Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade of Action for the SDGs
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Photos by: AndriiKoval / Shutterstock.com
A metal silhouette of a woman with a knife, dotted with bullet holes, on display in Kiev, Ukraine, as part of an installation called “The War is Nearby,” by Oles Kromplyas
Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade of Action for the SDGs

Accelerating Action for Global Violence Reduction
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<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>Arms Trade Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AWLN</td>
<td>African Women Leaders Network</td>
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<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>The Caribbean Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender based violence</td>
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<td>GENSAC</td>
<td>Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>IANSA</td>
<td>International Action Network on Small Arms</td>
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<td>ICAN</td>
<td>International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons</td>
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<td>IPV</td>
<td>Intimate partner violence</td>
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<td>ITI</td>
<td>International Tracing Instrument</td>
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<td>PoA</td>
<td>UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects</td>
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<td>PSSM</td>
<td>Physical Security and Stockpile Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECSA</td>
<td>Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States</td>
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<tr>
<td>SALW</td>
<td>Small arms and light weapons</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEESAC</td>
<td>South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDIR</td>
<td>United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNLIREC</td>
<td>United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNODA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRCPD</td>
<td>United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNREC</td>
<td>United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAANSA</td>
<td>West African Action Network on Small Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANEP</td>
<td>West Africa Network for Peacebuilding</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women's International League for Peace and Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPS</td>
<td>Women, Peace and Security</td>
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# Glossary of key terms

While there are no universally accepted definitions of gender or its derivative terms, clear working definitions do exist. The following definitions are based on the UN training module on small arms, MOSAIC 01.20: Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for males and females. Gender is context- and time-specific and is changeable. Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as male and female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender responsive</td>
<td>Policies, programs or activities that are non-discriminatory with regard to sex, equally benefit women and men, and aim at correcting gender imbalances and inequalities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>A state of affairs in which women and men have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities to access and control socially valued goods and resources and enjoy the same status within a society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-based violence</td>
<td>A general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between genders, within the context of a specific society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women</td>
<td>Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small arm</td>
<td>Any man-portable lethal weapon designed for individual use that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, including, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns, as well as their parts, components, and ammunition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light weapon</td>
<td>Any man-portable lethal weapon designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew (although some may be carried and used by a single person) that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender responsive small arms control</td>
<td>Gender responsive small arms control means that all policies, programs or activities at every stage of a small arms control initiative are non-discriminatory with regard to sex, equally benefit women and men, and aim at correcting gender imbalances and inequalities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender responsive small arms control in the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs

Promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development is one of the most ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda and an aspect that is deeply intertwined with all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing the violence caused by small arms, light weapons and their ammunition will be critical in meeting these global commitments to reduce violence by 2030. Effective and practical responses must begin with evidence based strategies that address the way that gender shapes both the causes and consequences of gun violence.

The need for more effective small arms control is already at the core of sustainable development, as set down in measurable targets for tackling their illicit use and trafficking within SDG16.4. Yet efforts to curb global gun violence will only succeed if practical approaches to implementation fully integrate the connections between women’s empowerment, gender equality and violence reduction at the heart of SDG5 and SDG16, as well as the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Putting the different realities of violence that men, women, girls and boys face at the heart of regional small arms and light weapons control makes the measures we take more efficient and more just.

Germany’s support for small arms control in the context of the 2030 Agenda has prioritized the cross-cutting linkages between peace, justice and inclusion under SDG16 as well as gender equality and women’s empowerment under SDG5. To fulfill our responsibility as an elected member of the UN Security Council in 2019/20, Germany’s support aims at turning these linkages into practical actions and visible progress by encouraging women’s representation and meaningful participation in peace processes, and gender mainstreaming in regional small arms control initiatives. In a joint initiative with France, Germany supported partners in the Western Balkans to develop a comprehensive roadmap that has made a gender perspective and ensuring the meaningful participation of women a cross-cutting issue at all levels.

In 2019, Germany partnered with the Pathfinders to accelerate action on violence reduction and seek practical ways of doing so through gender responsive small arms control. The launch of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC), together with the African Women Leaders Network marks a first milestone in the context of the Pathfinder’s Grand Challenge on SDG16.1: Preventing Violence and Building More Peaceful Societies. GENSAC will take forward the challenge of fostering sustained dialogue on violence reduction between disarmament and gender experts with the goal of bottom-up learning, top-down standard-setting and cross-regional experience sharing in gender responsive small arms control.
The development of this Action Paper on Gender Responsive Small Arms Control is a further step towards gender mainstreaming in the disarmament field, thus contributing to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda ahead of the 20-year anniversary of Resolution 1325 in October 2020.

The seven strategies outlined in this Action Paper set an agenda for innovative discussions and chart a course for action to reduce gun violence through gender responsive small arms control. The United Nations Secretary General called on all States to accelerate implementation of the SDGs in the 2020s to make the ten years ahead of us a Decade of Action. The Action Paper on Gender Responsive Small Arms Control is both a response to this call and a pledge of good faith for future action that can reduce violence and promote equality.

Susanne Baumann
Ambassador, Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control and Director-General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control, German Federal Foreign Office
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for steep reductions in global violence, yet the world is not on track to meet this target. On current trajectories, projections suggest that levels of lethal violence will increase by 2030, costing 660,000 lives a year.

Small arms are a major contributor to this global burden of violence, featuring in almost half of all violent deaths that occur worldwide. Addressing the drivers of small arms violence, including their illicit use and trafficking, will play an essential role in accelerating the reduction of violence by 2030.

Gender shapes the causes and the consequences of gun violence. Strategies for small arms control will be most effective if they respond to the different risks that men, women, girls, and boys face from weapons, and if women play a full role in their design and implementation.

As the United Nations launches a Decade of Action for Sustainable Development, this Action Paper distills the evidence on how to accelerate action for violence reduction through gender responsive small arms control.

