



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

Remarks at Side-Event in the Margins of BMS9:

**“UN Small Arms and Light Weapons Fellowship (SALW) Training
Programme:
One Year of Implementation”**

**Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

As delivered



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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to welcome you all, and I thank you for joining us during this very busy BMS9 week. Your presence here reflects the importance that Member States continue to attach to addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: an issue that remains central to international peace and security.

As we know, the human cost of armed violence remains unacceptably high.

Small arms and light weapons continue to be among the most widely used instruments of violence, affecting communities in all regions of the world.

Their impact extends far beyond immediate security concerns—undermining development, weakening institutions, and eroding trust within societies.

More than two decades after the adoption of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, we have a strong and evolving normative framework in place. Yet, gaps persist.

Many States continue to face challenges in establishing effective marking, record-keeping, and tracing systems, strengthening stockpile management and transfer controls, and ensuring sustained cooperation and information-sharing across borders.

Addressing these gaps requires sustained investment in capacity, expertise, and institutional coordination.

This is precisely where the SALW Fellowship Programme seeks to make a contribution.

The Fellowship is designed not simply to transfer knowledge, but to support practical, action-oriented learning.

During the training, fellows are encouraged to exchange experiences with peers from other regions; reflect on their own national contexts; and develop concrete, implementable ideas that they can take forward in their respective institutions.

In doing so, the programme contributes to building a community of practice: a network of professionals who remain connected beyond the training itself, and who can support one another in addressing shared challenges.

The experiences that will be shared today provide encouraging evidence of what can be achieved.

We are already seeing Fellows contribute to improving national coordination mechanisms; strengthening record-keeping and tracing systems; and promoting the use of technology and innovative tools in support of small arms control.

These may appear as incremental steps, but collectively they represent meaningful progress towards more effective implementation of the PoA and ITI.

Excellencies,

Allow me to underscore an important point.

The SALW Fellowship Programme is an initiative entrusted to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs by Member States, through the General Assembly.

As such, it reflects *your* collective commitment: a recognition that strengthening the capacity of national authorities is indispensable to advancing the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

This sense of ownership is essential.

Because ultimately, the effectiveness of our global frameworks depends on national implementation, and on the ability of institutions and practitioners to translate commitments into action.

At the same time, this Fellowship is very much a joint enterprise.

Its success rests on the collaboration of a wide range of partners, including UNODA's Regional Centres, national counterparts and host governments, other United Nations entities and international organizations, including UNITAR and INTERPOL, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society, academia, and industry.

Each brings a distinct contribution: technical expertise, regional knowledge, and operational experience.

Together, they form a comprehensive ecosystem of support, enabling the programme to respond to the diverse needs of participating countries in a practical and tailored manner.

This kind of partnership is not only valuable, it is necessary.

Because the challenges we face in addressing the illicit trade in small arms are complex, transnational, and constantly evolving.

If there is one lesson we can draw, it is that capacity-building must be sustained, inclusive, and partnership-driven.

Continued support from Member States will be essential to expand and sustain this initiative, and to ensure that it reaches those who need it most.

Dear colleagues,

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a global challenge that requires collective and sustained efforts.

The frameworks we have agreed provide us with a strong foundation.

What is needed now is continued investment in implementation.

The SALW Fellowship is one modest, but important, contribution to this broader effort. I look forward to hearing from our Fellows and partners, and to our discussion today.

I thank you very much for your attention.
