

16 January 2006
French/English only

**Preparatory Committee for 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
New York, 9-20 January 2006**

Communicating on the small arms issue : proposed guidelines (Cluster V)

(Submitted by France)

A. Sources, messages, targets, vectors

In elaborating communication guidelines for the small arms issue, the first question to solve is the content of the message to be sent out. Given the absence of an extensive consensus on the specific issues raised in the SALW context (marking and tracing, brokering, ammunition, transfers, civilian possession...) this proposed approach is based on a generic message denouncing the overall negative impact of SALW. Attached is an “umbrella message” which covers different specific elements of this message.

The nature of the message shall in turn determine the target. Obviously, given the rather general character of the attached message, it would rather be targeting the wider public than specialized individuals and organizations. However, at a certain point, they would have to be relied upon to convey the message (as vectors of the message). The aim of this paper is to encourage all States and organizations taking part in the small arms process to convey the key points contained in the message, not precluding them from supplementing it as they would deem appropriate.

Another specific step to be considered by States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations together in this direction might be to find a “communication appealing name” and a logo for the first review Conference and the process.

B. Event-related communication campaign

A list of forthcoming events at the national, regional and international levels to be used as opportunities to communicate on the issue should be established. Attached is a first list of these events that would require further completion. A “communication kit” including these guidelines and the attached items as well as other possible materials such as, for instance, short films, could be distributed to the organizers of these events.

A “good will ambassador” or some public personality who would be willing to voice public support for the message could be identified.

Raising awareness on the Small Arms and Light Weapons issue, « umbrella message »

- Each year, hundreds of thousands of deaths are caused by small arms
- The widespread presence of small arms and their misuse by States and non state actors greatly increases the suffering of civilian population in areas of conflict. They are used not only to kill, but also to threaten, torture, maim and enslave children, women and men.
- The availability and misuse of small arms also impedes development. In many regions of the world, they prevent the improvement of living conditions and a better future.
- It is more than time for the international community to take up action in a vigorous way.
- States are realizing the importance of working together to curb this trend. They are discussing a number of practical measures, including on better demobilisation efforts, transfer controls, stopping arms from leaking away from stockpiles, criminalizing illicit arms brokering and improving legislation. This United Nations programme of action shall be reviewed the at a conference from June 26 to July 7, 2006 in New York.
- This event and its preparation is the one opportunity to point out how much progress still needs to be achieved and to press hard for a breakthrough on this issue... This may not repair the damage already done, but it could save many lives in the future.

List of forthcoming events related to the Small Arms issue prior to the Revcon

- 1) 13-17 February, Geneva, Working Group on the use of mercenaries
- 2) 14-23 February, World Council of Churches general assembly, Porto Alegre (Brazil)
- 3) 14-15 March, Geneva, Workshop for national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on arms availability and small arms
- 4) 31 March-1st April, Durban, 8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion : Pre-conference on reducing Firearm related mortality and morbidity
- 5) World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, Durban (South Africa)
- 6) 7-12 May, Nairobi, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU): 114th Assembly
- 7) May (date TBC) , Bangkok, Human Security Network ministerial meeting