The first part of the paper reviews what we know about violence, how small arms are used, and the role that gender plays in how people commit, experience, and survive gun violence.

It demonstrates the opportunity to act on gender responsive small arms control, building on the normative framework that has been developed in the 2030 Agenda, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The need for a gender perspective is also moving towards the foreground of the global architecture for disarmament, through the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, and through innovations in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA).
Part two presents seven strategies for turning this opportunity into action that will accelerate the global agenda for violence reduction by 2030, with each strategy illustrated by examples of best practice in action.

**STRATEGY 1**
Raise awareness about gender equality and why it is important

**STRATEGY 2**
Build the evidence base for results

**STRATEGY 3**
Champion women's representation and leadership

**STRATEGY 4**
Turn evidence into action at national and local levels

**STRATEGY 5**
Link gender responsive small arms control to broader violence prevention efforts

**STRATEGY 6**
Mobilize finance to support more gender responsive arms control

**STRATEGY 7**
Share international and regional experience and celebrate progress

These strategies provide a framework to guide the development of regionally, nationally, and locally tailored approaches. Each strategy is people-centered, must be implemented through inclusive partnerships, and is linked to broader platforms for prevention.
Key Facts on Gender, Firearms, and Violence

On average, firearms result in a violent death every 15 minutes.

Of the 23 countries with the highest violent death rates in 2016, 9 countries were affected by armed conflict.

Firearms were used in 589,000 victims of armed violence in 2017. 84% men and boys, 16% women and girls.

Estimated violent deaths resulting from the use of firearms in the world.

Men and boys accounted for 84% of violent deaths worldwide.

High homicide countries: 10:1. In Central America, almost ten times as many men as women were killed.

Low homicide countries: 40–70%. In Europe, 40–70% of female victims of homicide were killed by an intimate partner.
Globally, guns are used in around 40% of the estimated 66,000 annual homicides that have female victims. In places with the highest levels of lethal violence, 50% of all killings were committed with a firearm. But even in the least violent countries, 12% of violent deaths still involved firearms.

2016

In South Africa...

In the US...

of people trafficked globally are women and girls who are most often coerced at gunpoint and most often for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

30% of women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

7% have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner.

40% of police reports of violent sexual assault by a group of strangers involved the use of a firearm.

79.5% of reported IPV incidents involved a gun and severe intimidation of the victim.

Who has the guns?

Armed forces 23%

Law enforcement 3%

Civilians 74%

Facts we cannot count yet...

> The gendered impact of firearms violence in countries and regions where data is not collected or not disaggregated

> The cases of gender-based violence and violence against women that go unreported because of social stigma, trauma, and failures in the criminal justice systems

> The effects of fear and trauma, and the psychological consequences of violence on the lives of survivors and their communities

> The impact on effectiveness and efficiency when women participate equally and meaningfully in small arms control

> The social and economic costs of the gendered impact of firearms violence
Part One

Gender Responsive Small Arms Control as a Lever for Violence Prevention

“Disarmament prevents and ends violence. Disarmament supports sustainable development. And disarmament is true to our values and principles.”

United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres\textsuperscript{17}
Disarmament that Saves Lives

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world’s leaders committed themselves to fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.

The 2030 Agenda includes targets to significantly reduce all forms of violence everywhere (SDG16.1) and to significantly reduce illicit arms flows (SDG16.4). It also promises increased efforts to “resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries” and to address the drivers of “violence, insecurity, and injustice, such as inequality, corruption, poor governance and illicit financial and arms flows.”

At the first SDG Summit in September 2019, the UN Secretary-General’s progress report found that conflict and violence “deprive millions of their security, rights and opportunities, and undermine the delivery of public services and broader economic development.”

The SDG targets for violence prevention are off track, with levels of lethal violence projected to increase slightly by 2030 on current trajectories (see box). The UN-World Bank prevention study – Pathways for Peace – describes “a surge and expansion of violent conflict” that is imposing an “incalculable human cost” and blocking progress towards more sustainable patterns of development.

Small arms are a major contributor to the global burden of violence, featuring in almost half of all violent deaths that occur globally. Small arms are also a major factor in homicides worldwide, killing nearly 40 percent of victims of intentional homicides, which make up approximately 80 percent of all violent deaths. In the places with the highest rates of lethal violence – Latin America and the Caribbean – firearms were used in 75 percent of all violent deaths, showing how the accumulation of easily available weapons can exacerbate violence. Worldwide, the Small Arms Survey estimates that there are more than 1 billion firearms, with the vast majority (857 million) in civilian hands. Numbers have increased rapidly since the turn of the century, with flows of illicit weapons also on the rise.

There is no pathway towards the significant reduction in violence promised by SDG16.1 without disarmament, more effective control of small arms and light weapons, and action to control the illicit trade in these weapons. Equally, disarmament efforts must demonstrate that they can deliver meaningful increases in human security. As the Secretary-General argued in launching his disarmament agenda, “we must put people at the center of our disarmament efforts,” he said, “and ensure disarmament that saves lives today and tomorrow.”

It’s not too late to save 1.45 million lives

Violent death rates are on the rise globally and firearms are a significant contributor to this trend. On current trajectories, projections by the Small Arms Survey suggest that levels of lethal violence will increase by 2030, costing 660,000 lives a year. However, it is not too late to correct course. Accelerated implementation of evidence-based violence reduction strategies could still save 1.45 million lives over the next decade.

Gender responsive small arms control will play an important role in saving these lives.
A Regional Response to a Global Threat

All regions are threatened by small arms and light weapons.

**Latin America faces an epidemic of criminal violence**

The region saw the end of its last conflict in 2016, with the agreement of a peace deal in Colombia, yet the region has the highest rates of homicide death linked to firearms anywhere. The uncontrolled flow of weapons has contributed to the highest rates of intentional homicide in the world, what the World Bank has described as “a challenge of epidemic proportion.” The most violent cities in Latin America experience levels of violence that exceed those seen in most conflict zones. Communities that are most likely to be left behind by the 2030 Agenda are the worst affected.

