



## SUMMARY REPORT

### UNRCPD Workshop on PoA Implementation *11-13 December 2012, Bangkok, Thailand*

#### Overview

At the invitation of the Government of Thailand, UNRCPD facilitated a three-day workshop for Thai security sector personnel focussing on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA). The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of Thai national agencies working with SALW, thus facilitating the further implementation of the provisions of the PoA. The workshop included presentations by both international and national experts on SALW control. Expert speakers included those from: the German Ministry of Defense Verification Center, the Small Arms Survey, the Conventional Arms Branch of UNODA, the Thai Ministry of Interior, the Royal Thai Police, the Thai Ministry of Defence and Royal Thai Customs.

The workshop was highly successful, fully meeting the stated project aims. In attendance were participants from 20 Thai national agencies who received information on SALW proliferation issues in Thailand, implementation of relevant international instruments, and international best practices in SALW control. Workshop participants were also provided with key materials in the Thai language with the aim of disseminating the information to relevant government personnel and also to begin a resource library on the issues for future utilisation.

The meeting was supported by generous contributions from the Government of Germany.

#### Day One

Discussions on day one focused on SALW proliferation in Thailand, international and regional instruments relating SALW control, and tools available for assisting states to implement the PoA. The extent of SALW proliferation in Southeast Asia was noted, with some one million unregulated small arms currently in circulation as a result of past conflicts. Workshop participants noted that although the PoA provides a framework for combating illicit SALW transfer, they felt it is not always clear how to implement it at the national level. Points of Contact for PoA issues in Thailand were also identified: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (international) and the National Security Council (domestic). A number of Thai national agencies, including Royal Thai Customs, the Ministry for Interior, Royal Thai Police, Royal Thai Navy and the National Security Council, were identified as playing a key role in the import and export of SALW in Thailand.

#### Firearms Proliferation in Thailand

Experts from the Royal Thai Police and the Ministry of Interior presented information and analysis on firearms proliferation and trafficking issues in Thailand. Background information on trafficking problems, statistics, and trends provided the context for discussions on the effective implementation of international control instruments such as the PoA. National experts estimated that there are around five million firearms in Thailand. It was noted that Thai citizens must obtain a licence, valid for three years, from the Thai Government to import firearms. Further, the Thai government maintains an electronic database of registrations of firearm possession.

#### International and Regional Instruments on Small Arms

Experts from the Conventional Arms Branch of UNODA and the Small Arms Survey presented information on the PoA, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol. Instruments for SALW control developed by ASEANAPOL and ASEAN/SOMTC were also discussed. During the course of discussions, workshop participants highlighted a desire to receive more capacity-building from the UN in the area of SALW control. It was also noted that there are some difficulties matching the international standards set by the PoA to national situations. For instance, participants noted that there is a need for different measures for addressing the challenge of illicit proliferation via sea – a common problem for Asian states – when compared to the challenges faced in addressing illicit proliferation via land. Recommendations were made during the session for the reinforcement of existing cooperation



mechanisms, the possibility of establishing new systems (in line with international laws and agreements), and the adoption of strategies such as raising public awareness of illicit SALW possession.

### Tools for Implementation

The session on tools for implementation of the PoA was presented by the Conventional Arms Branch of UNODA. Information was provided on tools that are currently available, or are being developed, to assist states to implement the PoA. The [PoA-ISS](#) website and online reporting mechanism, the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and the International Ammunition Technical Guideline (IATG) were all discussed.



Participants noted that many regulatory elements were already being implemented in Thailand. The Thai national regulatory framework governing arms transfers and other import, export and transit controls was discussed. Participants also noted that there have been regional efforts to stem the illicit transfer of SALW, such as the ASEAN Plan of Action and Work Programme on Arms Smuggling, which seeks to address organised crimes' involvement in SALW transfer. Several participants discussed the issue of 'civilian possession' of firearms from the perspective of their agencies. Overall, participants noted that such instruments were useful tools to assist state to share best practices across borders, and further, to enhance the implementation of international SALW commitments, such as the PoA.

### Day Two

Discussions on day two focused on issues of brokering, international transfer controls and arms trafficking, and stockpile management and destruction.

