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Verification of SALW programmes

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Foreword

On 08 May 2003 the development of regional micro-disarmament[1] standards and guidelines was discussed during the RACVIAC sponsored seminar on '***SALW - A year after Implementation of the Stability Pact Plan***'. The consensus was that such standards and guidelines were desirable, and SEESAC agreed to develop a framework and then take responsibility for the future development of regional standards. It was agreed RMDS/G would be designed to support the work at the operational level, and would go further than the more generic 'best practice' documents currently available. After a wide-ranging discussion between stakeholders as to the status of RMDS/G it has been agreed that the term 'standards' will refer to the technical issues, whilst 'guidelines' will apply to 'programme' issues.

This RMDS/G [2] reflects the development of operational procedures, practices and norms, which have occurred over the past four years in the area of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)[3] control. Best operational practices have been identified and reviewed from within the region and beyond, and included as appropriate within this RMDS/G.

SEESAC has a mandate under the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan to fulfil, among others, operational objectives of 1) sharing information on and enhancing co-operation in the establishment and implementation of SALW control and reduction programmes and approaches among regional actors; and 2) providing linkage and co-ordination with the other relevant regional initiatives. The development of RMDS/G is one means of fulfilling that mandate.

The work of preparing, reviewing and revising these standards and guidelines is conducted by SEESAC, with the support of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations and consultants. The latest version of each standard, together with background information on the development work, can be found at www.seesac.org. RMDS/G will be reviewed at least every three years to reflect developing SALW control norms and practices, and to incorporate changes to international regulations and requirements. The latest review was conducted on 01 March 2006, which has reflected the development of the UN Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) www.unddr.org, which include RMDS/G as a normative reference in the Disarmament and the SALW Control modules.

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[1] Defined as: 'The monitoring, collection, control and final disposal of small arms, related ammunition and explosives and light weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible weapons and ammunition management programmes'. Often used interchangeably with SALW control in the past, but SALW Control is now the recognised terminology. The term Micro-Disarmament has only been used here to ensure consistency of the RMDS/G concept, rather than renaming the standards.

[2] The layout and format of RMDS/G are based on the highly successful International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The cooperation of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is acknowledged by SEESAC during the development of RMDS/G.

[3] There is no agreed international definition of SALW. For the purposes of RMDS/G the following definition will apply: '***All lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability***'

Introduction

Small arms, light weapons and ammunition are inherently dangerous. In the wrong hands, and in sufficient quantities, they can be politically destabilising and lead to and exacerbate conflict. As such, they can present grave dangers, both to national governments and to international and regional peace-building efforts. The most effective way that they can be kept in check is by interventions and programmes for micro-disarmament and the control of SALW.

There are many inter-relational factors that determine the type of SALW control intervention, and its subsequent success or failure. This requires that a number of mechanisms have to be set up to implement the process. These mechanisms need to be planned, coordinated and used to ensure the success of a national SALW plan. One of these mechanisms is the system for the verification of the programme, which is necessary both for building confidence in the minds of stakeholders that the programme is being, and has been, carried out in the required manner. As such, it is an important part of the SALW programme.

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Verification of SALW programmes

1   Scope

This RMDS/G establishes the guiding principles for the establishment of a methodology for the verification of SALW Programmes. The national SALW commission[4], which is responsible for the safe, efficient and effective planning and execution of SALW control intervention activities, should make an appropriate organization(s) responsible for the verification process.

2   References

A list of normative references is given in Annex A. Normative references are important documents to which reference is made in this standard, and which form part of the provisions of this standard.

3   Terms and definitions

A list of terms and definitions used in this standard is given in Annex B. A complete glossary of all the terms and definitions used in the RMDS/G series of standards is given in RMDS/G 02.10.

In the RMDS/G series of standards, the words 'shall', 'should' and 'may' are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance. This use is consistent with the language used in ISO standards and guidelines.

a)   'shall' is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be adopted in order to satisfy the standard in full;

b)   'should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications; and

c)   'may' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.

The term **'national authority'** refers to the government department(s), organisation(s) or institution(s) in each SALW country charged with the regulation, management and co-ordination of SALW activities.

The term '**verification**' means 'confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence that specified requirements have been fulfilled'. [ISO 9000:2000].

In the context of **SALW Control**, the term **monitoring** refers to: 'the authorised observation by qualified personnel of sites, activities or processes without taking responsibility for that being observed. This is usually carried out to check conformity with undertakings, procedures or standard practice and often includes recording and reporting elements'.