**Africa aims to silence the guns but at present suffers the second highest regional rate of intentional homicide in the world**

According to the Small Arms Survey, “illicit arms flows continue to destabilize the African continent, fueling crime, conflict, and terrorist activities.” The African Union makes tackling illicit arms flows a priority that cuts across the political, social, and economic dimensions of its master roadmap for “Silencing the Guns by 2020” in the region. Small arms continue to pose a grave threat in the Western Balkans, even years after conflict has ended. Despite major progress on small arms control at both regional and national levels, estimates suggest up to six million small arms are still in illegal circulation.

**The threat is evolving**

More porous borders facilitate the trade of both licit and illicit weapons. In Africa, increasingly modern weapons are in circulation, indicating “new and emerging sources of small arms for the armed and criminal actors active on the continent.”

Armed and criminal groups are increasingly sophisticated in their tactics, using the proceeds from illicit flows of various kinds (weapons, drugs, natural resources, etc.) to fund their activities, destabilizing states and contributing to cycles of violence. New technologies, such as 3D printing, could increase the availability of weapons in the future, while circumventing existing controls. At the same time, locally produced artisanal and craft weapons are a major threat in many places, especially in Africa.

**Transnational threats require regional responses**

National governments cannot go it alone. Making use of regional platforms and organizations for experience sharing and coordinated action is the best hope for stemming the tide of small arms violence. The Secretary-General has called for increased regional and international cooperation, and for stronger and more inclusive partnerships between governments, experts, civil society, and people.
Gender and Lethal Violence

Women, men, girls, and boys experience gun violence differently.

Globally, men are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of gun violence

According to the Global Study on Homicide 2019, young men are at such a high risk in three of the most violent countries in Latin America that a 14-year-old boy has an 8 percent chance of a violent death before he reaches the age of 30.40

Within countries, the burden of violence is highly concentrated

Men living in the worst affected communities face extremely high risks. In Chicago, for example, 70 percent of shootings that occurred were confined to social networks that compromised just 6 percent of the population.41 In Bogotá, 99 percent of homicides happen in just 1 percent of the city’s streets.42

Women face the greatest risks of gun violence in places where violence levels are highest but face even greater levels of threat as violence decreases

While women account for a minority of the victims of gun violence, they are most likely to die violently in countries and communities where violence is highest.43 As countries become less violent, women make up a greater proportion of the victims of gun violence largely because of the effects of gender-based violence (GBV). In some countries where homicide rates are among the lowest globally, women are more likely than men to be killed by firearms.44

Women bear the brunt of the social and economic consequences of gun violence among men

They become the sole economic providers for their families, or caregivers to the injured, when disproportionate numbers of men are killed or injured by guns.45

Women are at greatest risk from firearms in their own homes and at the hands of intimate partners and family members

Women comprise the vast majority of victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners – 82 percent of people killed by their intimate partner in 2017 were women and firearms are implicated in almost half of homicides where the victim is a woman.46
Women suffer violence, threat, and coercion at gun point
In the United States, 4.5 million women have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner and 1 million women have had their partner shoot or shoot at them. In South Africa, approximately 40 percent of police reports of violent sexual assault and rape by a group of strangers involved a firearm.

Firearms make gender-based violence both more dangerous and more damaging
Where firearms are involved in gender-based violence, the encounter is more likely to be lethal, or to have more severe psychological consequences for the survivor. Threats with a weapon are, in turn, a risk factor for future lethal violence against women in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

Violence against women may increase the risk of other forms of violence and conflict
According to the Women, Peace and Security Index, “a 1 percentage point increase in the share of women experiencing intimate partner violence in the preceding 12 months was associated with a 1.4 percent increase in organized violence.”
Women’s Empowerment and Small Arms Control

Significant reductions in gun violence can only be achieved if countries fulfil their commitments to empower women and promote gender equality.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda

The agenda promises to remove the legal, social, and economic barriers faced by women and girls and recognizes that their empowerment will help deliver all 17 SDGs. The agenda includes a target to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres” (SDG5.2). The role of women in peacebuilding and state-building is also recognized, as is the need for women leaders “at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life” (SDG5.5).

Peace is more sustainable when women play a greater role in peacebuilding

An analysis of 82 peace agreements in 42 armed conflicts demonstrates “a robust relationship between peace agreements with women signatories and peace durability.” In all successful peace agreements, women delegates were effective through the links they built to women’s groups, activists, and female politicians. Women are also effective at pushing for the inclusion of gender provisions in peace agreements, including those that seek to protect women from further violence.

Women’s movements are effective at preventing violence against women outside conflict contexts

When women have an independent voice, they are effective both at creating public demand for policy change and in directly influencing the actions of policymakers. A review of 75 countries finds that women’s movements have a greater impact on a government’s willingness to combat violence than a country’s wealth, the proportion of women in parliament, or the strength of progressive political parties.
Women should play a greater role in disarmament efforts

Women have already played a leading role in arms control campaigns, such as the Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), or the targeted activism of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). However, women continue to be marginalized in disarmament diplomacy, accounting for less than a third of the participants in disarmament meetings and just 20 percent for gatherings of smaller groups of arms control experts. As the Secretary-General argues in his disarmament agenda, the “equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament” is an urgent priority that “increases effectiveness and productivity, brings new perspectives and solutions to the table, [and] unlocks greater resources.”

Gender responsive arms control is already making an impact

For example, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs have begun to address the roles women play in conflict as survivors, supporters, and combatants. The inclusion of women’s groups and women representatives in small arms control decision making has made policy more realistic and improved effectiveness.

