

DRAFT

Preparatory Committee on the UN Arms Trade Treaty Conference July 16, 2010, New York

Statement of the

World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities

Mr. Chairman, I am Ted Rowe 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 member associations represent over 100 million individual members. I might also say we represent most of the civilian firearms and ammunition manufacturers in the world.

Mr. Chairman, the WFSA and its member associations have been actively involved in the issue of small arms and light weapons for over 15 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. A little over two weeks ago we attended the Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms. We also attended all the meetings of the ATT Open Ended Working Group.

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 during the various meetings and gatherings 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 (SALW) and ammunition. It is our view that there is one issue where an early substantive decision can be made which will positively affect the future of any ATT, Mr. Chairman, and that issue is scope.

Mr. Chairman, let me discuss scope in terms of 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. I am referring, of course, to whether or not civilian firearms should be the focus of this category. We say that they should not be the focus of the SALW category – the first plus-one. It is our position that military small arms should be the primary focus of any ATT effort relating to SALW. Our position raises two questions: why move away from civilian firearms? And how does one define civilian firearms?

As to the first question of why we should move away from civilian firearms, let me give three reasons. First, the great, great majorities of civilian firearms are legally owned by civilians, and are not the problem. We heard from the Small Arms Survey, during their side event presentation at the German Mission that, and I quote,” There is no

significant undocumented trade in sporting guns.” We have an old cliché, Mr. Chairman: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

The second reason is related: regulation of civilian firearms is and always has been the concern of the various States’ domestic laws. The UN Firearms Protocol has had some impact on these domestic regulations, but even this involvement is proving to be very problematic.

The third reason is also related: any significant involvement in or reference to the issue of civilian firearms by an ATT will make the ATT a political issue in certain jurisdictions. It would be quite easy for an ATT to become politically toxic if the civilian issue is not resolved at an early stage.

Mr. Chairman, the question which our position elicits is how to define civilian firearms. The question is not without an answer and the WFSA has addressed it in earlier fora. Very briefly, we believe that military firearms are those capable of fully-automatic fire. Regardless, a further refinement of that definition might be a fruitful subject for the next rounds of Prep. Com. meetings contemplated for 2011.

Let me summarize, Mr. Chairman: we would ask that the report of this meeting state that military SALW, as opposed to civilian firearms, are the focus of a future ATT.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by a very brief reference to the other plus-one, ammunition. Mr. Chairman, any attempt to include ammunition in any international regulatory regime, whether an ATT or anything else, is doomed to failure. This is not a political or a policy statement. It is simply that we, the industry which produces billions of rounds of ammunition every year, are alerting you to a fact. It is not feasible because of the sheer volume. The limited experience of one or two jurisdictions cannot be transferred to the major producing countries.

Mr. Chairman, let me rephrase this point: the ATT process will have to resolve myriad 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. Ammunition, however, is simply an exercise in futility that will use valuable time and in the end produce nothing.

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