



Small arms control: A focus on the 2005 Session of the UN First Committee

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This analysis focuses on the activities of the 2005 UN First Committee as it relates to the issues of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons control and its implications for multilateral processes to address the arms trade and reduce gun violence.

Introduction

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has six committees, the purpose of which are to debate and decide issues for final agreement by the main assembly.² The committees and their official themes include:

- First: ‘Disarmament and International Security’
- Second: ‘Economic and Financial’
- Third: ‘Social, Humanitarian and Cultural’
- Fourth: ‘Special Political and Decolonisation’
- Fifth: ‘Administrative and Budgetary’
- Sixth: ‘Legal’

Chairs of the committees change annually and are rotated among regional groupings of States. Resolutions and draft decisions are presented by Member States, and if agreed by consensus or vote, are then transmitted to the UNGA for a final stamp of approval.

First Committee

The First Committee is essentially charged with an annual stock-take and reality check of matters related to disarmament and international security and is open to all 192 members of the UN. It meets every year in October, after the UNGA General Debate, for a 4-5 week session and includes general and thematic debates. Numerous resolutions are debated and adopted, on matters such as nuclear disarmament and the test-ban treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, fissile materials, biological and chemical weapons, missiles, as well as conventional weapons, small arms, landmines, and the functions and operations of various disarmament bodies.³

Many resolutions are passed year after year with few amendments or updating. In the era of UN reform, there is however an emphasis on a reduced number of resolutions moving through the various committees to try and streamline work where possible. In the opinion of one long time observer of the First Committee sessions have traditionally been “ritualistic, routine and cumbersome.”⁴ However, in 2004 under the leadership of

¹ From the Human Security and Small Arms Programme at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, see www.hdcentre.org (small arms) for a full listing of projects, resources and publications.

² See www.un.org/ga/60/ for more on the General Assembly and its various committees and procedures.

³ For analysis on how other weapons issues fared during First Committee see the work of Reaching Critical Will www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM.html; or the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy www.acronym.org.uk.

⁴ Johnston, Rebecca (2005), ‘2004 UN First Committee: Better organised, with deep divisions’, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue No. 79, April/May 2005

Mexican Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba several positive and long overdue reforms were achieved. Thematic debates, which previously happened behind closed doors and were largely a repetition of national positions expressed in the UNGA debate the month previously, were defined both as ‘informal’ (i.e. without verbatim records) and ‘open’ (to non-government participants) with experts (NGO and government alike) invited to participate. This invigorated the debates with fresh insights, critical input and a wider range of opinions. This format was again adopted in the 60th session of the First Committee. It was in session from 30 September through 1 November 2005 with South Korean Ambassador Choi Young-jin as Chair.

The importance of First Committee resolutions

The annual convening of First Committee, whilst striking dread into the hearts of many diplomats, is an important gathering which sets the framework of action for the year ahead, and enables governments and their citizens to gauge the collective mood on weapons control. The First Committee is the ‘home’ of several resolutions that have catalysed action on various issues to date. For example, in 1995 the First Committee negotiated a resolution (that then went to the UNGA) that called on the UN Secretary General to prepare the first report on the small arms issue, “with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts”.⁵ From that process, the 2001 UN conference on small arms was born and is fast approaching its fifth anniversary with a Review Conference in mid-2006.

The world of the UNGA’s numerous committees can seem far removed from the work of organisations working at a local or national level to reduce armed violence, and regulate the arms trade. Yet importantly it is where national positions are defined *and* refined, representing a key annual event for policy making for organisations working on small arms control to pay greater attention to in the coming years. Indeed, several government representatives lamented the absence of NGOs working on small arms control during the meeting to both monitor proceedings and provide a source of pressure and inspiration.⁶

Importantly, proposals and draft resolutions presented to the First Committee offer States the possibility to associate themselves with particular positions (or otherwise) to advance policy objectives and to set the stage for multilateral action. An example of a bold vision articulated in ‘diplomatese’ can be found in the draft resolution introduced by Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand and Sweden advocating the establishment of four open-ended ad-hoc committees in Geneva under the UNGA to move forward on the issues of fissile materials, negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Spurred to do so by the ongoing dysfunctional Conference on Disarmament (CD), this creative suggestion may have enabled States to navigate through some of the obstacles plaguing that forum and might have helped break the eight year deadlock.⁷ It was never formally tabled though the six States have put others on notice that they “will retain the option of reintroducing this initiative” in 2006 if progress has not been made to get the CD working.⁸ On the small arms control front, the Dutch-led resolution illustrated where tenacious attention could highlight the “missing pieces” of the international small arms control debates by drawing linkages between security, development and peace-building.

