

Only 4 WEEKS to the PrepCom!

IANSA Bulletin on the UN Small Arms Process

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1. Glossary of terms

PoA = UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

PrepCom = Preparatory Committee Meeting

RevCon = Review Conference for the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects

DDA = UN Department of Disarmament Affairs

BMS = Biennial Meeting of States on implementation of the PoA

2. What is the PrepCom?

The UN Preparatory Committee (**PrepCom**) is a 2-week meeting at UN Headquarters in New York (US), 9-20 January 2006. It prepares the structure, procedure and priorities for the 2006 Review Conference or **RevCon**, to be held 26 June – 7 July. The RevCon is the most important global meeting on small arms since the PoA was agreed in 2001, and will set the next phase of the UN small arms control process.

It is possible that there will be a second 2-week PrepCom in March. A decision on whether a second PrepCom is needed will be taken during the first PrepCom. We must assume that there will **not** be a second PrepCom – the January meeting may be our only chance to influence the Review Conference.

3. Opportunities in 2006

During the preparations for the 2001 UN small arms conference, IANSA advocacy efforts helped widen the debate from a narrow focus on arms control and national security to broaden human security concerns, with a focus on armed violence. One of the lessons learned was the value of raising public awareness of the meeting, an activity that IANSA will prioritise in 2006 through our media outreach strategy.

During 2006, there are numerous opportunities at both the national level and global level to put forward policy suggestions, identify programs for action and raise awareness. Negotiations at the UN are determined by the positions taken by government officials at home, so IANSA members are ideally placed to play a vital role in raising public awareness of the UN small arms process within their own countries, and through regular meetings with government officials.

See the calendar at the end of this update for dates on meetings around which IANSA members could undertake local, national and regional action.

The PrepCom will significantly shape the priorities and parameters of the RevCon. Since 2001 there has been a great deal of national and regional progress on small arms control, stockpile management and increased understanding of gun violence, facilitated by the UN process on small arms control. The RevCon is an opportunity to consolidate these achievements and to set goals for the next phase.

The PrepCom will also decide:

- The form of the Outcome Documents of the RevCon – annexes, action plans?
- Key issues/themes on which the RevCon will agree new commitments
- Procedure of the RevCon – will consensus be required or will voting be possible?
- NGO access – how will civil society contribute?
- Whether a second PrepCom is needed

It is very unlikely that the PoA will be renegotiated. The most likely outcome will be the continuing existence of the PoA, with additional ‘outcome documents’ appended. These might take the form of an Implementation / Action Plan, or they might be annexes.

The outcomes of the RevCon are unlikely to be legally-binding, but they may inspire UN General Assembly resolutions in October 2006 or encourage groups of States to facilitate greater understanding or action.

There is a risk that the UN small arms process will finish after the RevCon. IANSA argues that the process needs to continue as there are still great challenges associated with *eradicating the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects*. Just 4 months ago at the World Summit, small arms and landmines were the only disarmament issues affirmed by Heads of State. Even more recently at the First Committee (on disarmament) of the UN General Assembly, a range of resolutions were agreed, including a groundbreaking resolution advanced by the Netherlands on humanitarianism, development and small arms control. Clearly there is momentum building in other forums and the RevCon is an opportunity to take stock and commit to the next phase of global action.

4. IANSA objectives at the PrepCom

There are three key dates in the 2006 UN small arms calendar, all closely connected with each other.

	Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) 9-20 January 2005	Review Conference (RevCon) 26 June – 7 July 2006	First Committee, UN General Assembly October 2006
Purpose	PrepCom will determine the agenda, procedure and priorities for the RevCon.	RevCon will produce outcome documents to guide the UN small arms process.	First Committee will pass resolutions inspired by the RevCon outcome documents.
IANSA desired outcomes:			
Continuing the UN small arms process	PrepCom recommends that the RevCon establish a clear timetable for the UN small arms process.	RevCon establishes a clear timetable for the UN small arms process.	
Clarifying and elaborating PoA commitments	PrepCom recommends that the RevCon outcome documents develop the full range of commitments in the PoA, as described in the IANSA position papers.	RevCon outcome documents develop the full range of commitments in the PoA.	

Examples:			
Humanitarian action	PrepCom recommends text for the opening declarative sections of the RevCon outcome documents elaborating on the humanitarian cost of small arms proliferation and misuse.	Declarative sections of the RevCon outcome documents elaborate the humanitarian cost of small arms proliferation and misuse.	First Committee passes a resolution developing the links between small arms control and humanitarian action.
International arms transfers	PrepCom recommends including Global Principles on International Arms Transfers in RevCon outcome documents.	RevCon outcome documents include Global Principles on International Arms Transfers.	First Committee passes a resolution calling for negotiations on a global Arms Trade Treaty.
Gender-sensitive policies	PrepCom recommends that the RevCon outcome documents elaborate the links between gender and small arms.	RevCon outcome documents elaborate the links between gender and small arms.	First Committee passes a resolution endorsing the RevCon outcome documents including a gender dimension in the UN small arms process.
Arms brokering	Recommends that the RevCon outcome documents require the Group of Governmental Experts to consider proposals for a global instrument of standards to regulate international arms brokering, including of arms transport and finance, consistent with international law, and to fully consult non-governmental experts.	Outcome documents require the Group of Governmental Experts to consider proposals for a global instrument of standards to regulate international arms brokering, including of arms transport and finance, consistent with international law, and to fully consult non-governmental experts.	Establishes the Group of Governmental Experts with a deadline to consider and report on (i) proposals for a global instrument of standards to regulate international arms brokering, including of arms transport and finance consistent with international law (ii) existing laws and regulations by states (iii) elements for international cooperation and assistance, and (iv) consultations with recognised non-governmental experts on the subject.