#### Brokering

The case of Viktor Bout was used as an example of how international and national agencies working together can achieve success in curbing illicit trafficking. The changing nature of the international arms transfers was discussed – it was acknowledged that while arms transfers had previously been primarily government-to-government, globalisation has greatly increased the number of outlets where SALW are available. As a result, arms transfers have become increasingly difficult to control. This is a challenging issue to tackle as, even if there is national legislation in place to attempt to control brokering of arms, it is almost impossible for any one state to control the international aspects of a trade. It was noted that the 2007 Group of Governmental Experts on Brokering provided constructive recommendations for states looking to implement national legislation on brokering.

#### International Transfer Controls and Arms Trafficking

Experts from the Ministry of Interior, Royal Thai Customs and the Small Arms Survey presented information on International Transfer Controls and Arms Trafficking. Discussions highlighted the need to adopt a three level approach to regulation - *regulating the firearm, the firearm user and the use of the firearm*. Types of firearm regulation included banning some weapon types and adopting effective firearm registration and recordkeeping. The need to regulate firearm users based on various indicators, and to utilise licensing, waiting periods and penalties to prevent misuse were also discussed. Regulating uses of firearms explored the concept of requiring a 'genuine reason' for possession. Participants noted that issues such as reporting requirements in the event of theft or loss, safe storage, and carrying in public also needed attention.

Presenters also discussed the minimum requirements for the international transfers of SALW, covering *import, export, transit and re-export controls*. It was noted that to meet PoA commitments national laws needed to be adopted to cover these four areas, the illicit trade of SALW needed to be criminalised, and offenders prosecuted. Further, authenticated end-user certificates need be used in conjunction with appropriate licensing, transit measures and assessments of applications to export SALW. The importance of the importing state possessing the capacity to prevent diversion and record compliance with end user certificates was explained. During the discussions, participants raised questions on how to undertake effective risk assessment and management of international transfers. Presenters discussed the use of databases of criminals, technologies such as x-ray and CCTV, and enhanced national and international cooperation among customs agencies, other government agencies and the private sector in risk management.



An example of poor stockpile management by a country from another region

## Day Three

Day three covered issues related to stockpile management and destruction, marking and recordkeeping, and tracing.

### Stockpile Management and Destruction

An expert from the German Ministry of Defense Verification Center presented information on international best practice in stockpile management and destruction. Participants were advised on issues related to good and bad physical storage techniques, inventory management and inspection practices. Participants received information on the destruction of SALW, including disposal programme management and disposal methods, technologies and techniques. The importance that weapons destruction plays in an effective SALW control programme was also highlighted.



### Marking and Recordkeeping

The expert also presented information on SALW marking and recordkeeping. The advantages and disadvantages of different methods of marking SALW and ammunition were discussed. Participants raised the possibility of obtaining samples of bullet characteristics and information on original factory markings from manufacturers to include in national recordkeeping systems. Participants also noted that in Thailand SALW records are kept for greater than the 30 years dictated by international best practice.

### Tracing

Experts from the Royal Thai Police presented information on Thai tracing practices and experiences, and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). Discussions covered issues such as making tracing requests in Thailand, and the importance of inter-agency cooperation in achieving successful outcomes in tracing cases.

## Conclusion

By the conclusion of the three-day workshop there had been significant information presented and discussed relating to PoA and SALW control measures. Participants actively engaged in discussions, and a number of key issues specific to the Thai context were explored. Workshop participants were provided with key materials in the Thai language with the aim of disseminating information to other government personnel and creating a resource library on the subject. One important and unexpected outcome of this workshop was that participants from 20 different government agencies, all involved in some way with SALW in Thailand, were able to meet and discuss SALW-related issues face-to-face. This resulted in offers of increased cooperation and communication amongst agencies in their future work.



### Participating Thai Government Agencies (20)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Transport  
Ministry of Defense  
Ministry of Justice  
National Security Council  
Office of the Attorney General  
Royal Thai Police

Royal Thai Navy  
Royal Thai Air Force  
Royal Thai Army  
Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters  
Defense Industrial Department  
Department of Provincial Administration  
Ministry of Interior

Department of Special Investigation  
Royal Thai Customs  
National Intelligence Agency  
Immigration Bureau  
Port Authority of Thailand  
Airport Authority of Thailand