⁵ GA Resolution 50/70 B, 12 December 1995

⁶ Personal communication between Cate Buchanan and disarmament diplomats, November 2005; Also referred to during the 15 November 2005 Geneva Process meeting.

⁷ The Conference on Disarmament represents the world’s sole multilateral forum for negotiating arms control treaties. For more analysis on this see the work of the Acronym Institute, particularly Rakesh Sood, ‘Overcoming Deadlock in the CD’, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, October/November 2003; See also the work of Reaching Critical Will at www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd; and the work of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

⁸ ‘Initiating work on priority disarmament and non-proliferation issues’, paper from Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden. 12 October 2005. Available at www.reachingcriticalwill.org

Resolutions: Words on paper?

Over 25 resolutions at the 2005 session are of importance for small arms control.⁹ The most relevant are listed below. Other points of discussion included proposals to revitalise the First Committee, further resolutions linking disarmament and development, support to the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (Togo), Asia and the Pacific (Nepal), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Peru), and terrorism – although the discussions around this latter theme mainly centred on weapons of mass destruction.

Addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation - Key sponsor: Netherlands (A/RES/60/68)

This resolution represented an ‘experiment in the ability of States to blend vision and pragmatism’.¹⁰ A one-time only resolution, it distils messages from the UN World Summit Outcome Document and the international debates on the impacts of armed violence and the unregulated arms trade on sustainable development, peace-building and security.¹¹ By operationalising the concepts that have been developed over the past years, this resolution provides practical guidance for the upcoming small arms Review Conference (RevCon June 26-July 7, 2006). Despite extensive consultations and revisions to the draft, it went to the vote. In December it was voted on for a final time in the GA: 177 votes for, 1 against from the USA. There were no abstentions. (See annex 1 for full final text)

International Instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons (decision) Key Sponsor: Switzerland (A/RES/60)

This decision, which sought to endorse the outcome of the open-ended working group (OEWG) on marking and tracing, also proved contentious. It was adopted with a vote of 145 in favour, 0 against, and 25 abstentions, primarily from MERCOSUR and CARICOM countries.¹² They expressed deep regret that the OEWG was unable to achieve consensus on a legally binding international agreement on marking and tracing, and failed to include ammunition. These States argued that the final outcome was weaker than the relevant sections of the 1997 *Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition Explosives and Other Related Materials*.¹³

Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus - Key sponsors: France (A/RES/60/74)

Attempting to bring the ‘orphan issue’ in from the cold and responding to the exclusion of ammunition from the international marking and tracing instrument, this first time resolution “calls upon all interested States to determine the size of their surplus stockpiles of ammunition, explosive materials, and detonating devices if they represent a security risk and

⁹ For the full list of all First Committee resolutions agreed or otherwise go to: www.acronym.org.uk/un/2005unfc.htm; For final GA approved go to <http://disarmament2.un.org/vote.nsf> and also www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com05/res/resindex.html

¹⁰ Personal communication between Cate Buchanan and Geneva-based disarmament diplomat, November 2005

¹¹ An issue increasingly recognised as having significance for solutions to the small arms crisis. See for example the work of the UNDP on the small arms issue, including *Securing Development: UNDP's support for addressing small arms issues*, (2005), Geneva; the work of the UK Department for International Development, particularly *Tackling Poverty by Reducing Armed Violence: Recommendations from a Wilton Park workshop* 14-16 April, 2003; *Small Arms Survey 2003: Development Denied*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; UNIDIR (2003), ‘Disarmament, development, mine action’, *Disarmament Forum*, Edition 3; Louise, Christopher (1996), *The Social Impacts of Light Weapons Availability and Proliferation*, Discussion Paper, UN Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva; Butchart A, et al (2004), *Preventing violence: a guide to implementing the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health*. Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention, WHO, Geneva

¹² MERCOSUR includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, with Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru as Associate Members; CARICOM includes Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Kitt and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, with Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands as Associate Members.

