



## **EU-LAC Expert Meeting**

### **‘Management and security of public stockpiles of small arms and light weapons including ammunition’**

**San José, 6-7 September 2007**

## **Report**

### **I. Background**

1. The aim of the meeting of government officials and experts from Latin American and Caribbean states as well as member states of the European Union was to exchange views on the effective and efficient management and security of national stockpiles of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition. The meeting thus contributed to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. It served to foster dialogue among participants.

2. The meeting was co-organised by Costa Rica and Germany in the EU-LAC framework as a materialisation of the commitment expressed by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and of Latin America and the Caribbean, at their meeting in Vienna on 12 May 2006, to strengthen bi-regional cooperation with regard to the control of SALW. The meeting was attended by representatives from Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Finland, Germany, Poland and Spain. The EU Commission, the UN Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) and the Arias-Foundation participated as well. The agenda of the meeting is attached to this report as Annex 1. The key note speakers were asked in advance to contribute to an issues paper which is attached as Annex 2.

### **II. Opening**

3. The meeting was opened by H.E. Fernando Berrocal, Minister of Interior, Police and Public Security of Costa Rica who underlined the importance of addressing the spread and accumulation of small arms as a key factor in guaranteeing public security. Dr. Julia Monar, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of the German Embassy in Costa Rica welcomed the dialogue among senior representatives and experts with security, military and police backgrounds as an opportunity to making the management and security of stockpiles an integrated part of any strategy and programme addressing issues of human security. Words of welcome were extended by H.E. Alberto Gutierrez, Ambassador of Peru in Costa Rica and H.E. Augusto Saraiva Peixoto, Ambassador of the Portuguese Republic in Colombia, in their capacity as Presidencies of Latin American and Caribbean countries and of the European Union respectively.

### III. Stockpile management and security of small arms and light weapons as well as their ammunition

4. Discussions centred on the relevance of stockpile management and security in curbing illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons as well as their ammunition. Stockpile management and security next to issues with regard to marking and tracing as well as brokering were seen as essential parts of a national strategy addressing the spread of small arms and their ammunition. The need to deal with small arms control in a regional context and to promote mechanisms of regional cooperation was underlined. Existing mechanisms e.g. in the OAS and MERCOSUR framework were referred to in detail. Confidence-building measures such as regional seminars and information exchange of best practices were recommended to build political will and commitment to small arms control in general and stockpile management programmes in particular.

5. Participants agreed on the necessity to promote implementation of the UN International Instrument on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Core among the principles of the Programme of Action was a clear statement in favour of a system of stockpile management to safeguard SALW in the hands of authorised bodies. It referred to physical security measures, control of access to stocks, inventory management and accounting, transport provisions, procedures and sanctions in the event of loss as well as regular reviews of stocks.

6. The issue and the concept of surplus was discussed in detail. Individual states needed to take a political decision on size, structure and equipment of military and security forces. The resulting definition of surplus was solely in the hands of the responsible state. Stockpiles needed for national security purposes were to be separated from stockpiles that were insecure or in surplus. The importance of parliamentary oversight in this process, particularly in controlling the budgetary resources available for procurement, but also stockpile management and destruction was stressed. It was suggested that whenever arms and ammunition were purchased, the cost of decommissioning should be considered at the same time.

7. It was observed that SALW as well as their ammunition had specific requirements. But overall the issues, priorities, programmes and skills required to promote safety, security and appropriate disposal of SALW and their ammunition were similar for several categories of concern. Questions of scope were important for international norms, guidelines and programmes to promote and ensure safe and secure management. In practice, however, norms, guidelines and programmes for different categories of SALW and their ammunition as well as conventional weapons and ammunition in general needed to be closely co-ordinated and sometimes integrated in order to enhance efficiency.

### IV. Conclusions

8. The expert meeting was welcomed as an opportunity for regional dialogue on small arms control issues. In particular, the political relevance of the technicalities of stockpile management and security was recognized. The importance of the work of the up-coming Group of Governmental Experts set up for 2008 under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/72 entitled 'Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus' was stressed. Reviewing the problems related in particular to the management and security of ammunition stockpiles and looking into the development of standards and guidelines was an imminent task.