5. IANSA recommendations for the procedure of the UN small arms process

Civil society participation: At present there is uncertainty (and argument) about how NGOs will be able to participate in the PrepCom. Unusually for a UN disarmament process, the PoA explicitly acknowledges that cooperation with civil society is necessary to deal with small arms proliferation and misuse. This cooperation has been supported by UN General Assembly resolutions in 2004 and 2005. However, not all Member States agree – some would like NGOs excluded or severely restricted at the PrepCom and RevCon.

IANSA believes that the voices of its 600 member organisations should be represented and included during the **general** debate in order to present policy visions and expertise, most importantly the stories of survivors and people working every day in gun-ravaged communities.

In addition, we are seeking to take part in the **thematic** debates because some of the most knowledgeable experts are to be found among civil society organisations. IANSA members are experts working to implement the PoA in multiple ways, bringing invaluable skills and knowledge to the goal of reducing small arms proliferation and misuse.

Democratic consensus: Decisions during the UN small arm process have traditionally been taken by consensus reflecting the will of the majority. However in recent years, consensus has become the tool of a minority to reduce or erode the will of the majority. Voting remains contentious in multilateral contexts yet in many instances may be a more accountable and effective form of policy making.

6. IANSA activities during the PrepCom

The main task of NGOs at the PrepCom is to **advocate systematically and intensively** for the policy recommendations IANSA and the NGO community support. IANSA members attending the meeting in New York are encouraged to meet with government representatives and advance these viewpoints. Member at home are ideally placed to meet with government officials from diverse ministries, as well members of the media. While the key people from Ministries of Foreign Affairs will be in New York, there are officials from departments of police, customs, children, gender, health, development, etc that can be informed about the UN small arms process and the need for their input into the process.

To assist with advocacy at the PrepCom, IANSA will present short **position papers** on ten key themes covering areas which our members would like to see addressed in more detail by the UN small arm process:

1. Appropriate use of small arms by state officials
2. Draining the existing pools of weapons
3. Gender-specific action to prevent small arms violence
4. Matching resources to needs
5. National regulation of small arms
6. Reducing the demand for small arms
7. Regulating illicit arms brokering
8. Regulating international transfers of small arms
9. Survivor assistance
10. Sustaining development through regulating small arms

The position papers will include an assessment of how each theme is relevant to the PoA, and what progress has been achieved since the PoA was adopted. The papers will propose detailed recommendations on how to clarify and elaborate PoA commitments, and how to further develop the UN small arms process. These recommendations can then be used in advocacy efforts at home and internationally.

The PrepCom will likely include a **presentation by civil society**, as happened at both the 2003 and 2005 BMS.

IANSA will also organise a series of **side events** (briefings, seminars, workshops) during the PrepCom addressing some of the ten key themes listed above.

A variety of **advocacy materials** will be available, including the IANSA position papers, the Control Arms parliamentary action pack, annotated Global Principles for International Arms Transfers, the IANSA CD of small arms documents, and the 'Missing Pieces' report of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish).

IANSA will be doing **media outreach** on a larger scale than ever before at a UN small arms meeting. Our members from gun-affected regions can bring home to journalists the human impact of the global flood of small arms.

7. How to get involved

Send us information. Please look at the ten themes covered in the IANSA position papers above and let us know if there have been achievements on these themes in your country since 2001. Also:

- In your discussions with government officials, what positions do they support or oppose?
- What comments have been made by government officials?
- What comments have been made by opposition parties?
- How have these issues been covered in the media?

Talk to your government. The IANSA position papers will be online very soon. Arrange a meeting with someone from your government who will attend the PrepCom. This is most likely to be someone from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but you could also meet with any of the departments that should take an interest in small arms control – police, customs, children, gender, health, development, etc. Present the arguments from the IANSA position papers and propose that your government support a strong position on all of these areas. Please send us a report of the meeting, so that IANSA can follow up in forthcoming meetings,

Get media coverage. Media coverage is the best way to ensure that your government and its delegation support strong measures to control small arms, strengthen stockpile security and reduce gun violence at the PrepCom. The IANSA Secretariat will be working to raise international media coverage of the event and is happy to help anyone trying to raise media coverage in their own country. Please contact us for more information.

8. Key dates

December	
1-3	France-Africa Summit, Bamako (Mali)
6-9	UNIDIR-EU meeting, Brussels (Belgium)
8	DDA informal consultations, New York (US)
14-15	African Expects Meeting on SALW to prepare for RevCon, Windhoek (Namibia)
16	DDA informal consultations, Geneva (Switzerland)
26-27	League of Arab States meeting on SALW
TBC	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Standards launched
TBC	SADC national focal points meeting to prepare for PrepCom
TBC	AU Focal Points meeting
TBC	South Asia focal points meeting
January	
9-20	PrepCom
February	
14-23	World Council of Churches general assembly, Porto Alegre (Brazil)
28 Feb	Secretary-General's report on small arms
Feb/Mar	UN Security Council debate on small arms
March	
20-31	Possible second PrepCom
31 March-1 April	Pre-conference on Reducing Firearm-Related Mortality and Morbidity, Durban (South Africa)
April	
2-5	World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, Durban (South Africa)
May	
7-12	Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting, Nairobi (Kenya)
TBC	Global Week of Action
TBC	Human Security Network ministerial meeting, Bangkok (Thailand)
June	
TBC	G8 meeting in Russian Federation
26 June – 7 July	RevCon