¹³ Available at: www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-63.html

if external assistance is required to eliminate this risk”; it also encourages States to assist others, and asks for the development of measures to combat illicit trafficking of ammunition. France went to great pains, upon introducing this measure, to insist that it was intended as a voluntary exercise. US objections related to concern that text could be interpreted to refer to ammunition stockpiles other than State stockpiles. The text was changed to accommodate this concern, regarded by one observer as ‘excessive’.¹⁴ The resolution was ultimately adopted without a vote.

The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects - Key sponsors: Japan, South Africa, Colombia (A/RES/60/81), also referred to as the ‘omnibus resolution’

This was a slightly revised version of the resolution submitted by Colombia at the 59th Session in 2004. Amendments included references to the conclusion to negotiations on an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and ‘welcoming the report’ from the second UN Biennial Meeting of States for the Programme of Action (July 2005).¹⁵ There has been growing frustration in the last few years about the rigidity of this particular resolution. As in 2004, a key sticking point was the issue of brokering (those private individuals who facilitate legal and illegal arms deals), with the contested inclusion of references to the long awaited establishment of a Governmental Group of Experts (GGE). This group will be convened after the Review Conference to “consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering.” The EU’s proposed amendments which called for the GGE to include a mandate to examine the feasibility of a legally binding instrument were rejected. Usually adopted by consensus, this year the vote on the resolution was split and a separate vote was taken on operative paragraph 2 (OP2). Mexico and Jamaica abstained in the vote on OP2, citing the same concern raised in the debate for the marking and tracing ‘decision’ – that stronger standards already exist in the 1997 OAS Firearms Convention, and registering disappointment in the marking and tracing instrument’s non-legally binding status – however, they still endorsed the rest of the resolution. Additionally, the EU registered their displeasure by not co-sponsoring the resolution as it has done in past years.

The GA adopted the resolution without a vote.

Assistance to States for Curbing the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Collecting Them - Key Sponsor: Mali on behalf of Economic Community of West African States. (A/RES/60/71)

This resolution calls for the inclusion of assistance issues in the provisional agenda of the 61st Session and acknowledges the most recent accomplishments in the area. It calls on the international community to “provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to take action to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.” This resolution was adopted by consensus, as it was in 2004 and 2003.

Prevention of the Illicit Transfer and Unauthorised Access to and Use of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems - Key sponsor: Australia (A/RES/60/77)

This resolution urges States to support current initiatives to combat the illicit transfer of and unauthorised access to MANPADS – used for attacking planes – and highlights the importance of national controls on manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and brokering to prevent illicit access. It also encourages States to ban transfers of MANPADS to non-state armed groups.¹⁶ It was adopted without a vote.

¹⁴ Personal communication between Cate Buchanan and disarmament diplomat, December 2005

¹⁵ See the HD Centre *Small Arms and Human Security Bulletin* Issue 6, November 2005 on the 2005 Biennial Meeting. Available in French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese and English at www.hdcentre.org (small arms section)

¹⁶ Interestingly, rapid agreement to control particular types of weapons is feasible as demonstrated by the USA. In June 2003 the USA led swift agreement to control MANPADS within the G8 promoting agreement to an Action Plan which amongst other points bans transfers of these weapons to armed groups. The USA however remains resolutely opposed to other weapons being barred from sale or transfer to armed groups, a position it has reiterated since the 2001 UN Conference on small arms. In October 2003 the forum for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation agreed to a similar action plan. For more information go to www.state.gov/t/np/acw/c12759.htm

The broader negotiating environment

The resolutions pertaining to small arms control that were adopted at the 2005 First Committee, while in some ways modest, were regarded by some observers as among the highlights in a contentious session overall. They are reflective of the erosion of trust and progress on matters related to weapons and disarmament at a global level in the last year alone. The sense of crisis facing multilateral disarmament in other UN forums—the slow pace of the Disarmament Commission to agree to an agenda, the ongoing paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament, the logjams in both the Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the disappointments of the World Summit process—carried over into this Session, with negotiations in many areas problematic and unproductive.

In assessing the work of the 60th Session of the First Committee on small arms, some observations are worth noting from two perspectives – process and substance.