Gender responsive approaches must also address how masculinity shapes gun violence

As the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda states, “the ownership and use of arms is closely linked to specific expressions of masculinity related to control, power, domination and strength.” The experience of violence normalizes the presence and use of firearms. Expectations about masculinity also encourages acts of violence by men against women, children, and men considered inferior.
Gender responsive small arms control is a cross-cutting catalyst that will accelerate action towards the SDG targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG16+):

> By reducing firearms violence
> By reducing the fear, injustice and coercion that come with the threat of gun violence
> By increasing women's empowerment and leadership, and normalizing their full participation in decision-making and security provision
> By reducing the indirect economic and social costs of gun violence

**SDG16+ targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies**

SDG16 is the main goal for “fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence,” but in total 36 targets from seven other SDGs directly measure an aspect of peace, inclusion or access to justice: these are the SDG16+ targets.54
2020 has the potential to be a watershed year for making arms control more gender responsive.

The SDG Summit’s political declaration called for “a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.” The Secretary-General has also launched a global conversation for the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. It asks what action is needed to bridge the gap between current trajectories on global challenges and aspirations for a more peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.

The 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of the UNSC Resolution 1325, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda provide platforms for tackling violence against women and for promoting the role of women in peacebuilding and prevention.

An outcome of Beijing+25 will be the launch of catalytic “action coalitions” that bring together governments, civil society, and the private sector to “develop and implement targeted solutions that advance the rights of adolescent girls and young women during the UN Decade of Action.” Action Coalitions are planned on gender-based violence and feminist movements and leadership.

In 2020, the priority for the Women, Peace and Security agenda is also to accelerate implementation, with the chair of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict saying that women “don’t just need to be at the peace table, it’s time to redesign the table.” Areas identified for action include promoting inclusive peace processes, standardizing gender responsive analysis, and increasing financing.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has called for full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which is the first treaty to recognize the links between the arms trade and gender-based violence. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in the treaty through its commitment to human rights, but it also creates a specific obligation for states to weigh all possible arms transfers against the risk that these weapons may be implicated in gender-based violence. Women’s civil society organizations and disarmament advocates are mobilizing for more effective implementation.
Gender responsive arms control is increasingly part of multilateral disarmament frameworks. The Fifth Conference of State Parties chose “gender and gender-based violence in the context of the ATT” as a priority theme for the 2019 conference, while the review conference for the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) acknowledged the need for a gender responsive approach for the first time.

Financing is beginning to follow evidence-based solutions. The Spotlight Initiative, a multi-year partnership between the United Nations and the European Union to eliminate violence against women, has made promoting a strong and autonomous women’s movement one of its priorities for funding. It is investing in prevention approaches that mobilize women, girls, men, and boys.

In 2019, the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT) financing facility was launched as a facility within the Peacebuilding Fund. The UN’s High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has described SALIENT as a “paradigm shift” that will allow countries to make arms control central to their implementation of the SDGs and their work to sustain peace.

All SALIENT funding decisions will be informed by gender analyses and the requirement to address gender equality will be a key criteria for funding.

At this critical juncture, the global agendas for sustainable development, women’s empowerment, peacebuilding, and disarmament have converged on the importance of the gender dimension for controlling small arms and reducing violence.

The foundations are in place to turn this commitment into significant increases in women’s participation, practical responses to gender dynamics, and measurable reductions in the violence caused by small arms.

The Outcome of the Third Review Conference of the UN PoA acknowledged the need for a gender responsive approach for the first time:

14. We remain gravely concerned about the negative impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the lives of women, men, girls and boys and recognize that eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a key part of combating gender-based violence.

15. We recognize the need for strengthened participation of women in decision-making and implementation processes relating to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument and reaffirm the need for States to mainstream gender dimensions in their implementation efforts.
Gender responsive small arms control...

Saves lives
Understanding how gender shapes small arms violence produces policy responses that better prevent violence and address its wider social and economic consequences.

> Creating legal regimes that address the presence of firearms in the home has been shown to save women's lives, while men's lives have been saved by policies addressing violent crime.\(^74\)
> Support for the survivors of small arms violence must reflect the fact that women are more often displaced because of violent conflict and more often left as the sole caregivers of a family.\(^75\)
> DDR programs that effectively address the varied gendered roles of women and men in armed conflict have proven more effective at reintegration over time.\(^76\)

Promotes equality and inclusion
Reducing armed violence helps to redress the unequal power relations that underlie gender inequalities.

> Gender responsive arms control can address the fact that 70 percent of people trafficked are women and girls, who are usually coerced at gunpoint and usually for the purposes of sexual exploitation.\(^77\)
> Creating a safer environment for women by limiting access to small arms contributes to women's empowerment and a more equal society, as envisioned in SDG5.\(^78\)
> Promoting the meaningful participation of women in local, national, and international decision making about small arms control reflects the commitment to empower women for peacemaking embodied in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as SDG5.\(^79\)

Builds peace
Reducing the number and availability of small arms in circulation through more effective gender responsive policymaking is a catalyst for building more peaceful societies.

Gender responsive arms control can:

> Better address conflict-related GBV which is perpetrated at gunpoint.\(^80\)
> Prevent the normalization of violence in society by the links between some expressions of masculinity and violence.\(^81\)
> Address crime and insecurity in non-conflict contexts contributing to more peaceful societies.\(^82\)

Makes programming more effective
Gender responsive small arms control policies work better because they address the reality of how arms circulate and are used in society, for example:

> Involving more women professionals in small arms control at policy and operational levels can strengthen implementation.\(^83\)
> National surveys show that gun ownership is usually overwhelmingly male so addressing the social expectations of why men own firearms in the home has produced more effective interventions.\(^84\)
> Sensitizing national security services to the different security threats men and women face has generated more responsive policies that deliver better security outcomes.\(^85\)
“...it is our collective responsibility to hold ourselves and our leaders accountable to deliver on our gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments.”

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat

Part Two

Accelerating Action on Gender Responsive Small Arms Control
This set of seven strategies will build the knowledge, evidence, and understanding of how gender responsive policies and programs can limit the availability of small arms and reduce the harm these weapons cause.

