



**Webinar Organized by The Stimson Center and the Permanent Mission of
Japan to the United Nations**

“Renewing Commitments on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Issues

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It is always such a pleasure to be able to participate in these webinars. My special thanks, of course, to the Permanent Mission of Japan and Ambassador Ishikane. Thank you for organizing this webinar on this very important topic, especially for the United Nations Secretary-General, who calls this area a key pillar of the “Saving Lives” part of disarmament.

In my brief remarks, let me touch on four aspects, and I will go very quickly on some parts of it because it has already been so well articulated by you, Rachel, and Ambassador Ishikane.

The first one is obviously just to recap why this is a priority.

It’s been already stated, but I think it’s always useful for us to be reminded why this is such a priority. Small arms and light weapons actually represent the category of weapons that kill and injure the most around the world, either in violent crimes or in violent conflicts, and we have to remember the overwhelming quantity and extensive number of people who use them as well.

The Small Arms Survey says that over one billion of these weapons were in circulation worldwide in 2017, and 75 percent of them, which means 750 million of those were in civilian hands, which represents an increase from 20 years ago when it was estimated that 550 million were in circulation.

The global human toll is quite staggering as well.

The humanitarian and development consequences of gun violence and armed conflict are obviously huge. They range from increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, to famine and other aspects of human suffering, and an increased level of poverty as well.

Regulating arms and ammunition can reduce violence against women and girls, both in public and private spheres. In light of these hard realities and the disastrous impacts of the misuse of small arms and light weapons, Secretary-General Guterres decided to mobilize efforts towards what he called “Disarmament that Saves Lives” as a major pillar of his Disarmament Agenda.

My second point is about what we should do now at the global, regional, and country levels-policy and operational levels. The issue of small arms and light weapons control is not a new issue in the international community. It has been tackled by the General Assembly more forcefully in the past 20 years with the adoption of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and

Light Weapons (PoA), the Firearms Protocol, and more recently, with entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, another very important instrument, in 2014. The Security Council, Human Rights Council and several regional initiatives have adopted resolutions and frameworks to address this issue.

It's very important to mention the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has even dedicated target 16.4 to the significant reduction of illicit arms flows by 2030. Despite all these efforts and investments, the problem has been resilient, and its consequences on human lives are still staggering, so we therefore need to ask ourselves how we can do things differently, and think out of the box, drawing lessons from past successes and challenges at all different levels - national, regional, and global levels – which are some of the major paths in search for durable solutions.

We will have this very important opportunity called BMS7 that will convene next month, and that will become a huge opportunity for bold, practical and forward-looking deliberations that can make the PoA a more dynamic instrument. Especially what I would like to note is the bottom-up approach, the vision for the BMS7, and the role of national strategy and target setting, and how this links up with our work in the UN system to better support national or country level work.

Which brings me to my third element, the point which is the importance of steps taken towards more impactful UN engagement through strengthened linkages across peace, security, and development including SDGs, as I mentioned, and innovative programmatic support of SALIENT, as Ambassador Ishikane mentioned already, and the emphasis of course on the National Ownership as a guiding principle. Now, a couple of key points. National Ownership is absolutely key in accordance with the Secretary-General's directive and the vision. He called an Executive Committee meeting on this issue last year in April, and we are now really looking at how we will be able to make better impacts as the UN system, in terms of supporting the National Ownership by the governments at different national levels.

The second issue is the issue of small arms should be linked to sustainable development and related socio-economic processes. That is why we have started to work with UN Country Teams to ensure that this issue of small arms and light weapons will be integrated in the Common Country Assessment that they do, and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

The third is that in order for us to achieve a robust outcome on this issue, a dedicated funding arrangement should be sizable and also predictable for meaningful results. This is why, with the help of donors, including Japan, we established two years ago the Saving Lives Entity, SALIENT, to support some of the most seriously affected countries. SALIENT is now at the early stage of being pioneered in Cameroon and Jamaica- more countries are also being considered as we speak. I would like to highlight that for women, guns and violence between intimate partners often form a deadly combination. Evidently, sexual and gender-based violence is really abetted by armed intimidation, and we are therefore particularly proud that 30 percent of the resources for SALIENT is specifically dedicated to addressing these gender dimensions.

And finally in this area, setting targets on small arms control at the national level. National programs can ensure measurability and discipline of efforts, particularly regarding the implementation of instruments like the PoA. This bottom-up approach as I mentioned already would also guarantee flexibility and a focus on what each country feels will be their own priorities.

Now, my final point, making the case for a comprehensive definition and approach to human security premised on the linkages across these areas. It is really important to emphasize the holistic policy foundation on our efforts that small arms and light weapons control need to encompass, not just State security in terms of a traditional sense, but indeed human security more broadly. After all, the demand and supply factors that underpin small arms flows are predicated on freedoms from fear and also freedom from want. This people-centered focus is indeed the very premise of “Disarmament that Saves Lives” of the Secretary-General. It can accelerate our efforts and collective drive towards the achievement of SDGs by ensuring a safe and healthy society in which no one is left behind as a result of gun violence and armed conflict. The UN, therefore, addresses small arms control as an integral part of the Prevention Agenda, and a cornerstone of sustainable peace as well. In this endeavor we place a premium on the role of regional actors, as well as the critical bridge between the national level and the global agenda of the UN. We continue to contribute to regional initiatives such as the Silencing the Guns initiative of the African Union and the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap.

I'd like to conclude by noting the importance of partnerships. As you know, in his agenda for disarmament the Secretary-General stressed the need to strengthen existing partnerships and made a foundation for pursuing new ones as well. This requires, obviously, the commitment to work together and to coordinate our efforts and greater collaboration between different parts of the UN system, as well as with governments, civil society, and private sector which will enable us to pool our expertise and reinforce each other's efforts as we seek to reach the same goals, the shared goals. I look forward to our joint efforts toward this common future. I thank you very much for your attention, and am looking forward to exchanges that will follow.