Process related

A heated debate took place around the need for consensus and the related ‘tyranny of the minority’. It has continued in the weeks and months afterwards and will likely remain an unresolved fissure between States as frustrations grow over the ‘veto’ power that a small number of States wields over concepts or issues that otherwise enjoy overwhelming consensus.¹⁷

An example of this trend is evidenced in the case of the Dutch-sponsored resolution, which distils existing agreements and statements on the links between small arms control and sustainable development. During the unusual amount of five rounds of consultations on the resolution, two primary objections were registered to the original draft:

- some States worried that linking disarmament and international security issues with issues of human rights and development combines the scope of multiple committees into a resolution for a committee charged only with issues of disarmament and international security;
- some delegations were concerned that it pre-empted the 2001 UN Programme of Action (PoA) RevCon in mid-2006.

In response to these concerns, references to human rights, assistance to survivors of armed violence, and gender-based violence were watered down or deleted in this process. Nevertheless, inclusion of the role of women and women’s groups in security and disarmament policy were retained in the final version as well as references to including violence prevention programmes in national poverty reduction strategies, and better attention from peacekeeping missions to stockpile security.

The inclusion of violence prevention objectives in poverty reduction strategies is important in advancing holistic and effective approaches to dealing with the small arms crisis. Without embedding small arms control *in all its aspects* into such already well established processes, the international community runs the high and avoidable risk of duplicating resources and implementing poorly targeted interventions.

An additional significant section is that which calls upon States to “*more effectively address the humanitarian and development impact of ... small arms ... in particular in conflict or post-conflict situations, including by: ... (d) Systematically including national measures to regulate small arms and light weapons in longer term post-conflict*

¹⁷ As one example, there was a detailed exchange of views on the matter at the 15th November 2005 Geneva Process meeting organised by the Geneva Forum.

peacebuilding strategies and programmes...” Support for this resolution from 177 nations – with the exception of one – signals the willingness of the international community to support not only the reduction (ie. the collection and destruction) of guns, but also the regulation of guns in the hands of civilians: an estimated 60% of the world’s users, holders, and abusers of weapons.¹⁸ In addition to the extensive reporting on this issue at the two Biennial Meeting of States since 2001, it provides yet another signal that the overwhelmingly majority of States view this particular facet of the small arms issue as central to any control efforts – the latter made all the more remarkable due to the deliberate omission of civilian possession from the PoA at the insistence of the USA.¹⁹

That consensus does not need to amount to the lowest common denominator was demonstrated by Mexico and Jamaica in the case of the omnibus resolution. According to some government officials little effort was made to strengthen paragraph two of the resolution. Several States requested this due to its lack of reference to the status of the non-legally binding international agreement on marking and tracing. In response, the vote was split for the first time, with Mexico and Jamaica abstaining in the vote on the paragraph to register their disappointment. Despite howls of protest from some quarters consensus was not broken on the resolution as a whole and an important point was made that consensus should not be used to create lowest common denominator results.

The 2005 First Committee also consolidated a 2004 precedent by again permitting an interactive discussion with NGO experts. On Friday 21 October, presentations and discussions with NGOs on disarmament education in what was described as “one of the most engaging and heart-opening demonstrations the First Committee has experienced in a long time”.²⁰ Hopefully this will be built upon at the 2006 session to encourage even wider NGO participation, including in the thematic session on conventional disarmament.²¹

Substance related

The majority of the governments of the world demonstrated their continued commitment to promoting sustainable development and security through disarmament and weapons control. The Dutch-led resolution consolidated existing understandings of the relationship between small arms misuse and the threat it poses to sustainable development, and formally introduced the concept of *armed violence prevention programmes* to the arms control community.²² In addition, the First Committee again adopted a resolution calling for the reallocation of resources away from military expenditures and towards sustainable development. States also renewed their commitment to Article 26 of the UN Charter which calls upon member nations “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”.

The challenge of developing legally binding instruments, exemplified in the failure of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on marking and tracing to conclude a legal

¹⁸ *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the Human Cost*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 79

¹⁹ For more on this issue see theme one in, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (2005), *Missing Pieces: Directions for reduction gun violence through the UN process on small arms control*. Such high levels of voluntary reporting on an issue not explicitly contained in the PoA is revealing. In 2003 67% of States reported on civilian possession in their national reports to the Biennial Meeting of States, in 2005 this increased to 70%. See Kytömäki, Elli and Valerie Yankey-Wayne, (forthcoming), *Five years of implementing the UN Programme of Action on SALW: Regional analysis of the Reports Submitted by States in 2002-2005*, United Nations, Geneva.

