

## Third 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 aspect.

The third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Program of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects was held on July from 14-18, 2008 in New York.

The 136 countries around the world participated in the meeting. After five days of comprehensive meeting, 134 states voted for the agreement of Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms. No state voted against it. Iran and Zimbabwe abstained

The agreement provides guidance on several key areas of small arms control, including arms brokering legislation, the marking and tracing of firearms, and the management of arsenals.

Rebecca Peters, director of global network IANSA<sup>1</sup> said that ‘Today’s agreement is a significant step forward for the international effort to tackle the illicit gun trade. Gun violence is a global problem that can only be tackled if all countries work together, with common guidelines across the world.’

Key aspects of small arms control covered in the agreement include:

- The marking of firearms at the point of manufacture to help trace their destiny and identify points of diversion from the legal to the illicit trade
- Recommendations on the management of state arsenals. Thousands of people have died in explosions at arms depots since 2001 due to poor management and regulation of stockpiles
- Recommendations on legislation on arms brokering. Only 40 countries have passed laws on arms brokering, meaning that unscrupulous dealers simply operate from territories without legislation.

IPJ Nepal Project partner and IANSA member, Shobha Shrestha of South Asia Partnership Nepal (SAP-Nepal) did a presentation on “**Civil Society and the Geneva Declaration Process**”.

Campaigners welcomed the resurrection of the UN small arms process today, as states strengthened their commitment to work together to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

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<sup>1</sup> IANSA is a of more than 800 civil society organisations including human rights activists, democracy campaigners, development organisations, public health and humanitarian agencies, and victim support groups in 120 countries. Its members work for controls on the international arms trade and for laws to make people safer from gun violence. For more information see [www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)