



Side event
Supporting Country-level Small Arms Control and Violence Reduction for Sustainable Development: the launch of the SALIENT fund

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join Ambassador Bessho in welcoming you all to this event, which serves as the launch of the Saving Lives Entity, or “SALIENT” fund.

I am also grateful for the participation of Ambassador Toure of Côte d’Ivoire and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Ms. Diedre Mills. And I am pleased to be joined by Assistant-Secretary-General and Director of the UNDP Crisis Bureau, Ms. Asako Okai. UNDP is our partner in this important initiative, and together we have been working closely with colleagues in the Peacebuilding Support Office, over the past year, on the establishment of this dedicated fund.

When launching his Disarmament Agenda, the Secretary-General recognized the need to move away from the traditional “siloeed” measures that have often characterized approaches to small-arms control. His reasoning was straightforward: the challenges posed by the illicit trade and proliferation in small arms are multidimensional in nature. They encompass often-overlapping issues, whether of an institutional, legal, educational, development or law-enforcement nature. Multidimensional *challenges* therefore call for multidimensional *responses*. What is needed for effective small-arms control and regulation is a more integrated and coordinated programmatic approach. And we need such interventions at scale, supported by a flexible, development-oriented funding mechanism. This is what Member States called for in the review conference of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms.

The SALIENT fund represents an answer to this call. It has been created to support activities for addressing all relevant dimensions of the problem, especially with a view to mainstreaming small-arms control in development efforts and policies.

The link between achieving sustainable development and reducing harm caused by small arms is well accepted, as is the fact that the harshest impact of the widespread circulation of illicit small arms is felt by vulnerable groups and in developing countries, particularly those experiencing or emerging from armed conflict or facing pervasive criminal violence. Preventing and reducing such violence, in turn, helps to make development possible. Indeed, SDG 16 explicitly recognizes this connection. The inclusion of two targets – on reducing illicit arms flows (16.4) and on reducing all formed of violence and related death rates (16.1)

– unequivocally links arms regulation, armed violence prevention and economic and social development. More importantly, it commits all States and the UN to act.

Once underway, SALIENT will support activities that address both the supply and demand side, with an emphasis on gender-transformative, local-level or “bottom-up” approaches that are integrated into national policies and strategies and are in keeping with the focus on gender and youth in the Peacebuilding Fund as a whole.

I am pleased to note that significant strides have been made when it comes to solidifying normative frameworks that address the *supply*-side in reducing the illicit trade of small arms. SALIENT will continue to support such efforts. This may include work to support physical security and stockpile management; public debate and development of legislation regulating access to small arms; advancing national and regional arms control and reduction programmes; and building the capacity of national institutions including in the areas of law enforcement and criminal justice.

On the demand side, which has traditionally seen less attention, we foresee activities that support institutional capacities to respond to armed violence, which are then integrated into broader national development plans. This covers both support for community capacities, as well as the effectiveness and resilience of the State – reforms aimed, for instance, at community policing and promoting local development plans that are informed by and respond to armed-violence prevention challenges.

In this regard, it is necessary to support efforts to shape cultural attitudes and perceptions on small arms, in particular with regard to the gender dimension of the issue. As we are increasingly aware, the misuse and effects of small arms are heavily gendered and have differentiated impacts on women and men, boys and girls. Young, men, for instance, make up an overwhelming majority of firearms owners, and men constitute the majority of both perpetrators and victims of firearms-related violence. However, women are at greater risk of intimate partner violence – a common form of female homicide. In addition, attitudes and cultural norms have meant that possession and small arms use is often linked with expressions of masculinity.

It is therefore important that all efforts be informed by a thorough gender analysis in order for initiatives to respond to the different effects of small arms misuse on men and boys, women and girls. This in turn will require support for initiatives aimed at collecting disaggregated data and data related to gender-specific issues, which is currently lacking. I am pleased to note, in this regard, that SALIENT commits to channelling at least 30% of its programme funds to gender-related activities.

Small-arms control should be understood by all of us as a *sine qua non* of an overall development framework. We believe that SALIENT represents a paradigm shift in small-arms control – one that supports recipient countries’ work on small-arms control as an integral element in their national programmes towards SDG implementation and sustaining peace. We aim to institutionalize the view that improved small-arms regulation and control measures are not simply a remedy to a short-term, isolated public-security issue, but are rather a sustained investment in a country’s long-term social and economic development.

With the early financial support of initial donors Japan and New Zealand, my office and UNDP have developed the implementation strategy for the fund and are moving ahead to the pilot phase. We anticipate the pilot phase taking place in two or three countries over the next year. In order to take this effort to the scale that is needed, however, broader support and additional donors will be required.

We fully expect that the SALIENT fund will soon be supporting additional activities in the service of a truly comprehensive approach to the issue of small-arms control and armed-violence reduction. With your support and engagement and with a broad partnership across Member States, the UN system and civil society partners, I have no doubt that we will get there.

I thank you for your participation today and look forward to hearing your views.