Three key principles should guide their implementation so that strategies to accelerate action on gender responsive small arms control should:

> **Focus on people** – drawing on the best available evidence to save lives, reduce injuries and other forms of harm, and contribute to more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

> **Build inclusive partnerships** – with participation and leadership by women and a strong role for the communities that are worst affected by gun violence.

> **Link to broader platforms for prevention** – linking disarmament to broader efforts to prevent violence and promote inclusion, while recognizing the need for action across sectors if violence is to be reduced.

The strategies champion women’s representation and leadership through policies and programming at national and local levels that are connected to broader violence prevention programs.

Their implementation is supported by the mobilization of finance to support more ambitious implementation and the sharing of experience and success stories within and between regions.

The seven strategies for accelerating action support each other. Increased awareness of the importance of a gender responsive approach (Strategy 1) will strengthen implementation across the board, for example, by drawing attention to the need to strengthen the evidence base (Strategy 2), encourage greater representation (Strategy 3) and help galvanize action at the national and local levels (Strategy 4).

Similarly, sharing experience and celebrating progress (Strategy 7) can support national and local action (Strategy 4), raise awareness (Strategy 1) and enhance the evidence base for effective solutions (Strategy 2). Making meaningful funding commitments to gender responsive small arms control (Strategy 6) will be essential to progress across the board.
Countries should therefore aim to design an integrated approach that draws on each of the strategies, tailoring implementation to their local context through clear benchmarking and strategies for measuring progress.

**STRATEGY 1 -** Raise awareness about gender equality and why it is important

**STRATEGY 2 -** Build the evidence base for results

**STRATEGY 3 -** Champion women’s representation and leadership

**STRATEGY 4 -** Turn evidence into action at national and local levels

**STRATEGY 5 -** Link gender responsive small arms control to broader violence prevention efforts

**STRATEGY 6 -** Mobilize finance to support more gender responsive arms control

**STRATEGY 7 -** Share international and regional experience and celebrate progress
Section 3.3 of the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons calls for enhanced participation of women in all aspects of small arms control as a core principle for implementation of the agreement:

“Gender dimension: To promote and enhance the participation of all gender groupings, especially women, in the design and implementation of initiatives to fight proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons at all levels”

Strategy 1

Raise awareness about gender equality and why it is important

Increased awareness of the different threats men and women face from small arms can generate more responsive and inclusive policies that deliver better security outcomes. The following actions deepen understanding of the gender dimensions of arms control, creating momentum for accelerated implementation.

Build capacity through training and education

Pursue concerted and targeted awareness-raising efforts among key constituencies of decision makers at local, national, regional, and multilateral levels so that they become well informed and motivated advocates for gender responsive arms control.

Changing minds changes policies

Raising awareness of gender equality and small arms increases the use of evidence and builds momentum for better policy and programming

SEESAC introduced the Gender Coach Program in the Western Balkans in 2017 to offer decision makers the opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange on gender responsive small arms control. Through confidential one-on-one sessions, the program sought “to strengthen the capacities of leaders to integrate the gender perspective in SALW control policymaking.” It created an avenue for personal learning and consultative support over the long-term, tailored to the specific questions and needs of each institution, whilst enabling participants to become leaders in integrating gender within their institutions and operations.

The success of the program is reflected in positive feedback from participants and in the substantial inroads for gender responsive small arms control made across the region, including the inclusion of gender in national action plans, and multiple trainings for civil servants.

Use existing normative frameworks to strengthen commitments to gender equality

Formal commitments to promote gender equality already exist – both in disarmament and more broadly. They provide a platform to raise awareness among decision makers and operational staff for implementation in policymaking and programming, and for training and capacity building to support more gender responsive approaches.
Operationalizing the gender-based violence criteria of the Arms Trade Treaty

A groundbreaking international commitment is translated into practical and tailored support for government officials as they assess the risks to women from arms transfer decisions.

The Arms Trade Treaty creates the first legal obligation for states to address the link between gender-based violence and the arms trade.

To promote implementation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia hosted “The Central and Eastern European Regional Training on the Gender-based Violence (GBV) Criteria in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)” in May 2019.

Guided by global experts, representatives from 12 governments explored how gender-based violence criteria could be applied to export control risk assessment processes. They also shared national perspectives and best practices on how to strengthen compliance with the treaty.

The usefulness of this training was enhanced by its timing, as it was held shortly before the Fifth Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, where the thematic discussion focused on “Gender and Gender Based Violence”.

Use evidence to advocate for gender responsive arms control

Evidence can be used to challenge the absence of a gender perspective in national and regional policy fora, by demonstrating that gender responsive small arms control policies work better because they address the reality of how arms circulate and are used in society.

Effective advocacy for gender responsive small arms control in South East Europe

A strong evidence base is among the best strategies for raising awareness among decision makers and creating momentum for change.

The challenges of small arms control in South East Europe have been particularly acute, as a region with a legacy of violent conflict, high number of arms in circulation, and high rates of violence, including gender-based violence.

A regional study showed that firearms posed a major threat to women in particular. This sensitized decision makers to the gendered dimension of the security threat and alerted them to the need to adapt their policies and operations.

In the space of only a few years, gender responsive small arms control has become a regional priority, embraced in the regional roadmap and in national action plans.
STRATEGY 2

Build the evidence base for results

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates how gender inequality is linked to violence and small arms. However, more evidence is needed to inform implementation of gender responsive arms control policies and programs. A concerted effort to collect disaggregated data and research on what works will feed a virtuous cycle where increased implementation creates new opportunities for learning.

Collect and disaggregate data and evidence

The tracking and assessment of small arms flows has advanced substantially, pushed forward most recently by the requirements for measurement of SDG16.4. Research now needs to focus on understanding which interventions are most effective. This will often entail the greater use of practice-based learning, based on insights gained from observation, direct experience, and program monitoring.

Collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data on gender and small arms

Methodologically rigorous analysis of the gendered impact of armed violence is a priority in building an evidence base for gender responsive small arms control.

