Statement of the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council (DSAAC) to the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
June 19, 2014

Thank you, Mister Chairman. I'm Thomas Moore, standing in for Mr. Mark Westrom, President of the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council, the DSAAC. We represent US-based manufacturers of small arms for the military and law enforcement markets. We have participated in the PoA since 2006 as an indispensable technical resource.

Like everyone else in this hall, manufacturers abhor the criminal misuse of firearms to inflict pain and suffering, and we support common-sense steps to end the illicit traffic in small arms. However, we caution against easy technological "fixes" to solve the problem of gun violence.

For example, the micro-stamping of firing pins proposed under the International Tracing Instrument can be circumvented so easily that its value as a law-enforcement measure is nearly non-existent. Another proposal is Smart Gun technology, which disables the firearm unless it's handled by the authorized user. But to date, Smart Gun systems pose significant challenges to reliability--the most important feature of all. Military and law enforcement personnel must know their guns will function reliably in life-threatening encounters. This is why the US Fraternal Order of Police, the world's largest organization of rank-and-file law enforcement officers, has rejected mandating of firearms equipped with such devices.

Our industry is not opposed to new technology per se. Our companies spend millions on Research and Development. We are pioneers in technological innovation, and we will continue the search for safer means of self-defense. We have to, to remain in business. In serving the military and law enforcement markets, we also serve many of the governments represented in this room. In this role we have a responsibility to provide you with our best technical advice. The call for advanced and safer firearm technologies is commendable, but it should be expressed as a general goal rather than enumerate specific -- and premature -- solutions.

We urge Delegates to heed the counsel of industry in the final outcome document. Otherwise, the credibility of the PoA process will be called into question. In our zeal to end gun violence against the innocent, let us not jeopardize those who safeguard the innocent by rendering the tools of their trade impractical and unreliable. This will not solve the problems we seek to address, only make them worse.

Thank you.

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