

A gendered approach is a central component for sustainable progress in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA).

A gendered approach factors in the needs and capacities of men and women in the formulation of appropriate responses to small arms control. An inclusive approach will help provide fuller ownership of efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms.

We insist on the full and equal participation of women in the small arms process but we also recognise that men and boys need programmes to help them reject armed violence. There is an urgent need to fully address this dimension of small arms control and to provide training and support to local initiatives, many of which are led by women. It is a fact that gender-oriented policy, continuously and rigorously implemented, will maximise all efforts.

Mandates for gender in the PoA

The UN has long endorsed the strategies of gender mainstreaming and gender balance in its pursuit of gender equality. Most recently, UN Security Council Resolution 2117 (2013) calls for further measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in all policy making, planning and implementation processes to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms. It also calls for those planning disarmament initiatives to engage with women and provide for their full access to these programmes.

BMS 5: Gender entry points

Stockpile management

Stockpile management of weapons and ammunition can reduce illicit proliferation through safeguards to help prevent loss and theft.¹

1. Competent female experts should be given the opportunity to participate fully and equally in decision making on location, policy and process on stockpile management..
2. Women often have a unique role in the facilitation of dialogue between government institutions and communities in relation to stockpile sites, and can help to raise public awareness of the dangers of SALW if not adequately accounted for and secured.

¹ ISACS 05.20: <http://www.smallarmsstandards.org/isacs/0520-en.pdf>

International Tracing Instrument

Both in crime and conflict situations, women can play a vital role in tracing efforts.

1. Women's experience and knowledge should be integrated into approaches of customs, police, and intelligence organisations.
2. Women should be trained in identification of weapons so they can actively participate in investigations and tracing efforts.
3. States should create appropriate training materials and resources for all government officials, containing gender-specific best practices on how to conduct and integrate the needs and experiences of women particularly those who have been trafficked.
4. States should incorporate gender-inclusive consultations in information sharing mechanisms to source information from active civil society groups working toward eliminating the illicit trade in SALW.

In providing international assistance and capacity building, States should:

1. Initiate a more systematic approach to the gathering of sex-disaggregated data, thus facilitating more effective actions for combating the illicit trade in SALW.
2. Incorporate the knowledge and experience of different civil society groups, including women's organisations in exchanges and training processes.
3. Incorporate civil society groups, including women's organisations into training programmes and as a resource tool for training and awareness purposes to ensure that women's perspectives as users and victims of illicit SALW are reflected in all training programmes.
4. Allocate financial and technical assistance to civil society groups, in particular women's networks, for peace and disarmament and community reintegration and sensitisation.

States should include gender aspects of small arms and light weapons control, in addition to levels of women's participation in related processes, in their reports on PoA implementation.



A vicious cycle: lack of knowledge and exclusion

Women are largely perceived as less knowledgeable in the field of small arms control. This can also happen at the governmental level where women's ministries may choose to not take part in national security decision-making bodies because of lack of resources and perceived lack of knowledge.

A related challenge is that many times women's issues and gendered concerns are seen as only women's concerns and not something that men can have opinions on, advocate for, or be involved in. Gender should be addressed as a cross-cutting theme throughout programmes and projects with men as well as women championing gender equality.

Action and discourse around small arms control and disarmament serve in specific ways to limit and restrict women's participation. For instance, much of the discourse surrounding small arms control is focused on technical issues such as firearms transfers, firearms ownership, trade, stock management issues, firearms marking, and tracing mechanisms. While these technical issues are very important, focusing on technical issues can overshadow the human aspects and consequences of arms proliferation and armed violence making the issue abstract.

Women's organisations are often active in raising awareness on the impact of armed violence on individuals and communities. Keeping a focus on technical issues can thereby further exclude and sideline women's participation. The technical discourse as well as women's lack of economic empowerment and lack of resources in many situations negatively impacts women's preparedness to engage effectively in security discussions.

Democratising peace and security

Research shows that women are more likely to support strong measures to control access to small arms and actually have, to date, played a major role in initiatives aimed at reducing the availability and misuse of weapons around the world.

Education involving men and women on issues of gender and small arms can help to increase their democratic participation in arms control and disarmament initiatives.

Gender guidelines for the PoA

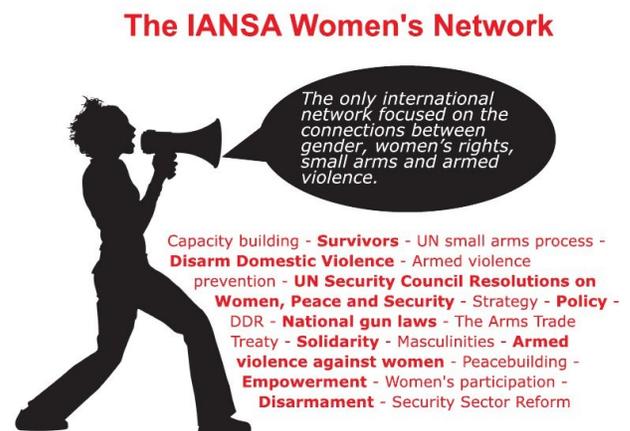
The Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender for the Effective Implementation of the UN PoA (A/CONF.192/2006/RC/CRP.3)² were designed to assist policy makers and field personnel in incorporating gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations in the process of implementation of the PoA.

The Guidelines help practitioners identify concrete ways of mainstreaming gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations, and at all stages, from information gathering and planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in the process of effective implementation of the PoA.

Women's participation in national frameworks

The PoA calls upon States to "Establish or designate, as appropriate, a national point of contact to act as a liaison between States on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action" (II:5). This requires effective inter-agency and civil society communication on the implementation of the PoA. There is an opportunity to involve women and incorporate gender perspectives through the inclusion of government ministries on women and gender and providing them with training on weapons identification, tracing and data collection mechanisms.

An inclusive approach will help in full ownership of all efforts to eradicate the trade in illicit small arms and light weapons. It is a fact that gender-oriented policy, continuously and rigorously implemented, will maximise all efforts.



² The Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender for the Effective Implementation of the UN PoA (A/CONF.192/2006/RC/CRP.3): <http://www.iansa-women.org/node/454>