



Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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**Review of the implementation of the United Nations
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
and the Protocols thereto: Protocol against the Illicit
Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their
Parts and Components and Ammunition**

Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote and support the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Report of the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with resolution 7/2 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, entitled “Importance of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”. In that resolution the Conference recalled that the Organized Crime Convention and in particular the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition were among the principal global legal instruments to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

2. In the same resolution, the Conference noted with appreciation the activities carried out by the Global Firearms Programme and requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to continue to assist requesting States in their

* CTOC/COP/2016/1.



efforts to ratify and implement the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol, and to support the Working Group on Firearms in the performance of its functions.

3. Also in that resolution, the Conference took note with appreciation of the study of the transnational nature of and routes used in trafficking in firearms carried out by UNODC in accordance with the mandate given in Conference resolutions 5/4 and 6/2, and requested UNODC to continue gathering information from States parties on illicit trafficking in firearms on a regular basis. The Conference also directed the Working Group on Firearms to consider the outcomes of the study, with a view to making recommendations to the Conference at its eighth session on the future of the study, including on the question of whether it should be repeated and/or updated and improved upon.

4. The Firearms Protocol has a total of 114 States parties. Since the seventh session of the Conference, the following four States have acceded to the Protocol: Barbados (2014), Denmark (2015), Republic of Korea (2015) and Sierra Leone (2014). Although the number of accessions to the Firearms Protocol has been increasing, it is still below the number of accessions to the Convention and the other Protocols. As at the time of writing, no accessions have been recorded for 2016.

5. The present report seeks to inform the Conference about the activities of UNODC in promoting and supporting the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol, covering the period from July 2014 to June 2016. Key achievements include the following:

(a) Substantive services were provided for the third and fourth meetings of the Working Group on Firearms, in 2015 and 2016;

(b) More than 30 legislative assistance activities were conducted or contributed to;

(c) Twelve countries benefited from direct legislative assistance at the national level;

(d) Four new laws were adopted and five draft laws were developed at the national level, with UNODC support;

(e) At least nine countries received technical advice or support in the areas of marking, record-keeping, collection, management and destruction of firearms;

(f) More than 600 practitioners, government officials and civil society representatives from over 36 countries participated in approximately 50 capacity-building and technical assistance activities;

(g) Two issue papers were published and several tools were revised and updated;

(h) The *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* was developed with data from 50 Member States.

II. Addressing illicit firearms trafficking and its links to terrorism, organized crime and other serious forms of crime

6. The Conference of the Parties has on more than one occasion expressed concern at the increased levels of harm and violence that transnational organized criminal groups generate in some regions as a result of the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and has noted that reducing such illicit manufacturing and trafficking is one of the major components of the efforts to reduce the violence that accompanies the activities of transnational organized criminal groups.

7. Illicit firearms trafficking is a global and transnational threat and is often linked to other forms of crime. During crises in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali, for example, firearms have proliferated across borders and among communities. Countries in South and Central America continue to experience high rates of homicide committed with firearms.

8. The *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015: A Study on the Transnational Nature of and Routes and Modus Operandi Used in Trafficking in Firearms*, developed in close collaboration with approximately 50 States, showed that a large proportion of the illicit firearms seized in reporting States were linked to the commission of other crimes, such as drug trafficking, smuggling, participation in an organized criminal group or violent crimes, or to administrative violations, such as carrying a firearm without a licence, rather than directly linked to illicit trafficking. Firearms are trafficked through a variety of means and modi operandi, and their trafficking is still a largely underreported activity.

9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the relationship between illicit trafficking in firearms and organized crime, and the negative impact of both on development. In particular, target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls upon States to significantly reduce, by 2030, illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime, thus providing a framework for building upon and supporting ongoing efforts to curb these crimes and for measuring progress made in this field.

