



SPORTING ARMS AND AMMUNITION MANUFACTURERS' INSTITUTE, INC.
SINCE 1926

United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty

New York, 21 March, 2013

Statement by Richard Patterson, Managing Director
Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, Inc

Thank you Mr. President. My name is Richard Patterson and I'm the Managing Director of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, also known by our acronym "SAAMI." SAAMI was founded in 1926 at the request of the US government to create standards for safety and reliability in the design, manufacture, transportation, storage and use of non-military firearms, ammunition, and components.

For the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to be successful at fulfilling its stated goals, it must be a reality-based instrument. We are all appalled at the terrible impact of violence in all its forms. Now is not the time for feel-good-do-nothing proposals that waste precious time and resources.

In this regard there has been considerable discussion about the inclusion of ammunition in the ATT. In the cold, harsh light of reality, the inclusion of small arms ammunition—though well-intentioned—would do nothing to enhance law enforcement efforts nor prevent diversions. It is a feel-good-do-nothing proposal that will divert valuable resources that could otherwise be used to effectively combat those who choose violence.

Another reality that must be examined is that firearms in the hands of law-abiding citizens provide many positive benefits to society. Hunters traveling with their firearms and ammunition provide economic stability in rural and developing areas. Firearms are part of the basic fabric of sporting events up to and including Olympic competition—and participation in these events helps build life skills such as discipline and focus in young people. In addition, millions of times a year firearms are used by individual citizens of every description and gender to effectively exercise their fundamental human right to protect themselves and their loved ones from violence in all its forms.

I must reiterate what I have said in the past--there is absolutely no validity to the assumption that more guns will equal more violence. Using UN ODC and Small Arms Survey data as an example, the 10 countries with the highest rates of civilian possession of firearms have homicides rates roughly four times LOWER than the homicide rates of the 10 countries with the lowest rates of civilian firearms ownership.

(over)

Finally, I offer this simple—if anecdotal—observation: looking at the photos in the literature published by Civil Society organizations is telling. Virtually every photograph used to illustrate the problem of violence is a photo of military weapons—most often fully automatic machineguns such as AKs and M-16s, or energetics such as RPGs.

All of these facts are important. An ATT must reflect the facts surrounding the misuse of firearms, AND it must be just as zealous in reflecting the many positive uses of firearms in the hands of law-abiding civilians. Failure to focus on this big picture will result in unintended consequences that can only serve to undermine the achievement of the ultimate goal we all share of reducing all forms of violence.

To this end, I would respectfully suggest this body focus the scope of the ATT to fully-automatic military weapons and energetics.

Thank you Mr. President.