The Small Arms Survey, based at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, has become a global reference in methodologically rigorous and reliable data on all aspects of small arms and armed violence.

The Survey presents a gendered analysis of violent deaths through its Global Violent Deaths database, while also tracking firearm deaths in conflict and non-conflict settings.92

The Survey has argued for the importance of “data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, victim-perpetrator relationship, and motivation for violence” for monitoring the impact of policies and programs that aim to prevent violence and implement the SDGs.93

Develop baselines and indicators for gender responsive small arms control

Focusing on what works in gender responsive small arms control means identifying and tracking over time the factors that most influence impact. Robust methodologies are needed to establish baselines and key performance indicators.
Disseminate evidence for decision making

Data collection and analysis must be disseminated if it is to inform policymaking and program development. Findings need to be formatted and presented in a way that is accessible and relevant to the needs of decision makers and practitioners.

Harnessing data for policy solutions

Effective communication is necessary for evidence-based policy solutions to gain traction

SEESAC created an evidence base for gender responsive arms control in South East Europe by creating three different data streams to demonstrate the need for action.

These included a regional distribution and impact survey, an online public perceptions survey that attracted over 50,000 respondents, and an Armed Violence Monitoring Platform that monitors reports of firearm-related incidents occurring in the region on an ongoing basis.

To translate evidence into policy actions, it launched the “Fast Facts” series to raise awareness of the need for gender responsive small arms control both among decision makers, practitioners, and the public.
STRATEGY 3

Champion women’s representation and leadership

From the political to the project level, women experts face barriers to full participation and leadership in arms control. However, new policies that promote representation are gaining traction, with champions for gender equality targeting women’s participation rates, training, and workplace conditions.

Provide opportunities for women to develop their expertise

Opportunities can be created for women to become experts or to increase their expertise through targeted training aimed at government officials and civil society leaders and activists. Existing experts need more opportunities to apply their expertise and can be supported through programs that tackle unconscious bias and that promote more inclusive and equitable working environments.

Supporting women experts in small arms control

Targeted training opportunities can help women develop careers as experts in small arms control

Around the world, most experts in small arms control have become specialists through a career in state security services, whether in law enforcement or the military. It is also personnel of the state security services who are the main target audience for international training and opportunities to work in the disarmament field.

Since women are a minority within the security and defense institutions, few women receive the specialist training that would give them access to these careers. Moreover, women who do serve in the military or law enforcement may not be able to access specialist training opportunities because of the discrimination they face.

Recognizing this problem, The Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) began requesting member states to send women candidates for specialist instructor training.

In 2019, the first woman to complete the training also became the first female instructor providing Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) training to police and military personnel responsible for munitions storage facilities across the continent.

Promote women’s representation and leadership

Moves to increase the visibility and quality of women’s participation in arms control decision making are gaining momentum, with increased visibility of women at senior levels at the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), for example. Continued advocacy is needed to support women’s representation. Women must be supported to take up leadership positions and their experience in the sector documented.
Advocating for gender equality at the highest levels of representation

High-level advocacy creates opportunities for women to participate and strengthens demand for gender responsive policies and programming

The International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group is a leadership network based in Geneva, co-chaired by the Ambassador of Ireland, the Ambassador of Namibia, the Ambassador of the Philippines, and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). It brings together UN member states’ representatives to support the disarmament community in translating gender awareness into practical action across the range of multilateral disarmament processes and activities.

The group, which was nominated for the Arms Control Person(s) of the Year 2018, has produced a Resource Pack for Multilateral Practitioners on Gender & Disarmament and a factsheet on the Arms Trade Treaty and Gender Equality. It has created space for dialogue by co-hosting side events at major international disarmament meetings.

Support men to champion women's empowerment in small arms control

The active participation of men helps to reinforce the message that gender responsive small arms control has an impact on the safety of both women and men, while creating space to address how masculinity shapes the use of firearms.

Men as champions for gender responsive arms control

Male advocacy and leadership helps bring a gender perspective into the mainstream of small arms control

The potential to reduce violence by addressing how masculinity shapes the use and abuse of firearms is increasingly widely recognized. Community programs targeting gang violence have pioneered approaches that use peer to peer mentoring and community ties to reshape attitudes to women and violence. Indeed, men have played a role as active advocates for women's empowerment and gender equality in many of the best practice examples described in this report.

For example, SEESAC’s Gender Coaches linked male gender experts with male decision makers in small arms control. Similarly, the Disarmament Impact Group provided a platform for senior men to become public advocates for gender responsive small arms control.
**STRATEGY 4**

**Turn evidence into action at national and local levels**

As gender responsive small arms control gains traction in multilateral and international policy commitments, greater support is needed for action at national and local levels. Strengthened legal and policy frameworks, tailored programming guidance, and training and capacity building will help countries bridge the gap between their commitments and current practice on the ground.

**Mainstream gender in national policy and legal frameworks and link to the implementation of international commitments**

A gender perspective can help expose elements of legal and policy frameworks that fail to provide equal protection for women and men. This could include prohibiting all forms of violence against women, supporting reform of firearms regulations, and policy reforms that facilitate the full implementation of existing laws. Regional model laws, frameworks, and centers of expertise are effective in supporting national efforts to implement international commitments.

**Model legislation to accelerate implementation**

*Developing model legislation for mainstreaming gender responsive small arms control could accelerate implementation of international commitments.*

Advances in international norms for disarmament and small arms control are promising but implementation has often trailed political commitments. One reason for this is the need to translate international commitments into coherent national laws in order for implementation to lead to violence reduction. The complexity of this task can present a hurdle in some contexts, and may be most difficult in those places where implementation is most needed. Africa and Asia, for example, are regions of the world with some of the highest rates of violent death and firearms related homicide, but also the regions with the lowest rates of ratification of the ATT.