10. Addressing the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms requires concerted action at the national, regional and international levels, and must start with adequate domestic capabilities. To achieve target 16.4, States should adopt comprehensive measures to enhance security controls over firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, reduce the risks of their illicit manufacturing, diversion and trafficking, and strengthen criminal justice responses to detect, investigate and prosecute those offences. As acknowledged by the Conference in its resolution 7/2, the Organized Crime Convention and the Firearms Protocol are among the principal global international legal instruments to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. This global framework is complemented by the Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force on 24 December 2014.¹

¹ See General Assembly resolution 67/234 B.

III. Activities to assist States in the implementation of the Protocol

11. Through the Global Firearms Programme, UNODC has promoted and supported the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol, delivered technical assistance, promoted international cooperation and the exchange of good practices among practitioners, and enhanced national and international data collection, research and analysis on firearms and their illicit trafficking.

12. The Global Firearms Programme is based on five pillars: (a) support for intergovernmental processes related to firearms; (b) awareness-raising, legislative assistance and the development of tools to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol; (c) technical support for the implementation of preventive control measures under the Protocol; (d) criminal justice responses and international cooperation for enhanced investigation and prosecution of firearms-related criminality; and (e) data collection and analysis on illicit firearms flows.

13. During the reporting period, UNODC provided direct assistance to 28 countries from Latin America, North and West Africa, the Sahel region, Asia and Europe, through activities to increase knowledge and raise awareness, as well as targeted legislative and technical assistance. It reached some 36 countries through regional activities.

A. Servicing intergovernmental bodies and processes related to firearms

1. Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Working Groups

14. UNODC substantively supported the meetings of the Working Group on Firearms held in Vienna on 9 June 2015 and on 18 and 19 May 2016. For the meeting in 2015, a report on UNODC activities was prepared (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2015/2) and the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* and its supplementary *Country Fact Sheets* were circulated. For the meeting in 2016, a technical background paper was prepared to support discussions held under the three substantive agenda items (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2016/2).

Working Group on Firearms

15. At its meeting in June 2015, the Working Group focused on the study on firearms and adopted a number of recommendations regarding its future. It welcomed the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* and reaffirmed the mandate of UNODC to continue to collect and analyse information and data on trafficking in firearms. It also recommended that the Conference consider requesting UNODC to produce a study every two years, in cooperation with Member States, on the dimension, patterns and flows of trafficking and to share and disseminate its findings, best practices and lessons learned (see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2015/3).

16. At its meeting in May 2016, the Working Group discussed three substantive agenda items. Several recommendations were adopted, including on the Sustainable Development Goals and their links to the Firearms Protocol; good practices in the

areas of marking, record-keeping and tracing; the relevance of data collection and analysis; measures to enhance international cooperation and information exchange; technical assistance needs; and the future work of the Working Group (see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2016/3).

17. Also at that meeting, the Working Group invited States to continue to make use of the Group to further promote the exchange of good practices and experiences and recommended that the Conference consider all the recommendations adopted by the Working Group at its meetings held in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016, to be collated by the Secretariat and grouped into clusters, in line with the themes of the Protocol, and to be presented to the Conference in a conference room paper.

2. Support for other intergovernmental bodies

18. UNODC provided input to General Assembly and Security Council reports on issues relating to firearms, such as the two-yearly report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289). UNODC also contributed to the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council addressing the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, pursuant to Council resolution 2195 (2014) (S/2015/366), as well as to the Secretary-General's report to 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 (to be issued as A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/1).

19. UNODC contributed to and participated in various other meetings, including the meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Inter-American Convention on Firearms against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, held in Washington, D.C., from 4 to 8 May 2015; the regular meetings of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) working group on firearms, held in Brasilia in November 2014, in Buenos Aires in June 2015 and in Asunción in November 2015; the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 24 to 29 August 2015; and 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 New York from 6 to 10 June 2016.

