



European Union

EU Statement on the consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action Eight Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

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United Nations

New York

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.
2. Allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as chairperson. The European Union (EU) welcomes the transparent and inclusive way you have steered preparations for this meeting.

Mr. Chair,

3. We convene here today amid Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which has increased global insecurity. Nations from every corner of the world have united at the UN General Assembly in calling for peace, demanding that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraws from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders, demanding civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine.
4. Russia, bears full responsibility for the loss of life, the human suffering and all the destruction it causes in Ukraine. The EU fully acknowledges Ukraine's right to self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. We commend the Ukrainian people's strength, courage and resistance to withstand Russia's aggression and we stand with them in firm solidarity.

Mr. Chair,

5. The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorised use of small arms and light weapons continues to constitute a serious impediment for peace, growth, development, and security in the world. Ever since its adoption in 2001, the EU has actively promoted the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (UN PoA) to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW

in all its aspects. The EU considers that the UN PoA continues to provide an effective framework for states valid and effective strategy to consider, commit to, and implement activities to address such impediments.

6. In order to further strengthen its action against the destabilising accumulation and spread of SALW and their ammunition, the Council of the European Union on 19 November 2018 adopted the EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition "Securing arms, protecting citizens".
7. With regard to the implementation of the UN PoA, the EU supports the inclusion of the following elements in the outcome document of the BMS8.
8. BMS8 should promote the exchange of information between states on identified diversion in order to expose and cut off arms trafficking channels, and in order to improve the capacity for risk assessment in the context of arms export control (link with article 11 of Arms Trade Treaty). The prevention of diversion of small arms to unauthorised actors constitutes an undeniable link between the UN PoA and the Arms Trade Treaty, especially with the first programmed meeting of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF) during CSP8. The EU deplores that some states deny this link, thereby remaining blind for the synergies between the UN PoA and the ATT. The EU would like to see BMS8 recognise that the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol contribute to the implementation of the UN PoA, which is supported by synergies with international instruments with similar objectives.
9. States should underline their commitment to promote national implementation by means of, where appropriate, dedicated interagency coordination bodies, national action plans and strategies, national points of contact, national legislation, including penal clauses, regulations, administrative procedures and record-keeping. The monitoring of the relevant aspects of the SALW life cycle including manufacturing and marking, trade, export control, safe and secure stockpiling and disposal is also critical.
10. States should confirm their commitment to transparency by sharing national points of contact for the UN PoA, submitting their biennial reports on the status of the UN PoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) implementation, by including SALW in their reports for the UN Register of Conventional Arms, and by promoting synergies on that matter with other related international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty.
11. Controlling the export and import of arms is an important tool in the fight against illicit SALW. The risk of SALW diversion can significantly be reduced by effective arms export control and risk assessment prior to authorising a transfer. The use of authenticated end-user agreements, as supported by the UN PoA, should be promoted.
12. BMS8 should confirm that, in line with the 2030 Agenda, including SDG Targets 16.1 and 16.4. that are shared objectives with the UN PoA, sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. Curbing the illicit trade in SALW and ammunition is crucial in this regard.
13. The EU supports BMS8 discussions on increasing the measurability of the impact of cooperation and assistance in SALW control. We should promote and support the

implementation of standards and best practices for the handling and stockpiling of small arms and ammunition, such as the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). The application of new technologies should be considered with a view to improved Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM).

- 14.** SALW-control should be promoted in bilateral and interregional security cooperation, including cross-border cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement and customs agencies. Regional and sub-regional organizations have an important role in assisting states in their implementation of the UN PoA. BMS8 should reiterate the important role played by researchers, civil society and industry in the UN PoA related activities. Civil society plays an essential role in increasing accountability and transparency in conventional arms control as well as informing and shaping all levels of decision-making.
- 15.** In the outcome document, States should underscore the importance of a gender sensitive approach to SALW-control, acknowledge the differing impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys, and, with the aim of improving their effectiveness, promote a strong role of women in the implementation of the UN PoA and gender mainstreaming in SALW control actions. The EU would like to see a reference to UNSCR 1325 of 2000 on Women, Peace and Security in the BMS8 outcome document, and in this regard a special reference to UNSCR 2242 of 2015 that specifically encourages empowering of women with the efforts related to the fight against illicit SALW.
- 16.** BMS8 should address the issue of illicit manufacture through illicit reactivation of deactivated firearms and the illicit conversion of blank firearms. They should consider the establishment of an international standard for irreversible deactivation and a standard for manufacturing norms for blank firearms, with a view to rendering impossible this source of illicit firearms.
- 17.** The scope of the UN PoA must include preventing, combatting and eradicating the illicit trade in ammunition. In this context, we welcome the work of the Open-ended working group (OEWG) on conventional ammunition in the context of UNGA Resolution 76/233 of 24 December 2021 and we look forward to building upon the outcomes of this body in the implementation of safe and secure management of ammunition over its whole life-cycle with a focus on preventing diversion and unintended explosions.
- 18.** BMS8 should highlight the role of the UN PoA in the fight against terrorism. The EU supports the reference to Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) to be included in the outcome document as these weapons pose a very specific risk when diverted into unauthorised hands.
- 19.** The outcome document should also address the growing importance of internet and online transactions, including the intangible transfer of technology and design, with regard to the illicit trade in SALW and their parts and components.
- 20.** BMS8 should call for increasing capacities to monitor and enforce arms embargoes, i.a. by supporting the work of UN panels that monitor arms embargoes. UN and regional peace

support missions should improve exchange of information on illicit flows of SALW with UN panel of experts when present in the same region.

- 21.** Finally, BMS8 should also pay attention to addressing illicit SALW in conflict-affected areas, i.a. by encouraging the involvement where appropriate, of UN and regional peace support operations in the collecting, recording, tracing and destruction of illicit SALW and their ammunition, and support national capacities to track and trace the origins of illicit SALW and ammunition. This should also include taking account of SALW and ammunition in post-conflict reconstruction programmes and Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes in particular.

Thank you Mr. Chair.