## **Annex 1**

### **EU-LAC Expert Seminar “Management and Security of Public Stockpiles of Small Arms and Light Weapons including their Ammunition” San José, 6-7 September 2007**

#### **Agenda**

**Radisson Europa Hotel & Conference Center  
Calle Blancos, San José, Costa Rica**

**Thursday, 6 September 2007**

**9.00-9.30**

Registration

**9.30-10.15**

Opening Statements by Mr. Fernando Berrocal, Minister of Interior, Police and Public Security, Costa Rica and Dr. Julia Monar, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of the German Embassy in Costa Rica.

Welcome by Mr. Alberto Gutierrez, Ambassador of Peru in Costa Rica and Mr. Augusto Saraiva Peixoto, Ambassador of the Portuguese Republic in Colombia.

**10.15-10.30**

Coffee break

**10.30-12.45**

Session 1

Overview: The relevance of stockpile management and security in curbing illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons including their ammunition.

Chair: Mr. Alejandro Solano, Deputy Political Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica.

Key note speaker: Dr. Michael Ashkenazi, Leader SALW Control, Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

Mr. Pericles Gasparini, Director, UN Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Piotr Pniejnia-Olszynski, Chargé d’Affaires a.i., Embassy of Poland in Costa Rica.

**12.45-14.15**

Lunch

**14.15-16.00**

Session 2

Stockpile management and security for SALW.

Chair: Mr. Michael Hasenau, Deputy Head, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany.

Key note speaker: Mr. David de Beer, Consultant, former Programme Manager, EU Programme in Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia.

Mr. Elwood Watts, Officer, Public Prosecutions, Barbados.

Maj. Alberto Hidalgo, Operations Officer, Verification Unit, Spain.

**16.00-16.15**

Coffee break

**16.15-17.45**

Session 3

Stockpile management and security for ammunition.

Chair: Mr. Michael Hasenau, Deputy Head, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany.

Key note speaker: Dr. Pablo Dreyfus, Researcher, Viva Rio, Rio de Janeiro.

Col. David Barrientos, Deputy Head, Control of Weapons and Ammunition, Ministry of Defence, Guatemala.

Col. Marcelo Montaner, Head, National Weapons Register, Uruguay.

**18.00**

Reception

**Friday, 7 September 2007**

**9.00-10.45**

Session 4

Identification of surplus arms and ammunition: Ways to assess arms and ammunition that are surplus to requirement.

Chair: Mr. Alejandro Solano, Deputy Political Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica.

Key note speaker: Mr. Michael Hasenau, Deputy Head, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany.

Ms. Lilliam Ballon, Head, International Security and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru.

Maj. Jorge Saavedra, Joint Command, Armed Forces, Ecuador.

**10.45-11.00**

Coffee break

**11.00-12.30**

Session 5

Destruction, recycling and associated environmental issues: Challenges for the disposal of surplus arms and ammunition.

Chair: Mr. Alejandro Solano, Deputy Political Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica.

Key note speaker: Mr. Jim Carr, Ammunition Technical Officer, UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Col. Mario Antezana, Head, Armament, Ministry of Defence, Bolivia.

Mr. Carlos Cordero, Head, Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica.

**12.30-13.00**

Closing remarks by Mr. Alejandro Solano, Deputy Political Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica and Mr. Michael Hasenau, Deputy Head, Conventional Arms Control Division, Federal Foreign Office, Germany.

**13.00-14.30**

Lunch

## Annex 2

### **EU-LAC Expert Meeting**

### **'Management and Security of Public Stockpiles of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition'**

**San José, 6-7 September 2007**

### **Issues Paper**

#### **Session 1: "Overview: The relevance of stockpile management and security in curbing illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons including their ammunition."**

**Dr. Michael Ashkenazi, Leader SALW Control, Bonn International Centre for Conversion.**

Diversion from security, private, and government sector stockpiles are one of the major sources for arming criminals and other armed groups. Proper stockpile management, as well as proper disposal of surpluses are one major key for controlling the illegal flow of arms. Where stockpiles are not secure, safe, and well managed, problems will occur. Each of these three terms has specific meanings and implications which will be presented in turn.

The single most critical factor in stockpile management is the human factor. Most specifically, the presence of political will at all levels to tackle the issues is critical. Without a commitment from the responsible government, and a substantiation of this commitment, no stockpile is likely to be well-managed. The political commitment goes well beyond party politics. It implies that there is a coordinated, sustained effort both vertically (of the government and security services in all their permutations in the country concerned,) and horizontally, between governments and between security services of different countries.

