

15 June 2010
English
Original: Spanish

**Fourth 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**
New York, 14-18 June 2010

**Elements prepared by the Working Group on Firearms for the
position of MERCOSUR and associated States at the fourth
Biennial Meeting of States**

The Working Group on Firearms has prepared the following elements for the position of MERCOSUR and associated States at the fourth Biennial Meeting of States and support the continuation of the Programme of Action process.

Topic 1

Prevention of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders

We welcome the facilitation-related work entrusted to Federico Perazza (Uruguay) as friend of the Chair-designate at the fourth Biennial Meeting for a topic of such crucial importance to MERCOSUR and its associated States.

We reiterate that States have primary responsibility, through coordinated action by the relevant national agencies, for controlling their borders to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Bearing in mind chapter II, paragraph 27, of the Programme of Action, we stress the importance of further progress in strengthening border control cooperation mechanisms through legislation and national capacity-building in order to identify possible responses to border control challenges.

In that regard, we stress the importance of further reviewing proposals which would serve to enhance national capacity, for example, through customs cooperation as a means of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We welcome the recent establishment of the Operating Committee provided for by Decision 552 of the Andean Community entitled “Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects”, and stress the interest of MERCOSUR and its associated States in cooperating with the Andean Community on small arms and light weapons initiatives.



Topic 2

International cooperation and assistance

We stress the importance of international cooperation and assistance and national capacity-building as cross-cutting themes for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Effective assistance and cooperation are contingent upon smooth relations among States, international organizations and civil society at the national, regional and global levels.

The States members of MERCOSUR and associated States support the goal of the Programme of Action of sustainable capacity-building to enhance its implementation.

We encourage States and international agencies in a position to do so to provide assistance to interested States, upon request, through appropriate technical and funding mechanisms.

Topic 3

Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action

We consider it important to include the mechanism in order to follow up on the conclusions and recommendations of the biennial meetings, groups of experts and review conferences, and to ensure proper consideration of the reports submitted by States.

Topic 4

Other issues: issues of relevance in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects: problems and implementation challenges and opportunities in order to improve and strengthen implementation of the Programme of Action

We consider it important to analyse and discuss the following issues, inter alia:

- The fact that the Programme of Action’s title refers to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons “in all its aspects” means that it also applies to munitions and explosives. Addressing all aspects of the trade is, therefore, one of the challenges remaining for the Programme’s effective implementation.
- MERCOSUR and associated States, through the Working Group on Firearms, have addressed munitions and explosives as integral components of the topic small arms and light weapons.
- Dissemination of information on national and regional progress in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as established in section II, paragraph 23, of the Programme of Action.
- As part of government authority to enact public policy to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, enhance cooperation among States, international organizations and civil society in the implementation of the Programme of Action, as established in section II, paragraphs 40 and 41.

- Mainstreaming of a gender and age perspective in the implementation of the Programme of Action, so as to ensure that consideration is given to the most vulnerable sectors of society.
- Establishment of effective systems for the verification of end-user certificates, as an appropriate tool for preventing the diversion of small arms and light weapons and development of an international framework for authentication, reconciliation and standardization of end-user certificates.

Topic 5

Implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

MERCOSUR and associated States have demonstrated that the measures and solutions proposed under the International Instrument are feasible even with limited resources and thus continue to support efforts aimed at making the instrument legally binding and enlarging its scope to include munitions and explosives to prevent that trade from adversely affecting our region's political, social and economic situation.

We also emphasize the need for international cooperation and assistance with respect to marking and tracing through the sharing of information and experiences among States, as well as to record-keeping, so as to enhance the tools available for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, munitions and explosives.

Outcome of the fourth Biennial Meeting

MERCOSUR and associated States reiterate how important it is for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to become a legally binding instrument.

MERCOSUR and associated States support a concrete outcome in the form of a consensus document.
