Request for inputs to the 2022 report of the Secretary-General on Resolution 76/232 “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”

“Requests the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to seek the views of Member States, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders for enhancing international cooperation and assistance modalities and procedures in the framework of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, taking into account good practice and lessons learned, and to present recommendations for consideration by Member States at the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States”.

UNIDIR’s research-informed strategic inputs

- International cooperation and assistance provided by regional and international partners enables progress on weapons and ammunition management (WAM) in resource-constrained contexts. In July 2021, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) convened a second regional WAM lessons learned seminar, in partnership with the African Union and ECOWAS, to promote dialogue and the sharing of good practices on practical ways to strengthen WAM policy and practice among international and regional organizations, States, and non-governmental organizations. Seminar participants highlighted the following:
  - The need to ensure sustainable assistance and cooperation to strengthen WAM in accordance with national and regional priorities was recognized by United Nations system partners. This highlights the importance of coordination mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels to prevent the duplication of efforts and seek to effectively match needs and resources. It also calls for robust monitoring and evaluation tools to identify effective measures and practices, common challenges, and broader lessons for future programming efforts.
  - Comprehensive WAM baseline assessments facilitate the effective functioning of national WAM lead entities and coordination mechanisms, including national commissions on small arms and light weapons, to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In turn, such entities can identify priority areas for action and clearly articulate requests for international assistance and cooperation to address gaps in national systems and enhance national capacities. Further, the results of completed WAM baseline assessments provide for more coherent international cooperation and assistance efforts, helping to identify appropriate operational partners to support the implementation of measures to strengthen WAM.
  - An inclusive, consultative and participatory approach to WAM, including the involvement of community-level stakeholders and civil society, and the integration of gender considerations to support the implementation of national road maps are essential for the effective and sustainable implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Efforts to widen stakeholder involvement and cooperation on small arms-related activities can facilitate information sharing on existing assistance gaps, priorities and resources available.
- The United Nations Secretary-General’s 2018 agenda for disarmament, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament called for the integration of conventional arms and ammunition control into the United Nation’s conflict prevention and management activities, which can support implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument in order to “save lives”. In December 2021, UNIDIR released the Arms-Related Risk Analysis Toolkit (Toolkit), providing practical guidance to identify and integrate conventional arms and ammunition-related risks into conflict analysis and conflict prevention, management, and resolution strategies. An expert community of practice workshop in December 2021 concluded that the Toolkit can support the design and development of assistance projects to address arms and ammunition-related risks in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, as well as provide a framework for monitoring the effectiveness and sustainability of these projects.

Other elements to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance to address the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects:

- Ensure political will and articulation of actions to enhance WAM/SALW control as part of wider strategies (National Security, Defense Planning, SSR, DDR, etc) that could benefit from international cooperation and assistance programmes
- The importance of applying a through-life management approach for small arms control consistently (special emphasis on approaches beyond PSSM – pre-requisites in manufacture to prevent diversion and enable tracing, EUC systems, investigation and prosecution, post-delivery control systems, forensic ballistic capabilities, targeted capacity building on diversion, identification of weapons, and tracing, inter-agency coordination, etc.)
- Integrate the use of technologies in assistance programmes to increase capacities (equipment, software) in different areas (PSSM, track and trace, transit and transportation, marking, record-keeping, identification, border controls, risk analysis, etc.)