

**Canadian Statement on Agenda Item 6
UNPOA BMS8 (27 June – 1 July 2022)**

Agenda Item 6 – Consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms Light Weapons in All its Aspects at the national level, the regional level and the global level.

Mr. Chair, as this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, let me congratulate you on your appointment and thank you and your team for your efforts in organizing this meeting.

Canada supports the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action and recognises the great contribution of this instrument in addressing, preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are very pleased to participate in this Eighth Biennial Meeting of States.

Conflict and instability are fuelled in large part by the availability of arms. Canada believes that governments can and should work together to do more to address the possession and proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Canada remains active at the international, regional and sub-regional levels to tackle the problems stemming from the proliferation, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

States must enforce and apply adequate national controls to the entire life cycle of small arms and light weapons, in accordance with national legal frameworks, to minimize the risk of diversion and the illicit international transfer of SALW. For our part, the Government of Canada is taking a comprehensive solution to address the multifaceted issue of firearms violence in Canada. As a significant step, in May 2020, the Government of Canada prohibited over 1,500 models of assault-style firearms and their variants. These prohibited firearms cannot be legally sold, or imported, and can only be used or transported under limited circumstances. An Amnesty Order is in effect until October 30, 2023 to allow firearms owners and businesses to come into compliance with the law, and to allow time to implement a program to allow the mandatory surrender of now prohibited firearms from Canadian communities.

As part of the Government of Canada's comprehensive strategy to keep communities safe from gun violence, the Government brought into force regulations that will require firearms businesses, effective May 18, 2022, to keep records which describe each firearm in their possession, and record activities related to each firearm, the date on which these activities are performed, and their disposal, in order to facilitate the tracing of firearms by law enforcement in the event that a firearm is diverted to the illicit market: On May 30, 2022, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-21: *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*. Bill C-21 proposes to strengthen gun control in Canada and keep Canadians safe by placing significant restrictions on guns used by criminals and introducing measures to target criminal activity. It specifically puts forward a proposal to create a national 'freeze' on the sale, purchase or transfer of handguns by individuals within Canada, and bringing newly-acquired firearms into Canada. It also introduces "red flag" and "yellow flag" laws to help protect the safety and security of victims of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence. Lastly, it brings forward new measures that will increase Canada's ability to combat firearms trafficking and

smuggling. These are examples of concrete steps my government has taken that are in line with the objectives of the PoA.

With respect to the outcome document, we would like to stress the relevance for Canada of the existing synergies with other international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Firearms Protocol. We would appreciate to see those synergies reflected in the Outcome Document, as has been stated in other forums.

Further, Canada strongly welcomes the inclusion of paragraphs highlighting the importance of applying a gender lens to the PoA and reinforcing the need for the full equal and meaningful participation of women. We also believe that it is important to address the differential impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys. To this end, we support the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data on SALW.

Finally, we welcome the inclusion of the section “Armed violence and the broader peace, security, and sustainable development nexus”, as well as the references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, General Assembly Resolution 65/69, and subsequent relevant resolutions. Likewise, we strongly support the recognition of the links between the implementation of the PoA and the prevention of gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.