²⁰ Reaching Critical Will, First Committee Monitor, Week 3, October 17-21, 2005

²¹ For more on this point see UNIDIR (2002), ‘NGOs as partners: Assessing the impact, recognizing the potential’, *Disarmament Forum*, Edition 1

²² This is a well established policy concept and programmatic activity in development, women’s security, public health and humanitarian communities. See for example, World Health Organisation (2002), *World Report on Violence and Health*, WHO, Geneva, and the work of the UNDP at www.undp.org/bcpr/smallarms/index.htm.

instrument, also played out in the debate over the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on brokering.²³ The UK, Norway and the EU called for an agenda that included a mandate to consider the feasibility of a legally binding instrument, while South Africa, Egypt, Japan, Colombia and Russia urged another approach. The issue was unresolved at the end of the First Committee.

Another key area of disagreement in the debates was around the purpose of the 2006 RevCon and whether the meeting should consider re-opening the PoA for negotiation.²⁴ Some States wanted more advance preparation for the RevCon, such as early identification of the Chair for both the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom 9-20 January 2006) and RevCon, while others preferred waiting for the RevCon to finalise agendas. The prospect of a second PrepCom meeting (in March) was also discussed perhaps as an insurance mechanism against indecisiveness and division in January.

Conclusion

The UN First Committee debates and decides on critical decisions related to international security, weapons control, and ultimately peace-building. Hampered by tedious procedures, lengthy repetitive statements, and low levels of inclusion of civil society it has room for improvement in the years ahead. Nevertheless, since 2004 some marked progress has been achieved, highlighting the potential of this forum to complement other disarmament forums when these appear unable to foster real progress.

This year some States used this opportunity to reiterate and advance their priorities with respect to small arms control – most notably through the Dutch-led resolution. The 2005 session provides grounds for both optimism and concern: *concern* that the limited views of a minority override the views of the clear majority of nations through the increasingly unrepresentative process of consensus; and *optimism* that important symbolic and political markers were laid down for the forthcoming RevCon on perspectives that stand to make a significant contribution to addressing the insecurity that armed violence poses to ordinary people all over the world.

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²³ States making statements in support of a legally binding instrument on marking and tracing included Albania, Austria, Canada, Finland, India, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Pacific Islands, Sierra Leone, UK and the EU, and Uruguay and MERCOSUR

²⁴ On this issue, see Parker, Sarah (2005), *Reviewing Multilateral Political Agreements: Precedents for the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference*. Geneva Forum, Background paper for the residential seminar 'Strategies for Strengthening the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons', Glen Cove, New York, 30 September-2 October 2005.

General Assembly resolution: A/RES/60/68

Addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its respect for and commitment to international law and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing that, as stated in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,¹ the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels,

Concerned by the implications that poverty and underdevelopment may have for the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and determined to reduce the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and to enhance the respect for life and the dignity of the human person through the promotion of a culture of peace,

Reaffirming the urgent necessity for international cooperation and assistance, including financial and technical assistance, as appropriate, to support and facilitate efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

Recalling the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, at which States, while welcoming the significant progress made in that regard, recognized that further action was required to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action,²

Recognizing that, in 2005,³ world leaders expressed grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by, inter alia, the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and that they committed themselves to supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Noting in that regard that the 2006 review conference on the Programme of Action represents an opportunity to address interconnected peace and security and development challenges, which are relevant to the agenda of the said conference,

Placing particular emphasis on the regions of the world where conflicts have come to an end and where serious problems with the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons have to be dealt with urgently,

1. *Calls upon* States, when addressing the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, to explore ways, as appropriate, to more effectively address the humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation, in particular in conflict or post-conflict situations, including by:

- (a) Developing, where appropriate, comprehensive armed violence prevention programmes integrated into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies;
- (b) Building on the commitment by States and appropriate international and regional organizations in a position to do so to, upon the request of the relevant authorities, seriously considering rendering assistance, including technical and financial assistance where needed, such as small arms funds, in order to support the implementation of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;¹
- (c) Encouraging United Nations peacekeeping operations to address the safe storage and disposal of small arms and light weapons as an integral part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;
- (d) Systematically including national measures to regulate small arms and light weapons in longer term post-conflict peacebuilding strategies and programmes;
- (e) Ensuring, where appropriate: that the activities mentioned in subparagraphs (c) and (d) above take full account of the roles that women and women's organizations could play in small arms disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; the requirement that the needs of women and girl combatants and dependants be addressed in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; and the commitment to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children in armed conflicts.

