

International Action Network on Small Arms

Presentation to the January 2006 Preparatory Committee

Introduction (Rebecca Peters, IANSA Director)

On behalf of the IANSA network, I would like to give our thanks to

- Ambassador Rowe
- the Department for Disarmament Affairs
- Member states that have welcomed IANSA members into their official delegations, including Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Kenya, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Finland, Ireland and the UK.
- The Governments of Norway and Sweden, which provided the funding for NGOs from the Global South to attend the PrepCom

IANSA is the global network of civil society organisations working to reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms. We are a network of over 700 civil society organisations from over 100 countries

IANSA has been the official coordinator of civil society organisations in the UN process on small arms since the first official conference in 2001. Many of the IANSA members that you will hear from today and will meet in the corridors this week have been heavily involved in this issue since the outset and have contributed to all the UN small arms conferences.

Over 400 civil society organisations applied for accreditation to attend this meeting, and over 100 NGOs are here today from all over the world. Unfortunately, a number of our colleagues were unable to attend, due to lack of funding and difficulties getting visas to come to New York, but they are following the proceedings closely.

We are here because the Programme of Action explicitly calls on states to fully involve civil society in the formulation and implementation of measures to control the illicit trade in small arms and reduce gun violence.

Around the world IANSA members are actively working through many different avenues to reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms. Some are local grassroots organisations and others are large international well-established organisations. They include:

- human rights organisations
- youth groups
- women's groups
- development organisations
- humanitarian agencies
- faith-based groups
- community action networks
- peace and conflict prevention organisations
- public health organisations
- research institutes

IANSA members work to reduce gun violence in many ways including:

- research and information
- advocacy
- awareness raising
- campaigning
- communications
- policy development
- victim support
- technical assistance

The importance of this meeting must not be underestimated. This Preparatory Committee is crucially important as it will determine the agenda at the Review Conference and shape global small arms policy for years to come.

This meeting must ensure that the UN small arms process is continued and strengthened beyond the Review Conference.

Over the past 5 years it has become clear that some elements which were not included or not sufficiently clear in the PoA are in fact essential in effectively combating the proliferation of small arms. The outcome document from the RevCon should recognise the need to elaborate some aspects of the PoA.

We hope that NGOs will be able to participate fully both in the PrepCom and the RevCon. NGOs lend a unique and necessary role by bringing expertise and diverse perspectives to the small arms process. Grassroots organisations encounter the devastating effects of small arms in their communities on a daily basis, and they are particularly skilled at highlighting the human element to this problem.

While governments provide technical disarmament expertise, the small arms issue demands a broader human-security perspective. NGOs are essential not only in providing a more holistic view of the small arms problem but also in helping to formulate creative, effective solutions to combat the scourge of small arms proliferation and misuse.

Many of these solutions will be presented to you this morning. Our presentation covers the first three clusters created by Ambassador Rowe:

1. The human impact of small arms proliferation
2. Norms and regulations
3. Accumulation and misuse

IANSA has produced a series of 10 position papers which expands on this presentation. Each paper provides an overview of the problem and a list of concrete recommendations for States. They are available just outside this room, at the IANSA table, and also on our website (www.iansa.org).

I will be introducing the 10 speakers, each of whom will present these recommendations.

I hope you find our presentation both interesting and useful. Thank you again.

The first cluster is on the human impact of small arms proliferation, and our first speaker in this cluster is from South Asia Partnership in Bangladesh.