



**Open Ended Working Group on an
Arms Trade Treaty
July 16, 2009, New York**

Statement of the

World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities

Mr. Chairman, I am C. Edward Rowe, President of the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities, or WFSA. The WFSA is an ECOSOC NGO and is the primary voice for the hunting and sport shooting community in the international area. Our various associations represent over 100 million individual members. We have member associations in countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, to name just a few. We are a vital part of civil society and a legitimate stakeholder in this process. We are here to speak for the legitimate interests and rights of the legal and responsible firearms owners of the world. Mr. Chairman, I might also say we represent most of the world's civilian firearms and ammunition manufacturers.

Mr. Chairman, the WFSA and its member associations have been actively involved in the issues of small arms and light weapons for over 14 years. We were involved with the drafting of the United Nations Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action, the marking and tracing instrument and the effort to regulate brokering and ammunition.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the opportunity to speak today and it is our desire not to repeat what has been said before. It is evident from listening to interventions both during this meeting and March's gathering that the scope of any future ATT is a crucial issue. Most discussions of scope have centred on the UN Register of Conventional Arms categories, the often repeated "seven plus one plus one". The two "plus ones" are small arms and light weapons (SALWs) and ammunition. One irony of these discussions has been that of the three topics under consideration by the OEWG, "feasibility, scope and parameters", scope has had the most specific discussion. It is our view that this is one issue where an early substantive decision can be made which will affect positively the future of any ATT.

Mr. Chairman, let me discuss the two "plus ones." There seems little disagreement that small arms and light weapons should be included within an arms trade treaty. However, there is considerable disagreement about which SALW. We say that the focus of the SALW category should be strictly upon military small arms, the first "plus one."

Mr. Chairman, our position raises a question: how does one define military small arms? The question is not without an answer and the WFS A has addressed it in earlier forums. Very briefly, we believe that military small arms are those that are designed to function with fully-automatic fire.

Let me summarize, Mr. Chairman: we ask that the report of the Group state, under the category of “scope”, that military SALW are the focus of a future ATT if indeed the “plus one” of SALW is added to the seven UN Conventional Arms Register categories.

Now, Mr. Chairman, for a very brief reference to the other “plus one”, ammunition. Any attempt to include small arms ammunition in any international regulatory regime, whether an ATT or anything else, is doomed to fail. This is not a political or a policy statement. It is simply that we are sharing with you our knowledge and experience of the realities of the manufacturing and distribution processes of sporting ammunition. The intention of ammunition regulation is to diminish huge-scale ammunition dumps in postwar environments. We support this goal, but if it is too broadly written the outcome will be failure to achieve this. Instead, it could create a regulatory tangle affecting lawful, retail ammunition buyers such as those practising their Olympic target shooting.

Mr. Chairman, let me rephrase this point. The ATT process will have to resolve a myriad of important policy questions. Answers may or may not be found. States and NGOs can debate a wealth of issues, and we have taken a position on one of these central questions today. A highly specific registration system for ammunition, made and consumed in billions of rounds each year, is simply a fantasy, the pursuit of which will use valuable time and resources and in the end achieve nothing. We ask that the report of this Group recommend small arms ammunition be outside the scope of any future ATT efforts.

Let me now, Mr. Chairman, cite two particular points made by the Group of Government Experts in its report pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 61/89.

The Report A/63/334 distributed on August 25, 2008, contained the following in Section IV, paragraph 18, on page 14, and I quote:

“Exclusively internal transfers or national ownership provisions, including national constitutional protections on private ownership within that State’s territory, should not fall under an arms trade treaty.”

Further within the Report, in Section V, paragraph 21 on page 15, it states and I quote again:

“It was noted that the particular nature of the lawful trade in sport and hunting arms should be taken into account in a potential arms trade treaty.”

In the light of these two points, I must also express our concern at what appears to be an inconsistency of approach between those working towards an Arms Trade Treaty and UN CASA's "Project on International Small Arms Control Standards" (ISACS) of February, 2009. While we appreciate that ISACS is not intended to be mandatory but advisory, we are nevertheless concerned that it seeks to provide "...a basis for the development of national small arms control standards." This is contained in paragraph 4.1 on page 9. Its proposed Module 03.30 on page 12 refers to "National controls over the access of civilians to SALW." CASA's work on national controls could well serve to raise private owners' concerns and increase their apprehension about any UN initiative that involves small arms, including the ATT.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your patience and indulgence.