

Introduction

At the invitation of the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway, 71 experts from 28 nations gathered in Oslo on 22 – 24 April 2003. They met to discuss possible common approaches towards ensuring effective controls on small arms and light weapons (SALW) brokering activities. The participants came from Governments, International Organisations, research institutes and NGOs from across the world.

The aim of the Conference was to promote implementation of a key element of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on the illegal trade in SALW: to help countries to ‘develop adequate national legislation or administrative procedures regulating the activities of those who engage in small arms and light weapons brokering’ (PoA, II.14). To this end, the Conference focussed particularly on examining possible elements of model regulation of brokering activities. The Conference aimed to develop shared understandings of such elements, in order to facilitate the adoption of effective national controls by all States where such controls are not already in place.

The development of such shared understandings was also seen as a way to promote appropriate harmonisation and co-ordination of national efforts to regulate SALW brokering activities. Such cooperation is necessary because illicit brokering activities, and the trafficking associated with it, have global dimensions and unscrupulous brokers typically exploit loopholes and inconsistencies in States’ regulations.

The Conference provided an opportunity for participants from governments interested in implementing brokering regulations to learn from the experience of governments that have been through this process; and receive advice from experts from academic institutions and NGOs that have studied the problem of illegal arms brokering.