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**Third United Nations Conference to Review  
Progress Made in 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, 18–29 June 2018

**Working paper submitted by Switzerland**

**Sustainability of cooperation and assistance relating to the  
management of small arms and light weapons**

**I. Introduction**

1. In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States members of the United Nations have acknowledged that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. The consequences of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons are devastating for sustainable development, as is also recognized in the new agenda for disarmament of the Secretary-General. Considering the 2030 Agenda when working on the small arms issue and vice versa are, therefore, crucial, as arms regulation and development must be approached in an integrated manner.

2. Cooperation and assistance play a direct part in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. This represents an important contribution to Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as combating illicit arms flows has a direct impact on reducing violence and on achieving other Goals. It is, therefore, crucial that all actors involved use the 2030 Agenda as a backdrop to their approach. States delivering cooperation and assistance should ensure that their projects in this field are in line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. Recipient States should ensure that the cooperation and assistance that they receive is part of a larger plan aimed at reaching the Goals. Taking the 2030 Agenda into account in all projects will, therefore, contribute to the sustainability of cooperation and assistance.



## II. General considerations

3. At the Sixth 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, held in 2016, States undertook, among other things, to consider, at the Third Review Conference, ways to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of assistance for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, including financial and technical assistance (see [A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/2](#), para. 120).

4. At the same Biennial Meeting, States also underlined the importance of sustainable outcomes and impacts when designing and implementing cooperation and assistance programmes and, for this purpose, ensuring that such programmes have national ownership and provide for the training of relevant national authorities and the establishment of personnel career structures that retain, sustain and strengthen knowledge and skills in recipient States (*ibid.*, para. 91). They undertook to explore options for building sustainable capacity for the life cycle management of small arms and light weapons stockpiles (normative frameworks, structures and procedures, training, personnel management, financing and infrastructure) (*ibid.*, para. 102).

5. In this regard, Switzerland recognizes the relevance of cooperation and assistance in reaching the objectives of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. While the provision of assistance that is adequate (i.e., meeting local needs) and effective (i.e., target-oriented) requires proper assessment by recipient and donor States, achieving sustainability is a more complex and far-reaching process.

6. The various capabilities that need to be considered when endeavouring to develop a sustainable process of managing small arms and light weapons are laid out in the present working paper.

## III. Underlying elements for sustainability in cooperation and assistance

7. In the context of international cooperation and assistance, Switzerland understands sustainability to be the capacity of a State to perform a set of tasks, the performance of which was acquired through cooperation activities, continuously and at the desired level, without external support. Since the performance at the desired level implies a multitude of capabilities, sustainability is only warranted if the tasks are comprehensively built into the recipient State's system.

8. First and foremost, a legal and normative framework is needed. Such written provisions provide for repeatability and hence ensure security in the implementation of the tasks. Adapting the normative framework to new tasks also ensures that there is no discrepancy between legal requirements and the performance on the ground, thus providing operators with the security necessary to operate. This framework may include legal provisions, directives, instructions and/or standard operating procedures.

9. Also essential are dedicated structures and procedures within relevant services (e.g., border guards, police forces and armed forces) with clearly defined competencies and responsibilities, adequate for the tasks at hand and able to design, implement and, if necessary, adapt standardized procedures.

10. These dedicated structures and procedures should be reflected in the decision-making and management processes, the core process and the support processes, because their absence would invariably lead to the discontinuation of the tasks.

#### **IV. Capabilities to ensure sustainable performance**

11. Independently of the two core elements mentioned above, which each State needs to sovereignly define for itself, a number of capabilities should be anchored in an organization in order to ensure the sustainable performance of specified tasks related to the management of small arms and light weapons.

##### **A. Doctrine**

12. This aspect covers the current mission, vision and guiding principles of an organization. In terms of the management of small arms and light weapons, it involves, among other things, the definition of the likely engagements and orientation of the process towards core tasks, as well as the definition of readiness levels, scenarios and requirements.

13. Having the capability for doctrinal development is essential to orienting an organization towards a specific objective and a specific task. Without this capability, an organization will tend to move away from its objectives.

##### **B. Organization**

14. This feature relates to the capability to establish or develop an organization that is adequate for achieving the mission and vision. It involves, among other things, the definition of the organizational structure and related processes or the description of roles and the delegation of competencies.