4   Role of verification in a national SALW programme

SALW programmes need to be completely transparent in the way they are carried out, and also need to be, and be seen to be, as accurate as possible. In a country recovering from the results of internal conflict, the various communities and factions involved in the conflict will still be suspicious of each other, and this suspicion can affect the rate at which SALW are surrendered, or even if they are surrendered at all.

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[4] National SALW commissions have been called a variety of names in previous SALW interventions. These include; national SALW co-ordination committee, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) committee, DDR authority etc. For the purposes of this RMDS/G theses names all refer to a 'national SALW commission'. For information on the national commission see RMDS/G 03.10.

Every action taken and every figure issued during the SALW programme may be the subject of intense scrutiny, and uncertainty can create tensions and fears that could undermine the disarmament process[5]. For this reason, verification should be applied at every level of the disarmament process, and not merely at the time of weapons disposal.

The SALW process should be monitored, and should be subject to rigorous accounting, but even these elements will need, or be integrated with, some form of verification. Verification is therefore an important element in the search for transparency and accuracy in the programme, and if properly conducted could add much to its ultimate success.

5 Establishment of a verification system

5.1 A verification organisation

An appropriate organisation should be nominated as the verification organisation by the national SALW commission, as part of its overall preparations for the SALW programme. It should be appropriately staffed, accommodated and functioning before the start of the weapons collection process, and may even be used in the SALW survey process, to verify that all stakeholders in the disarmament process have been included in the SALW survey.

5.2 Roles of the verification organisation

The roles of the verification organisation shall include:

a) assistance during the SALW survey, to verify the participation of all warring factions, militias or communities that could be holding illegal weapons have been included in the survey;

b) creation of a verification database and diary, to record areas and items verified;

c) verification that records of legal and stolen weapons and ammunition are obtainable and have been obtained from the police and armed services;

d) verification that the weapons database includes the recommended factors, including the quantities, types, serial numbers and sources of legal and surrendered weapons;

e) verification that the necessary weapon details are being recorded at the weapons collection point;

f) verification of the issue of receipts for weapons and explosive items, (receipts will usually only be provided in a DDR programme, it would be unusual to provide them in an amnesty type programme, as anonymity would be lost);

g) verification of the weapons collection data;

h) verification that incentives for voluntary surrender have been delivered in a timely manner;

i) verification of the actual destruction of weapons at the destruction points, and that the registration procedures are being followed;

j) verification of the destruction of explosive munitions surrendered during the programme;

k) verification that weapon destruction certificates have been completed and that all stakeholders are allowed access to them;

l) verification that the SALW programme database has been updated; and

m) briefing the national SALW commission, donors and sponsors of the SALW programme, members of the SALW awareness campaign, media and NGOs on the verification procedures that have been carried out in support of the programme.

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[5] See 'Managing the Remnants of War', Chapter 3, Page 91 of the results of uncertainty in the disposal of weapons.

5.3   Composition of verification organisation

The verification organisation team should include:

a)   sufficient staff numbers to verify the data collection of SALW survey teams;

b)   sufficient staff numbers to carry out verification at SALW collection points (as required);

c)   staff members who should:

d)   be trained in the use of computers;

e)   have sufficient seniority and standing to gain detailed information from police and military sources;

f)   have the integrity and credibility to be able to gain and maintain the confidence of all stakeholders;

g)   have appropriate technical skills to assess the success of the weapons processes and demolition of explosive items;

h)   have a knowledge of relevant national languages, or access to interpreters;

i)   an independent group to monitor the accounting organisation's data collection and storage; and

j)   an element for liaison with communities and the national SALW awareness campaign.

5.4   Authority for direct contact

The verification organisation should be authorised to work directly where necessary with the following national organisations:

a)   Ministry of Interior / Internal Affairs;

b)   Ministry of Defence;

c)   Ministry of Justice;

d)   National Focal Point [6];

e)   Agencies handling the incentive programme (if used);

f)   Local communities; and

g)   United Nations Development Programme, (as Chief Technical Advisor if directly supporting a national programme).

6   Areas of responsibility

6.1   United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP has a general responsibility for enabling, assisting and encouraging the effective management of SALW control programmes by continuously maintaining an overview of RMDS/G to reflect developing SALW control norms and practices, and by informing stakeholders of any changes to international regulations and requirements.

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[6] This should be the nominated individual, not the organisation providing the NFP.

UNDP should apply RMDS/G to its SALW intervention programmes, activities and contracts within South Eastern and Eastern Europe unless the local situation precludes their effective application. In such circumstances, when one or more RMDS/G is not appropriate, UNDP will provide alternative specifications, requirements and guidance.

