

**United Nations Conference to Review Progress
Made in the Implementation of the
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in
Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
30 June 2006**

"Saving the Programme of Action"

Presented by Dott. Carlo Peroni
President of the WFSA

Mr. President, I am Carlo Peroni, President of the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities, an ECOSOC NGO comprising over 40 hunting, sport shooting and commercial organizations from all over the world. The WFSA and its member organizations have been participating in UN meetings regarding small arms since 1995. This was even before the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001. Although it is of little consequence, we are the senior NGO in this process

In these 11 years we have brought a consistent message to the United Nations. First, we have repeated over and over that we, the law abiding hunters, sport shooter and legal firearms owners, are not the problem. Hundreds of millions of sporting and subsistence firearms have traditionally and historically been in the hands of families in free nations all over the world where people have lived in peace and enjoyed the lowest of crime rates. Second, Mr. President, we have attempted to offer positive solutions to real problems that do exist. We have made substantial contributions to the deliberations on tracing. We look forward to offering our expertise and knowledge to discussions of brokering and if the decision should be made, end user certificates and other matters.

Unfortunately Mr. President, all has not been well with this matter. For years we have been told, time and time again, that the UN effort is not a threat to legal civilian ownership of firearms. However, not once has this been acknowledged formally by the UN. It just never seems to happen, Mr. Chairman. We are always left with a nebulous "trust us."

Mr. President, in one of the pre-Conference documents published by a sister NGO, on the other side of the issue, the outrageous claim is made that the 400 million firearms in the hand of law-abiding citizens are the problem. Legally held firearms have always been part of our tradition and culture without creating a problem.

Mr. Chairman, this has got to stop. The issue of legal civilian firearms possession should only play one role in this Conference, and that is for this body to acknowledge in its report the undeniable, legitimate and rightful role of hunting, sport shooting and lawful civilian firearms ownership in numerous UN member States.

We would again ask that this UN Conference to adopt language such as this in its final report:

Recognizing that states have developed different cultural and historical uses for firearms, and that the purpose of the Programme of Action is not to discourage or diminish lawful leisure or recreational activities such as travel or tourism for sport shooting, hunting, and other forms of lawful ownership and use recognized by the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman, this Conference would do well to acknowledge that recent national political trends have been away from further and excessive interference with legal civilian firearms ownership. Representatives of governments and civil society in both countries, Brazil and Canada, can well speak for themselves.

Mr. President, I sincerely hope that this Conference can acknowledge the role, the legitimate role that those hundreds of millions of hunter, sport shooters and legal firearms owners have to play in this process. Thank you.