



SUMMARY REPORT

UNRCPD Workshop on PoA Implementation 15-16 May 2014, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Overview

At the invitation of the Government of Myanmar, UNRCPD facilitated a two-day workshop for government departments and agencies involved in small arms and light weapons (SALW) control. Partnering with the Ministry of Defense, and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the relevant national agencies to effectively implement the UN Programme of Action (PoA).¹ The workshop was generously sponsored by the Government of Switzerland.

The workshop included presentations by experts on SALW control. All 18 participating national departments and agencies gave overviews of their relevant policies and practices. It was an opportunity for them to exchange information on domestic issues, international instruments, and best practices regarding SALW. Ministries were also provided with key SALW materials in the local language as part of the project to create a resource library on these issues for current and future government officials.



Day One

Day One was focused on policy issues. It included discussions on the domestic firearms situation, international and regional instruments relating to SALW control, brokering, and tools available for assisting states in the PoA.

Firearms Situation in Myanmar

Experts from the Office of Defence Industries, Offices of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air), Directorate of Ordnance Services, Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training, and Offices of the Union Attorney General and Judge Advocate General all presented short overviews on firearms issues, as well as existing rules, legislation and regulation in Myanmar. Participants noted how a comprehensive control system for SALW manufacturing is an important measure to curb illicit trade.

International and Regional Instruments on Small Arms

UNRCPD gave a brief overview of the PoA and presented its online reporting tool. An update was also given regarding preparations for the June 2014 PoA Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS5) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs). The discussion emphasised the importance of developing national action plans, submitting national reports, establishing national points of contact, and international and regional information sharing. An expert from Small Arms Survey presented on the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), and compared and contrasted with related instruments. Participants also mentioned how Myanmar is already employing many of the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) in its national practices. Participants raised questions on weapons control in post conflict situations,



¹ <http://www.poa-iss.org/Poa/poa.aspx>

disarmament, and demobilisation and reintegration processes, as well as questions about incorporating the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) into national legislation.

International Transfer Controls and Arms Trafficking

Experts from the Myanmar Police Force, Bureau of Special Investigation and the Small Arms Survey presented information on International Transfer Controls and Arms Trafficking. Law enforcement agencies have adopted multi-level coordination and cooperation mechanisms, and the government has been sharing information with neighboring countries. Also, it was noted that Myanmar is considering ratifying the Firearms Protocol. It was noted that as Myanmar has not yet ratified the Firearms Protocol or the ATT, the PoA is a key instrument for arms transfer and transit controls. To meet PoA commitments, adequate legislation needs to be adopted to cover export, import, transit and transfer. Discussions explored licensing systems and inter-agency collaboration.



Tools for Implementation

Possible tools for PoA implementation were presented by international experts and the Myanmar Police Force. ISACS were lauded for their wide range of applications at multiple social and political levels. Participants also discussed the [PoA-ISS](#) website and online reporting mechanism, the [IATGs](#), and the [ATT Baseline survey and checklist](#). Further, UN meetings themselves were mentioned as 'tools' for exchanging information and discussing challenges and solutions with other countries.

Brokering

Government agencies expressed interest in sharing international best practices concerning brokering regulations. International experts put forward a definition of 'brokering', and the difference between an 'arms dealer' and 'broker' was discussed in detail. In addition to ISACS, the Group of Governmental Experts Report (2007) was praised as one of the best sources on relevant legislation. The session revealed a wide interest in further information related to brokering controls, including model legislation.



Day Two

Day Two focused on technical issues, such as stockpile management/destruction, and marking, recordkeeping and tracing. Domestic border controls and international cooperation were also examined.

Stockpile Management and Destruction

An expert from the German Ministry of Defense Verification Center presented information on best practices in stockpile management and destruction. Participants were shown examples of stockpile management practices. Participants also received information on SALW destruction techniques, highlighting the importance of weapons destruction in SALW control.



Marking, Recordkeeping and Tracing

Practices were also presented on SALW marking and recordkeeping. Various marking methods were discussed. Participants noted that Defence Industries already follows many marking guidelines in the ISACS. Experts from Myanmar Police Force and Bureau of Special Investigation presented information on tracing practices, and presenters provided several case studies. Discussions covered the ways in which various SALW control instruments overlap with and complement each other.

Border Controls and the Situation in Myanmar

Experts from Myanmar Police Force, Bureau of Special Investigation, Ministry of Immigration and Population, Myanmar Port Authority, and Department of Civil Aviation all gave overviews on border security. The Customs Department gave a presentation on its cooperation activities, and Ministry of Commerce discussed cross-border trade arrangements. To this end, Myanmar has been sharing information regarding arms smuggling with its neighbours, and cooperating with INTERPOL, ASEANAPOL.

International cooperation

An expert from the Armed Forces of Switzerland discussed international cooperation in implementing the PoA. Showing examples, he demonstrated the advantages and the limits of international cooperation. The notion of 'local ownership' was stressed as vital. Moreover, he talked about security in general and in the view of Security Sector Reform, highlighting the nexus between SALW control and SSR.

Conclusion

With a turnout from 18 government agencies, this groundbreaking workshop met its goals to assist the government to more effectively implement the provisions of the PoA, further familiarise them with related international instruments, and provide an opportunity for face-to-face discussion of SALW issues from multiple viewpoints. Participants actively engaged in discussions, and explored a number of key issues specific to the Myanmar context. Moreover, excluding ASEAN meetings, the Myanmar Ministry of Defence had never before hosted a disarmament-related workshop on its territory in recent history. The event ended with calls for follow-up activities, including assistance on how to translate the PoA and related instruments into national legislation. Other issues of particular interest included arms smuggling, border control, ISACS and IATGs, brokering controls and DDR practices. UNRCPD will continue to expand its offering of these workshops and stands ready to assist other countries in the Asia-Pacific.



The workshop was generously funded by the Government of Switzerland, with external experts provided by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland.



Participating Myanmar Government Agencies (18)

Bureau of Special Investigation
Custom Department
Department of Civil Aviation
Directorate of Ordnance Services
Ministry of Commerce
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Immigration and Population
Myanmar Police Force

Myanmar Port Authority
Office of the Chief of Armed Forces
Training
Office of the Chief of Defence
Industries
Office of the Judge Advocate
General
Office of the Chief of Military Affairs
Security

Office of the Commander-in-Chief
(Air)
Office of the Commander-in-Chief
(Army)
Office of the Commander-in-Chief
(Navy)
Office of the Union Attorney General