B. Technical assistance

1. Increasing knowledge and raising awareness

20. UNODC continued to engage in a number of activities to increase knowledge and raise awareness regarding the Firearms Protocol and UNODC work:

(a) A side event was held at the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in Doha from 12 to 19 April 2015, co-organized by UNODC and the Italian National Association of Manufacturers of Sporting and Civilian Firearms and Ammunition and co-sponsored by the Government of Italy, on private-public partnership in the prevention and control of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms;

(b) Through the Global Firearms Programme and the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, UNODC contributed to an Arrria-formula meeting of the Security Council, initiated by Angola and Lithuania, on the impact of illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons on poaching in Africa, held on 30 November 2015 (see A/70/614-S/2015/953);

(c) On the margins of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, in June 2016, UNODC participated in a side event organized by Germany and the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, as co-chairs of the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures, on the topic “Small arms as a core development goal: the implications of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

21. UNODC has contributed to several seminars and meetings organized by Member States or regional organizations, including the following: a seminar on the theme “Preventing and tackling illicit trafficking in conventional arms in Africa”, held in Paris on 2 and 3 October 2014; the first Union of South American Nations regional meeting on firearms, held in Lima from 3 to 5 June 2015; a ministerial meeting on citizen security policies, held in Quito on 20 and 21 October 2015; a think-tank meeting organized by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, held in March 2016; and the 13th General Assembly meeting of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, held in Asunción from 3 to 5 November 2014.

22. Other activities conducted by UNODC focused on the synergies between the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol, for instance: (a) the informal consultation meeting in Vienna on 20 and 21 April 2015 in preparation for the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty; (b) the fifth meeting of the informal Expert Group on Arms Trade Treaty Implementation, co-organized by the Government of Ghana and Saferworld; (c) an expert meeting on challenges and opportunities relating to Arms Trade Treaty implementation in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) subregion, co-organized by the ECOWAS Commission and Saferworld, in November 2015; and (d) regional meetings in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, and San José on synergies between international arms control instruments (see para. 65 below).

23. In January 2016, UNODC also participated in a two-day seminar on illicit trafficking of firearms in the Danube region, jointly organized by the Slovenian Centre for European Perspective and the Ministry of Interior of Slovenia.

Priority area for further action

24. In order to continue promoting ratification of the Firearms Protocol, UNODC intends to raise greater awareness of the Protocol among non-parties and regions with low ratification rates through regional pre-ratification support workshops, and is seeking funds to support this initiative.

2. Legislative assistance

25. UNODC continued to provide Member States with tailor-made, specialized legislative assistance to help in the development of effective national legislation in line with the Firearms Protocol, contributing to long-lasting changes and increased inter-institutional coordination.

26. During the reporting period, UNODC conducted more than 20 legislative assistance activities in over 10 countries, carrying out assessments of legislative needs, supporting the drafting of new legislation to operationalize the Protocol and training legal drafters. In 2015, eight legislative assessment reports were concluded and submitted to the national authorities of Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo.

27. Tailored assistance was provided to Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mauritania, the Niger and Togo. The UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan organized a legislative workshop for national authorities and legal experts from Afghanistan to assess the compliance of the draft criminal code with the provisions of the Organized Crime Convention and the Firearms Protocol, held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2016. A similar meeting was held in the Niger in March 2016 to share the findings of the legislative assessment report with national legislators and authorities and agree on a course of action for the development of a new law.

28. UNODC has also supported the establishment of drafting committees, to enhance national ownership of and participation in the process. During the reporting period, UNODC also continued to work with legal drafting committees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Togo. In Chad and the Niger, legislative drafting workshops are planned for 2016.

29. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, following the initial support leading to the adoption of a national firearms law in September 2013, UNODC continued to support the country in its efforts to implement the new law (Law No. 400), advocating and providing legislative advice for an adequate regulatory framework, which the Government adopted in November 2014. Further legislative advice was provided with regard to the review of the firearms regulations and the development of a national arms-collection campaign.

30. UNODC actively supported the legal drafting committee in Senegal, whose work culminated in the adoption of a draft law and its implementing regulation. The drafts were presented and validated by national authorities during a high-level stakeholder meeting held in Saly Portudal, Senegal, in September 2014. The draft law was the result of a broad-based, inclusive and participatory process that included civil society and benefited from strong national ownership; its discussion by Parliament is pending.