A particularly acute problem can be identified in post-conflict countries. By definition, almost, post-conflict countries lack both political will and technical and human capacities to deal with stockpile problems. This is particularly acute where parts of the stockpile are held by Other Armed Groups, reluctant to even admit the size of their stockpiles. Such unrecorded, often not managed, and certainly unsafe stockpiles are often sources for illegal arms flows.

The Latin American perspective is particularly interesting in this regard. Political and developmental changes in the past decade, a similarity of language and cultures, and some remarkable successes coming out of Latin America indicate that the LAC has the potential to demonstrate all the better examples of stockpile management, and, indeed, apply best principles in a region-wide control effort. Clearly, here as well, political will is the key.

Finally, we shall address some of the implications of stockpile control mechanisms for the future. With the world awash with weapons, and new ones in the pipeline, addressing the issue of stockpiles is an even more acute problem than it has been at any time in the past.

#### **Session 2: "Stockpile management and security for SALW".**

**Mr. David de Beer, former Programme Manager, EU Programme in Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia.**

Stockpile management and security for SALW is one of many measures mentioned in the UN Programme of Action adopted in July 2001 as a means of improving weapons security and

restricting illegal trade in SALW. It is, however, important that we remain aware that good stockpile management is part of a wider approach to SALW security - even though it is the theme of this conference.

The aim of SALW stockpile security is to ensure that all SALW under the control of the Military and the Police are securely stored under internationally acceptable conditions and are marked and registered in a computer database. This allows the authorities to know the whereabouts of each weapon in storage, limits the chances of state-owned weapons being illegally leaked into civilian society or illegally traded. In addition it enables the authorities to assist in tracing weapons that may have been lost, leaked or illegally traded.

Important references to the UN position on stockpile security are to be found in the UNPOA and in the Instrument on Marking and Tracing (2005), giving indications as to the standards required for secure stockpiling, marking and registration.

The EU ASAC project in Cambodia (2000 to 2006) gives an example of how a SALW stockpile project was designed and implemented in a post-conflict situation. It provides an insight into issues such as gaining the confidence of the government and military authorities, the provision of short, medium and long term stockpiling, registering the SALW in a centralised computer database and the provision of sets of training courses for those involved in all levels of implementing the project

The results in Cambodia can be measured against the stockpile procedures laid out in the UNPOA : appropriate locations for stockpiles; physical security measures; control of access to stocks; inventory management; staff training; security, accounting and control of SALW held by operational units; and procedures and sanctions in the event of loss or theft.

Because of the potential for massive loss of life in a single MANPADS attack on a passenger plane, preventing MANPADS falling into terrorist hands has been paid much attention. Effective stockpile management is particularly important, with special attention paid to enhanced stockpile security (with separate paths of access to the missile launcher and the missile) and reporting on frequent stockpile control.

### **Session 3: “Stockpile management and security for ammunition.”**

**Mr. Pablo Dreyfus, Researcher, Viva Rio, Rio de Janeiro.**

Within the context of State ammunition stockpiles management, although they are considered synonyms and “relative” concepts, the words “safety” and “security” have different meanings. Safety makes reference to the prevention of accidents and hazards. The word safety is related to the physical integrity of the personnel working in ammunition stockpile facilities as well as the people living in the surrounding areas. The word security makes reference to the term “national security”, and is related to the absence of threats to the integrity of the institutions, territory, sovereignty and population of a State. In the case of State ammunition stockpiles, the difference between the connecting link two words is the scale of the problem. The injury or death of a worker due to an accident in handling ammunition represents a personal tragedy and an embarrassment for an institution. The diversion of ammunition and their components from State stockpiles to criminal and/or terrorist groups is a matter of public security and national security. The explosion of a large ammunition depot in a population area is both a safety and a national security problem besides being a social tragedy.

*The virtuous circle of management: marking, storage, recordkeeping and surplus identification and disposal*

Stockpile management is composed of four basic activities which are inherently interconnected and interdependent: marking, storage, recordkeeping and surplus identification and destruction. When combined, these four components generate a virtuous circle of efficiency that will prevent accidents and diversion.

