengthen the implementation of the PoA/ITI

Use of technologies to:
- **Strengthen national practices** in marking, record-keeping & tracing
- **Identify and interdict** weapons
- **Enhance security measures** throughout the life cycle of weapons

*Potential technologies application:*
Mechanical marking, laser marking, 2D codes (QR codes), RFID chips, chemical taggants and holograms as viable solutions for identification and marking of weapons; use of biometrics, digital databases, or the use of block-chain to enhance documentation authentications and security measures and along the life cycle of weapons.
Scope of the open-ended technical expert group

(3) International cooperation and assistance

➢ **Enhancing international cooperation**
  To strengthen tracing capabilities (respond to tracing requests, reinforce judicial and law enforcement cooperation to facilitate criminal investigations and criminal justice response)
  Cooperation with the industry and the private sector in the development of technologies that improve the marking, record-keeping, tracing and safe, secure and effective storage of SALW.

➢ **International assistance and capacity-building**
  To address the technology gap and promote effective responses to challenges as well as avenues for technological opportunities.
Scope of the open-ended technical expert group

(4) Addressing future developments

*Rationale:* Developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design are expected to evolve overtime – with the potential of carrying ‘new’ challenges and opportunities.

➢ Establish a mechanism capable of monitoring and addressing new and emerging challenges and opportunities in a timely manner.
III. Modalities of the technical expert group

The following modalities should be considered:

1. Composition
2. Membership
3. Timeframe
4. Output
5. Reporting considerations
Modalities of the technical expert group

(1) Composition

- **National technical experts** – with specific expertise in relevant areas, including marking, tracing, forensics, law enforcement and legal services.

- **Industry and private sector**, including manufacturers, shipping companies, technology developers.

- **Academia**

- **Civil society**
Modalities of the technical expert group

(2) Membership

Open-ended membership
(as per mandate from BMS8)

Participation open to all Member States and observer States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations with ECOSOC consultative status

Alternative membership

Other modalities could encompass options for limited participation (GGE model)
Modalities of the technical expert group

(3) Timeframe

**Limited duration**

Open-Ended Working Group with several substantial sessions.

Possibility of including intersessional meetings to facilitate inputs from relevant stakeholders including industry and private sector, academia and civil society.

Intersessional meetings to focus on thematic areas i.e., marking, record-keeping, tracing, craft manufacturing, additive manufacturing, including 3D-printing.

**Standing mechanism**

One standing expert group and/or several working groups.

Options: Standing expert group which meets:
(i) on the margins of each biennial meeting and review conference;
(ii) as part of each biennial meeting and review conference with one or two days dedicated to consider recent developments in weapons manufacturing, technology and design;
(iii) as a substitute for one of the biennial meeting and once per cycle or;
(iv) every two years when no PoA biennial meeting takes place.
LIMITED DURATION
Schedule of meetings –
Upcoming cycle (2025 – 2030)

STANDING MECHANISM - Example with the upcoming PoA cycle
Modalities of the technical expert group

(4) Output
Flexible arrangement to accommodate amendments as required. Options include:

➢ Set of agreed recommendations
➢ Set of agreed commitments
➢ Supplementary annex to the ITI and PoA

(5) Reporting considerations
Dependent on the timeframe of the expert group

➢ Reports to the next meeting in the PoA cycle (BMS or RevCon)
➢ Reports solely to Review Conferences
References

Chair’s summary of the First MGE, 9-13 May 2011.


Recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and implications for the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons: Report of the Secretary-General, A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1, 6 May 2014.

Chair’s summary of the Second MGE, 1-5 June 2015.


Report of the Secretary-General, The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them, A/74/187, 17 July 2019. See Section IV (paragraphs 69-83).
Thank you

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Inputs can be sent to:
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