6.2   Regional organizations

In certain areas of the world, regional organizations have been given a mandate by their member states to coordinate and support SALW control programmes within a state national boundaries. (For example EUFOR within Bosnia and Herzegovina).

In these circumstances the regional organization should assume many of the responsibilities and roles of the national SALW authority, and could also act as a conduit for donor resources. The responsibilities and roles of regional organizations for SALW control will vary from state to state and may be subject to specific Memoranda of Understanding, or similar agreements.

6.3   SEESAC

SEESAC shall provide operational assistance, technical assistance and management information, within resources and on request, to all SALW intervention programmes within South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

6.4   National SALW authority [7]

The national SALW authority shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining a national SALW commission for the management of SALW intervention planning and operations. The national SALW commission should be consistent with the guidelines provided by RMDS/G, and other relevant national and international standards, regulations and requirements. This commission shall nominate an appropriate organisation to take on the responsibility of verification.

6.5   SALW Control organizations

NGOs, commercial companies and other organizations involved in SALW control interventions shall make every effort to liaise and cooperate with the national SALW commission in order to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of SALW control interventions.

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[7] In this case the national SALW authority, if the same as the national SALW commission, may be responsible to itself.

Annex A
(Normative)
References

The following normative documents contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of the standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of the standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid ISO or EN:

a)   RMDS/G 01.10 - Guide to RMDS/G and SALW control measures;

b)   RMDS/G 03.40 - Marking and tracing of SALW;

c)   RMDS/G 04.10 - Management of SALW programmes;

d)   RMDS/G 01.20 - SALW accounting;

e)   RMDS/G 04.30 - Monitoring of SALW programmes;

f)   RMDS/G 05.10 - SALW collection;

g)   RMDS/G 05.20 - SALW destruction;

h)   RMDS/G 05.80 - SALW survey; and

i)   RMDS/G 06.20 - Development and implementation of SALW awareness campaigns.

The latest version/edition of these references should be used. SEESAC hold copies of all references used in this standard. A register of the latest version/edition of the RMDS/G standards, guides and references is maintained by SEESAC, and can be read on the RMDS/G website: http://www.seesac.org/. National SALW authorities, employers and other interested bodies and organisations should obtain copies before commencing SALW programmes.

Annex B
(Informative)
Terms and definitions

B.1.1
micro-disarmament
the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

B.1.2
micro-disarmament organisation
refers to any organisation (government, military or commercial entity) responsible for implementing SALW Control projects or tasks. The organisation may be a prime contractor, subcontractor, consultant or agent.

B.1.3
monitoring
in the context of **SALW Control***, the term refers to …..* the authorised observation by qualified personnel of sites, activities or processes without taking responsibility for that being observed . This is usually carried out to check conformity with undertakings, procedures or standard practice and often includes recording and reporting elements.

B.1.4
national authority
the government department(s), organization(s) or institution(s) in a country charged with the regulation, management and coordination of **SALW** activities.

B.1.5
quality
degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements. [ISO 9000:2000]

B.1.6
quality management
coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality. [ISO 9000:2000]

B.1.7
quality control (QC)
part of quality management focused on fulfilling quality requirements. [ISO 9000:2000]

Note: QC relates to the *inspection* of a finished product. In the case of collection and destruction, the 'product' is destroyed weapons.

B.1.8
quality assurance (QA)
part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be met. [ISO 9000:2000]

Note: The purpose of QA in **SALW** is to confirm that management practices and operational procedures for collection and destruction operations are appropriate, and will achieve the stated requirement in a safe, effective and efficient manner. Internal QA will be conducted by **SALW organizations** themselves, but external inspections by an external **monitor** should also be conducted.

B.1.9
Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)
all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability.

Note: There are a variety of definitions for SALW circulating and international consensus on a 'correct' definition has yet to be agreed. For the purposes of RMDS/G the above definition will be used.

B.1.10
SOPs
a set of instructions that define the preferred or currently established method of conducting an operational task or activity. Their purpose is to <u>promote</u> recognisable and measurable degrees of uniformity, consistency and commonality within an organisation, with the aim of improving operational effectiveness and safety. SOPs should reflect <u>local</u> requirements and circumstances.

B.1.11
standard
a standard is a documented agreement containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.

Note: RMDS/G aim to improve safety and efficiency in SALW Control by promoting the preferred procedures and practices at both headquarters and field level. To be effective, the standards should be definable, measurable, achievable and verifiable.

B.1.12
verification
confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence that specified requirements have been fulfilled. [ISO 9000:2000]