Having robust, well constructed and well guarded stockpile facilities is a condition to prevent accidents and leaking to illegal users. Diversion however, will be only detected if the ammunition and their packages are properly identified through easily readable markings. We can only notice the lack of what we can measure (number of boxes, number of mortar shells etc.) Marking allows rapidly identifying the degree of potential hazard of the ammunition thus helping a safer storage of the ammunition. It also indicates information on how to handle and transport the ammunition correctly. Marking is also vital in order to assist the tracing of ammunition and aid investigations regarding ammunition leaking incidents.

Adequate record keeping is essential to rapidly and readily locate ammunition when it is needed, and it is also fundamental in order to run control checks and observe whether ammunition and its components are where they are supposed to be. It is record keeping which will also give information about the type, quantity and location of the ammunition as well as information its end user. Finally, the excessive accumulation of ammunition increases the dangers of accidents and diversion, especially in countries with serious public security problems such as internal conflicts or organized crime. At the same time, ammunition is a consumable good that has an expiration date. It is useless and dangerous to stockpile ammunition with non-reliable or already instable primers, explosives and propellants. Identifying surplus requires having an adequate record keeping of what has been already used and what is still stored, and then it is possible to identify the ammunition that has to be destroyed as surplus through the lot numbers and date of manufacture marks made on the ammunition components and its packages. With the destruction of surplus the virtuous circle is closed.

**Session 4: “Identification of surplus arms and ammunition: Ways to assess arms and ammunition that are surplus to requirement.”**

**Mr. Michael Hasenau, Deputy Head, Conventional Arms Control Division, Federal Foreign Office, Germany.**

Worldwide, arms and ammunition are held in insecure locations at considerable risk of loss, capture or diversion. These arms and ammunition contribute to the risks of trafficking and proliferation and to the prolongation and intensification of armed conflict. At the same time, regular incidents at ammunition storage depots illustrate the resulting threat to security, health and the environment.

While different types of conventional arms as well as ammunition, munitions or explosives have different requirements, the basic issues, priorities and skills required to promote the management and security of stockpiles are similar for most categories of concern.

Many of the insecure and unsafe stockpiles are surplus stocks. This applies to military stockpiles, but also to the quantities of arms and ammunition held by police and other agencies. The individual state needs to define surplus stockpiles and take a decision on how to

deal with them. Stockpiles needed for national security purposes are to be separated from stockpiles that are insecure or in surplus. Stockpiles needed for national security purposes need to be safely stored, stockpiles that are insecure and in surplus must be destroyed.

Germany organised an Expert Meeting on ‘Enhancing controls and promoting reductions in stockpiles of conventional arms and ammunition’ in Berlin in April 2007. The main conclusions of the meeting included the following points:

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3. Individual states need to take the political decision in favour of making the management and security of stockpiles a priority. Management and security of stockpiles are elements of a national strategy. Such national strategy is best discussed in mechanisms bringing the different stakeholders together e.g. national SALW commissions.

4. Individual states need to take a political decision on size, structure and equipment of military and security forces based on threat analysis and needs assessment. The resulting definition of surplus lies in the hands of the responsible state. Stockpiles needed for national security purposes are to be separated from stockpiles that are insecure or in surplus, the first must be safely stored and the latter destroyed.

5. Effective parliamentary oversight is crucial, particularly in controlling the budgetary resources *inter alia* available for procurement, stockpile management and security as well as destruction and disposal.

6. While SALW and in particular MANPADS as well as SALW ammunition deserve specific attention, the issues, priorities and skills required to promote the management and security of stockpiles are similar for all categories of concern. Programmes for different categories of arms and ammunition needed to be closely co-ordinated in order to be efficient, not withstanding the scope of specific international norms or guidelines.

7. Special attention is needed with regard to ammunition due to its unstable nature and restricted shelf life as well as the high risk of diversion. The scale of the current problems posed by insecure and unsafe ammunition stockpiles is so urgent that efforts to promote good practices with regard to management and security of stockpiles need to be supplemented by emergency programmes.

8. International guiding principles and standards for management and security of stockpiles are needed, also as a prerequisite for providing assistance. The need to address the issue at the global level was underlined. However, standards need to be implemented with a perspective of risk reduction, based on political judgement.

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14. Management and security of stockpiles need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner in the frame of the forthcoming deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts established under UN General Assembly resolution 61/71 entitled “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”.

