

## UNODA's Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific concludes hybrid training on gender mainstreaming small arms control with the Government of Lao PDR.

On 14 – 16 July, the [United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific \(UNRCPD\)](#), in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR, conducted a training on mainstreaming gender into small-arms related policy, programmes and legislation. Held in hybrid format, the course drew thirty-two government officials from various departments and agencies, who gained in-depth and practical knowledge about how gender plays a role in small arms and light weapons (SALW) control, and ways to apply global instruments and agendas to combat the illicit trafficking, use and misuse of these weapons.

The participants were welcomed by the Ambassador of the European Union to the Lao PDR, Ms. Ina Marčiulionytė, the Director-General of the International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Maythong Thammavongsa, and Mr. Yuriy Kryvonos, Director of UNRCPD.



*The Ambassador of the European Union delegation to Lao PDR, H.E. Ms. Ina Marčiulionytė and Director-General of the International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Maythong Thammavongsa delivered opening remarks.*

Ms. Ida Scarpino, UNRCPD Regional Project Coordinator, explained how small arms impact men, women, boys and girls differently. In order to implement gender-responsive policy, programmes and legislation that adequately address these issues, policymakers need to consider how existing gender norms relate to the possession, use and misuse of SALW. To do so, it is important to collect sex and age disaggregated data as well as to conduct a gender analysis of small arms related issues and operations. Finally, Ms. Scarpino introduced the linkages between SALW and the risk of armed gender-based violence and underlined the importance of a solid gender equality strategy in small arms control, while commenting the presentation of Ms. Sisouvanh Vorabouth, Gender Team Leader at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Lao PDR, focussing on those issues in Lao PDR.

The presentations were followed by practical exercises to explore gender dynamics in Lao PDR and their evolution over time, including the role of women and men in the security and defence sector and the equal authorization for them to carry weapons while on duty. Participants were also introduced to a SALW survey template and methods to conduct critical national data analysis related to small arms and gender issues.



*In working groups, participants conducted practical exercises related to gender analysis and small arms control.*

On the second day, presenters focused on ways to design gender responsive SALW control at the policy and regulatory framework level, and briefed on the [Seventh Biennial Meeting of States \(BMS7\)](#). UNRCPD presented its project activities to provide technical and legal assistance to Member States for the implementation of global instruments on SALW control, such as the [UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons \(PoA\)](#), and the [Arms Trade Treaty \(ATT\)](#). Participants then reviewed relevant national policies and laws and provided input to Lao PDR's first national report on the UN PoA.



*Mr Yuriy Kryvonos, Director of UNRCPD, explained how the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 in particular.*



*Participants and trainers discussed the results of the exercises held in the afternoon sessions.*



*Ms. Venephet Philathong, UN Political and Security Affairs Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, presented the results of the exercises on the relevant normative framework and the first national report on the UN PoA.*

On the third day, participants discussed practical steps to include gender-responsive approaches in operational small arms control measures, including women’s participation in this field. In this context, Ms. Gaelle Demolis, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, delivered a presentation on women in law enforcement in the ASEAN region.





*Ms. Gaelle Demolis, Governance, Peace and Security Programme Specialist Governance and Officer in Charge for the Philippine Programme Presence Office at the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and Dr. Melissa Jardine, International Expert, discussed with women's participation in law enforcement in Lao PDR.*

Concluding the activities, participants drafted inputs to a gender mainstreaming strategy in SALW control. Specifically, they identified gaps, opportunities and synergies with relevant domestic agendas and other relevant policy areas, using the template of a National Action Plan as defined by [the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium \(MOSAIC\) as a reference.](#)

The three-day course was part of a [global project](#) in support of gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking and misuse, in line with the Women, Peace and Security agenda, funded by the European Union.



*The Director-General of the International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Maythong Thammavongsa, handed out certificates to the participants.*