31. During the reporting period, the following countries passed new legislation with UNODC support: Argentina reformed the institutional structure of the National Arms Registry (law 26.702); Bolivia (Plurinational State of) adopted by decree the regulation of Law 400/2013; and Uruguay introduced the criminal offences of internal and international trafficking in firearms.

Priority area for further action

32. Supporting legislative review and reform processes will continue to be a core activity of the Global Firearms Programme.

3. Development of tools

33. Several tools and publications have been adapted or developed by UNODC to provide practical guidance to States and support for the delivery of quality technical

assistance. The *Model Law against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition* is of particular importance, and its review, translation and publication in all official United Nations languages were completed during the reporting period.

34. In 2015, UNODC developed an issue paper entitled “The Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty: divergence or complementarity?” and another entitled “Comparative analysis of global instruments on firearms and other conventional arms: synergies for implementation”, prepared with the support of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. Both papers are available in English at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/tools-and-publications.html, and will soon be available in French and Spanish as well.

35. The UNODC comprehensive firearms training curriculum was completed during the reporting period, and is being tailored to better reflect the methodology used for adult learners. UNODC is working with its global e-learning programme to transform the curriculum into online modules.

36. In 2015, UNODC started to revise the *Legislative Guide for the Implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, and organized a meeting of experts in Vienna in November 2015 to support that work.

37. The UNODC online directory of competent national authorities for the Organized Crime Convention is currently being revised. In its new version, the directory will contain information on the agencies and services involved in informal cooperation and the exchange of relevant information in line with article 12 of the Firearms Protocol and on the national bodies or single points of contact designated under article 13, paragraph 2, of the Protocol.

Priority area for further action

38. UNODC is seeking funds to translate and disseminate relevant tools in all six official United Nations languages, in particular the training curriculum, the two issue papers and the e-learning modules.

4. Technical support and capacity-building for implementation of preventive control measures under the Protocol

39. During the reporting period, the Global Firearms Programme continued to provide technical support for marking and recording in eight countries, and for the collection and disposal of firearms in five countries.

(a) Marking and keeping records of firearms

40. UNODC recently purchased one marking machine for Burkina Faso and one for Mali, in addition to the nine purchased in 2014, of which one was for Benin, two for Burkina Faso, one for Mali, two for the Niger and three for Senegal. It also reinforced national marking practices in those five countries and in Togo through national and regional training workshops delivered in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the National Commission of Côte d'Ivoire. National training courses were held in Burkina Faso

and the Niger in September 2014, in Mali and Senegal in October 2014 and in Benin in March 2015, targeting approximately 100 practitioners. Furthermore, a subregional refresher course was held in Benin in January 2016 for Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. In March 2016, UNODC conducted a regional meeting in Mali, with ECOWAS, to evaluate ongoing efforts and lessons learned on the marking, registration and tracing of small arms and light weapons in the region.

41. As a result of this assistance, several countries have started to mark and record firearms in line with international best practices. In Burkina Faso, the police reported having marked 2,500 firearms during 2015. Mali has started to make active use of the donated machines and has reported the marking of 800 firearms in the course of 2015.

Priority area for further action

42. Support for marking and record-keeping will remain a priority for most countries in the region.

(b) National arms registries

43. Effective and comprehensive arms registries represent the backbone of the international firearms security and tracing regime. Effective records are required to locate firearms and monitor their movements. Without such records, States cannot adequately trace firearms that have been seized, found or collected. A lack of adequate records on seized firearms leads to additional challenges in the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms.

44. UNODC has provided technical advice on the relevance of comprehensive record-keeping systems, and on measures to strengthen and/or develop effective and comprehensive national registries of arms, including seized ones, through national and regional training activities and meetings, as well as through bilateral advice, upon request.

Priority area for further action

45. Sustained support to improve national arms registries and strengthen the overall capacity of Member States will remain a priority.

(c) Physical security of storage facilities for seized and collected firearms

46. Many project countries face challenges in properly storing and managing seized and confiscated firearms, including theft and loss from storage facilities, and in relation to ensuring the chain of continuity that is required in order to produce valid evidence in court. Effective and secure management and storage of seized firearms are a major priority for many countries, and go hand in hand with effective and comprehensive record-keeping systems.

