

Conference Report

**1st Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) and Light Weapons
New York City
July 11, 2003**

On July 11, 2003, IPPNW and the World Health Organization co-sponsored a panel entitled “Public Health Dimensions of Small Arms Violence: Impacts, Meaningful Interventions, and the Programme of Action.” The panel, attended by approximately 40 public health experts, medical students, and members of NGOs affiliated with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), was a side event in conjunction with the “1st Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons,” held at the United Nations in New York from July 7-11.

The Panel was convened to examine the contribution of public health professionals to understanding the effects of small arms violence on individuals and communities and to explore public health interventions that can effectively prevent small arms violence. The focal point was the Programme of Action on Small Arms adopted at the conclusion of the Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in July 2001. The Programme of Action includes calls to combat the small arms trade simultaneously from both a supply and demand perspective, and to develop and support action-oriented research.

IPPNW, through its “Aiming for Prevention” campaign, and WHO, primarily through the work of its Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention, share a common interest in bringing together the medical research and medical advocacy agendas that are key to the prevention of small arms violence. The goal is to reduce, as far as humanly possible, the deaths, injuries, and social disruption inflicted by small arms and light weapons, and to do so by supporting policies and practices that are based firmly on a well documented public health analysis.

The following panelists addressed these issues from both global and national perspectives:

- Camilla Waszink— Mines-Arms Unit, Legal Division, International Committee of the Red Cross
- Balkrishna Kurvey, PhD—Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection (IIPDEP) and IPPNW-Central India
- Simon Bokongo Kaway, MD—Congolese Physicians for Peace
- David Meddings, FRCPC (C) MHSc—Human Security and Small Arms, Injuries and Violence Prevention Department, World Health Organization

Wendy Cukier, Professor of Justice Studies at Ryerson University and Coordinator of the Small Arms and Firearms Education and Research Network (SAFER-Net), served as the panel moderator.