Submission 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”

29 March 2022

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) wish to focus its submission on the subject of gender and small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the context of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA).

We take note of the significant levels of recognition given to the importance of adopting a gender-responsive approach to small arms control which includes, *inter alia*: the full, meaningful, and effective participation of women and improving gender diversity in the implementation of the UNPoA; recognizing and addressing the gendered impacts of small arms violence and proliferation through evidence-based gender-responsive policy-making and programming; the strict control of SALW supplies and holdings including from a gendered perspective; preventing unnecessary and illicit demand for such weapons via educational programmes for youth on gender, security sector reform with gender-responsive policing and peacekeeping, public awareness campaigns on gender-based violence prevention; calls to improve the collection of disaggregated data by gender, sex, age, and ability; and strengthening linkages with other frameworks including the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This recognition of the gender dimensions of small arms use and proliferation has progressed by, and been enshrined within, recommendations contained in the consensus outcome documents of the Sixth and Seventh Biennial Meetings of States (2016, 2021) and the Third Review Conference (2018). It is supplemented by the resolutions and decisions of other bodies, including the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and states parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

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2. Report of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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, A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, 11 August 2021.
In the spirit of continuous progress on the subject, WILPF and IANSA put forward the following recommendations for consideration by Member States at the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8):

- To ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of all genders in delegations participating in the BMS8 and in relevant side events or meetings;

- To use the UNPoA voluntary report template to share information about actions being taken at national and regional levels to implement gender-responsive small arms policy and programming in line with UNPoA outcome document recommendations and commitments under other frameworks
  o One first step to be considered by Members States may be the collection and sharing of disaggregated data on SALW by age and sex.
  o Member states may wish to consider holding a focused meeting or dialogue in the context of BMS8 about how to better report on these aspects or share challenges they are experiencing in doing so;

- In addition to preserving and upholding consensus decisions and recommendations adopted in past UNPoA meetings, Member States are encouraged to extend consideration to other topics relevant to gender and SALW control, including for instance inadequate regulation of firearms in the hands of civilians and those used by state security forces giving rise to gender-based gun violence, including against LGBTQ+ people, and the role of militaristic and violent masculinities in SALW proliferation and use. As the OHCHR has noted in a 2020 report, “In raw numbers, firearms deaths are overwhelmingly caused by and inflicted upon men. That trend is tied to a stereotyped and inherently harmful notion of masculinity which also contributes to gender-based violence and abuse. States should therefore demonstrate clear and consistent political commitment to alter the social and cultural patterns of conduct of boys and men that contribute to that trend.”

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8 A/HRC/44/29.