47. UNODC has continued to support selected countries in enhancing the security of storage rooms for seized firearms. Assessment missions were conducted in Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal to identify suitable locations for storage facilities and to develop a costed operational plan for future work. In Senegal, a single centralized facility was selected, and plans for its reconstruction and

refurbishment were approved by both the National Commission and UNODC. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, sites for storage have been identified and individual plans for their refurbishment are being developed.

Priority area for further action

48. Support in relation to the physical security of stocks will continue to focus primarily on seized firearms, with due consideration for supporting record-keeping structures.

(d) Collection, management and disposal of firearms

49. UNODC has continued to provide policy advice and technical support to several countries in the collection and disposal of firearms. UNODC staff travelled to La Paz in March 2015 to provide technical advice on the development of a collection campaign; additional support was provided during a seminar organized by civil society organizations in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In Ecuador, advice was provided to the Government for the design and implementation of a national voluntary arms collection campaign, based on lessons learned from the region and farther abroad, and taking national specificities into account. A follow-up project proposal has been developed, for which donor support is being sought.

50. In Senegal, UNODC is working with the National Commission and civil society organizations to support the national arms collection campaign that was launched by the Government in 2015. UNODC is working with civil society organizations on the development of advocacy material and a public service announcement to support the campaign. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, work has started on the development of an action plan for the campaign, including with the collaboration of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in the Niger.

51. In February 2016, UNODC visited Burkina Faso and the Niger to discuss their national action plans for the marking, collection, storage and final disposal of arms. Following expert advice, several destruction methods were evaluated and good practices discussed, including at a one-day workshop in Senegal.

Priority area for further action

52. UNODC will continue to support requesting countries and is seeking financial support to provide the required hardware and material support for the conduct of campaigns.

5. Strengthening criminal justice responses to firearms-related criminality

53. Strengthening criminal justice responses to firearms trafficking and its links to organized and other forms of crime, including terrorist activities, is a major pillar of UNODC work.

54. During the reporting period, UNODC continued offering the specialized training course on the investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking and its links to organized crime. UNODC also delivered courses to 280 practitioners directly involved in firearms control and organized criminal matters from eight countries, as follows: in Ouagadougou, in July 2014; in Asunción, in

July 2014; in Porto-Novo, in July 2014; in Buenos Aires, in August 2014; in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, in September 2014, for border officials from Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay; and in Santiago de Chile, in November 2014.

55. UNODC also contributed to other training courses, including a national course organized by the University of the Defence Force of Ecuador for 80 military staff, in June 2015; and a two-day training session for 54 parliamentarians, judges and prosecutors, organized in collaboration with the Argentine Federal Prosecution Service, National Arms Registry, on the changes in investigative functions resulting from the new firearms law, also in June 2015.

56. UNODC also organized five national training courses and two regional refresher courses on marking and record-keeping for six countries benefiting from new machines (see para. 40 above).

57. Two specialized courses on civil society participation, cooperation and oversight in firearms control were developed and pilot-tested in Togo, as a subregional training event in February 2015, and in Uruguay in March 2015, for a total of 40 civil society representatives from 11 countries.

58. UNODC organized a five-day training-of-trainers course in Vienna in May 2016, for the UNODC training team and for selected expert practitioners from Burkina Faso, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and the Niger, to revise and streamline the existing UNODC training courses and adapt them to adult learning needs.

59. In June 2016, UNODC contributed to the advanced training on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, jointly organized by the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) secretariat and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), for law enforcement officials from six OSCE countries (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

Priority area for further action

60. Training and capacity-building remain priorities for many requesting countries. UNODC intends to reinforce this component of its programme to better respond to their requests.

6. Promoting international cooperation and information exchange

61. International cooperation in criminal matters is a fundamental part of the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms, including the regular sharing of information and of good practices among practitioners, which is explicitly encouraged in article 12 of the Protocol. At its meeting in May 2016, the Working Group on Firearms requested UNODC to promote and encourage international cooperation in criminal matters, and to investigate and prosecute firearms trafficking and related crimes, through regional and cross-regional workshops, including for countries that are on relevant trafficking routes (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2016/3, recommendation 38).

62. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to foster regional and international cooperation by various means, targeting over 130 practitioners from 20 countries, through the activities described below.

63. UNODC organized a regional workshop on international cooperation, held in Ouagadougou in July 2014, with 25 participants from 12 countries in West Africa and the Sahel region.² A second workshop was held in Quito in December 2014, targeting firearms control authorities, police, prosecutors, customs officers and the foreign services of nine countries in South America,³ with a total of 55 participants.

64. A cross-regional meeting between South American and Sahel-Saharan countries for 40 practitioners from firearms control authorities and criminal justice offices from 19 countries was held in Vienna in March 2015, jointly supported by the European Union and the Sahel programme.⁴ The aim of the meeting was to foster dialogue and cooperation among practitioners from widely separated regions.

65. UNODC organized two regional meetings on the topic “Synergies between international arms control instruments” in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, in September 2015 and in San José in October 2015, for over 80 participants from 26 countries in West Africa, the Sahel and Latin America. The first meeting targeted 30 participants from 10 ECOWAS countries, plus Chad and Mauritania, as well as several partner organizations (ECOWAS, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Mine Action Service, International Committee of the Red Cross and INTERPOL). The second meeting involved 51 participants from 16 countries in Latin America,⁵ the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the civil society organization Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano.

(a) Data collection and analysis of illicit firearms flows

66. In 2015, UNODC concluded its study on the transnational nature of, and routes and modi operandi used in, firearms trafficking, mandated by Conference resolutions 5/4 and 6/2. The *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* was developed in close cooperation with Member States, based on information on seized firearms. As the study confirms, the largest flows of illicitly trafficked firearms are usually the result of many small incidents rather than of a few larger ones. The collection of data and subsequent analysis is the only reliable way of establishing the patterns and trends of firearms being trafficked in and out of States, across regions and around the globe.

67. The Working Group on Firearms welcomed the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, reaffirmed the mandate given to UNODC to continue to collect and analyse information and data on trafficking in firearms, and recommended that the

² Experts came from Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, representing the gendarmerie, ministries of interior, ministries of justice, the prosecutor general’s office, the judiciary and national commissions on small arms and light weapons.

³ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

⁴ Argentina, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Togo and Uruguay.

⁵ Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Conference consider requesting UNODC to produce a biennial study on the dimension, patterns and flows of trafficking, in cooperation with Member States, and to share and disseminate its findings, best practices and lessons learned. The Working Group also recognized the existence of challenges in some countries with regard to the systematic collection and analysis of firearms trafficking data, and emphasized the need to strengthen technical assistance to help Member States to overcome these challenges (see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2015/3).

(b) Relationship between the study on firearms and target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

68. Under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the aim is to significantly reduce by 2030 illicit financial and arms flows. This target has increased the relevance of the *UNODC Study on Firearms* and helped to shape the Office's mandate to continue to collect and analyse firearms data. In fact, the proposed indicator for this target, "proportion of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments", is complementary to the study, and further supports UNODC work.

69. UNODC has a well-established data-collection mechanism and a leading role in statistical analysis in areas such as drug seizures, crime, trafficking in persons and wildlife trafficking. The *UNODC Study on Firearms* builds on these bases and provides a good starting point for shaping a coherent and systematic data-collection mechanism on firearms, to support and complement the Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Cooperation within the United Nations and with other international and regional organizations

1. Cooperation within the United Nations

70. UNODC has continued to contribute to the work of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), the system-wide coordination platform established by the Secretary-General to promote the exchange of information and coordination on ongoing initiatives, and to support the Organization in "delivering as one" on the issue of small arms. Currently, CASA comprises 23 United Nations entities that coordinate and cooperate within the framework of their respective mandates.

