
Baffour Amoa – Ghana

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Thank you, Mr Chair.

My name is Baffour Amoa and I have the honour of Chairing the International Advisory Council of IANSA, the International Action Network on Small Arms.

IANSA is a global movement of hundreds of NGOs and individuals working to stop gun violence. We have been coordinating civil society in the UN small arms process since it began. We thank the UNSCAR trust fund for supporting that work.

We also thank Member States of the United Nations, for the opportunity to once again use this platform to remind the international community that all is NOT well with our world.

Teenagers in the Americas have taken to the streets because of gun violence. Organized crime and terrorist groups are recruiting in Africa and Asia. Armed conflict in the Middle East is more brutal than ever.

The 2018 Review Conference is a critical opportunity to strengthen global, regional and national action against arms trafficking and armed violence. IANSA has identified key topics which we are prioritising for this Review Conference. These include:

- Including ammunition explicitly in the scope of the Program of Action on small arms and light weapons
- The gender and public health dimensions of the small arms and light weapons problem
- Links between disarmament and development, or between implementation of the POA and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

This process has failed to pay sufficient attention to pervasive armed violence in crime as well as conflict. In 2001 when the PoA was agreed, the main preoccupation of States was armed conflict. Nearly two decades later, conflict is still a concern; but evidence shows that the small arms problem is overwhelmingly a problem of crime, not conflict.

For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, which have the highest rates of gun deaths, no country is now at war. The POA should recognize this reality.

The human suffering and the economic and social problems caused by small arms proliferation are not specific to conflict and post-conflict situations, but are found in many countries affected by the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Another key issue is the recognition of synergies between the POA and the Firearms Protocol, the Arms Trade Treaty, and instruments to prevent terrorism and corruption.

Sustainable Development Goal 16.4 complements these global norms, and States should recognize, encourage, and support synergies in implementation, to eliminate loopholes, increase efficiency, and maximize the effectiveness of all the work being done – by States and civil society – to reduce the deadly toll of these weapons.

IANSA also wishes to highlight the underlying conditions that foster the illicit arms trade – including corruption and poor governance. Preventing the excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons depends on the application of the rule of law, including international human rights and international humanitarian law.

Mr Chair, we would also like to reiterate a point we have made in previous years:

We will never be able to reduce small arms proliferation until we begin to reduce small arms production. The money that is earned from selling guns does not justify the damage that these weapons are causing.

Mr. Chair, my colleagues on the panel with me will in diverse ways now address key priorities of IANSA as we prepare for the Third Review Conference.

I thank you Mr Chair.