**Session 5: “Destruction, recycling and associated environmental issues: Challenges for the disposal of surplus arms and ammunition.”**

**Mr. Jim Carr, Ammunition Technical Officer, UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

In immediate post-conflict environments the safe destruction of recovered or captured small arms and light weapons and ammunition presents a variety of technical challenges. Even at the simplest level, the destruction by Open Burning and Open Detonation (OBOD) of large quantities of ammunition is a complex technical subject. It must not be confused with the destruction of a single UXO (Unexploded Ordnance). OBOD requires a significant degree of additional training beyond what is normally provided to the normal field engineer or an EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) Technician. For the destruction of larger stockpiles of ammunition in non-conflict environments, destruction by demolition is often not an option. The potential for environmental and noise pollution, and the sheer quantities of ammunition involved, will often suggest that an industrial demilitarization approach is more effective and cost efficient. This industrial demilitarization of ammunition combines the skills of production, as well as that of mechanical, chemical and explosive engineering. Again it is a highly specialist operation, and appropriate independent technical advice needs to be taken before planning or even advocating such activities.

There were traditionally five methods of disposal of surplus ammunition: sale, gift, increased training use, deep sea dumping, and destruction:

The sale or gifting of ammunition might be considered to be the most cost effective means of disposal, but there are factors that need to be considered:

- 1) Any sale or gift should comply with international export control and transfer best practices.
- 2) Ammunition quality at the end of its useful shelf life will not be as high as newly manufactured ammunition. Any end user wishing to purchase ammunition of this age should be subject to the deepest scrutiny as to why they wish to purchase such ammunition.
- 3) International transport regulations and guidelines require the ammunition to be certified safe to transport. This will involve physically inspecting the ammunition and possibly carrying out chemical testing. This will involve additional costs.

Increased use at training may initially seem to be a desirable option. However, increased usage will create additional wear on equipment such as gun barrels, vehicle automotive systems, etc. This will inevitably reduce the life of the parent equipment and will result in additional maintenance costs. Therefore these additional costs should be balanced against the value of the training obtained from firing surplus ammunition stocks.

The dumping of ammunition at sea is subject to international agreements as it is considered to be either hazardous or industrial waste. If a state is not a party to such an agreement, it is highly unlikely that it would receive any international donor assistance to dispose of its surplus ammunition in such a manner.

The most realistic disposal method is therefore that of destruction. Stockpile destruction can be defined as ‘the process of final conversion of ammunition into an inert state that can no longer function as designed’ The effective management of stockpile destruction planning and operational activities aims to physically destroy ammunition in a safe, cost- effective and efficient manner.

Physical destruction techniques available range from OBOD to highly sophisticated industrial processes. The selection of the most appropriate destruction technique will depend primarily on a range of factors including available resources, the physical condition of the stockpile (if known), the quantity and types of ammunition involved as this will affect economies of scale, national capacities and national explosive safety and environmental legislation.

Of these, the most influential factors have usually proven to be donor resources available and economies of scale. The more ammunition for destruction provides for a larger economy of scale, the wider the range of affordable and efficient technologies and the greater likelihood that an industrial demilitarization facility can be developed. Industrial scale demilitarization has many advantages; mechanical disassembly, incineration in environmentally controlled systems and the ability to operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Their major disadvantage is the high capital set-up costs of design, project management, construction and commissioning. It is also a possible source of major air, land and water contamination. Operating costs are generally lower than OBOD when amortisation of the development capital is discounted. The physical destruction process of ammunition is only one process of the complete demilitarization cycle. This operational cycle is complex, comprehensive and wide-ranging. It includes activities such as transportation, storage, processing operations, equipment maintenance, staff training and accounting at all stages of the process.

The development of a safe, effective and efficient industrial demilitarization capability within a State, that also reflects the safety and environmental concerns of donors, inevitably takes time. However as the Chinese say “the longest journey starts with a single step”. These difficulties should not prevent initial steps being taken to support the development of such facilities. In many regions, capacity will have to be developed from semi-dormant and under-resourced State ammunition production facilities. They will require infrastructure investment, staff training and demilitarization equipment procurement. However a balance must be struck as unstable and dangerous items will still require destruction by OBOD. Similarly, whilst facilities are being set-up, disposal by OBOD can take place in parallel. For countries with insignificant stockpiles, OBOD will remain the only economically practical option.