2. Cooperation with other international and regional organizations

71. In 2016, INTERPOL and UNODC signed a comprehensive cooperation agreement, including for capacity-building in the tracing, investigation and prosecution of illicit trafficking and related crimes, the enhancement of national and international registries, support for enhanced interaction between firearms control and criminal justice communities, and exchanges of information. The INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System contributed to the development of two training modules and participated in several training courses organized by UNODC.

72. UNODC has had regular contact with the European Union, in particular with its Firearms Task Force, to address the need to strengthen legislative frameworks on firearms, enhance national and international data collection and analysis of illicit trafficking flows, and reinforce the criminal justice response to detect and prosecute illicit firearms trafficking and its links to organized crime and terrorism.

73. Following the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between UNODC and OSCE two years ago, the two organizations renewed, in early 2016 their commitment to working together. UNODC contributed to several meetings organized by OSCE, including a joint OSCE/INTERPOL training event on tracing for six Central Asian countries.

74. In Africa, UNODC continued to cooperate with various regional organizations. Cooperation with the African Union has progressed. In September 2015, UNODC participated in a first meeting jointly organized by the African Union and Germany to promote cooperation and coordination for the physical security of small arms and stockpile management in the Sahel region. Follow-up meetings were held in November 2015 in Addis Ababa and in June 2016 in New York. The African Union and UNODC agreed to enhance their cooperation in several areas, including legislative assistance and operational cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking and related crimes. Cooperation with ECOWAS has evolved with the implementation of the Global Firearms Programme in West Africa. ECOWAS actively participated in a regional meeting held in September 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and co-organized a regional meeting with UNODC on marking practices, held in Mali in March 2016. UNODC has also cooperated with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States in the delivery of software for the marking machines that they purchased in close coordination with each other for several countries in the region.

75. In the Americas, UNODC has maintained regular contacts with several organizations. It participated in the tenth meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, held in Washington, D.C., from 4 to 8 May 2015. Cooperation with the Union of South American Nations started in December 2014, with the participation of the latter in the UNODC regional meeting held in Quito, and continued throughout 2015. In Lima in June 2015, UNODC participated in the first Union of South American Nations regional meeting on arms control and civilian use of explosives, organized by the Government of Peru. In Quito in October 2015, UNODC participated as a panellist at a ministerial meeting on the topic "Citizen security policies". In March 2016, the Secretary-General of the Union of South American Nations and the Executive Director of UNODC met to discuss areas of mutual interest, including the possibility of concluding a joint cooperation agreement in the near future. UNODC has also continued its regular cooperation with regional partners, such as the MERCOSUR working group on firearms.

3. Cooperation with civil society and the private sector

76. Participation and cooperation with civil society is an integral element of the Global Firearms Programme. UNODC has actively engaged civil society organizations in respect of various activities: legislative development, training

activities, the development of a training course on civil society participation and oversight, and collaboration in advocacy.

77. Examples of the involvement of non-governmental organizations during the reporting period include the development in Senegal of advocacy materials and a public service announcement for the arms collection campaign. UNODC also cooperated with the Brazilian non-governmental organization Viva Rio on the development of specific modules of the firearms training curriculum, and on the design and delivery of a specialized training course for civil society organizations, in Togo and Uruguay in the first quarter of 2015.

78. UNODC has also maintained an open dialogue with the private sector, reinforced through the holding of two joint side events during intergovernmental meetings in 2014 and 2015 to explore the meaning and implications of article 13 of the Protocol, which calls for cooperation between States parties and the private sector to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.

Priority area for further action

79. Cooperation with and involvement of civil society organizations will be continued.

IV. Conclusions

80. The illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, and their links to organized crime, terrorism and other serious crimes, remain a pressing problem in many countries and regions.

81. The Global Firearms Programme has continued to promote the Firearms Protocol and to assist Member States in its implementation, building on five major pillars: legislation; technical support; criminal justice response; international cooperation; and data collection and analysis. The Programme is committed to continuing its efforts to work collaboratively with Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and private industry in this common endeavour.

82. However, sustainable and predictable funds are required in order to ensure the continuation of the activities of the Global Firearms Programme, and to allow it to respond to technical assistance requests from the various countries and regions.