

Statement of the IANSA Women's Network to the Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, 18 July 2008

As participants of the Third BMS on small arms, members of the Women's Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the only international network focused on the connections between gender, women's rights, small arms and armed violence, welcome the interest of those States who highlighted the importance of gender perspectives in the small arms process.

In his message to the Third BMS, the Secretary-General stressed that, "*Despite this progress made, challenges abound [...] because of both conflict and crime, innocent civilians continue to fall victim to those weapons in high numbers.*" We also draw attention to the following paragraph in the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the subject of small arms (S/2008/258):

II.7: Gender approaches are particularly relevant for targeted policy interventions coupled with prevention and response activities to address small arms victims, survivors and perpetrators as well as community leaders, peace negotiators and peacekeepers. Women and girls are often gravely affected by small arms violence, through armed sexual violence, intimidation and coercion, or as surviving partners and heads of households. They can also be agents for change.

The issue of human security should be higher on the agenda, and the IANSA Women's Network, as a member of civil society, is working towards this. In relation to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), we:

1. Call upon States to include, in their national reports on the implementation of the PoA, gender disaggregated data, and information about laws and strategies that address the impact of armed violence on women and girls. *(II. 23)*
2. Appeal to States to include the issue of armed violence against women and girls, in education and public awareness programmes as outlined in the PoA. *(II. 41)*
3. Request that States support academics, think tanks and civil society to provide evidence based research and social analysis of the impacts of gun related violence on women and girls. *(III. 5)*
4. Encourage all States to develop policies, strategies and legislation to prevent armed violence, including armed domestic violence, and protect victims, particularly women and girls. This is an area well suited to international cooperation. *(III. 6)*
5. Urge States to fully meet existing international commitments relating to violence against women, including armed domestic violence, such as UN Security Resolutions 1325, and 1820.