Developing model legislation on a regional basis can provide a bridge between international commitments and national law making processes to speed up implementation. Regional model laws make particular sense because countries in the same region often face similar challenges related to violence and small arms, whilst also sharing similarities in language and legal regimes. The Government of New Zealand sponsored the development of model legislation to support Pacific countries in implementing the ATT, while CARICOM did the same for its 14 member states.

**Tailor programming guidance for gender responsive small arms control to national contexts**

The development of the MOSAIC module on gender responsive small arms control, as well as EU support to mainstream gender in policies, programs, and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and
misuse show how programming guidance for gender responsive small arms control is advancing. The next step is more detailed guidance that adapts programming advice to specific national and local needs.

**Tailored gender responsive small arms control in the Sahel**
*Gender responsive small arms control are more successful when tailored to local and national experiences of how small arms affect men, women, girls, and boys.*

The National Commissions for SALW control in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger joined with the Danish Demining Group to develop an education tool to help local communities understand and mitigate the risk of harm from small arms.

The “Toolbox of Pictures” uses culturally accurate and appropriate illustrations to reproduce familiar scenes from daily life in such a way that local communities can better relate to messages about the risks of small arms.

Over time, images or scenarios were adapted to sub-regional contexts in order to improve their effectiveness, providing an example of the flexibility that is needed to make context-specific approaches more successful.

**Mainstream gender in technical arms control training**
Professional and operational training in small arms control has traditionally neglected gender. While there will always be a role for specialist expertise on gender, gender responsive approaches should be a core competency for disarmament experts. This must be reflected in their training and professional development.

**Training on gender responsive small arms control will enhance implementation**
*Targeted training for practitioners can help overcome the policy-practice gap in gender responsive small arms control*

“Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide” is a new handbook produced by the Small Arms Survey that “is designed to provide a roadmap for practitioners, diplomats, and donors to become accustomed to this way of thinking and working explains the rationale for gender responsive small arms control.”

To achieve this aim, the Handbook presents case studies of good practice, and details how practitioners can implement these insights in the design, monitoring, and implementation of their programs and projects.

Targeted training modules for practitioners are also being developed based on the MOSAIC module and will be delivered in a pilot phase across six country training programs. Workshops with national coordinating bodies will explore the strengthening of the gender dimension in National Action Plans and other relevant policy and legislative frameworks.

Training for desk officers from the secretariats of sub-regional and regional organizations will also be undertaken, with a view to promoting gender aspects in regional small arms initiatives.
STRATEGY 5

Link gender responsive small arms control to broader violence prevention efforts

As small arms control is further advanced in its integration of gender responsive methodologies than many other parts of the disarmament agenda, insights can drive other parts of the disarmament agenda. Similarly, the small arms community can ensure that the control of firearms is central to strategies for ending violence against women. However, this requires a shift from a narrow security paradigm to more comprehensive approaches to violence prevention.

Address the violence caused by small arms held legally by civilians

Legally owned firearms are those most likely to be used against women, especially in non-conflict settings and by intimate partners and family members. However, international control regimes for small arms have principally focused on illicit firearms and how they are used. If violence against women is to be reduced, a new commitment will be needed to understand and address the harms caused by weapons that are legally held by civilians.

Linking violence to domestic gun licensing laws

*Applying a gender responsive approach to national laws regulating small arms in civilian hands can save lives*

Countries have been able to reduce rates of violent death and injury by placing stricter controls on legal ownership of firearms among civilians.

Lower rates of gun related injuries and deaths have, for both women and men, been linked to tighter legislation and changes to licensing laws in contexts as diverse as Albania, Australia, Brazil, Canada, South Africa, and the United States.  

Specific measures that address the risk of violence against women in the home through legislation have included notifications to partners and ex-partners of an application or renewal of a gun license, character requirements, and disqualification for ownership (or service in the security sector) in cases where a history of violence against the family or partner exists, and seizure of weapons following instances of family or partner violence.

Integrate gender responsive small arms control into thematic approaches to violence prevention

Gender experts working on small arms should actively reach out to communities working on other forms of prevention, including violence against women, urban violence, violence against children, conflict prevention, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Shared analysis of the risks and protective factors driving violence can allow for the development of more holistic and integrated strategies.

The Global Study on the Implementation of resolution 1325 clearly identifies the need to address small arms violence:

“[T]he availability of small arms inhibits efforts to prevent armed violence and contributes to the escalation of lethal violence. Access to such weapons intersects directly with and impacts the forms and intensity of women’s experiences of gendered violence within and outside of conflict.”

*BEST PRACTICE*
Committing to disarmament through the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Broader frameworks for violence prevention create opportunities to commit to action on gender responsive small arms control

A group of member states, including Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Namibia, and Sweden, as well as the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, are promoting the role that disarmament can play in accelerating action for the 20th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in 2020.\(^{107}\)

At a national level, 1325 National Action Plans are being used to mainstream gender responsive arms control policies. The Philippines committed to new regulations on small arms control in its National Action Plan for 2010, as the country continued to suffer from high rates of homicide and the easy availability of small arms due to the long-standing conflict that had affected the south of the country.\(^{108}\)

Countries not directly affected by conflict are also making the same connection. Switzerland, for example, refers to the need for gender responsive small arms control in its own 1325 action plan.

Build cross sectoral partnerships for violence reduction

Gender responsive small arms control strategies must be implemented by justice, security, education, public health, economic development, and other actors. This requires coordination structures, shared budgets, and training for non-disarmament specialists.

Joining forces for prevention

Integrating gender responsive small arms control into cross sectoral approaches can lead to better outcomes for people and communities

At the international level, arms control is also being mainstreamed into broader efforts to tackle GBV.

The RESPECT framework, developed by WHO and UN Women, and endorsed by a coalition of international organizations, sets out seven evidence-based strategies for action to prevent and respond to violence against women.\(^{109}\) The framework underlines the need to reduce the risks to women posed by the availability of weapons (alongside risk factors like drugs and alcohol).