15. The capability of a structure to organize, reorganize and transform itself ensures the adequacy of means and objectives and the responsiveness of the system to needs.

##### **C. Training**

16. The performance of tasks related to the management of small arms and light weapons presupposes the availability of personnel adequately trained in their performance. Training alone, however, is barely sufficient to ensure sustainability, which involves the systematic integration of knowledge into the recipient State's training organization. In practice, this may be ensured by integrating trainers or experts into a dedicated training institution and establishing training curricula. In order for pure knowledge to be able to evolve into know-how, that knowledge needs to be managed and developed.

17. The capability to ensure that the training is adequate for the mission, adapted to the organizational set-up and targeted to the available materials and equipment will contribute to perpetuating institutional knowledge.

##### **D. Materials and equipment, including maintenance**

18. The consumption of expendable materials and equipment is the corollary of the performance of a task. Accordingly, ensuring the timely qualitative and quantitative provision and maintenance of equipment is required. Materials should also be

adequate for the specific conditions prevailing in the recipient State (e.g., the availability of spare parts and sufficient operation and maintenance capabilities).

19. The capability to acquire, manage, maintain and dispose of materials and equipment should be mission-oriented, adapted to financial realities and coordinated with the provider of training.

## **E. Personnel**

20. The training of personnel is often considered to be a key factor in cooperation and assistance projects. However, beyond training, personnel management is a capability that is key to ensuring sustainability. On the one hand, the performance of a task requires the quantitative and qualitative allocation of personnel. This relates to the organizational capability mentioned above and to the need to establish dedicated structures. On the other hand, sustainability requires that knowledge loss owing to changes in personnel (e.g., rotation, natural wastage and retirement) be compensated for by proper personnel management.

21. The capability of far-sighted personnel management involves strong coordination with the training capability. This will ensure the preservation and application of know-how over the long term.

## **F. Finances**

22. The management of small arms and light weapons will invariably cost money, hence the need for the proper allocation of financial means. Financial management, however, involves the budgeting not only of the operation of specific tasks but also of the costs related to training, personnel, maintenance and management, among other things. Hence, this capability is directly related to all the other capabilities that have a specific cost associated with them.

## **G. Infrastructure**

23. The last capability relates to the provision of adequate infrastructure to perform a task. This includes the physical locations where operations, storage, maintenance and training, among others, are conducted and all the related network requirements.

24. The provision and development of infrastructure is connected to the financial management capability, among others.

25. The seven capabilities described above are not stand-alone. They are interrelated and influence one another. In addition, the entities in charge of the capabilities need to interact and coordinate with one another.

26. As indicated above, every State has its own historically grown legal system, structure and organization. The purpose of the present working paper, is not to identify how an organization needs to be structured. Rather, it is to point to key capabilities that need to be distributed within an organization in order to ensure the long-term performance of any task.

## **V. Conclusion**

27. In the present working paper, the importance of aiming for sustainability in cooperation and assistance is underlined. It is argued that sustainability can be

achieved if a number of capabilities are successfully anchored in the recipient State's organization.

28. Switzerland does not advocate that these capabilities need to be implemented before cooperation and assistance can occur. Rather, it is proposed that the existence and performance of the capabilities be assessed at the very beginning of a cooperation activity. The establishment of a baseline regarding the capabilities will assist in identifying measures to complement or strengthen them, as appropriate.

29. While donor States may support recipient States in performing the necessary baseline assessments, it is the responsibility of the recipient State to develop national capabilities. Many of the reforms needed to ensure sustainability require administrative adaptations. These reforms can only be successful if they are run by or in close cooperation and with considerable political buy-in from local authorities.

## **VI. Recommendations**

30. Switzerland recommends that the outcome document of the Third Review Conference include the following concepts:

(a) The relevance of the 2030 Agenda should be recognized in the implementation of cooperation and assistance efforts;

(b) Achieving sustainability should be a driving factor in cooperation and assistance;

(c) Sustainability can be fostered by ensuring that recipient States master key capabilities related to doctrine, organization, training, materials and equipment, personnel, finances and infrastructure;

(d) States engaging in cooperation and assistance are encouraged to conduct a baseline assessment of these key capabilities and cooperate to strengthen them;

(e) The strengthening of these key capabilities is more likely to be successful if strong local ownership is provided.

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