Statement by
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to the United Nations

First Committee
THEMATIC DEBATE

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The Geneva Process on Small Arms
Making the UN Programme of Action Work

WORKING GROUP ON NEEDS AND RESOURCES - GENEVA
Developing effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them
with resources to facilitate implementation of the UN Programme of Action

New York, 29 October 2007
Mr. President,

In the previous statement by my delegation during the general debate, I made a reference to the working group on needs and resources that meets in Geneva, under the Geneva Process on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The group, coordinated by Colombia, has met several times this year to help develop effective mechanisms for assessing needs and matching them with resources to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We have had the participation of Australia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, UK, USA, the Geneva Forum, the Quaker United Nations Office, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research –UNIDIR–, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The working group has benefited from presentations of UNIDIR on its research in cooperation and assistance in the context of the Programme of Action implementation and from the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on how needs are assessed and matched with resources to advance implementation of that instrument.

Mr. President,

There is a rationale behind the work of the group.

The Programme of Action places strong emphasis on the importance of international cooperation and assistance to its implementation.

However, the Programme of Action does not elaborate on how international cooperation and assistance should be carried out. It offers no guidance on the way in which the needs of implementing States should be assessed and subsequently matched with available resources. Nor does it suggest ways in which additional resources could be mobilised to advance implementation.

The mandate of the working group contains two distinct elements. It refers to helping to develop effective mechanisms for (1) assessing needs and (2) matching them with resources to facilitate implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition, the working group has considered another element: (3) resource mobilisation, understood as the generation of additional resources to advance Programme of Action implementation.

Assessing needs

A fundamental first step in the cooperation and assistance process should involve a comprehensive assessment of the needs of States in relation to implementing the Programme of Action. Since it is States that bear the
primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,\(^1\) each State should take upon itself the primary responsibility for assessing its own needs when it comes to meeting its Programme of Action obligations.

Since a comprehensive assessment of needs requires a significant investment of time and resources, States should be encouraged to seek, and donors to provide, assistance for this phase of the cooperation and assistance process.

**Mobilising resources**

As mentioned above, national plans for implementing Programme of Action commitments should contain a strategy for resource mobilisation. Where possible, the State concerned should invest some of its own resources in the realisation of its plan. Such investment is a powerful signal of the importance attached by a State to meeting its Programme of Action commitments and, as such, can act as a strong incentive for donors also to invest substantially in the realisation of the plan.

Donor countries and organisations should recognise that States that comprehensively assess their own needs with regard to Programme of Action implementation and that invest some of their own resources in the realisation of their national plan, are demonstrating a strong commitment to implementing the Programme of Action and, as such, should be provided with the cooperation and assistance that they need to fully realise their goals.

**Matching needs with resources**

The comprehensive assessment of needs is only the first step in an effective cooperation and assistance process and, as mentioned above, can itself require the provision of assistance. Such needs assessments, embedded in national action plans, can provide a coherent picture of the strategy to be followed by a State in implementing its Programme of Action commitments. To be at all meaningful, however, these needs must be matched with resources in order to be met.

The working group has considered among others, the following options and proposals in this regard and will continue to elaborate on these and other ideas in the future:

- **The role of Biennial meetings of States:** Biennial meetings of States could fulfil, much more than they have to date, the role of a global forum for matching needs with resources. This could be achieved either by dedicating one biennial meeting to the issue of cooperation and

\(^1\) Programme of Action, section I.13.
assistance or, preferably, by making cooperation and assistance a predominant theme of all biennial meetings and by making full use of the opportunities provided by such meetings for formal as well as informal interactions among States seeking assistance and those in a position to provide it.

➢ “Contact Group” on assistance: The working group will also consider further the potential role that could be played by a “contact group,” made up of States and relevant organisations, which would focus exclusively on matching needs with resources in the context of implementing the Programme of Action.

➢ Standing support mechanism: To date, some useful mechanisms to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action have been developed on an ad hoc basis. The working group would like to consider further the utility of developing other such support mechanisms, ad hoc or otherwise, specifically focused on matching needs with resources.

➢ The importance of donor coordination: The importance of good coordination among donors has been a recurring theme in the working group’s deliberations. Coordination among donors is crucial in order to avoid duplication, to prevent good projects from being overlooked, and generally to contribute to an overall strategic approach to cooperation and assistance in the context of the Programme of Action.

One mechanism that the working group has been considering as a means of improving donor coordination is the convening of regional and sub-regional cooperation and assistance meetings, possibly convened by UN regional offices, in order to facilitate the development of multi-stakeholder regional approaches to advancing implementation of the Programme of Action through coordinated assistance and cooperation.

Mr. President,

We believe that the different ideas that have been expressed in the working group can contribute to the process of improving the different mechanisms already in place for matching needs with resources or fulfill the gaps that could exist in assistance and cooperation for the implementation of the Programme of Action. It has also provided an opportunity to present initiatives that can be considered within the process of the United Nations in the issue of small arms and light weapons.

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2 A notable example is the project on “Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms” run by UNDP, UNCDA, UNIDIR and Small Arms Survey. See http://www.unidir.ch/btd/fiche-activite.php?ref_activite=247.