INSPIRE – the equivalent strategy for ending violence against children – calls for action to limit young people’s access to guns and other weapons.\(^{110}\) It points to the experience of South Africa, where stricter licensing and reduced circulation of firearms saved nearly 5,000 lives in five cities over a five-year period.\(^{111}\)

Both frameworks provide the basis for integrated approaches that are implemented across sectors and by governments, civil society, and the private sector.
STRATEGY 6

Mobilize finance to support more gender responsive arms control

Commitments require increased funding if they are to be implemented. Criteria for gender equality should be mainstreamed into existing funding mechanisms, while dedicated funding for gender responsive small arms control is also needed. Modalities for funding civil society actors are urgently needed, given their critical role in promoting gender responsive small arms control and shrinking political and financial space for their operations.

Integrate gender equality into funding criteria for multilateral projects

National and multilateral funding mechanisms are increasingly integrating the promotion of gender equality into the technical requirements for projects and programs. The OECD’s three-point Gender Policy Marker is a well-known example that can also apply to small arms control. New funding streams for disarmament have the potential to support more ambitious implementation of gender responsive policies and programs.

Gender responsive programming as a requirement for funding

In 2019, the United Nations launched the Saving-Lives, Entity, or SALIENT Fund, with the goal of supporting member states to mainstream small arms control within a comprehensive approach to sustainable security and development.

SALIENT has committed to spending at least 30 percent of its program funds on gender-related activities and to projects that identify gender equality as a principal objective, with a Project Gender Marker score of 2.

As national authorities and international actors cooperate to prepare joint proposals, these funding criteria will sensitize a broad range of actors to the need for gender responsive small arms control.

Bring gender responsive small arms control into national gender budgeting processes

Gender budgeting aims to redirect public resources to close gender gaps. Almost half of OECD countries are already using this approach or seriously considering it. When applied to national security and defense spending, it provides an opportunity to finance arms control policies and programs that benefit women and men equally, while building cooperation between ministries of finance, defense and security, and gender and women’s affairs.

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/56 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control:

7. “Encourages States to seriously consider increasing funding for policies and programmes that take account of the differing impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys.”
Fund civil society advocacy in places most affected by small arms violence

More dependable sources of funding are needed if civil society organizations are to continue to play their essential role in advocacy for more gender responsive small arms control at local and national levels. Grassroots organizations are in urgent need of funding that protects their independence and can be accessed without placing unreasonable demands on the volunteer and part-time activists who work in local communities.

Making small arms control gender responsive from the bottom up

Better support for the grassroots can help finance reach the communities in greatest need of the better control of firearms

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is a global movement for the control of small arms and light weapons that networks hundreds of civil society organizations with shared aims across the world.

Recognizing the importance of supporting grassroots organizations, IANSA introduced a micro-grants program that provides grants of a size that smaller organizations can manage. This has helped groups strengthen their capacity and outreach, for example by creating a website to create awareness of their work.
STRATEGY 7
Share international and regional experience and celebrate progress

To accelerate action, more opportunities are needed to showcase progress and share best practice. Regional centers for arms control, regional civil society networks, and international civil society organizations with strong grassroots networks showcase national implementation, demonstrating how gender responsive small arms control can save lives.

Encourage cross-regional experience sharing and networking

Innovations in gender responsive small arms control are typically developed at the local and national levels, but lessons learnt can easily be lost. Learning is often best promoted at a regional level, where countries often share similar challenges, constraints, and opportunities. Regional approaches can be formalized in framework agreements for cooperation and mutual pledges for national action.

Creating opportunities for regional learning on gender responsive small arms control

Regional networks empower gender champions and allow learning to be shared within and across regions

The Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) was created to convene national and regional specialists and to promote gender responsive approaches.

GENSAC acts as a network supporting the work of women and men as SALW gender champions, empowering them to learn from each other and providing them with a platform to participate in global and regional events, and to influence political processes. It will also connect gender champions working on arms control to peers working on other forms of violence prevention.

GENSAC is also a platform for sharing between regions, exploring how gender-informed strategies can respond to different types of risk posed by firearms and increasing understanding of how to tackle illicit flows and other transnational threats.

Sharing between regions will also promote understanding of emerging trends and encourage the spread of innovation and best practice.

Highlight the leadership of national champions and pathfinders

Some countries and regions have gone beyond internationally agreed standards, creating models for others to follow. This provides an opportunity to reward success and encourage bottom-up standard setting.
Focus on results and promote accountability

The international system for arms control offers a number of avenues for reporting and accountability through instruments such as the ITI, PoA, ATT, and the Firearms Protocol. Existing reporting mechanisms should be strengthened to better showcase progress on gender responsive small arms control as called for, for example, in regional instruments such as the African Union Master Roadmap. Through the 2030 Agenda, countries are encouraged to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven.” These Voluntary National Reviews provide another opportunity to highlight progress on gender responsive arms control while also linking implementation to processes of accountable national benchmarking.

National champions spearheading change
Focused international leadership on gender responsive arms control draws attention and creates space for political progress

Namibia played a historical role in launching the Women, Peace and Security agenda, using its chairmanship of the Security Council in 2000 to sponsor UNSC Resolution 1325, which was based on the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693).

More recently, Namibia has integrated small arms control into its own 1325 National Action Plan; co-chaired the International Gender Champions Disarmament Group; used its chairmanship to the WPS Focal Points Network in 2019 to make arms control a subtheme for discussion at the Network meetings; and has also been a founding supporter of GENSAC. Namibia's focus on promoting gender responsive small arms control has been enhanced by cooperation with other states, which also prioritize gender responsive small arms control in their support, including Germany and Canada.

The African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa By Year 2020 commits to

“Ensure the effective implementation of agreements on landmines and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons”

BEST PRACTICE
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About the Pathfinders

The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies is a group of UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society, and the private sector. We work to accelerate the delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+). Pathfinders is hosted by the NYU Center on International Cooperation.