



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

**UN Review Conference on Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in  
Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA),**

New York, 29 August, 2012

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

Thank you Madame President. My name is Richard Patterson and I am the Managing Director of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute—also known as SAAMI. SAAMI was created in 1926 at the request of the US Government to create technical standards for safety and reliability in the design, manufacture, transportation, storage and use of firearms, ammunition and components.

As an accredited standards-setting organization, SAAMI knows that consensus is a mandatory requirement for excellence. Consensus is also critically important to the United Nations. Consensus ensures that all possible outcomes are considered. Consensus ensures resources are wisely allocated to the most important and effective actions, and it ensures all parties are committed to implementation of the final outcome. Unfortunately, we have seen special interest groups and even UN agencies attempt to undermine the consensus process to make it easier to achieve their personal agendas.

This is a dangerous path. A perfect example of how eliminating consensus leads to bad results is the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). While this program had the opportunity to achieve success, the decision to ignore consensus resulted in both technical and policy errors. ISACS instead came to provide nothing more than a platform for adoption and pseudo-legitimization of the “wish lists” of special interest groups. Without consensus, opposing facts and perspectives were simply ignored. The most egregious error of ISACS, however, is how it deliberately side-steps the UN and UN member-states. Regardless of how you feel about the gun control issue, a process like ISACS that deliberately circumvents the will of the UN member-states must not be tolerated.

(over)

Turning to the Program of Action and other SALW initiatives, let me give an example where failure to embrace consensus can lead to factual and policy errors. Advocates of gun control make two fundamental assumptions: First, that more guns will equal more violence and, second, that more gun control will equal less violence. Both of these assumptions are confounded by history and by facts. They are simply not true. Countries with high rates of gun ownership have low rates of violence, and countries in which civilian ownership of guns is banned have high rates of violence. Ignoring these facts can cause harm by removing the means by which people protect themselves, their families and their communities—and thereby protect their rights to self-determination.

Madame President, SAAMI supports consensus. It's a requirement for standards setting and it works in the UN. We oppose any efforts that seek to circumvent the UN member-state process. We stand ready to lend our expertise to the UN member-states to help make informed decisions that will have a positive impact, and provide real and tangible results.

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