

United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA)



The United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

New York, 26 June-7 July 2006

Statement by

Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka
Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

on behalf of CASA

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I take the floor today to address the meeting on behalf of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA).

Mr. President,

The United Nations system deals with almost all the dimensions of the problem of illicit small arms and armed violence. For instance, OCHA is concerned with the interference of small arms with the delivery of relief assistance. The UNHCR often faces situations where refugee camps are disrupted by individuals armed with such weapons. UNICEF and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict address the problem of child soldiers and the negative impact of small arms on children. The UNODC assists States in their efforts to combat small arms trafficking by or for transnational organized groups. The WHO is alarmed with the negative public health consequences of violence committed with the aid of small arms. We are also very aware that conflict and instability, often fuelled by illicit small arms and light weapons, impede social and economic development; for instance, it is estimated that the cost of conflicts in Africa is as high as \$15 billion a year – hence the interest of the UNDP and DESA in helping find solutions to the illicit trade in those weapons.

UNIDIR conducts action-oriented research to improve our understanding of the negative impact of that nefarious trade. DPKO and DPA deal with the challenges posed by illicit weapons in post-conflict situations. UNEP has provided advice on environment-friendly ways of disposing of weapons and the UNHCHR is concerned with the use of small arms to commit human rights violations. DPI has been very instrumental in raising awareness of the problem; thanks to DPI we have the excellent Web site (smallarms2006) that covers this Review Conference. UNIFEM is concerned with the direct and indirect impact of illicit SALW on women.

The CASA mechanism was created in 1998 to coordinate the activities of these various parts of the UN system and to harness the potential synergies that could stem from interagency collaboration. Consultation and joint planning can lead to integrated projects, less duplication and better service to Member States. During the past five years many joint projects have been implemented under the framework of the CASA mechanism and inter-agency collaboration. Some of these projects have also involved partnerships with civil society organizations. For example:

- As the representative of Sri Lanka pointed out last Monday, DDA and DESA, in collaboration with the UNDP and Saferworld, have provided continuous support to the establishment and functioning of Sri Lanka National Commission on Small Arms.
- DDA, UNDP and UNIDIR, in collaboration with the Small Arms Survey, provided assistance to States to help improve their national reporting.

- Under the coordination of the United Nations Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, CASA members in partnership with civil society have supported training for over 800 officials, including parliamentarians and law enforcement officials. DDA and UNDP have supported the establishment of a Regional Training Centre in Brazil, which aims to support MERCOSUR and Associated States and Members of the Andean Community.
- More recently, the UNDP and DDA, with the support of the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and the United Kingdom formulated a Pilot Sponsorship programme which has enabled representatives of National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs) of 28 countries to participate in this Conference. In connection with this Programme, a workshop was organized to help the sponsored representatives to prepare for an active participation in the Conference. Our goal is to set up a full-fledged Sponsorship Programme that will facilitate the participation of representatives of NCBs in future international meetings on small arms and light weapons.

CASA partnerships have been formed not only to deliver practical capacity-building assistance but also to undertake research and to compile and analyze information that could help States deepen understanding of relevant issues. For example, in this connection;

- Building on a pilot project carried out in Brazil and El Salvador, the WHO and UNDP are collaborating in the implementation of an Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP). It is hoped that this Programme will contribute to the development of a database outlining effective ways to prevent armed violence, and will eventually enhance the capacity to develop strategies to reduce the demand for small arms.
- UNIDIR and DDA, in collaboration with the Small Arms Survey, are working together to publish a comparative study of existing regional and subregional brokering instruments and guidelines, which will be published before the first session of the forthcoming Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in SALW.
- UNIDIR, DDA, UNDP and the Small Arms Survey have also produced extensive analysis of the reports on national implementation of the Programme of Action. The first volume was published in 2004, following the First Biennial Meeting of States, and now you have the second volume entitled “Five Years of Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons”.
- DDA and UNIFEM have prepared a document entitled “Gender Mainstreaming for the Effective 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”. This document has been made available to this Conference as a CRP.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I could not exhaust here the list of interagency partnerships undertaken by CASA members. I invite you, however, to make use of the CASA Internet Database which contains all the joint projects developed under the framework of the CASA mechanism as well as many other projects and activities undertaken by individual CASA members. This database is part of our efforts to transform the CASA mechanism into an effective tool to support the implementation of the Programme of Action. We expect that this Database will become an important information and research tool for Member States. We are particularly thankful to the Government of Japan for its critical support to the development of this Database and we hope that other donors will come forward to support its operation and enhancement.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In an organization accustomed to working in compartmentalized bureaucratic structures, any coordination mechanism faces serious challenges. These challenges are even more daunting when resources that are already thinly stretched have to be squeezed further in order to ensure the functioning of the mechanism. We have listened attentively to the concerns expressed by Member States regarding, in particular, international assistance and cooperation. It is our intention to transform the CASA

mechanism into a clearing house for the matching of needs with resources and for the channelling of coordinated and integrated UN assistance to Member States. To achieve these goals, we will need your firm support.

Thank you.