General Assembly resolution: A/RES/60/74

Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus

The General Assembly,

Mindful of contributing to the process initiated in the framework of the United Nations reform to make the Organization more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction,

Underlining the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to disarmament through the development of practical measures,

Taking note of the report of the Group of Experts on ammunition and explosives,¹

Recalling the recommendation contained in paragraph 27 of the report submitted by the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons,² namely to address the issue of small arms and light weapons ammunition in a comprehensive manner as part of a separate process conducted within the framework of the United Nations,

Underlining the challenges posed to law enforcement authorities in affected countries in regulating possession of conventional weapons and access to their ammunition and preventing illicit trafficking accordingly, and the consequences that may result from inadequate control over them,

Noting with satisfaction the work and measures pursued at the regional and subregional levels with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition,

Recalling its decision 59/515 of 3 December 2004 to include the question of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus in the agenda of its sixtieth session,

1. *Encourages* all interested States to assess, on a voluntary basis, whether, in conformity with their legitimate security needs, parts of their stockpiles of conventional ammunition should be considered to be in surplus;

2. *Recognizes* that the security of stockpiles must be taken into consideration and that appropriate controls with regard to the security and safety of stockpiles of conventional ammunition are indispensable at the national level in order to eliminate the risk of explosion, pollution or diversion;

3. *Appeals* to all interested States to determine the size and nature of their surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition, whether they represent a security risk, if appropriate, their means of destruction, and whether external assistance is needed to eliminate this risk;

4. *Encourages* States in a position to do so to assist interested States in a bilateral framework or through international or regional organizations, on a voluntary and transparent basis, in elaborating and implementing programmes to eliminate surplus stockpiles or to improve their management;

¹ See A/54/155.

² A/60/88 and Corr.2.

5. *Encourages* all Member States to examine the possibility of developing and implementing, within a national, regional or subregional framework, measures to combat illicit trafficking in conventional ammunition;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States regarding the risks arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus and regarding national ways of strengthening controls on conventional ammunition, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”.

General Assembly resolution: A/RES/60/81

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/24 V of 24 December 2001, 57/72 of 22 November 2002, 58/241 of 23 December 2003 and 59/86 of 3 December 2004,

Emphasizing the importance of the early 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

Welcoming the efforts by Member States to submit, on a voluntary basis, national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action,

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 tackling both supply and demand factors that are relevant to addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,

Recognizing the efforts undertaken by non-governmental organizations in the provisions of assistance to States for the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Taking into account the relevant paragraphs on small arms and light weapons in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,²

Welcoming the report of the Second 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, held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005,³ and expressing its appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Chair of the Meeting,

Taking note of the report of the Open Ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons,⁴

Recognizing that illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons is a serious problem that the international community should address urgently and, in this regard, welcoming the broad-based consultations held by the Secretary-General with all Member States and interested regional and subregional organizations on further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 59/86,⁵

¹ See 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 resolution 60/1.

³ A/CONF.192/BMS/2005/1.

⁴ A/60/88 and Corr.2.

⁵ A/60/161.

Conscious of its decision to convene in New York the 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 for a period of two weeks, from 26 June to 7 July 2006, and its preparatory committee for two weeks from 9 to 20 January 2006, followed by, if necessary, a subsequent session of up to two weeks in duration, which is especially relevant in order to set the agenda for activities of the international community for continuing to tackle problems in this field beyond 2006,

1. *Encourages* all initiatives, including those of the United Nations, other international organizations, regional and subregional organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society, for the successful conclusion of the 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 Aspects¹ in order to set the agenda for tackling problems in small arms and light weapons of the international community beyond 2006, and calls upon all Member States to continue to contribute towards the preparation of the conference and to make every effort to fully implement the Programme of Action;

2. *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;⁶

3. *Decides* to establish a group of governmental experts, appointed by the Secretary-General on the basis of equitable geographical representation, commencing after the review conference and no later than 2007, to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in three sessions of one week's duration each, and to submit the report on the outcome of its study to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the group of governmental experts with any assistance and services that may be required for the discharge of its tasks;

5. *Continues* to encourage all initiatives, including regional and subregional ones, to mobilize resources and expertise to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action and to provide assistance to States in its implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to collate and circulate data and information provided by States on a voluntary basis, including national reports, on their implementation of the Programme of Action, and encourages Member States to submit such reports;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution;

8. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

⁶ A/60/88, annex.