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Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

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REINFORCING DISARMAMENT: COMBATING ILLICIT TRADE IN WEAPONS AND MATERIALS Regional Challenges

CONCEPT

On 1-2 February 2010, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), jointly with the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), organised a Workshop on “Reinforcing Disarmament: Combating the Illicit Trade in Weapons and Materials: Actors – Synergies – Challenges” at the Palais des Nations. This event was financially supported by the Swiss Government.

This Workshop identified a number of common challenges faced by the broad variety of disarmament, non-proliferation and export control regimes discussed. A follow-on session, in a smaller format of 20 to 25 participants, will be held on **6 April 2011** (under Chatham House rule), with the support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, to focus on the specific challenges met on the **African continent**.

The February 2010 Workshop ranged across widely different topics, all too often dealt with in isolation, and with differing approaches in various regional contexts. The concerns related to the particular case of **Africa** emerged in the discussion, due to the combination therein of relevant, interrelated phenomena that create a favourable environment for illicit arms trafficking: inter-state and internal conflict, weakness of state structures, porosity of borders, corruption of officials, insufficient capacity in legislation and enforcement, exploitation of those weaknesses by unscrupulous arms exporters; lack of proper disposal and recycling of small arms and light weapons (SALW) withdrawn from conflict zones; limitations to action by civil society organisations, etc. Because Africa has no monopoly on those phenomena, it was thought that the experience acquired in other regions by governmental and non-governmental institutions in dealing with such issues may serve the African continent. Similarly, the experience gained in Africa, including through to the involvement of civil society organisations, may be helpful to other regions.

Although African participants to the first Workshop focused their attention on **SALW**, it is clear that illicit trafficking encompasses all sorts of other armaments, technologies, and materials, both conventional and non-conventional, including delivery vehicles or other sensitive equipment or information. Therefore, the April 2011 Workshop will not be limited to addressing SALW. Similarly, the discussions and early negotiations on an **Arms Trade Treaty** (ATT) already cover a number of issues relevant to the 2011 Workshop, including whether and how SALW are going to be covered by an ATT. One pertinent aspect would be to address the implications of an ATT on anti-trafficking policies. However, the agenda of the 2011 Workshop will be broader than focus on the ATT *per se*.

This event will associate academic experts, diplomats, military officers, representative of the arms industry as well as civil society organisations. It could include in its agenda the following issues:

- Is an **ATT** necessary and sufficient to fight against illicit trafficking in SALW?
- How can developed states assist the weaker states, especially in Africa, to cope with the heavy **legislative and regulatory requirements** of an effective combat against illicit trafficking, such as: national transfer control systems; licensing, authorizations, and denials; information-sharing; record-keeping; enforcement; criminalization?
- How can exporters and importers of arms provide **credible assurances** regarding their intended uses, thus facilitating the distinction between responsible, justified arms transfers and illicit or diverted flows of arms fuelling conflict and organised crime and impacting human security?
- How can the various stakeholders (governments, industry, international and regional organisations, civil society organisations) improve their **acquisition of reliable information** related to illicit trafficking in weapons-relevant areas, including through the exchange of complementary information on interconnected networks of illicit trafficking?

Through a comparative approach, the proposed Workshop will thus bring together specialist practitioners of the fight against illicit trafficking in Africa and other regions, *inter alia* in order to:



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- Assess the **issues and constraints** each of them are confronted with in their practice; and
- Explore any opportunities for **exchange of information** and **cooperative improvements** that a comparative examination of their respective existing practices might suggest.

Policy recommendations will be the outcome of the Workshop, and will be published together with the report of both Workshops in the form of a *GCSP Geneva Paper – Conference Series*. Also the speakers' written contributions, with their approval, will be made available on line by the co-organisers.

PROGRAMME

6 April 2011

Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), WMO Building, 3rd Floor (Jura Room)

09:00-09:30 **Opening**

Ms Theresa Hitchens, Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

Dr Matthes Buhbe, Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Geneva

Mr Marc Finaud, Special Advisor to the Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

09:30-10:30 **Panel I: The Challenge of Acquiring and Managing Reliable Information on Arms and Related Material Trafficking**

Like for transnational organised crime in general, the issue of the collection, analysis and processing of relevant data related to illicit trade in conventional or non-conventional arms and technology is critical as a necessary step to understanding, preventing, and fighting this worldwide phenomenon. How have various regional or global organisations dealt with this challenge?

Chair: Mr Marc Finaud, Special Advisor to the Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

10:30-11:00 Discussion

11:00-11:30 *Coffee Break*



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11:30-12:30 **Panel II: The Requirements for an Effective Legal and Law-Enforcement System to Combat Arms and Related Material Trafficking**

When relevant data on arms trafficking becomes available, governments and international organisations need a proper legal framework, both domestically (including for export control and end-use certification) and internationally (for transborder cooperation), in order to empower law-enforcement agencies to act either preventively or in prosecuting suspects. Countries lacking the necessary resources require assistance not only in legislation and regulation but also manning, training, and equipment of security forces, as provided for by the relevant international instruments (1540 Committee, Programme of Action on SALW, etc.). How can such countries in need obtain this support?

Chair: Dr Christiane Agboton-Johnson, Deputy Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

12:30-13:00 Discussion

13:00-14:30 *Lunch (WMO 'Attique' Cafeteria)*

14:30-15:30 **Panel III: Operationalising Action against Traffickers**

Even equipped with proper data, legal backing, and adequate law-enforcement resources, governments and regional or global organisations engaged in the fight against illicit arms trafficking also need operational expertise and international cooperation in order to tackle a transborder phenomenon with complex financial, political, social and other ramifications. How can all the interested stakeholders mutually benefit from each other's experience?

Chair: Dr Matthes Buhbe, Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Geneva

15:30-16:00 Discussion

16:00-16:30 *Coffee Break*

16:30-17:30 **Conclusions: Identifying Synergies and Opportunities for Cooperation**

Chair: Mr Marc Finaud, Special Advisor to the Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

17:30-19:00 *Reception (GCSP Lobby)*